



*Just what is
an*

APOSTLE?

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APOSTLE?

One God Sends With Truth!

*by
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Why this Booklet?

Today we find the Church of God in a "wilderness of religious confusion!"

The confusion is not merely around the Church – within the religions of the world outside – but WITHIN the very heart of The True Church itself!

Does the voice of God speak through chaos? Is Christ going to return to a harem of hundreds of bickering churches? Or is there still just one pure bride – a single spiritual Temple – to whom Christ will return and marry?

This subject was once very clear to us: “God doesn't use a Babylon of confused, disagreeing religious organizations, divided into hundreds of different concepts of theological doctrine, as His instruments” (Mystery of the Ages page 350).

So, how should we conduct ourselves within the present situation?

The subject of this booklet – “What is an Apostle?” – may not at first sight seem linked to the above. But it is. It provides the missing link in understanding the very Government of God – government that must flow from God Himself down to His people for eternity. This booklet therefore presents the subject in that light, as a vital ingredient for unity and singleness of purpose, given to us by God, as a guide to His true people.

Chapter 1

An Apostle is One Sent

The word *apostle* is a Greek word that means “one who is sent.” The first use of the word may well have been within the Temple where “*apostoli*” were sent by the High Priest into the outlying lands to collect the temple tax that was paid annually (www.jewishencyclopedia.com “*apostoli*”). It is interesting, that the one verse where we find Christ referred to as “The Apostle,” He is also called our High Priest: “*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus*” (Heb 3:1).

Sent To Do Something:

The meaning of the word: “one who is sent,” actually gives us many clues about the subject of apostleship. If one is sent, he clearly must be sent **by** someone, sent **to** someone and to **do** something. Therefore let us obey what Hebrews 3 tells us, and consider “The Apostle” Jesus Christ, using Him as an example to find answers to each of these questions:

- He was sent **by** God the Father (*John 17:18*).
- He was sent **into** the world (*John 17:18*) and specifically **to** Israel (*Matt 15:24*).
- But what was He sent to do? The answer is given in Luke where Christ is reading in the synagogue from the prophet Isaiah about His mission: “*he hath sent me [grk: apostello] to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord*” (*Luke 4:18-19*).

John records that Christ said “*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent [grk: apostello] me draws him*” (John 6:44). So God the Father is also involved within the above process. After having our minds opened by the Father, we receive illumination through Jesus Christ (the living Word of God) as described in Luke 4. From being spiritually blind, we begin to see; from being brokenhearted, we are given a new heart (Ezek 36:26-27); from spiritual captivity, we are released (John 8:34-36). But until that time of initial illumination, we remain spiritually blind and enslaved. So we see that one of the reasons Christ was sent (or made The Apostle) involved *the revelation of Truth to those whose minds God had just opened.*

Sent by Christ and the Father:

The reason this is important is that Christ told the twelve apostles: “*as [my] Father hath sent [grk: apostello] me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on [them], and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy [Spirit]*” (John 20:21-22). The apostles to whom He said this were being sent by Christ to continue the same Work He did and for the same reason. He also symbolically gave them the same power that came from the Father, by breathing on them and saying, “receive the Holy Spirit.” It was only this power that gave them the ability to reveal the Truth to those they dealt with.

This is why Christ emphasises the importance of this chain of authority, that flows down from God to His people through those He sends as apostles, by saying to them, “*He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent [grk apostello] me*” (Mt 10:40).

Apostles of God – Not Man:

In the beginning of Galatians Paul says: “*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). Although ministerial ranks

certainly are imparted by the laying on of hands (*II Tim 1:6*), the scripture above clearly shows that the rank of apostle is something God Himself must impart. This is true even if a human ceremony should also take place. It is God who sends an apostle, not man. Continually Paul referred to himself as “*an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God*” (*I Cor 1:1; II Cor 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1*) and mentioned how he received his individual apostleship from God for a specific purpose within the Gentile world: “*for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name*” (*Rom 1:5*).

So why is Paul mentioned as being sent by certain prophets and teachers in Acts? In Acts 13 we read of particular prophets and teachers in Antioch ***to whom God specifically revealed the mission*** given to Paul. Without this specific revelation, they would undoubtedly not have performed the ceremony of the laying on of hands. Clearly it was God who actually did the sending, even though prophets and teachers were used to formally acknowledge what God had already decided: “*So they, being sent forth by the Holy [Spirit], departed unto Seleucia*” (*Acts 13:4*).

Christ said “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent [grk: apostello] greater than he that sent him*” (*John 13:16*). ***A mere man cannot send an apostle, as it is the highest rank within the Church*** (*I Cor 12:28*). One would have to be greater than the apostle in order to do so.

It is God who must therefore indicate that this is something that has ***already*** taken place, should an ordination to the rank of apostle be carried out. This is somewhat different to ordination to the normal ranks of the ministry, as although elders are indeed the servants of God, it is men who ordain them: “*ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee*” (*Titus 1:5*).

In Summary:

The word “apostle” conveys much within its meaning “one who is sent.” An apostle is a man expressly chosen and sent, not by men, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father. Such an apostle is sent into the world to illuminate with the Truth those drawn by the Father. This Truth can only come from God Himself – and such Truth is only available via revelation *specifically given* to such an apostle through the power of God’s Holy Spirit.

Chapter 2

Apostles of the Early Church

The Twelve:

Just before Jesus chose the twelve apostles, from those who were His disciples at the time, He said “*The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest*” (Matt 9:37-38). What He was about to do was of such monumental significance that Luke 6:12-13 tells us that He spent all night in prayer to His Father before making His final choice. But why were there *twelve* apostles? Is there any significance in the actual number of men Jesus chose?

After choosing the apostles, Jesus commanded them: “*Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*” (Matt 10:5-6). This initial command holds far more information than simply relates to their role at the time. Not only did He send them to the twelve tribes of Israel at the first, but later refined this role by defining what their positions were going to be at His return - within the Kingdom of God.

In Matthew 19 Christ said, “*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 19:27-28). The reason there were twelve apostles was because there are twelve tribes of Israel. Each apostle is destined to be the ruler over a specific tribe. No wonder Christ spent an entire night in prayer before making such a momentous decision.

We even see this in Revelation where further information is given: John was shown a vision of the New Jerusalem which “*had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are [the names] of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel . .*

. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev 21:12, 14).

Here we see that the names of the Twelve Apostles are bonded into the very foundations of the New Jerusalem. These foundations support the walls, and contained within the walls are twelve gates that provide *access* into this spiritual city – each gate being identified with a specific tribe within Israel. This vision gives more clear evidence of the vital role God has for the Twelve Apostles – providing spiritual foundations for each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Replacing Judas Iscariot:

The reason the Twelve Apostles understood their position in teaching Israel, must have been that Christ had been clearly instructing them: Acts tells us that *“Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy [Spirit] had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen . . . speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:2-3).*

Having been instructed by Christ, their minds were obviously on the future kingdom and the position of rule they had been promised within it. The apostles asked, *“Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6).* This is also why one of the first things that needed to be done after Christ’s death and resurrection, was to replace Judas Iscariot, as it was important that the number Twelve was preserved: *“And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles” (Acts 1:26).*

If we notice how this lot was cast, we once again find that it was God – not the disciples themselves – who chose Judas’s replacement. God must always be the One who sends a true apostle. What we find in Acts 1:21-22 is the basic criteria that allowed someone to be considered by God in the role of replacement, as the person also needed to act as a witness of Christ’s whole ministry on earth: *“Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time*

that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection” (Acts 1:21-22).

It appears that just two individuals fulfilled the requirements: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. They then prayed and asked God to choose between them: *“You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship . . . and the lot fell on Matthias” (Acts 1:24,26).*

Once again, it was God who chose, and God who sent – not the disciples!

More than The Twelve:

The Twelve were very special indeed. But it is also clear from scripture that the apostle Paul was regarded as a special individual chosen by God and specifically sent to the Gentiles as an apostle. However, there are also several other apostles mentioned in the pages of scripture, showing us clearly that the term “apostle” was not limited to The Twelve and Paul.

In Matthew we are told that Christ had a brother called James (*Matt 13:55*). James, the brother of Christ, is later described by Paul in Galatians as “an apostle”; *“But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord’s brother” (Gal 1:19)*. It is very clear he was in addition to the twelve. One of the twelve was also called James the son of Zebedee and there was another James – the son of Alphaeus. But clearly neither was “James the Lord’s brother,” or he would have been described as James the son of Joseph (the human “father” of Christ).

In Acts 14 Barnabas is described as an apostle (one sent): *“Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul heard [of], they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, And saying, Sirs,*

why do ye these things? (Acts 14:14-15). In this case, Paul and Barnabas had been “sent” by God for a specific purpose. In Acts 13 we find both Paul and Barnabas being selected by God and then sent to a particular area “*by the Holy [Spirit]*” (Acts 13:4).

In Romans 16 two individuals are mentioned: Andronicus and Junia. There are different ways of translating this passage, but it is possible that these were apostles (sent) for a specific reason. However, we are not given any details: “*Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me*” (Rom 16:7).

False Apostles:

One of the clearest indications that there were several more apostles in the early church than the Twelve and Paul is the fact that “*false apostles*” are mentioned. If the office of apostle was restricted only to the Twelve and Paul, false apostles could not have deceived anyone. It is clear from scriptures, such as the two below, that this was not the case:

*"For such are **false apostles**, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ" (II Cor 11:13).*

*"I know your works, your labour, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And **you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not**, and have found them liars" (Rev 2:2).*

John the Baptist:

There is one individual who at first glance nobody would tend to think of as having fulfilled an apostle-like role, yet John the Baptist is somewhat unique in this regard, as he *preceded* Christ – unlike the twelve. The reason it is important to recognise this aspect of John the Baptist, is that he was described by Christ as the type of one prophesied to come just before His second coming. This latter

fulfilment is prophesied to have a similar role in being sent before Christ, to prepare a people for Christ's return. This is why the subject of apostleship is ***absolutely vital*** for the true people of God today.

Two things indicate the apostle-like role of John the Baptist. First is the wording used within the prophecies predicting his arrival: God says: "***Behold, I send*** My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me" (Mal 3:1) and "***Behold, I will send*** you Elijah the prophet" (Mal 4:5-6). These scriptures show that John the Baptist was to be **sent** by God – the very meaning of the title "apostle."

The second aspect is the way in which Christ Himself referred to John: "*But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yes, I say unto you, and **more than a prophet**. For this is [he], of whom it is written, **Behold, I send [grk: apostello]** my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee*" (Matt 11:9-10). When this verse is understood in the light of the offices currently within the Church: "***first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers . . .***" (1 Cor 12:28), then we see that the only role greater than a prophet is an apostle. Christ therefore seems to imply an apostle-like role here of John the Baptist.

John the Baptist was "sent" to do a specific job. He is also the type of an apostle (one sent) who is prophesied. This latter individual is prophesied to appear at the end-time, when an elect people of God must be prepared as part of the very living Temple to which Christ is going to return. The existence of this end-time apostle will be covered later in the booklet – in chapter eight.

In Summary:

The reason why Christ chose twelve apostles is that each one is to rule a specific tribe of Israel in the Kingdom of God. Paul also was hand-picked by God and sent to the Gentiles.

However, there were several more apostles than just the twelve and Paul. Although John the Baptist preceded Christ, he also was “sent” (*grk: apostello*) and was described as “more than a prophet” by Christ. More importantly, he was the type fulfilment of another individual who was also prophesied. This individual was to be “sent” (*grk: apostello*) shortly before Christ’s return, specifically to prepare a people (a holy temple) for that return, and was prophesied to restore all things, just before the end.

Chapter 3

An Apostle – Lays Foundations

The foundation on which the True Church is built is very clear. In Ephesians 2 Paul talks of the Church as a household that is “**built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner [stone]**” (Eph 2:20).

Aligned to the Corner Stone:

When a building was constructed during that time – and even today in some cases – a large corner stone was always the first stone laid. This stone was then used as the single main reference point for the entire structure. In the case of the Church, Jesus Christ – the Living Word of God – is clearly that stone (Eph 2:20). But the way in which walls were then aligned was **not** simply with reference to the corner stone directly, but with the **foundation** found vertically **below** each **section** of the building.

As long as each section of the foundation is carefully measured from and aligned with the corner stone, then the resulting walls above those foundations will also be aligned and true. It is only by using this simple process that the **unity** of a building is preserved. As Paul says, “**in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord**” (Eph 2:21).

The responsibility to carefully align such foundations with the Corner Stone was something **not** given to the general ministry, but according to this scripture in Ephesians and several others, remained the preserve of apostles (I Cor 3:10; I Cor 12:28; Eph 3:5; Eph 4:11; II Pet 3:2; Jude 1:17; Rev 21:14). The general ministry, as faithful stewards (I Cor 4:2), were then duty bound to align their own teachings carefully **with these foundations** – teaching **only** as they had been taught (Titus 1:9, II Tim 1:13; Jude 1:3; II Thes 2:15).

A Spiritual Temple:

The prophecy given in Malachi implies that a temple, having such foundations, will be under construction just before the return of Christ. The temple that “*the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to*” (*Mal 3:1*) is clearly a spiritual temple – composed of resurrected people – not mere stones and wood. Before Christ’s first coming, John the Baptist was to “*prepare the way before me*” (*Mal 3:1*) and fulfilled this verse according to the angel, by making “*ready a people prepared for the Lord*” (*Luke 1:17*).

This spiritual fulfilment of preparing people as part of a spiritual temple becomes even more clear in Paul’s description of the Church as a building being “*fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord*” (*Eph 2:21*). In addition, a prophecy in Haggai describes the glory of this latter house being, “*greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace*” (*Hagg 2:9*). This prophecy was not fulfilled physically by the temple then built, as not only was it inferior to Solomon’s temple (*Ezra 3:12*), but little or no peace was subsequently associated with it – so a *spiritual* fulfilment is clear.

For the temple prophesied in Malachi to be this glorified, unified, spiritual temple to which Christ will return, it must, like a physical building, be aligned to a single foundation – a foundation laid by God through His apostles and prophets. Only then can the ensuing structure be properly “*builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*” (*Eph 2:22*). This is why the individual prophesied to be sent (an apostle) to prepare the way before the Messiah’s second coming (*Mal 3:1*) is so important. The reason he is sent is *to restore the same spiritual foundations required by God in His end-time Church*, allowing it to be part of the spiritual temple to which Christ is prophesied to return. The one laying the foundations in His Church is always Jesus Christ, but He has resolved to do so by sending a human being – an apostle – to His people with those foundational Truths.

Only by Revelation:

The apostle Paul also fulfilled such a role. We read in Ephesians “*of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward, how that **by revelation he made known unto me the mystery**” (Eph 3:2-3). Paul was given **revealed knowledge** from God – describing it as “*the mystery*” (Eph 3:3, 4) – which was unique to him. It involved understanding that the Gentiles would be part of this Holy Temple God was building.*

Judaism had no understanding of this concept. Only when Peter met Cornelius (Acts 10:10-48) did God begin to reveal this understanding to His Church. But God then selected and sent Paul – as the apostle sent to the Gentiles – to carry it out. This commission, given to the apostle Paul, was one “*which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit*” (Eph 3:5). God’s time for this had come and the foundation, laid here in the Ephesian Church by the apostle Paul, consisted of revealed **foundational** knowledge – **trunk-of-the-tree** teaching that was **new**, or **restored** in some way – given specifically by God for His people.

Occasionally a New Testament prophet would be used by God to receive specific information but, even in such cases, an apostle would be used to disseminate that knowledge to The Church (*cf Acts 11:27-28 with Rom 15:25-28*). God used apostles to do the work of laying the foundations of revealed knowledge within the Church. They were **sent** to implement the revelation according to “The Way” God had directed them – so preserving this vital unity within God’s Church.

We can conclude, therefore, that the prophets mentioned as the foundation, in Ephesians 2:20, were almost certainly the Old Testament prophets to which the Word of God originally came, and through whom the Hebrew Scriptures were delivered. Paul talks of this foundation in Romans when he says, “*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called [to be] an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,*

(Which he had promised ***afore*** by his prophets in the holy scriptures)” (Rom 1:1-2). Conversely, the prophets mentioned as having received revelation in the present tense in Ephesians 3:5, would be those found within the New Testament who were occasionally given specific messages from God, intended to be delivered to fully-established Churches (*cf I Cor 14:4, 22*).

In Summary:

New Testament prophets were occasionally used by God to deliver specific messages to a fully-established Church. But an apostle’s major job was to lay bedrock truth that can only come as revealed knowledge sent by God. Because of this function, they are mentioned with the Old Testament prophets as forming the very foundations of the Church of God. The primary job of an apostle – including the apostle prophesied for the end-time construction of the spiritual temple – is to lay spiritual foundations.

Chapter 4

Removing Blindness – For The First Time

When a new building is constructed, the first thing laid is the foundation. Before those foundations go down, no building exists. So it is with the Church of God, and the spiritual Temple to which Christ is to return.

Not Where Christ Was Named:

Paul writes in Romans: “*For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, **not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation**” (Rom 15:18-20).*

Paul, as the apostle sent to the Gentiles, very deliberately avoided preaching where any of the other apostles had already been. As Paul then continues, “*But as it is written, to whom he was **not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand**” (Rom 15:21). Being an apostle, sent to lay foundations specifically for the Gentiles, Paul was required to lay such foundations **only** in virgin territory.*

We Must Remain Alert!

If we are to correctly locate where God is working today we also must understand this vital point. Malachi predicts that there would be a single individual – a true apostle – sent by God at the end-time. Through this individual God will lay foundations for the end-time spiritual Temple to which Christ is destined to return (*Mal 3:1*). Romans the 15th chapter helps us understand that, as a true apostle, this individual would be the **only** one used by God to lay the

foundations of **this part** of His Temple. God will restore, through him, the bedrock truth required by the people destined to comprise the end-time portion of His Temple – illuminating their minds for the **first** time.

Those coming after a true apostle are duty bound **to align their teaching with the foundation** Christ revealed through him. True apostles are sent **by God** to lay foundations. They do not re-lay foundations, changing doctrines where other true apostles have **already** been sent by Christ. We must be aware that Paul describes anyone who does otherwise as, “**false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ**” (II Cor 11:13).

The context of the above scathing scripture tells us a great deal. Notice how just a few verses before this passage, Paul explains how important it was that the Corinthian Church cast down “**imagination, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ**” (II Cor 10:5). Paul was reminding them that it was Christ – not him – who had originally laid the foundation of faith in their lives. That is why they were to guard this faith jealously within their mind.

He then goes on to explain that he taught them “**according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us**” (II Cor 10:13) and how that “measure” or boundary of his Christ-given apostolic authority, included the Corinthian Church. He then talked of going north of Corinth into new areas – but never those of someone else – when he said he wanted to “**preach the gospel in the [regions] beyond you, [and] not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand**” (II Cor 10:16).

False Apostles Operate in Existing Churches:

Using sarcastic rhetoric, Paul refers to these false apostles as “**chiefest apostles**” and points out to the Church that “**if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or**

[if] ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with [him]. For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles” (II Cor 11:4-5). These “chiefest apostles” were teaching things at odds with the revelation given by God through the apostle Paul, who was specifically sent to illuminate the Corinthian Church.

God must choose an apostle. God must send him. God must reveal His Truth to him. It is for this reason Paul describes such people as “*false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore [it is] no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness” (II Cor 11:13-15).*

God’s people need to be acutely aware of this! We are warned repeatedly by Christ to be on our guard at the end-time, to “*hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev 3:11)* and that “*there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if [it were] possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matt 24:24).* False apostles certainly fall into this category (*cf Rev 2:2*). The problem of spiritual deception does not decline, but seems destined to become progressively worse and even more difficult to discern (*II Tim 3:13*). If we are not close to God, and firmly rooted to the foundation **God** originally laid in our lives, we will not be able to survive what is prophesied. It is impossible to do this on our own strength.

Paul Kept From Gallic, Israelite Areas:

We can actually see how, although Paul was clearly the apostle sent to the Gentiles, God deliberately kept him away from certain other areas. In Acts 16 we see how “*After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered [or allowed] them not” (Acts 16:7).* Bithynia was an area on the southern shore of the Black Sea, to the north of Asia. That area and the northern area of Galatia were mountainous regions where the people were mainly of

Gallic extraction. Paul was clearly not the apostle sent to these people. There are a number of records that imply that it was primarily inhabited by Israelites (*see article "Where did the 12 Apostles Go" by H. L. Hoeh*).

Even I Peter 1:1 indicates this to be the case. Here Peter was writing to the Diaspora – Jews who had fled from Jerusalem – and addresses the letter specifically to this area on the southern shore of the Black Sea. Northern Galatia, Pontus, Bithynia, Northern Cappadocia and Northern Asia were all primarily Gallic areas, and thus very different from the totally Gentile southern region where Paul operated, which stretched down to the Mediterranean Sea.

Instead of journeying into this northern region, Paul was instructed to go to Macedonia, and from there, journey south toward the Gentile cities of Athens and Corinth (Acts 16:9). These were the people to whom he was primarily sent (*grk: apostello*) in order to enlighten them for the first time – not work in an area assigned to someone else. Although it is possible that he wrote a letter to these non-Gentile people – in total agreement with the apostle Peter who seemed to be working with them (*II Pet 3:15*) and was even the author of the book of Hebrews (as he had specific knowledge of the Temple practices) – Paul was not regarded as the *primary* apostle in these areas, as he was not the one God *sent initially to enlighten them*.

God Even Restricted Christ's Area:

Even in the case of Jesus Christ, we can see this same principle at work. Even though Christ was sent into the world (*John 17:18*), during His time on earth He had a particular area in which to specifically operate as The Apostle sent by the Father. For this reason His attention was focused primarily on that area.

When a woman from Canaan asked Him to heal her demon-possessed daughter, He initially totally ignored her. And the reason he gave his disciples was, "*I am not sent [grk: apostello] but unto*

the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt 15:24). Although His compassion finally caused Him to grant her request – which He was perfectly entitled to do (*John 17:18*) – His initial reluctance when He says, “*It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast [it] to dogs” (Matt 15:26)* can be properly comprehended only when we understand this principle: that when God sends an Apostle, He sends him somewhere specific and for a specific purpose. This is something all those around him also need to recognise.

Removing Spiritual Blindness:

As we have seen in Chapter 1, an apostle is given the same purpose as Christ who works through him – namely, he is sent to “*heal the brokenhearted . . . and recovering of sight to the blind” (Luke 4:18-19).* The blindness that grips the world at large is removed when the Father leads someone to the apostle He has sent, who has the revealed Truth they need for their enlightening.

This can be seen in what was written to the Corinthian Church by the apostle Paul. The very fact that the people there understood the things they did, proved his apostleship: “*If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord” (I Cor 9:2).* He explains that the understanding and change within their lives was in effect a letter, or recommendation, of his position and authority, proving that he was the one who administered that initial enlightenment to their minds: “*need we, as some [others], epistles of commendation to you, or [letters] of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: [Forasmuch as ye are] manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart” (II Cor 3:1-3).*

Paul then goes on to explain the process itself. He likens it to a veil that is lifted by Christ, allowing someone to understand the Old Testament Scriptures for the first time – when their heart turns to where Christ is working: “*for until this day remaineth the same veil*

untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which [vail] is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away” (II Cor 3:14-16). As the preceding verses clearly show, Paul himself was the one who administered this enlightenment – as their apostle – the apostle sent to the Corinthian Church.

The Pool of Siloam:

Christ graphically illustrates this process of enlightenment through one of His most spectacular miracles. In doing so, He also clearly indicated how the way someone was to be initially enlightened was through those God sends (*grk: apostello*). The incident is where a man who was born blind is ***allowed to see for the very first time*** by being totally healed. Notice what Christ did: *“he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent [grk: apostello]). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing” (John 9:6-7).*

The Hebrew word “Adam” for man, comes from the Hebrew “adama” which means ground or earth *“And the LORD God formed man [adam] [of] the dust of the ground [adama]” (Gen 2:7).* What Christ did symbolically through this miracle, was to illustrate how humans – under the sway of Satan – are blinded by their humanity from birth. For us to see, God’s Spirit must wash off this “human clay” that is covering our eyes.

The interesting thing is from where the water must come. Only one source of water is suitable – the waters of Siloam (which means *sent* – or *apostle*). This is the source God has decreed for removal of human blindness for all of us. Apostles are the human vehicles sent to us, empowered by the living waters of The Holy Spirit. Through His Holy Spirit God works this incredible miracle of removing human, spiritual blindness for the very first time in our life. For the

man born blind, it was Christ Himself. For all of us, it is the human apostle sent by Christ with Spiritual revelation specifically for us.

In Summary:

God uses apostles whom He sends to remove spiritual blindness. By very definition, the foundation of this process can only be done once. This initial enlightenment is done through an apostle sent by God specifically to a particular group of people, and this apostle remains *their* apostle.

Should other “apostles” appear, overturning the foundations laid by the original apostle, such individuals in scripture are described as “*false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ*” (II Cor 11:13) and the people of God must be alert to reject such individuals. As the people of God, it was Christ, *through* the original apostle sent to us, who lifted the veil from our eyes. We must therefore remain firmly centred on that clear foundation that was laid by Christ, looking past the human instrument to its true source.

Chapter 5

Unity – Through Grace

Has God given His people anything specific to counter fragmentation and promote unity? Can churches from different areas and cultures, being shepherded by different pastors, all consistently speak the same thing? Can such people link arms in harmony to do whatever Work God expects at this time and prepare God's people to be part of a single, spiritual temple to which Christ is prophesied to return?

The answer from scripture is clearly – **yes!** The True Church is a **unified** body (*Eph 4:4-6*). There **will be** an elect on this earth at the end (*Matt 24:22*) and the single prophesied spirit-begotten Temple **will be ready**, prepared by and for Christ, when He returns (*Mal 3:1*). These scriptures are very clear.

Unity is Vital Within the Family of God:

Christ prayed to the Father on His last night as a human being, “*keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we [are]*” (*John 17:11*). There is absolutely no schism between Christ and the Father. They exhibit perfect unity through out-flowing love and cooperation. Christ never usurps any role that the Father reserves to Himself. Jesus Christ submits perfectly and obediently to whatever is placed over Him within the family of God. This is how perfect unity and harmony exists on their plane of existence.

God and Christ want this for all of us. Christ prayed for that identical understanding within His Church – within His future brothers and sisters: “***That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent [grk: apostello] me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast***

sent [grk: apostello] me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (John 17:21-23).

But the question is, how?

The Grace Given an Apostle:

What sets the elect apart is the fact that they are striving to be totally subject to God’s Word (*John 17:17, Matt 4:4*). But this Word is not revealed to us individually, by each privately interpreting the scriptures however he or she pleases. Peter says “*that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake [as they were] moved by the Holy [Spirit]” (II Pet 1:20-21)*. The same Holy Spirit must therefore reveal what God is saying *within* the scriptures (*verse 19*).

Private interpretation by all within the Church would produce confusion, and God is not the author of such a state (*I Cor 14:33*). Scripture tells us that instead, God has chosen a specific way in which He reveals His Truth: He does so *as a grace* – or undeserved favour – given principally to apostles (and occasionally prophets working under an apostle) who are then *sent* to His people with that revelation (*Eph 3:5*). In this way unity within God’s True Church is preserved.

Other Grace Given:

Ephesians 4 explains how this precious unity is to be achieved.

After stressing how in God’s True Church there must always be only “*one body . . . one Spirit . . . one hope . . . One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God*” (*Eph 4:4-6*), Paul goes on to explain that “*unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he . . . gave gifts unto men . . . 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 4:7-13).*

Each position within the ministry, or administration of the Government of God, is given by God as grace (an unmerited favour), **and each gift of grace is different.** Only apostles and prophets are associated with the task of laying foundations. We have seen, in chapter 3, the prophets being talked of here are the Old Testament prophets. They, and the apostles sent by God, receive foundational Truth by revelation – foundational Truth that the Church of God today specifically requires, and if correctly aligned to, will produce unity.

The rest of the ministry are not given **this** grace. Yes, they too are given grace – given gifts from God – but they are not given the gift, or grace, of an apostle. Their grace consists of gifts required **to build on** the foundations that God has laid through the apostle sent.

Therefore if a rank and file minister (or even a lay member) should take apostolic gifts to themselves, **they are effectively attempting to steal them!** *As in II Cor 11:13 they make themselves false apostles, deceitful workers! They take to themselves something God has not given them, and bring about the exact opposite of God’s purpose within the Church.* Such people cause **disunity**. They thus work against God and, though they may not realise it, Paul describes them in verse 15 as being the very ministers (or servants) of Satan!

Remaining Unified – While Growing in Grace:

In II Pet 3:18 we are told to grow in grace. So how should we do this in light of the above? Does this scripture give any justification to altering foundations? How can we all remain in unity – yet grow as this scripture commands?

The answer is found within Romans 12. Here Paul makes it very clear that such “growth” can only be done through God’s Spirit within us and is limited, therefore, to the grace and faith given to us individually by God as He chooses: *“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have **not the same office**: So we, [being] many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another”* (Rom 12:3-5).

Paul encourages us all to increase, to grow – but he limits that growth to within the gift or grace given to us by God. There is absolutely no justification for taking to ourselves another grace given specifically to an apostle and attempting to justify such an action by saying we must “grow in grace.” This approach would result in chaos within the Church and is totally out of line with Romans 12: *“Having then **gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us**, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, [let us wait] on [our] ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, [let him do it] with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness”* (Rom 12:6-8).

Humility is vital within each of God’s potential sons and daughters throughout this life in which we are being trained. God has decreed that unity and harmony must be maintained for eternity within His Spiritual Family. And God has shown us how this is achieved in a small way now by providing each of us with the individual grace that we need, in order that the whole Church may be *“fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part”* (Eph 4:16).

Correctly respecting the unique grace bestowed upon the apostle God sends to us, is a vital part in this process and will help cultivate

within all who put it into effect, the Godly unity that is destined to last for eternity.

In Summary:

Unity is a vital and eternal quality that God insists is present within each of His potential sons and daughters. Without it, there can be no True Church of God; God and Christ and those within the Family of God are all to be one (*John 17:21*). If unity is lacking between different organisations that all claim to be the True Church, it indicates a grave sickness. “The people judge or decide” – the very meaning of the word “Laodicea” – gives rise to such an antithesis of unity. It produces a myriad of different interpretations of the same scriptures. But scripture is not for private interpretation (*II Pet 1:20*).

God has given His Church the means whereby the unity He insists upon can be achieved. To be in harmony under God, each of God’s people must have the humility to grow according to the grace given and not attempt to take something that is not theirs. ***The grace to lay foundations within the Church is specifically given to apostles – not the general ministry or membership.*** Only by aligning our teachings and beliefs with such foundations can the unity God wants be produced. Going in any other direction takes us away from God’s revelation and will produce chaos and confusion – the utter antithesis of what God insists must be found within His Family.

Chapter 6

The Apostle to Corinth

There is a specific book in the Bible that contains much information about apostleship in its opening chapters and more importantly, the chaos and disunity that result when the subject is not properly understood and respected. That book is First Corinthians, and those opening chapters have been written and preserved by God specifically so that we may read them – so that we also may learn from the early Church’s experience – when facing similar problems at this end-time.

History Of The Corinthian Church:

The city of Corinth was a place where God had selected people and was in the process of converting them to His Way of Life. The human instrument He used to lay the foundations of this process was the apostle Paul.

In Acts 16 we find Paul wanting to go North East from Ephesus into Asia and Bithynia, but the Holy Spirit did not allow him to do so (*Acts 16:6-7*). Instead, he was instructed in a vision to go North West into Macedonia on the other side of the Aegean Sea (*Acts 16:9*). This he did, and from Macedonia finally travelled south into Greece, coming first to Athens where he preached to the philosophers on Mars hill, and finally to Corinth (*Acts 17:15; 18:1*).

In Corinth, God showed Paul that it was a place where He was about to convert several people. Even though it was a port city, and therefore probably quite crime-ridden and dangerous, God encouraged Paul to remain there as He had “*much people in this city*” (*Acts 18:10*). So Paul remained in Corinth a year and a half (*Acts 18:11*), teaching and preaching to those God was calling within the area, and in so doing raised up the Church of God at Corinth (*1 Cor 1:2*).

The Teachings of Apollos:

Remember that Christ had personally taught Paul using some spectacular visions (*II Cor 12:2*). This was probably when he was in the wilderness of Arabia, where he remained for three years after his conversion, prior to arriving at Jerusalem and his introduction to Peter (*Gal 1:17-18*). Christ Himself would have shown Paul what he was expected to teach in the future. So by the time Paul arrived at Corinth, he knew exactly what his commission was and what he was to teach. The teaching given to the people of Corinth therefore was not coming from Paul, but from Christ Himself. Paul was the apostle – one sent by God – with a specific message from God for the Corinthian Church (*Acts 18:9*).

Within the section of Acts that deals with the Corinthian Church, there is an interesting passage, placed at the end of chapter 18 and into chapter 19, about an individual called Apollos. We are told here that, though this man had great oratory skill and command of the scriptures, he knew “*only the baptism of John*” (*Acts 18:25*), and he needed to have “*expounded unto him The Way of God more perfectly*” (*Acts 18:26*). We are also told that immediately after he had been in Ephesus, Apollos went to Corinth and greatly assisted the Church there with his public oratory about Jesus being the Christ (or Messiah) (*Acts 18:28*).

However, there is an indication of a problem existing with those Apollos had taught, as the passage is immediately followed by Paul coming across people who only had the baptism of John (*Acts 19:3*). Though these people understood repentance and the need to turn from their own evil ways, they did not have the Spirit of God – necessary to live the new life required for true conversion (*Acts 19:2*). The repentance they had, therefore, was only human – of the flesh – and not empowered by the very Spirit of God. If one is truly converted, true Spiritual empowerment is required. The clear inference is that these were the converts of Apollos. God has placed this passage within scripture for a reason. It is very clear, from the

first few chapters of First Corinthians, that most of the problems arising within the Corinthian Church came from a similar *human* approach to *spiritual* subjects.

The Problems in Corinth:

One of the primary manifestations of the problem within the Corinthian Church was division (*I Cor 1:11*). At its root, this division arose from a lack of true spirituality and the spiritual discernment to recognise where and how God was working. As we will see, *it particularly involved not understanding how God uses the office and grace specifically given to an apostle.*

Within the first four chapters of First Corinthians, Paul has to take time to re-establish his authority over the Church, by showing them the means by which Christ works. Only then can he deal with the specific problem that had arisen, where there was sexual misconduct that urgently needed action using that authority (*I Cor 5:1*). This need to re-establish his authority gives us many insights into the subject of how Christ operates within the Church, and how He uses the apostle whom He sends to a group of individuals. In addition, God has chosen to have this section of scripture preserved for us today – *because we also need to understand what it has to say to us.* One reason it was inspired and preserved was to instruct us *about the role of an apostle* – if we have the ears to hear – and to warn us of the chaos whenever that role is not properly appreciated.

Paul begins the book with the fact that he was, “*called an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God*” (*I Cor 1:1*) and wrote to them in that capacity. To back this up, in the first ten verses alone, the word “Christ” is repeated *ten times!* Clearly, it was Christ – not Paul – who was speaking to the Corinthian Church.

After these initial verses he gets straight to the point, urging them to “*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. 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” (I Cor 1:10-12).

On the surface, the phrase “*I am of Christ*” seems to be backed up as the correct approach, for Paul goes on to say, “*Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?*” (verse 13) but, as we will see, he does not condone this approach. What he is about to show is **how** Christ operated within the Corinthian Church – and operates within all Churches of God. He is about to show that it was Christ (not Paul) who actually laid the foundation within the Corinthian Church – although Christ chose to do so **through** Paul.

In verse 17 Paul emphasises that “*Christ sent [grk: apostello] me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words*” (I Cor 1:17). Apollos was a great orator, and people were probably looking to this human wisdom as a sign of spiritual standing. Paul therefore had to point out how The Truth he originally brought them had nothing to do with worldly wisdom, and was utterly unseen by the “wise” of this world: “*For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent . . . where [is] the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*” (I Cor 1:19-20).

The Greek culture looked up to philosophy and oratory (Acts 17:21; I Cor 1:22). Even in a port city like Corinth, they undoubtedly regarded those with such skills as superior. But being a “disputer of this world” does not impress God. Though it was clearly an area in which Apollos excelled (Acts 18:24, 28), Christ did not choose to illuminate the Corinthian Church in this way. When they initially had their minds opened to The Truth, the knowledge came in one way, and one way only – it was **revealed** by God Himself – “*because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men . . . That no flesh should glory in his*

presence” (*I Cor 1:25, 29*). The Corinthian Church desperately needed this basic, foundational Truth pointed out to them once again.

What Corinth had to Learn:

When Paul came to Corinth, what he had to say was “*not the wisdom of this world . . . but . . . the wisdom of God in a mystery, [even] the hidden [wisdom], which God ordained before the world unto our glory*” (*I Cor 2:6-7*). He delivered to them “*the testimony of God*” (*I Cor 2:1*), not his own words. His message was “*not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power that [their] faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*” (*I Cor 2:4-5*).

Paul knew that only by using God’s Spirit of power (not empty human might) would the people within Corinth have any chance at all of developing spiritually as God’s people. However, such wisdom is alien to the natural mind (*I Cor 2:14*). The natural mind only understands the things of man (*I Cor 2:11*). It takes contact with God, made possible via the sacrifice of Christ, to cause the Spirit of God to begin fully illuminating each newly-begotten Spirit-led mind. This basic fact formed the focus, the bedrock, the trunk of the tree that Christ brought to them – through Paul – during the 1½ years Paul lived in Corinth (*I Cor 2:2*).

Anyone who subsequently taught within the Corinthian Church, was therefore duty bound to follow within the Spirit-led heritage that Christ had already placed within the Church. He could not teach contrary to that heritage – for if he did, he made himself a “false apostle” as per *II Cor 11:13*. As Paul brings out, anything else was, “*another Jesus . . . another spirit . . . another gospel*” (*II Cor 11:4*). Christ had already laid the foundations – for “*other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*” (*I Cor 3:11*) – but He used Paul to do so, through the grace given to Paul specifically as **their** apostle. He was the apostle sent specifically to the Church at Corinth: “***According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation,***

and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon” (I Cor 3:10).

Should someone build in an unaligned way – at odds to this foundation laid originally by Christ through the apostle sent – they would be attempting to defile and misalign something profoundly Holy, the very temple to which Christ is destined to return: “*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and [that] the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which [temple] ye are” (I Cor 3:16-17).*

This stewardship is a huge responsibility to all of us within the ministry. Our judgement will largely consist of how faithfully we administer this responsibility. We should be left in no doubt whatever about this, as Christ – through Paul – instructs us: “*Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (I Cor 4:1-2).* The knowledge Paul gave to the Corinthian Church did not come from his own human mind, for he says, “*I know nothing by myself . . .” (I Cor 4:4),* but those in Corinth learned what **God** required them to learn – through Paul – not from their own human minds. Yet it was a lack in continuing in This Way that caused the problem: “*For who maketh thee to differ [from another]? and **what hast thou that thou didst not receive?** now if thou didst receive [it], why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received [it]?” (I Cor 4:7).*

The heart and core of the Corinthian problem – the reason they had the factions and arguments about this minister, or that elder – was that they elevated their own human reason above the revelation of God. They refused to receive the Truth in **The Way** God decreed – **and failed to recognise the true role of the apostle** Paul. Paul was **their** apostle sent originally to them by God Himself. This is why Paul uses sarcasm in saying to them: “*For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We*

[are] fools for Christ's sake, but ye [are] wise in Christ; we [are] weak, but ye [are] strong; ye [are] honourable, but we [are] despised" (I Cor 4:9-10).

Solutions in Corinth:

Paul then lays out the clear unambiguous solution when he says: “*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, 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**” (I Cor 4:14-16). If the Corinthian Church was to get back on the **single** track that “*leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*” (Matt 7:14), it had to recognise where that single, original track actually was for them – where it originated. It did not come **from** Paul. But it did come **via** Paul – from Christ Himself.*

He then tells them how he decided to assist them and bring them back into the line Christ requires: “*For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, **who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church**” (I Cor 4:17). Timothy did build faithfully, clearly aligning what he said with the foundation Christ had laid previously within the Church through Paul. This is the reason Timothy was sent to them. Apollos had either not been doing so, or he had been unable to prevent the factions developing due to his inexperience. Whatever the problem with Apollos, sending Timothy – and his faithful spiritual alignment to the foundations laid by the one sent by Christ as their apostle – was the solution to the problem.*

“Follow me as I follow Christ”?

We see in chapter 4 above, that Paul clearly instructed the Corinthian Church to **follow** him – as he was **their** apostle, sent to them **by** Christ. However, many people try to use another passage, also found

within First Corinthians, to justify a position of **not** following the apostle sent to them and through whom they were enlightened. The passage is: “*Be ye followers of me, even as I also [am] of Christ*” (1 Cor 11:1). Such people claim that this verse implies **only** following someone **in so far as** they follow Christ, and **rejecting** any aspect or teaching that does not comply.

On the surface this sounds commendable; indeed scriptures such as, “*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good*” (1 Thes 5:21) do indicate careful comparisons of all teachings with God’s Word – **so that we might hold fast to the good**. But trying to make this passage in Corinthians imply that we **only accept that which we happen to agree as scriptural is an erroneous twisting of scripture** for one simple reason: The people at Corinth **only** knew of Christ **through** the apostle Paul whom Christ had sent to them. There was no New Testament or other document available to them that they could use to “check up on him.” So this interpretation **cannot** be correct.

The passage means, “be followers of me – **because** I am following Christ.” This is further reinforced when you read the very next verse: “*Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered [them] to you*” (1 Cor 11:2). The passage gives no justification whatever for rejecting the direction and guidance of an apostle – in fact, quite the opposite.

In Summary:

The Church in Corinth was a divided, factious Church, because of one central problem: The people in the Church elevated human reason above the revelation of God. They failed to recognise that Spiritual things can only be God-inspired, and not deduced using the intellect of man. To continue as the people of God, it was essential that the brethren in Corinth follow their initial revelation faithfully – looking past the individual Christ sent as their apostle, to the True Spiritual Source of that revelation.

The solution in the case of the Corinthian Church was to send Timothy to them, as he understood this principle. Paul knew that Timothy would behave as a faithful steward and align his teaching with the spiritual heritage originally given via the apostle Paul, who was *their* apostle – *sent to* Corinth. In this way the Temple, that the people were destined to become, could once again be brought back on Track into the unity that Christ intended. These words within First Corinthians have been preserved so that we at the end-time can also learn. We also must remain alert as to whether the stewards working among us today are indeed faithful, as was Timothy.

Chapter 7

When an Apostle Dies

What should happen – as far as God’s people are concerned – when an apostle dies? Does the fact an apostle is dead give those who remain any right to overturn his teachings?

The Message of II Peter:

Fortunately, God has not left us in the dark on this subject, as a specific book within the Bible deals with this particular topic. The book of II Peter was written, “*Knowing that shortly I must put off [this] my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance” (II Pet 1:14-15). The very **purpose** of the book is to remind those reading it of the specific things Christ delivered through the apostle Peter, so they would continue to have these things within their own minds after his death.*

Peter then goes on to show how Christ dealt with three individuals specifically – Peter, James and John – only John and himself being alive at that time. The New Testament was canonised immediately prior to their deaths. Not only was the book of II Peter to guide those to whom he was writing, but God then used the New Testament to help **preserve** the Church through the millennia to our time today. Peter therefore tells us **all**, “*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place*” (II Pet 1:19).

Scripture Is Not for Private Interpretation:

This illumination did not originate with Peter but with Christ. In addition, Christ was about to preserve those within His Church – following the death of Peter – by giving a more clear and consistent grasp of scripture **through the instruction the apostle Peter was about to leave them**. This is why he points out, “*that no prophecy*

of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake [as they were] moved by the Holy [Spirit]" (II Pet 1:20-21).

Just as the scriptures were originally written by the action of a *single* Spirit, so they are to be understood in *one* way, and *one way only*. To accurately comprehend that “Way,” requires a gift or grace from the *identical* Spirit of God that *inspired* the scriptures in the first place. That unique gift can *only* come from God Himself.

False Teachers:

God chooses *not* to reveal His will to each and every individual privately, but has chosen to reveal His Truth in a structured way – via apostles who possess this “*more sure word of prophecy*” (II Pet 1:19). For, as Peter warns us, “*there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies*” (II Pet 2:1-2).

Such false teachers, he tells us, “*despise government*” – particularly the Government of God – and are “*presumptuous*” and “*SELF-willed*.” In addition, they are “*not afraid to speak evil of dignities*” – including the apostle that originally enlightened the people they mislead (II Pet 2:10). We should also be aware that they are to be a *common* problem, for “*many shall follow their pernicious ways*” (II Pet 2:2).

The Attitude of Balaam:

The attitude displayed by such men is identical to the attitude of Balaam (II Pet 2:15). In addition to wanting money, Balaam wanted to be looked upon as a prophet of The Eternal – even though he was a pagan priest. This was undoubtedly due to the recognition he would thereby receive. Unlike God’s true servants, Balaam was not interested in truly following God’s Way, but rather wanted to *go his OWN way* to whatever degree he reckoned he could get away with. He gave the *impression* he was following God (Num 22:18-19), but

in *practice* advised Balak how to *undermine* God's purpose by enticing Israel to sin with the women of Midian (*Num 31:14-16*).

Christ therefore warns us, through II Peter, that such carnal men would consistently "*turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them*" (*II Pet 2:21*) in *order* that they may follow *their own ways*. Also notice that the *source* of the "commandment" from which they turn is made very plain: it is, "*the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour*" (*II Pet 3:1-2*).

An Unbroken Leadership:

Peter and the other apostles were sent by God to *illuminate* His people. As apostles they illuminated them for the *first* time, and properly interpreted the scriptures that had been written previously by the prophets of old.

This same illumination process happens to each of us. God does this by leading His Church using His Spirit within an apostle, when that apostle is alive. However, following that apostle's death, the very same leadership – from the very same Spirit – must continue unbroken over the Church, if it is to remain the *same* Church of God.

II Peter shows us that God's Government will *then* include the *spiritual heritage* left by the apostle. It is vital, therefore, that the human *leadership* in a Church organisation *also* submits to what God has placed over it. Leadership within the True Church of God is *never* merely from a human leader down. God's True Government is *always* from God down.

Human leadership within God's Church must be *seen* to place itself clearly and unambiguously beneath this spiritual heritage left after an apostle's death. The death of the apostle sent should have absolutely no effect on this aspect. *Its true source* does not change. The *understanding* obtained via the former revelation and the *type* of administration over the Church must both continue uninterrupted.

In Summary:

When II Peter was written, Peter was about to die. He knew, from what Christ had told him, that it was imperative for people to keep the original revelation in mind after his death. He also knew that deceiving men, with the same attitude as Balaam, would put them to the test on this specific point. God therefore saw fit to have him write the epistle of II Peter. God also saw fit to *preserve* this book down to our day – because He knew that we also would be tested in similar ways.

We must always keep the *source* of all revelation we have received clearly in mind. That revelation did not come originally from man. To be God's Truth, it had to come from God Himself. It was merely *delivered* to us via a man – an apostle – sent by God with His Truth for His people. Just as in II Peter, even after that man's death, we also must be sure that the spiritual legacy left to us remains over us – if we are to continue as the true people of God.

Chapter 8

The End-Time Apostle

In preceding chapters we have seen that the True Church of God must remain subject to the *specific* apostle God sends to them – the one who first illuminates them with the Truth of God’s Word. We have also seen how, even after the death of such an apostle, God expects His people to remember the Truth their apostle taught and remain subject to the spiritual heritage he left behind. Doing this gives protection against false teachers.

At the end-time, prophecy indicates that a very *special* apostle is to be “sent” by God. This individual is destined to restore “all things” (*Matt 17:11*). Whatever “all things” may mean, it certainly must include all spiritual foundations the people of God will need at that crucial time. Yet scripture also indicates that the level of false teachers is set to rise disproportionately as Satan sees his age drawing to a close (*Matt 24:24*). ***Correctly understanding and appreciating the role of the end-time apostle therefore becomes progressively more important as we approach the end of this age.*** It will help each of us to recognise those prophesied false teachers as we come across them.

The Elijah to Come:

In describing John the Baptist, Christ portrays John as a type of one prophesied to be “sent” just before His *second* coming. This is indicated when Christ says, “***Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already***” (*Matt 17:11*). The tenses used here show *two separate* fulfilments. In addition to being “sent” (the meaning of the title apostle), Christ also describes the role of John the Baptist as “more than a prophet” (*Matt 11:9*). It therefore follows that the one fulfilling the *future* role would also hold a similar office and the only office greater than a prophet is that of an apostle (*I Cor 12:28*).

The primary job of this individual is to prepare an elect people of God as part of the very living Temple to which Christ returns as King of kings (*Mal 3:1*). This requires teaching them the specific revelation God restores – illuminating them with Truth for the first time. If such a people do not exist, God says He will destroy the earth (*Mal 4:6*). However, it is clear that an elect people *will* be present, as Matthew tells us: “*for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened*” (*Matt 24:22*). The fact “the elect” are prophesied to exist indicates that this apostle *has* appeared on earth prior to this time – restoring all things God specifies they will need for their preparation.

When talking of this individual, please notice that he is *an individual* – as was John the Baptist. There is no indication he is linked to someone else such as one of the two witnesses found in Revelation 11. The prophecy also does not talk of a collective church group. God says, “*Behold, I will send my messenger [singular – not plural]*” (*Mal 3:1*), and “*this is he [singular] that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one [singular] crying in the wilderness*” (*Matt 3:3*). What we must look for is an individual, who prepares God’s people, just before the end of this age. The prophecies are very clear.

Viewing Time Correctly:

To correctly understand such prophecies, it is important we appreciate the way God views time and then use a similar view ourselves. Peter tells us that to God “*a thousand years is as one day*” (*II Pet 3:8*). We are also told in the same section “*that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?*” (*II Pet 3:3-4*). The 1,000 years for a day principle seems to be an antidote that God gives us to counteract such sarcasm.

The early Church also understood this principle. Notice what Edward Gibbon writes in *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol II*: “*The ancient and popular doctrine of the millennium was intimately connected with the second coming of*

Christ. As the works of the creation had been finished in six days, their duration, in their present state . . . was fixed to six thousand years . . . succeeded by a joyful Sabbath of a thousand years" (Page 100–101).

When we gauge the history of man using this yardstick – with 6,000 years being a working week – a startling picture emerges: Most things of any significance seem to occur during the daylight portion of Friday – the time that corresponds to the preparation day for the Sabbath Millennium. Let us examine three such areas that directly relate to the end-time apostle:

Early that “Friday morning”: In 1525 William Tyndale produced a translation of the Bible into the English language. At the same time, through the invention of printing he was able to *disseminate* this edition of the scriptures to the public at large – giving previously unheard of access to the Word of God. As Tyndale famously said to a visiting priest, *“If God spare my life, before very long I shall cause a plough boy to know the scriptures better than you do!”* This universal access to scripture was crucial for the end-time apostle to effectively accomplish his job. Much of Tyndale’s work survives to this day within the King James Bible.

Around “mid-day” that “Friday”: In 1815, the industrial revolution began. This also was a crucial event. Daniel predicted that at *“the time of the end many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (Dan 12:4).* In modern vernacular these qualities are “communication, and science.” They virtually define our world today, but their roots go back historically to the industrial revolution.

Between “2pm and 3pm” that “Friday”: From around 1900 – the two qualities of communication and science began to literally *explode* within our world. The telephone; wireless; powered flight; mass-produced automobiles; the invention of pulp paper; commercial electricity; the theory of the atom – all began at this time. The “end-time” itself really *began* from this point!

Daniel was told, “***shut up the words, and seal the book, [even] to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased***” (Dan 12:4). ***This*** time – beginning around 1900 – is the time to begin looking for the words of Daniel to be revealed as predicted! ***This*** time – a lifetime beginning around 1900 – is the time in which we also need to look for the prophesied end-time apostle!

Unprecedented Apostasy:

When Christ prophesies that “***Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things***” (Matt 17:11), He is actually giving us a ***new*** prophecy. This ***restoration*** of Truth is particularly important as it also lays the groundwork for two other vital prophecies to take place. Both are linked to the revealed Truth the end-time apostle is destined to restore:

Within II Thessalonians there is prophesied a great apostasy, or falling away from God’s Truth, that must take place just before the end: “***Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away [grk apostasia] first***” (II Thes 2:3). This apostasy cannot be referring to what happened during the rise of the Catholic Church in the first century, as the apostasy in question is specifically tied to the end-time (*verse 1*), not an event 2000 years before. Paul tells us that it will be one of ***two*** crucial signals indicating that the entire age of man is about to close. Until the apostasy occurs, he tells us, we should not to be “***soon shaken in mind . . . that the day of Christ is at hand***” (*verse 2*). This has to be a ***major*** falling from the Truth – different to anything that has been seen before – ***just before Christ returns***.

For such an apostasy to take place, ***The Truth must first have been restored***. ***Only then can there subsequently be a falling away from that Truth***. So the prophesied apostle – who restores “all things” at the end time – ***must come prior*** to this unprecedented, final apostasy.

In addition, when we begin to appreciate the implied *scale* of this apostasy, it also becomes more than likely that the apostasy will take place *after the end-time apostle has died*. A total rejection of God's Way by an *unprecedented* segment within the Church founded through the apostle himself is implied. It is this unprecedented *scale* – and perhaps the speed – that is indicated, that makes it most likely that the one who initially restored that Truth is no longer there to protect the Church.

Philadelphia and Laodicea:

In addition to the above apostasy, we also find a second problem within what remains of the end-time Church of God. This problem is implied when we examine two of the Churches found within the first few chapters of Revelation.

It can be clearly shown that the Seven Churches of Revelation primarily represent *successive* eras of the True Church, for the apostle John was told, "*Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand*" (Rev 22:10; 1:3). The focus of Revelation is the end-time "Day of the Lord" (Rev 1:10). Only by taking these Churches as *successive* eras, does the above non-sealing of the overall book make sense. Only then can the first era (Ephesus) have information specifically for those of John's day – making the phrase "*for the time is at hand*" correct.

When looking at these successive eras, two end-time Churches come to the fore: Philadelphia and Laodicea. Within these two groups we can also see evidence of there being an end-time apostle.

It is quite clear that Philadelphia exists just before and during the close of this age as Christ not only tells them "*behold I come quickly*" (Rev 3:11), but also talks of the imminency of "*the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth*" (Rev 3:10). This era must therefore be *concurrent* with God's end-time apostle who is the one through whom God reveals His Truth during this time. In addition, they are

told to “**hold that fast which thou hast**” (Rev 3:11). It follows therefore, that “*that which they have,*” must have come originally **from** this individual who was prophesied to “*restore all things*” (Matt 17:11).

Laodicean Blindness and The Waters of Siloam:

In the case of the Laodicean Church, they are described as being “*poor, blind and naked*” and must therefore “*anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see*” (Rev 3:17, 18). Coupling this passage with the lesson from the man born blind, in John 9, allows us to understand not only what it is that Laodicea must do, but also how Laodicea and the previous era (Philadelphia) are tied together.

The command to Philadelphia to “*hold fast that which thou hast*” (Rev 3:11), also implies part of the antidote Laodicea needs. Both the meaning of Laodicea (ie “*the people judge or decide*”), and the warning to Philadelphia “*that no man take your crown*” (Rev 3:11), give strong indications that both the problem, and the solution needed are common to both. The difference is that Philadelphia voluntarily applies the solution, and Laodicea does not.

It appears that those within Laodicea have turned from the source of pure Spiritual water that God formerly used to wash away their blindness at conversion. This eye-salve is encapsulated within the very meaning of the word “Siloam” found in John 9 – the enlightenment that came originally via the “apostle,” or the one God “*sent*” to both Philadelphia and Laodicea with His **revealed** Truth. The indication is that Laodicea is substituting the teachings of men (Heb: *adam*) whose blind ideas of clay are merely from this earth (Heb: *adama*). Only by returning to “the pool of Siloam [which means *sent* – or *apostle*]” – to True Spiritual foundations “**sent**” by God (not men) – can those within Laodicea remove their Spiritual blindness.

This analysis is also reinforced when we read of the foolish virgins within Matthew 25. The missing key ingredient in their case is oil –

another symbol for the Spirit of God and the Truth from that Spirit. As we have seen, God gives His Truth at a foundational level through apostles using Spiritual grace or gifts. At the end-time, this is a single individual – God’s prophesied apostle who prepares a people for Christ’s return.

Just Two Alternatives – With Implications:

Only two alternatives are possible: either God’s end-time apostle *has* come, or he has *not*. As we will see, choosing to believe he has *not* carries with it some profound implications for the people of God today. When we accurately understand the scenario that is prophesied, those implications are truly spine-chilling.

The logical conclusion is: if Herbert W. Armstrong was *not* that end-time apostle (as he claimed to be) then the True Church of God *must* look for another. That individual *must appear* – just as prophesied – or God is made a liar! But what are the implications of rejecting Mr Armstrong as fulfilling that role? What if we look for *another* End-Time Elijah instead? And if we decide on this course of action – and we are wrong – what are the repercussions?

Most who wish to reject Mr Armstrong as the Elijah, have voiced that “coming in the spirit and power of Elijah” implies great miracle-working ability, such as that given to the Elijah of old and the two witnesses. This stance is very dangerous indeed, as we are told that “*there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if [it were] possible, they shall deceive the very elect*” (Matt 24:24). Notice that the words “it were” are *not* in the original. The above verse in the original implies that the very *purpose* of the satanic signs and wonders *is specifically to deceive the elect!*

Just before Christ mentions the above, He says “*for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here [is] Christ, or there; believe [it] not*” (Matt 24:22-23). God is warning us! He warns us *not* to be taken in by those who insist on

looking for another Elijah *who will perform miracles*. The indication is that Satan is about to give such people just what they are looking for!

Are Miracles Required?

To correctly understand what the *end-time* Elijah will do, God allows us to see within scripture how the *initial* “Elijah,” prior to Christ’s *first* coming, fulfilled his role. This includes whether spectacular miracles are required or not.

Speaking of John the Baptist, we are specifically told that “*John did no miracle*” (*John 10:41*), and yet John *did* fulfil the prophesied role of Elijah, as the angel said to his father Zechariah: “*he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord*” (*Luke 1:17*).

We can therefore see from John the Baptist – who was the type – that the apostle at the end-time will not *be* Elijah, but will come in “*the spirit and power of Elijah*.” He will come as a teacher, or converter – just as Elijah and John the Baptist were. His role will involve preparing a people for God, and teaching them about repentance – turning them from their own way, to the Way of God. Such an individual will automatically also possess the hallmarks of a true apostle for, as we have seen in previous chapters, enlightening people and turning them to God’s Way for the first time does indeed lie at the very heart of an apostle’s role.

In Summary:

Prophecy clearly predicts that at the end-time an individual will be sent to prepare part of the spiritual Temple to which Christ will return. From the type – who was John the Baptist – we learn that the phrase “spirit and power of Elijah” does *not* imply the spectacular

miracle-working powers of Elijah, but rather the way he illuminated people's minds – turning them towards God's Way in repentance.

This end-time apostle is also to be given profound revelation in the sense of a **restoration** of former understanding. In this role he will “restore all things” the end-time Church needs to “hold fast” that no **man** take their crown.

From the above, only two scenarios are possible: either the end-time apostle **has** come, or we in the True Church **must** look for another. Those who do not accept Mr Herbert Armstrong as that individual must therefore be expecting another – or the Word of God is false. Such a stance is incredibly dangerous, as prophecy indicates Satan will give such people whatever miracles they may be expecting – but as **lying** signs and wonders, to **deceive** the elect of God.

Chapter 9

The Evidence of Our Apostle

During the time of the early apostles, there were several who would not accept the authority of the apostle Paul. They refused to accept that Paul had been specifically sent to them as *their* apostle. Instead they listened to others – who led them away from the truth formerly revealed to them. However, when we examine the scale of grace given to the apostle Paul, and how God used him in the role to which He sent him, it is *that collective evidence* that indicates very clearly that he was the genuine article – even though he was not one of the Twelve.

Today, we find ourselves moving towards a far more awesome period in history. God’s Plan requires righteous judges who can use His Spirit to *effectively weigh evidence in a Godly way*. Having to be backed into a corner each time, before we recognise anything God has to say to us, is not an acceptable approach. If we are close to God, and weigh *the collective evidence of our apostle* – in the honest way that God demands – then two things become remarkably clear: Mr Armstrong was *both our apostle and the prophesied end-time apostle* as well. He was the one prophesied to restore the “all things” that God requires for this critical period.

Seal of Apostleship – That We Know The Truth:

It should be plain to all of us who know the Truth today that we learned the vast majority of that Truth through Mr Herbert Armstrong or those he taught. This, more than any other thing, should tell us that he is *our* apostle. Foundational Truth, as we have seen in preceding chapters, is by its very nature *revealed* knowledge. It comes *only* from God, and is revealed via the apostle whom *He* chooses to *send* to His people. If we know that Truth – and have therefore been made part of God’s True Church – then the one who taught us humanly is *our* apostle – sent (*grk: apostello*) by God.

The apostle Paul specifically uses this fact as his own **prime proof of apostleship** to the Corinthian Church when he says, “*Am I not an apostle? . . . are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord” (1 Cor 9:1-2).*

It is our ability to understand spiritual things that gives the **major** proof of Mr Armstrong’s position as apostle. Paul had to point out to the Corinthian Church that the Truth they understood was merely **received** by them. They did not come up with this Truth themselves! But the irony is that God could just as forcefully say to each of **us** today, “*what hast **thou** that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive [it], why dost **thou** glory, as if **thou** hadst not received [it]?” (1 Cor 4:7). The Truth within the Church **today** has not been **self-generated**. We learned that Truth **from** God. He chose to teach us **through** a single individual – the apostle sent to illuminate us at this end-time: Mr Herbert W Armstrong.*

Mr Armstrong Knew His Role:

If we look at the way in which Mr Armstrong taught as an educator – doing an Elijah-like work – the very same Elijah-like qualities within John the Baptist can also be seen in him. He clearly recognised this parallel himself. Notice this quotation from Mystery of the Ages:

*But **now** God's time has come! **He now** sends a voice to cry out with amplified world-covering power to reveal the way out of this senseless madness, into the world of peace and righteousness that soon shall grip the earth!*

*In the book of Isaiah is a "**now**" prophecy: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord . . . lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say . . . Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him" (Isa. 40:3, 9-10).*

*That voice **now** cries out!*

The prophet Malachi confirmed this: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3:1).

The Elijah to Come

*Both of these prophecies have a dual application. First, they refer to John the Baptist, who prepared the way before Jesus' human ministry more than 1,900 years ago. But, as a prototype, or forerunner, **these prophecies foretell one** to prepare the way before Christ's Second Coming as the King of kings and Lord of lords to rule over all nations!*

*Malachi's prophecy, like Isaiah's, if you will read on past the first verse, refers to **a human messenger** preparing the way before Christ's now imminent Second Coming, this time in supreme power and glory as Ruler over all nations!*

Understand the duality principle here. These prophecies refer to a type and its fulfillment.

*John the Baptist was a voice crying out in the physical wilderness of the Jordan River area, preparing for the human physical Jesus' First Coming to a material temple at Jerusalem, to a physical Judah. But that was a prototype, or forerunner of **a voice "lifted up"** (greatly amplified by modern printing, radio and TV), crying out in the midst of **today's** spiritual wilderness of religious confusion, announcing the imminency of Christ's Second Coming as the spiritually glorified Christ, to his spiritual temple (the Church resurrected to spirit immortality) (Eph. 2:21-22).*

Jesus came, over 1,900 years ago, to announce the future kingdom of God. He's coming this time to establish that kingdom. That end-time last warning message is now going out worldwide in amplified power.

*It's going before kings, emperors, presidents, prime ministers of nations--and to their peoples, **on all continents** and all nations of the earth!*

(Mystery of the Ages page 9-10)

The above quotation and many others show clearly that Mr Armstrong knew **he** fulfilled the role of end-time Elijah. In the early 1980s he also repeatedly referred to himself as “God’s apostle,” both when he spoke and in his writings. Anyone who has any doubts about this, should listen to the bible-study he gave on Zerubbabel’s Temple on 21st July 1978 in which he specifically answers both how and when he knew he was God’s apostle.

He **knew** who he was. Those of us who know the Truth – revealed to us by God through him – must hold this fact in crystal-clear focus. This is particularly true now, after his death, when so many formerly with us in the Church have lost sight of the utterly momentous times in which we live – and into which we are poised to enter.

Mr Armstrong Appeared At The Right Time:

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, when we view time the way God does, we are currently witnessing the closing hours of a 1,000-year preparation-day prior to the soon-coming Millennial Sabbath rest. Using this framework, 1900 becomes a pivotal date because of two key signs given to us in the book of Daniel. These two key signs of communication and science (*Dan 12:4*) exploded onto the world from that specific point in history.

Mr Armstrong was born on 31st July 1892 – right at the start of this pivotal period. As he says himself, “*I have lived through the horse and buggy age, the automobile and industrial age, the air age, the nuclear age and now into the space age*” (*Mystery of the Ages, Author’s Statement*).

When Mr Armstrong was 11 years old, the Wright brothers took what is regarded as the first steps in powered flight – staying in the air just 12 seconds. Towards the end of his life, Mr Armstrong was able to traverse the globe in his own aeroplane taking the gospel to kings, presidents and prime ministers. The way in which scientific progress seemed to develop in step with the growing Work of God – radio, television, telephones, telex, computers, satellite video streams – was quite astounding.

In addition, when the gospel first went to the world in 1953 – 100 time cycles after the apostle Paul took the gospel to Europe – another crucial prophetic event occurred. It was around this date that it first became possible for all human life to be extinguished from the earth due to the build-up of fusion-based nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them. Such world-altering events – witnessed alongside an expanding end-time Work of God – is yet further proof that Mr Armstrong was indeed who he said he was – God’s end-time apostle.

The Range of Truth Restored:

The grace of revelation given to the apostle Paul was quite specific. It was, “*That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel*” (*Eph 3:6*). When we look at the specific grace of revelation and the **breadth** of material given to Mr Herbert Armstrong, some would argue that it was even **greater** than that given to the apostle Paul. This should not be unexpected if he was indeed “sent” as God’s end-time apostle, to fulfil the prophecy to “*restore all things*” just before Christ’s return!

For over a thousand years – through the Middle-Ages – major teaching was lost to the people of God. Then God chose to reveal them once more, specifically to this man. Even the “holy grail” of all philosophy – the very *meaning of life* – was revealed. With this awe-inspiring Truth came *the very Plan of God for humankind*. God even revealed to Mr Armstrong *each individual stage He will use* to provide humankind with that “meaning to life” we all crave. ***To a human being, there can be no greater revelation!***

Though always present within the Holy Days, the true significance of these days was not understood from the time of the early apostles until God’s revelation via Mr Armstrong. Do we within the Church of God fully appreciate just how great such revelation is? Can we not see that such divine understanding did not come from the mind of man? It had to be *given* by God. We need to appreciate the timing of this gift, and the importance God attaches to the one He “sends” *with* such a message. There *cannot* be a greater restoration coming *after* such material. The man who delivered *this level* of revelation *has to be* His true end-time apostle.

Just notice the range and depth of foundational Truth revealed:

- The True Gospel of God’s soon coming Kingdom;
- The Purpose of God – and how He is reproducing Himself through mankind;
- The re-establishment of God’s Government within the Church;
- Who and What God is – that God is a family of persons into which we humans may be born;
- How God is not a trinity and the Spirit of God is not a person;
- What and Why man is – that he is flesh, deliberately made incomplete, with a human spirit that is designed to be joined to God’s Holy Spirit – uniting him with God;
- The nature of this “spirit in man” – that it imparts human intellect to the physical brain;

- That man is not an immortal soul;
- That those called by God and given His Spirit are only begotten now – like a human embryo – waiting to be born later in the first resurrection;
- That God is not calling the world at large – only the first-fruits who are training to become the teachers of the future;
- The purpose of the Millennium in eventually opening up salvation to the entire world for the *first* time;
- The incredible Truth of the Last Great Day – when all who have ever lived will be given their first chance for salvation through a physical resurrection;
- The identity of Israel – as physical nations within this modern world;
- The specific identity of Ephraim and Manasseh – that unlocks our understanding to the vast spread of end-time bible prophecy;
- Second tithe and its link to the festivals of God;
- The administration of third tithe;
- The identity of Babylon the Great and her harlot daughters – identified within the Catholic and Protestant churches of this world;
- How Satan remains the guilty party today – even deceiving the so called “christian” churches whom God leaves blinded – so God’s Church should not sit in judgement of them;
- The importance of God’s Church being separate – “called out ones” from this world of Babylonian confusion.

Each of the above foundational Truths was restored to the Church at this end-time through Mr Herbert Armstrong. Although we *today can clearly see* this knowledge within scripture, before it was restored it was *not* perceived humanly. Only at the *appropriate* time – the end-time – did God *choose* to reveal it. He did so using the same Spirit that inspired the original scriptures – sending that revelation through a single individual. This is why Mr Armstrong could confidently say, “don’t believe me – believe the Bible” as both sets of Words were coming from the same Source.

Please **look again at the list above!** *Appreciate the grace* given to this man. This astounding **degree** of revelation and restoration of Truth – unprecedented in history – **clearly** identifies just who God’s end-time apostle really was.

Law of Moses Remembered:

Just before the prophecy within Malachi that talks of God sending Elijah the prophet before the return of Christ, there is a verse that says, “*Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, [with] the statutes and judgments*” (Mal 4:4). The placement of this verse – just before the prophecy of the Elijah to come – indicates a clear connection between the two.

One criticism that many outside the True Church made against Mr Armstrong was his insistence that both the Sabbaths and the Holy Days of God should still be kept today. Early in 1927 Mr and Mrs Armstrong began to keep the Holy Days mentioned in the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus – recorded by Moses. For many years they faithfully kept these days, even though they did not understand **why** God had instructed mankind to keep them. All they knew was that their observance was required. Eventually, the meaning within the days became plain. These days contained the very Plan of God – an awesome plan that revealed the very meaning of human life itself.

Had Mr Armstrong not “*remembered the law of Moses*” as this passage in Malachi instructs, it would have been impossible for the Plan contained within these days to be revealed to him. This is due to the fact that God **demand**s obedience of His true servants (*John 7:17; Acts 5:32; Heb 5:9; I Pet 4:17*). Once again, we can see a clear fulfilment of the scriptures that foretell this end-time apostle – scriptures fulfilled by Mr Herbert W Armstrong, as one sent in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Family Relations Restored:

Just after the above prophecy, God says, “*And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse*” (Mal 4:6).

Two separate fulfilments are to be found within this passage:

When the angel talked with John the Baptist’s father, he rephrased the latter part of this verse: He talked of turning “*the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord*” (Luke 1:17). By phrasing the passage in this way, the angel **also** incorporated within the single passage both “*remember the Law of Moses*” (Mal 4:4) and “*prepare the way before me*” (Mal 3:1).

The first part of the prophecy, “*and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children,*” deals **specifically** with family relationships. This subject was prophesied to become a particular problem at the end-time by such passages as: “*This know also, that in the last days . . . men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . disobedient to parents . . . without natural affection*” (II Tim 3:1-3).

Within his many books, booklets, and articles on marriage and the family, Mr Armstrong would invariably approach the topic from a higher, God-plane perspective. No one else in the world could do so – ***because no one else had received such astounding revelation as to why marriage and the family were so important to God!*** It was this revelation – given specifically to him – that ***made*** his analysis and advice unique.

I remember being taught by Mr Armstrong numerous times on the Bricket Wood campus here in the UK. Whenever he was here, he would make a point of taking several classes, forums and assemblies. The two classes he concentrated on above all others were: *Principles of Living* (which used *The Missing Dimension In Sex* as its text book), and *Family Relations* (in which Godly relationships between

husband and wife, parents and children, were taught to the senior class). He also implemented the Summer Educational Programme (SEP); Youth Educational Services (YES); Youth Opportunities United (YOU); Youth Magazine and Imperial Schools.

The following two quotes from his letters are typical:

“God intended [the reproductive system] to have a spiritual as well as physical function -- to endear a husband and wife in true spiritual LOVE (something far greater than lust) -- and to BIND husband and wife as ONE -- spiritually as well as physically -- to protect and preserve the marriage in sacredness, happiness and joy.” (Plain Truth Subscriber letter of 3rd November 1980)

“Not only are these summer camps of such supreme importance but also our program of working with you parents so you may come closer to your children. As God's apostle I call on you, brethren, to have a CLOSER RELATIONSHIP with your children. The last two verses of the Old Testament are a prophecy showing how important that is for YOU, TODAY!” (Co-worker letter of 15th January 1984)

The prophecy within Malachi is clearly fulfilled by this unique God-plane perspective – *revealed to Mr Armstrong alone* – and the consequential emphasis he placed on family relations because of it. Here also we find proof of his position as end-time apostle – one coming in the spirit and power of Elijah – exactly as prophesied.

A Voice Did Cry Out:

Of this end-time apostle God says *“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord . . . lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say . . . Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him” (Isa 40:3, 9-10, quoted: Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23).*

When prophets of old were given a commission to go to certain countries, they did not go to the general populace. They would go to the *leaders* of each country, and pass whatever message God had for the country *to those leaders*. In a similar way, Mr Armstrong conducted a program in the 1970s of taking a message to the leaders of the nations. Though not framed in religious language, the message nevertheless carried the soon-coming World Government of God at its heart – and it was taken to the leaders of many, many nations around this earth. It has been estimated that Mr Armstrong met approximately one third of the leaders of the world in his day – a greater percentage than probably any other man-of-God in the entire 6,000-year history of mankind.

In addition to the above programme to individual leaders, the Work headed by Mr Armstrong also took both his voice and printed words to untold millions of ordinary people across the face of the globe – most still available today via the Internet and CDROM. This was particularly true within the USA, Canada, Australia, UK, New Zealand and other areas where the Israelite tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh live. Remember, it is these two specific tribes that Jacob prophesied would carry the name “Israel” down through the millennia to the end-time (*Gen 48:16*) and to whom so many of the end-time prophecies are directed.

Within this effort over twenty million copies of his book, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, were distributed. In 1985 alone, seventy-four million Plain Truth magazines were either mailed to subscribers or distributed through newsstands – representing around eight million magazines every month. As “cult watcher” Ruth Tucker said, “**Herbert W. Armstrong was a well-known figure in religious circles for most of half a century. It was hard to find anyone who had not seen an issue of The Plain Truth magazine or heard The World Tomorrow radio and television broadcasts**” (*Christianity Today*, July 15, 1996).

It was indeed an incredible end-time Work of God – unprecedented in all history. Mr Armstrong himself constantly emphasised that this

was not *his* work – the work of a mere man – but the Work of the Living God. The quality, scale and scope fully support this assessment. We were actually observing the fulfilment of prophecy – God’s prophecy! Using the unique power of radio and television, *Mr Herbert Armstrong probably spoke personally to more people than all of God’s servants down through the ages put together.* That such a voice has cried out in the way it did, shows that it was indeed the Work of God’s *end-time* apostle – a Work prophesied to occur just prior to Christ’s now-imminent return.

An Unprecedented Apostasy:

We have seen in the previous chapter, that following the prophesied restoration of the Truth, an unprecedented apostasy is also foretold within *II Thes 2:3* as one of two key signs of the end-time. The scale of this apostasy also seems to imply that the end-time apostle may be dead when it occurs. This precise scenario took place – exactly as predicted.

Within a very short time after Mr Armstrong’s death in 1986, his successor began to implement a *progressive* series of changes – destined to totally transform the Church with which he was entrusted. There was eventually a complete departure from the foundation of Truth delivered. This departure has now made the corporation that was once God’s Church, just one more church of this world – a world that scripture tells us is led by Satan (*II Cor 4:4*) who “*deceiveth the **whole** world*” (*Rev 12:9*).

The changes were so startling that even those outside were astounded at their scale:

D. James Kennedy, senior minister of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Florida, said, “*This is **the most astonishing change that I have ever seen or heard of in any religious group***” (*Christianity Today, July 15, 1996*).

William M. Alnor wrote of “**Unprecedented Changes**” and said, “**Dramatic changes** have turned the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) **upside-down** since the January 1986 death of founder Herbert W. Armstrong. **The changes are so great and so extraordinary** that some long-time cult watchers believe the WCG may be moving toward Christian orthodoxy” (*News Watch – a column of the Christian Research Journal – Spring 1991, page 5*).

Ruth Tucker, visiting professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, wrote the following in an article entitled “From the Fringe to the Fold”: “**The "changes"--as they are referred to by insiders--are truly historic. Never before in the history of Christianity has there been such a complete move to orthodox Christianity by an unorthodox fringe church**” (*Christianity Today, July 15, 1996*).

The scale was not merely the departure of a few people from the Truth delivered to them. It involved **the human leadership and the entire organisation** of what was once God’s Church. This apostasy corrupted the **majority** who once formed that holy establishment. This huge segment forsook the Truth, and instead returned to the various religious ideas of this world from which they – or their parents – had originally been cleansed. This clearly fulfils the prophecy within *II Thes 2:3*: for they did not merely become slightly off Track on a doctrine or two – they apostatised right back into the world and once more **re-embraced** its ways.

As the apostle Peter said, such people “**turn from the holy commandment delivered to them**” (*II Pet 2:21*). That commandment came originally via apostles (*II Pet 3:2*). Peter graphically portrays the process as a “**dog turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire**” (*II Pet 2:22*). False teachers – under Satan’s influence – did indeed infiltrate the True Church and bring in “**damnable heresies**” (*II Pet 2:1-2*).

The way, the scale and the speed at which this took place, are all further proof of the true identity of the end-time apostle that

preceded it. Only by first having the Truth *restored* through Mr Herbert W Armstrong was it possible for the prophesied unprecedented apostasy *from* that Truth to occur.

The Attitude of Laodicea Is Here Today:

This booklet has *not* been written for people who have turned away from God's Truth into total apostasy. As the apostle John said of such people in his day: "*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would [no doubt] have continued with us: but [they went out], that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us*" (1 John 2:19). No, this booklet has been written for *God's* people – *those whose place is beneath God's Government* – the people who *have* the Spirit of God available to them and are therefore *able* to be subject to God and His Law (Rom 8:7, 9, 14).

The problem is that the understanding of what God's Government *entails* today, differs according to the organisation we attend. Each Church of God group has *their own "brand"* of belief – a smorgasbord of disparate ideas and opinions. This has resulted in disunity and chaos – yet "*God is not [the author] of confusion, but of peace*" (1 Cor 14:33).

So how has this situation arisen? The truth of the matter is that it was prophesied: and the attitude behind the problem lies within the very *meaning* of the word "Laodicea."

A church era is the product of the society in which it lives. In *today's* society there is a definite and recognised spirit that goes well beyond mere democracy. It is the spirit of "post-modernism": where absolutely nothing is entirely right – except the utter insistence that "my view is always as good as yours." This spirit directly parallels the very meaning of the word Laodicea. The word means "*the people judge or decide,*" and we can see this *specific* spirit both

within the Church and within the society around it – reinforcing exactly where we are in prophecy.

As we saw in the previous chapter, it is by coupling the passage “*hold that fast which thou hast*” (Rev 3:11), with the prophesied lukewarm attitude that thinks it is “*rich and increased*” and has “*need of nothing*” – that we begin to see a truly clear picture: The lukewarm attitude of Laodicea is at least in part a lukewarm approach **towards the Truth that has been revealed**. This Truth **has** to be the same revealed Truth that Philadelphia is urged to hold onto (Rev 3:11), as God is consistent and these two groups are concurrent at the end-time.

Once again, this is what we find: The leaders and people within any particular Church organisation are not against **all** that was revealed by God via Mr Armstrong; they merely have their **own** ideas about **certain** aspects that **they** decide should be different. Yet each group – and even each person – disagrees with the next as to **which** aspects they believe should be changed. They are not **cold** to the revelation, but neither are they **hot**. **And they all believe they are right**. They look upon what they believe as indeed being spiritually “rich and increased with goods”! They do not see where they are “off Track.” Christ therefore finds Himself at the door knocking (Rev 3:20).

Christ says, “*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*” (cf Rev 3:20). He has already given us – by revelation – the food we need at this end-time. As we will see in the next chapter, it is the same spiritual food that the **entire** family of God must eat for eternity!

This prevalent attitude of Laodicea today is but more clear evidence that Mr Herbert Armstrong was indeed who he said he was – God’s end-time apostle. He was the one who delivered the Truth God revealed to us at this time – including those destined to become the era known as Laodicea.

Getting “Back on Track”!

God – who does not change (*Mal 3:6*) – says “*Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets*” (*Amos 3:7*). If this was true of warning the people within Israel of old, how much more within the True Church of God at the end-time. God said of His people Israel, that He “*sent . . . all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending [them]; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear*” (*Jer 25:4*). How much more will Christ both clearly warn and instruct His future bride prior to the most cataclysmic period that there has ever been or ever will be again (*Matt 24:21*)? God – being God – will ensure that none can turn around and say they have not been warned; but where does that warning come from? It also has to be from His end-time apostle.

Beginning August 1977, we lived through a most remarkable series of occurrences. Mr Armstrong talks in his autobiography of the catalyst that began these events:

Had not skilled nurses been present to administer instant mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and heart massage, I tell you that as far as I was personally concerned I wouldn't be here today.

Shortly after they'd told me what had happened, I felt that if my work in God's hands were finished and God didn't have any further use for me in His Work, that I would rather have remained dead. Because if they hadn't intervened I would have been buried in two or three days.

But I realize that God had shown me something by two miracles. No. 1, He restored my life when I was already past eighty-five years of age. And this was very shortly, as a matter of fact, about twenty days after my eighty-fifth birthday. And, second, neither I nor my nurses had ever heard of anyone of like age being restored by that process

*after almost complete loss of mind, my brain virtually a vegetable. And **I was restored with my mind just as intact as it ever was..***

(Autobiography, Volume 2, page 592)

This “near death” of Mr Armstrong resulted in a sequence of events within the Work that in hindsight was truly remarkable. These events show clearly that it was Christ – not Mr Armstrong – who was the One actually in control. The result of this “near death,” was to **embolden** those who wanted their **own** way within the Work of God. This is also what we also see today. They thought Mr Armstrong was close to death and therefore assumed that **they** would be in control. However, their assessment was totally wrong. Christ remained in charge through the whole process! He actually used the situation to reveal to Mr Armstrong just how far “off Track” the Work had become, and more importantly, who was responsible. **Christ effectively gave him a view of the Laodicean attitude that would eventually arise after his death!**

Having seen what the Church would become, Mr Armstrong was determined – as he put it – to put God’s Work “back on Track” once more. He first removed the “liberal” elements, including his own son, and later dealt with specific “right-wing” individuals who were also “off Track” as well. What we witnessed was a process that took several years, and we were shown the areas that must be addressed, and the stages in which it should be done. We were given a picture of how an organisation of God is to be restored once it has gone astray. We were effectively given a demonstration of exactly what we were going to have to do following an apostasy from the Truth: how to bring an organisation that is turning to a Laodicean attitude back to God.

This event is also further evidence of just **who** Mr Armstrong was – that he was indeed the end-time apostle who was prophesied. Not only was he **sent** by God to His people, but also God even brought him “back from death” to show His people how to “hold fast” within

this unique and potentially devastating period of history – that we are now living through without him.

In Summary:

1. The seal of any apostleship – is that we know the Truth
2. Mr Armstrong knew and *told* us of his prophesied roles
3. Mr Armstrong appeared at the right time
4. The scale and range of Truth show that **God** actually revealed it
5. The Law of Moses *was* remembered – as prophesied
6. Family relations *were* restored – as prophesied
7. A voice *did* cry out – for the first time in 1900 years
8. Apostasy indicates end-time Truth was *previously* restored
9. A Laodicean attitude is here today – just before the Tribulation
10. We were shown *how* to get "Back on Track" in the 1980s

Chapter 10

Our Spiritual Heritage

As we saw in chapter seven, God wanted the early Church to hold faithfully to the spiritual heritage they received from Peter after his death. Because of this, Peter wrote his second epistle as a means of encouraging them to do so, and within it warned of the dangers they would face from false teachers, who would attempt to lead them in different directions. The parallel with the instruction God gives the Philadelphian era to “*hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown*” (Rev 3:11) is instantly recognisable.

It is also clear from II Peter that the spiritual heritage left after an apostle has died must continue to be over the people illuminated by God through him. However, the questions still remain: What exactly does such a “spiritual heritage” entail? And more importantly, what is the *specific* “spiritual heritage” left to us – after Mr Armstrong’s death – at the end-time today?

Called Now – To Be Teachers:

By viewing our salvation and part within God’s Kingdom through the prism of the Holy Days, a clear reason for our overall calling emerges: God’s people are to be first-fruits – part of the first resurrection – and are destined to become “*priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years*” (Rev 20:6). This purpose – to become priests and reign through the millennium – is why we are called *now*.

A priest’s principal role – including the role we are destined to fulfil as the “*royal priesthood*” (I Pet 2:9) – is that “*the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth*” (Mal 2:7). Therefore, the reason God has called us during this age, is to ensure that a group of spirit-born kings and priests *will be available to teach* within the very Kingdom of God (*also see: Deut 24:8; II Chron 15:3; Micah 3:11*).

Within Mystery of the Ages Mr Armstrong very clearly drew our attention to this reason for our calling. He said:

*Let it be emphasized that the purpose of the Church is not merely to give salvation to those called . . . **The Church may be called God's teachers' college** to prepare rulers and **teachers** for the kingdom of God . . . for calling predestinated human beings out of this world to be trained for positions of leadership in the world tomorrow, **when they shall teach and train others.***

(Mystery of the Ages, Chapter 6, page 228)

What Will We Teach?

Our spiritual heritage is intrinsically bound to this **teaching** purpose for our calling. Isaiah states that those who live humanly into the millennium are going to “*hear a word behind thee, saying, **This [is] THE WAY, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left**”* (Is 30:21). Please notice that we – as teachers – are going to have to point out “the Way” **in all circumstances**, as it says, “*when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.*” This can only be done if “The Way” being spoken of here, primarily involves a **principle** that can be applied to each and **every** circumstance.

“This Way” that we must point people toward as teachers **under** Jesus Christ also cannot be something new, as we are told “*Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*” (Heb 13:8). So “The Way” we are to point people toward in the millennium, is clearly the same “Way” we must also walk today. It is also the same “Way” as taught by Christ and the early apostles. It is also the same “Way” obtained from God via the apostle who originally spoke the Word of God to us – in our case Mr Herbert W Armstrong. It has to be the very “Way” of God Himself. This “Way” lies at the very heart of everything. **This “Way” is our spiritual heritage.**

The Two Trees:

Mr Armstrong continually talked about “This Way,” but he would do so using a *particular* example from scripture: the example was the subject of the two trees. In a sermon he gave on Atonement 1981 he explains *why* he would continually go back to this account. He said:

*Have you really understood it? Have you grasped it? Does it mean anything for you? Or is it, ‘Ah I wish that Armstrong’d just quit hammering back, going back to Genesis again. **There he is back to those two trees again.**’ You betcha! I’ll go back to it again and again and again! **I want to get you into the Kingdom of God with me!** I didn’t call you in the first place, but I’m somewhat responsible **for feeding you** now that you’re here. You know that? God is going to hold me responsible. **I want you all to go along with me** and it isn’t going to be easy.*

(“Meaning,” Atonement 1981)

Notice in the above passage, Mr Armstrong explains *why* he continually went back to the two trees: It was in order that *we* may be in the Kingdom of God! This subject of the two trees – the “Way of Give,” and the “way of get” – is absolutely vital. If we do not *fully* understand it, to the point that we can teach and apply it, there will be no purpose for us even *being* in God’s Kingdom! The teachers within God’s Kingdom must *always* be able to tell the difference between these two trees.

Paul tells us “*Do ye not know that the saints shall **judge** the world?*” (I Cor 6:2). Notice what it says in Malachi in this regard: “***Then shall ye return, and discern** between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not*” (Mal 3:18). Two distinct “ways” are shown here – just as taught by the Two Trees. The indication is that *only* those who really “get it” – and “get it” the Way *God* specifies – are going to be there as spirit beings to both apply and *teach* it!

Daniel recognised these two distinct “Ways” when he said, “*O Lord, righteousness [belongeth] unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces*” (Dan 9:7). Christ also talked about them when he told the disciples, “*wide [is] the gate, and broad [is] the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*” (Matt 7:13-14).

The very spiritual heritage that Peter left after his death involved them: He contrasts “*the right way*” with “*the way of Balaam*” (II Pet 2:15); “*the way of truth*” with the “*pernicious ways*” of false teachers (II Pet 2:2); and how those who deceive have left “*the way of righteousness*” when they “*turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them*” (II Pet 2:21).

The lesson of the Two Trees is crucial! The World Tomorrow is not going to be the way it is due to fancy scholarship, or management techniques. It is not due to a list of do’s and don’ts that *men* may glean from scripture – or even that men may glean from an apostle’s teachings. The World Tomorrow will be brought about *by a radical change of thinking, from one way of life to a totally different WAY of Life.*

This “Way of Life” is also *our* spiritual heritage. At its root is “*the divine nature*” (II Pet 1:4). This is why, in the book of Acts, we continually find the True Church mentioned as being followers of “That Way” or “The Way” (Acts 9:2; 18:26; 19:9; 19:23; 22:4; 24:14; 24:22).

It was The Way the apostles taught when the early church “*continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship*” (Acts 2:42). It was also “The Way” taught to us by the end-time apostle – Mr Herbert W Armstrong – under the inspiration of the very same Spirit of God.

The Government of God:

Though describing our spiritual heritage as “The Way” may appear somewhat trite on the surface, what we are *actually* describing is *the very government of God*. Mr Armstrong writes:

GOD’S PURPOSE in having created and put HUMANS on earth was to develop in them GOD’S own holy and righteous character. God wants a people who will REJECT and overcome Satan’s WAY OF LIFE and turn to THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD – which is GOD’S WAY of life.

(Incredible Human Potential, Chapter 11, page 162-163)

Not only is Jesus Christ “*The Way, the truth, and the life*” (John 14:6), but He also is “*the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*” (Heb 13:8). This Government of God – this Way of God – flows down *from God* to His people, and it is destined to do so for eternity. God’s Government therefore can *never* be merely from a *human* leader down. It must always be transparently evident that those over us in the Church must *themselves* remain humbly subject to what *Christ* places over them!

When Mr Armstrong was alive, that link was *through* God’s apostle. Today, though the individual apostle is dead, we must still place ourselves beneath the *identical* administration – if we are to remain under the identical Government of God. Any leader over us has no right to change *that spiritual heritage* over him. “The Way” never changes. How ironic therefore, that at the end-time, Christ is depicted as standing *outside* the Laodicean Church knocking! (Rev 3:20).

Administration of the Spirit:

How many times did we hear Mr Armstrong tell us that, “*the problems in this world are spiritual!*” After all, “*we wrestle not*

against flesh and blood, but . . . against **spiritual** wickedness” (Eph 6:12). It is after all, a “**Spirit** that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph 2:2). Therefore it is also clear that **the solution** – God’s future “Way” and Government – must **also** be spiritual.

The apostle Paul talks of this spiritual dimension within the administration of God’s Government, when he says that God “*hath made us able ministers (or administrators) of the new testament (or covenant); not of the letter, but of the spirit*” (II Cor 3:6). Please notice that the administration to be used must **not** be according to the letter – but according to the Spirit. It is talking here of The **Way** in which the Law of God must be **administered**.

This aspect – that the Law of God is to be administered within God’s Church according to the spirit **and not** the letter – has been, and is today, a **major** stumbling block to many. Many simply **never** “get it.” Some allow liberalism and licentious behaviour that relegates God’s Law into a mere nebulous “something set up in our hearts.” Others ignore what God says here completely and become little more than modern day Pharisees – constructing “check-lists” of points that they believe will somehow “make them righteous.”

These approaches are both carnal and are utterly false in the eyes of God. Neither of them was received from God’s end-time apostle. The **spiritual** heritage we received was just that – **spiritual!** And that does not mean nebulous – but actually the exact opposite!

I remember a particular instance when Mr Armstrong thundered that we “**just did not get it!**” from the pulpit in Bricket Wood. Two friends of mine were sitting towards the front and were staggered at just **who** Mr Armstrong was continually looking at, and even pointing to while he was explaining this: He was addressing his comments **directly** to the first three rows – where the key leaders within the Work then sat – evangelists, college lecturers, department heads and ministers. It was **the leaders** – rather than just the rest of us – who Mr Armstrong recognised were not “getting it.” This

became painfully obvious immediately after his death. Unfortunately, it is still painfully obvious today!

One of those friends then had the opportunity to meet with Mr Armstrong a day or so afterwards. Mr Armstrong came to where he worked, to approve some photographs for one of the publications. He therefore took this opportunity to ask him, “*Mr Armstrong, what exactly did you mean in the service when you said we are not ‘getting it’ – what is it that we are still ‘not getting?’*” His answer lays bare this entire subject of the two trees and the spiritual heritage we have been left: Mr Armstrong picked up a photograph and said, “*What people do not understand is that there is absolutely nothing in **this** world today that is going to survive without change into the future. For example, do you see this photograph? The silver on this photograph has had to be mined from the ground, and in so doing caused pollution that is not “God’s Way.” There is absolutely **nothing** in this world that will remain just as it is when the world eventually comes completely under the Government of God in the Kingdom of God. **Everything must change. And that includes us!***”

Not a Human Way:

This principle that “*everything must change,*” has to be applied today within each of our lives. If we are to remain within God’s *True Church* then *every aspect of our lives must become submissive to the Government of God – the Way of God.* The vast majority within the Church simply have *not* yet grasped this. They do not grasp *the scale* of what this *actually* means. Christ even tells us that *humanly, it is impossible,* but immediately points out that “*with God, all things are possible*” (Mark 10:27). Mr Armstrong clarified just *how* God makes this impossible situation possible when he said: “*That law is love. **But it is not human love. Human love cannot rise above the level of human self-centeredness. It must be ‘the love of God . . . shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy [Spirit]’***” (Rom 5:5)” (*Mystery of the Ages, Chapter 6, page 274*).

King David – described as “*a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will*” (Acts 13:22) – did not just want to **understand** God’s precepts, but “*to understand the way of thy precepts*”; not just remove the **lie**, but “*the way of lying*”; not just **truth**, but “*the way of truth*”; not just **walk** that Way, but “**RUN The Way of thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart** (with the very **Spirit of God**)” (Ps 119:27-32).

David was a man after God’s own heart – because he recognised his **human** heart **continually** needed **changing** if he was to walk God’s Way! Because “The Way” is a **spiritual** heritage, it can **never be grasped** by the **natural** mind. As the apostle Paul says, “*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned*” (I Cor 2:14). Understanding the spiritual heritage demands the Spirit of God!

We have witnessed people in our midst making “check lists” on the one hand, or on the other hand “spiritualising away” the Law of God until it becomes meaningless. Staggeringly, within the recent apostasy, we even saw people who previously used a harsh “right wing” approach to God’s Law, **suddenly** switch overnight and become ultra liberal! We should not have been surprised. What we witnessed was simply two alternative **carnal** approaches to the spiritual Law of God.

Our spiritual heritage from God via Mr Armstrong is a **spiritual** “Way” that the carnal mind **cannot** grasp (Rom 8:7). But the question remains; how do we get “back on Track,” and once again embrace “That Way” once more? That is the subject of the final two chapters.

In Summary:

The Spiritual heritage, left for the people of God to follow faithfully after the death of the apostle sent to them, is much more extensive than human beings naturally grasp. It is “The Way” that is continually mentioned within Acts, and comprises the spiritual *administration* of the new covenant prophesied within scripture (*II Cor 3:6*). It is also “The Way” in which Christ applied the scriptures when He was here on earth as a human being, magnifying the very *Spirit* of the Law. It is therefore only possible *humanly* through the Spirit of God. That Spirit is given as a gift, and is only given to those willing to humbly place themselves in obedience to God (*Acts 5:32; Heb 5:9*).

“This Way” must be *thoroughly* learned by God’s True Church, so it can be effectively taught within the World Tomorrow. “This Way” can also be described as the Government of God. It is also the “Way of Give” as opposed to the “way of get” that Mr Armstrong continually returned to when describing the account of the two trees. “*This Way*” is *our spiritual heritage*. It is the priceless gift God has left us after the death of the end-time apostle He sent to us – Mr Herbert W Armstrong.

Chapter 11

Getting Back on Track

As we have seen in the previous chapter, there is an urgent need to “get back on Track” – to return fully once again to the spiritual heritage and “Way” of God. But how? What does it *specifically* entail? What is involved in us getting “Back on Track” – more than a mere *nebulous* embracing of whatever *we* may personally perceive as “The Way”?

But Mr Armstrong “Got Things Wrong...”

One of the most common excuses people use to justify rejecting *specific* areas Mr Armstrong dealt with is that “he made mistakes.” Indeed, Mr Armstrong would be the first to admit that he was human and therefore did make mistakes – as did Peter, James, John, Matthew, Paul and all the other New Testament apostles.

Paul and Barnabas had a fierce argument over John Mark (*Acts 15:39*). The apostle Peter had to be openly corrected by Paul for his treatment of Gentiles (*Gal 2:11-13*). The apostle Paul was at one time fully expecting to be alive physically at Christ’s return (*1 Thes 4:15, 17*). In each case God is teaching us. He is showing us not only that apostles make mistakes – but that *such “mistakes” in no way absolve the apostolic nature of their writings – nor do they jeopardise in any way the leadership of the One who is actually guiding the Church – Jesus Christ!* Although Christ chooses to work through frail human apostles to lay foundations – and chooses to continue to work through them to preserve those foundations – *He does not make mistakes with His Church.*

Those who attempt to use past “mistakes” as their excuse, invariably do so *because they have their own agenda*. I remember being asked, in this context, if I agreed with the statement, “*we reserve the right to continually review and change any of our doctrines that are not in line with scripture.*” My reply was simply, “who is ‘we’?”

They had no effective answer. Whoever the “we” may be, they have absolutely *no right whatever to change apostolic revelation (I Cor 3:11)*.

I hope by this point in this booklet we can clearly see that assuming an apostolic role *for ourselves*, or attempting to *take to ourselves* a grace that God has not given, places us in opposition to God’s direction and purpose. But this still leaves the question: which portions of Mr Armstrong’s material has Christ *prepared for us* to use today to “get back on Track” – *in regard to the specifics?*

Learning From “The Trial Run”:

Fortunately, our loving God has provided precise instruction on how we must proceed in regard to the “specifics.” He did this during a unique time – from 1978 to 1985 – when He brought His end-time apostle back from total heart-failure to put the Church “Back on Track” in a kind of “trial run.” What the Church had to recover from at that time was an almost *identical* “Laodicean” condition to that seen around us now. For those with eyes to see, God’s hand was then – and is today – firmly on the helm. Notice what was said in one of the first “Back on Track” sermons Mr Armstrong gave after his return to Pasadena from Tucson:

*I have called a special **day of prayer and fasting** today - because **God's church is in FATAL DANGER!** I can't say that loud enough to hammer it home to you.*

*WE DON'T REALISE my brethren **the way we've been drifting.** We've been doing just what you heard in the sermonette - doing our own thing. We've been getting lukewarm . . . I would rather have two or three filled with the Spirit of the Living God than to have this church packed full and a thousand other churches like it of lukewarm people – **getting into the Laodicean condition – doing their own thing.***

(“Warning to the Church,” 24th June 1978)

Notice that the problem Mr Armstrong highlights above is “**doing our own thing.**” This is the very *meaning* of the word “Laodicea.” God allowed Mr Armstrong to witness this condition not only within the Church, but also within the leadership, the ministry, the College and the media effort. Notice this segment of a letter he had to write to his own son pointing out *his* part in allowing the Work to get progressively “off Track”:

*The Work . . . was done in a **MANNER** unlike anything in this world -- it was **CHRIST** doing it **HIS WAY** -- and **not the way men would do it . . .***

*In due time, you, my son, came into the Work. But unfortunately you **DID NOT AGREE** with **the WAY** Jesus Christ had been leading me . . .*

*At first you followed the same style on the air that Christ had used in me -- totally **DIFFERENT** from **THE WAY** the 'expert' commercial broadcasters used . . . Then you changed in your delivery. You copied the commercial broadcasters . . .*

*You did not agree with **THE WAY** in which Christ was building the college and the Work through me. You even said to others you would not have built the college **THE WAY** I did under Christ's guidance . . .*

*You began changing **WAYS** and personnel over to **YOUR WAY**. And, although you will not agree with me in this, as you have not agreed in **THE WAY** things ought to be done, the Work started downhill. Yet I have been told you claimed **YOU BUILT THE WORK**.*

*But the living **CHRIST** built it. And He built it **THE WAY** He led me -- **THE WAY** you disagreed with.*

(Quoted in co-worker letter of 21st May 1978)

In getting the Work “back on Track,” Mr Armstrong had to **return each area of the Work back to “The Way” Christ had formerly shown him.** He did this in stages. I hope we can see, therefore, that “The Way” is anything but nebulous. The reason the Work became “off Track” was because **aspects** of “This Way” were no longer being faithfully adhered to “**as taught**” (*Col 2:7; Tit 1:9*).

A Starting Point:

If we wish to personally get “back on Track”, an excellent place to start is by once more reading *Mystery of the Ages*. But this time – now we understand more about apostleship – **our approach must be different**. Whatever our role in the church, **we do not have the grace given to an apostle**. It is **not** Mr Armstrong who has left us the spiritual heritage within *Mystery of the Ages* and his other material. It is the **Head** of the Church – Jesus Christ – **as He leads His end-time Church toward its position within His bride and Temple!**

The fact that Christ chooses to speak through a frail human instrument – His end-time apostle, with all his faults – has no bearing whatever on the True Source. The position of such teaching is actually the same as the **non**-canonised writings of Paul or Peter, or their scriptural writings **prior** to canonisation. The approach Christ would have demanded in the past, towards such un-canonised material of Peter and Paul, would still have included **a respect toward its apostolic nature!** So the writings of **our apostle** – sent by God at this end-time, just before the return of Jesus Christ – require the **same respect!** *Mystery of the Ages* **is indeed an apostolic writing** – albeit an un-canonised one.

Read the author’s statement and **be reminded** just **why** *Mystery of the Ages* was written – and why Satan did his level best to stamp out this explanation of God’s “**coded message not allowed to be revealed and decoded until our time**” (*page xii*). Appreciate that indeed, “**time may prove this to be the most important book written in almost 1,900 years**” (*page xii*), and that “**God’s time for it has come**” (*page xiii*).

Realise that just as the apostle Peter said, “*I will endeavour that ye may be able **after my decease** to have these things always in remembrance*” (*II Pet 1:15*), so **our** apostle says to us: “*And now, in my 93rd year, **I have been led to write this book before this event-packed life ends**, to share with as many as care to know, the answers that the great supreme mind of God reveals in his Word*” (page xiii). Realise also, that just before this paragraph, Mr Armstrong makes very clear indeed that the **only** ones **able** to understand – will be God’s True Church – and **no one** else! Mystery of the Ages has been **specifically** written for those future teachers – that they may **thoroughly** understand “The Way” they are destined to teach.

The Sin Question:

In studying this wealth of material, one thing should constantly come to the fore: “The Way” – as we have seen in the previous chapter – is **spiritual**. When getting “back on Track,” we must learn from the writings of Mr Armstrong, **to apply the principle of God’s Word properly**. We must do so in a Godly, open, **honest** way – not “*handling the Word of God deceitfully*” (*II Cor 4:2*), as so many are doing today.

Should we try to bend “The Way” into “our own way,” we will be unfit to apply it properly in the Kingdom of God. Clearly and firmly applying the **principle** – not merely the letter – is **exactly** how we were taught to get “back on Track” in the 70s and 80s. Notice how Mr Armstrong does this in this 1983 Pastor General’s Report sent to the ministry concerning the subject of makeup:

*Before examining specific texts on the subject of make-up, let me summarize the PRINCIPLE involved--not only on make-up **but on any or all subjects of what is right and what is wrong.***

*God’s law defines **the WAY** of human conduct—first of all, in relation to God, and secondly to human neighbor. **LAW** simply means the rules of conduct. The **RULES** of a basketball, baseball or football game might be called the **LAWS** of those games—the rules that regulate performance.*

God's LAW is stated in the one word, LOVE. The word LOVE is a PRINCIPLE, and in principle it is opposite to the word LUST. It is LOVE toward others. First of all, LOVE toward GOD, in love, worship, and obedience. Secondly it is love toward other humans. It cannot be vanity, because vanity is toward self and puts SELF before God. Love toward and worship of God in itself is the PRINCIPLE of humility, not self-glory or vanity or coveting. It is love toward neighbor in the spirit of outgoing CONCERN for neighbor's welfare and good—of cooperation, serving, helping, sharing. It also may be love toward self in the sense or principle of concern for the physical and mental and spiritual welfare of the body and mind, which is the temple of God's Holy Spirit.

YOU CAN APPLY THAT PRINCIPLE TO ANY QUESTION OF HUMAN CONDUCT. It is the real answer to the SIN question.

As I write, and THINK on this subject, I am convinced that few understand — even in God's true Church — the TRUTH on this SIN question.

*A great deal of Protestantism has rubbed off on our people in God's Church. Neither the Catholics nor Protestants teach God's Commandments. Rather, they teach that the law was abolished. If there is no law, then there is no sin, "for where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15), and "sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Rom. 5:13) and "**sin IS the transgression of the law**" (I John 3:4). **But the law of God is SPIRITUAL (Rom. 7:14).***

*God looks on the heart. But "the heart" as used in the Biblical sense, refers to the attitude, the intent or purpose. **Sin results from a wrong attitude, intent, desire, which is an attitude of mind. Yet sin is also an act. It is the act of yielding to an attitude, desire or purpose contrary to LOVE toward God or toward humans.** Vanity violates "love toward and worship of GOD." It is desire or intent, or attitude of SELF glorification. SELF wants to glorify itself, not God. **VANITY is the root of SIN.***

*Brethren, this month I shall enter the 92nd year of my life in this age. I have to realize that I am only a heartbeat away from the end of this life. For your sake, and the Work's sake, I hope God will allow me continued heartbeats. But I have to look at the state of God's Church realistically. **I think I see these things more soberly than formerly — perhaps more soberly than many of you.***

*Ask yourselves, "**Do I really hunger and thirst after God's righteousness?" or after being like the world, whose, god is Satan?***

*How many are like the woman who had been baptized only a few months and came to me, saying, "I've just inherited some money. Tell me, how much of it do I **have** to tithe to God? **I don't want to tithe any more than I have to, but I want to get into God's Kingdom.**"*

Do YOU hunger and thirst after God's righteousness, or after the ways of this world? Are you concerned with what GOD thinks of you, or what the world thinks — WHICH?

(Pastor General's Report Vol.5, No.26 July 1, 1983)

Two Types of Error:

There is no doubt whatever that the full article, partially quoted above, clearly and firmly shows that makeup **cannot** form part of "The Way" we walk. This is merely an example chosen because it deals the most succinctly with the sin question – but such conclusions stand true both in what we are to follow today, and in what we must teach tomorrow. Makeup is incompatible **spiritually**. Yet within the corporate Churches of God today, what do we find in relation to specific rulings such as this – rulings originally made by God, through His apostle who was being **led** by His Spirit – to **show** His people **how** to get "back on Track" in the modern world?

What we largely find are two approaches – spread through hundreds of different corporate groups - and **both** approaches are “off Track”:

The most common blatantly rejects the leadership of Christ – and instead assumes a grace reserved specifically for apostles. **They** decide Mr Armstrong was mistaken on various issues and take to **themselves** the knowledge of right and wrong in whatever areas **they** decide to re-examine. They almost wear the Laodicean “*the people judge or decide*” badge with pride!

The other approach, however, appears outwardly to be more righteous. They try to maintain that **because** they have added makeup (or some other point) to the “check list” they have compiled, this **makes** them righteous. Often you will also get the impression that this group has **always** been right, that they have **always** been “on Track.” Such an approach within a human being is **never the Way of God, and was not “The Way” we received** via Mr Armstrong as our spiritual heritage. Certainly, “*sin IS the transgression of the law*” (I John 3:4), but as Mr Armstrong points out above: “*the law of God is SPIRITUAL*” and the apostle Paul then goes on to say, “*but I am carnal, sold under sin*” (Rom. 7:14).

The Track to which we are to return is not a destination. It is a “Way” – a path on which we all must walk. Getting “back on Track” is therefore a process – of aligning absolutely all we do, think, or say, with the divine nature of God. In a human being, the **True** “Way” of God consists of a ***lifestyle of constant repentance***.

The Purpose of Rulings and Law:

Mr Armstrong explains that, “*LAW simply means the rules of conduct. The RULES of a basketball, baseball or football game might be called the LAWS of those games—the rules that regulate performance*” (Pastor General's Report Vol.5, No.26 July 1, 1983). By using this analogy from basketball, we can see that the laws of basketball point out when we are **not** playing the game – but they do not **make us good** basketball players!

In the same way, both the specific Laws of God *and* the apostolic rulings, made for the *modern* world through the end-time apostle, are *both* designed to point out when we go *OFF* Track (the meaning of “sin” – to “miss the mark” spiritually). *But they do not make us righteous!* They do not get us *back ON* Track again. We may keep whatever “check list” we decide to compile and *still be totally off Track* – as were the Pharisees. Being *on Track* comes *only* from God’s Spirit, for it is *only* those who “*are led by the Spirit of God, [who] are the sons of God*” (Rom 8:14).

This *vital* important point is reinforced within Romans when Paul tells us that “*by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law [is] the KNOWLEDGE of sin*” (Rom 3:20). The law tells us *WHEN we sin* (are off Track). It does *not* get us *BACK to possessing God’s Character*. It does *NOT* make us righteous! *Righteousness can come only from God* – it must be *God’s* righteousness *not* our own (*verses 21-22*). This is why it takes constant contact with God – using study, meditation, prayer and fasting – if we are to be successful.

This is also true with any apostolic rulings made by Mr Armstrong. Whatever rulings we have today – left by the end-time apostle – show us when we are “Off Track” in our *modern* world. We are therefore duty bound to adhere to them. But keeping them does *not* get us back *on* Track again. That still takes the conversion of our innermost being – our heart – by God’s Spirit. This is why Mr Armstrong pointed out, “*That law is love. But it is not human love. Human love cannot rise above the level of human self-centeredness. It must be “the love of God . . . shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit*” (Rom 5:5)” (*Mystery of the Ages, Chapter 6, page 274*).

I hope we can now see just why we *needed* an end-time apostle. We needed to be taught by God *how to apply “The Way” in our 20th and 21st Centuries*. This Way – this Government – is the “all things” that was restored to God’s Church. It is what we specifically need, at this time, *to train us how to function as Sons of God within the Kingdom of God*. This is why it is so vital for us at this crucial time in history to *LISTEN again* to the spiritual teaching Christ left us!

Unless we fully understand it within today's society – we will not be able to teach it in the future society – and God will therefore not allow us to be one of those future teachers!

At this time – just before Christ returns – we must go **back** and listen to the sermons Mr Armstrong gave during 1978-1985, and study God's Word in the **light** – the **illumination** – of them. If you have not done so for some time, I can guarantee that you will be amazed by the breadth and depth of Truth. Also we must read the articles that God's apostle **wrote** at that time – coupling them with humble, meditative Bible-study. Only when we are fully submissive to the full Government of God (which is “The Way” of God), can God effectively prepare us for His Kingdom – ready to **teach**, correctly, that identical “Way” when Christ returns.

Faithful Ministers:

As we have seen in chapter 5, specific grace is given alongside each ministerial office God has established within His Church. Because such ministers are the very servants – or ministers – of God, we should indeed “**esteem them very highly**” (*I Thes 5:13*) as the apostle Paul commands. This is because they teach as **representatives of God Himself**.

However, we should only accept teaching from such men if those men are themselves **clearly and unambiguously aligned** with the **foundations** laid by God. The apostle Paul brings this out in I Corinthians: “**According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon**” (*I Cor 3:10*).

A minister must be a **faithful** steward (*I Cor 4:2*) – carefully aligning his own words with those of the apostle sent to us. They must be like Timothy – “**faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ**” (*I Cor 4:17*). As we have seen, God chooses to reveal foundational Truth **only** to apostles – not the general ministry. For example, **doctrine cannot come into**

the True Church of God via a doctrinal committee! Notice what God ***clearly*** reveals about ***this*** area through His end-time apostle:

*And some of our intellectuals are going to burn up with it if they do not wake up in time and if they don't realise that **that** intellectualism is of Satan the Devil. Let me explain a minute about that before I go on with the main sermon. This type of intellectualism and scholarship - they all want to be scholars - they want high scholarship - it is 100% carnal. It is material and materialism. There is none of God, none of Christ in it. It is an intellectualism that throws Christ right out the window. And that has been like leaven getting into the College . . .*

We had here a doctrinal committee of intellectuals. And the whole idea was "lets try and study intellectually to find out how wrong Mr Armstrong is and where he's misled us." That was the real object. Well there isn't any such committee any longer and there isn't going to be. God doesn't reveal His Will to intellectual scholars on the intellectual basis that go into it in little tiny ways.

*(Sermon by Mr Armstrong: "Warning to the Church"
- given 24th June 1978)*

The List Seems Endless:

On and on we could go – with the apostolic guidance that led us back to “The Way” of God within our modern world: healing; doctors; voting; physical-sin; born-again; the gospel; “That Prophet”; inter-racial marriage; physical Israel; the calendar; makeup; birthdays; how we baptise; childrearing; laws of health; Sabbath dress; hymns we sing; making the publications “Plain” – or clouding them in nuance? The list seems endless.

We are today in “Fatal Danger” as Mr Armstrong thundered at us in 1978. There are indeed “men” trying to take our crown (*Rev 3:21*). Those who attempt to overthrow “the Way” that has already been revealed to us at this end-time make themselves “*grievous wolves* . .

. *speaking perverse things*” (Acts 20:29-30) and become “*false apostles*” (II Cor 11:13).

Such men are like the Pharisees of old whom Christ cornered. They were asked, “*The baptism of John, [the type of the end-time apostle] was [it] from heaven, or of men? . . . And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell*” (Mark 11:30, 33). These hypocrites were happy to use John when it suited them (Matt 3:7) but here ***claimed no one could tell if it was God who SENT John the Baptist***. If they were to admit what was clearly evident – they knew Christ’s next question: “*Why then did ye not believe him?*” (Mark 11:31). ***Today we see leaders within the very corporate Churches of God behaving in exactly the same way. They offer lip service to Mr Armstrong, but give an identical Pharisaic response in regard to his prophesied end-time role!***

God’s Church ***must*** have unity – not factions – and there is only one “Way.” There cannot be “an apostle” coming after initial enlightenment who overturns previous revelation. In such a case, ***someone’s*** information is ***not*** coming via revelation. If we recognise that God used the ***original*** individual in an unprecedented way and that he understood the things he passed to us ***due to revelation***, then the only conclusion is that those who attempt to overturn that revelation are false – however many “*good words and fair speeches*” they undoubtedly will make (Rom 16:18).

Our loving God has ***shown*** each of us how to get “Back on Track.” Yes, the Track we are to return to is spiritual – it is “The Way” of God that we must learn and adhere to for eternity. But we have also been given precise pointers ***that specifically show us where we are “off Track” in this modern world***. Such pointers must be accepted for what they are: ***the only modern apostolic administration of the Government of God available to us***. They point us again to God’s ***Spiritual*** “Way.” They ***point*** us “back on Track.”

In Summary:

The Church became “off Track” in the mid 1970s when we all began “doing our own thing.” This was true from the top to the bottom of the human organisation and seems to have been allowed by God for a specific reason. It allowed God to guide Mr Armstrong as he brought the organisation “back on Track” at that time – almost as a “trial run” of what we must do today.

The material written at that time (1978-1985) is readily available today. That material will also allow God to correctly guide us “back on Track” today, just as it did originally. We must recognise and appreciate that the True Source was Jesus Christ who continues then – and now – to lead His Church. *Mystery of the Ages* and other material by Mr Armstrong from that period of time should be recognised for what they actually are – un-canonised **apostolic** writings. Such material points both **where** we are off track and also points out **the direction** we should go once more – from our modern end-time perspective.

Any minister involved in helping us in this process must himself be clearly and unambiguously aligned with the spiritual heritage over him. Only such **truly faithful men** should be regarded as part of the genuine Government of God. All others who are disobedient to that heritage make themselves “*grievous wolves . . . speaking perverse things*” (*Acts 20:29-30*) as “**false apostles**” (*II Cor 11:13*) and should be avoided by God’s True people (*Rom 16:17*).

Chapter 12 **Conclusion**

The subject of apostleship is probably the most important subject there is for the people of God at the end time. The Truth, and the training that flows from it, seems to be the dividing line between those who will be ready for the Kingdom of God, and those who will not.

Getting the “Big Picture”:

For us to really “get it,” we should place the subject of apostleship into its bigger, God-focused, overall context:

- ***We must recognise*** that God remains in total control. He is going to bring His Kingdom very soon – with or without our input. If we are to have a part in that Kingdom, then we accept that opportunity His way, or not at all.
- ***We must recognise*** that Christ has been and remains today the Head of His Church. If we are to be part of the True Church – led by Jesus Christ – we accept that privilege in the Way He chooses to lead His Church. Absolutely no other way is acceptable.
- ***We must recognise*** that the reason we have been called now – into the True Church – is not for our benefit. It is ***not*** for our personal salvation. We have been called to train as teachers – part of the first-fruits within the Millennium.
- ***We must recognise*** that “The Way” we have been called to teach in the future is spiritual. Unless we understand “this Way” ***exactly*** as The Father and Christ determine, then we will not be able to teach it – and therefore will not exist as kings and priests within the Kingdom of God.

- **We must recognise** that God prophesied that there **would** be an end-time apostle who would restore “all things.” All the evidence points to the fact that Mr Armstrong was that individual – sent by Jesus Christ to His Church, to train His people in “The Way” within a modern setting.
- **We must recognise** the position of the writings of Mr Armstrong. Though they are un-canonised, they are still apostolic, and should be given the respect such apostolic instruction warrants.
- **We must recognise** that we were given a trial run from 1978 to 1985 in how God’s True Church must be put “back on Track.” This unique period identifies **the portions** of Mr Armstrong’s writings that will allow Christ to do the same job today.

In the account of the two trees, Satan did not say, “*follow me*” – he said “**you decide for yourself** – *right from wrong*.” This is the basis of Laodicea’s blindness. They **refuse** to go to the **source** of Truth: The Waters of Siloam (which means *sent* – or *apostle*) that God originally used to wash away their blindness. They now claim **they** have the right to interpret scripture – that God has revealed “truth” to them – that they are “rich and increased” spiritually. But they blindly **ignore** the **fruit** of this “truth.”

The fruit from the tree **they** have chosen is chaos and disunity! Their “way” is plainly **not** God’s Way. It is **their own** way, which is also Satan’s way. “The people” have decided for **themselves** and God says that the only way He can **make** them ready for His Kingdom is to have their “own way” purged by being “*tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich*”(Rev 3:18).

Humility and Prayer:

All of us, including me, have had to **come** to the understanding within this booklet over a period of time. None of us are “there” yet – and we may never be in **this** life – as “The Way” taught by God is Spiritual. We most certainly did **not** have the subject in clear focus when we first perceived the apostasy that attempted to take over the Church. Should someone try to give the impression that they did, be instantly suspicious that they have probably not even **begun** to understand this life of constant repentance. They may well have merely chosen their own self-justifying “check list.”

The important thing is that we all repent and turn **fully and continuously** again to “The Way” of God – keeping close to Him through heartfelt study, meditation, fasting and prayer. “That Way” is the Way we learned via the apostle sent to us, with all its spiritual implications. Our loving God has even provided us both with examples and the means to do so, through material from the “trial run” of the 70s and 80s.

This material came from **the hands** and voice of Mr Armstrong. It is interesting that we are told of the Temple construction: “**The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath SENT** [the meaning of apostle] **me unto you.**” (*Zech 4:9*). The direction and “Way” required for the Spiritual Temple to which Christ is to return – the purpose of the end-time apostle – **is still** available across the Internet and in CD, tape, book, booklet and article form. His hands – that originally typed those words – may, in this way, **yet** finish the work God gave him, even after his death! Just as we saw how technology seemed to develop so that the Work could be done in the past, likewise today the same also seems to be the case with the progressive rise of the Internet and CDRom!

The Choice Is Ours:

Christ now stands at the door of the corporate Churches – knocking. Are we *personally* going to respond – and “hold fast that which we had” – getting back “on Track” as previously taught?

Apostleship is a vital subject. It is absolutely crucial for this pivotal time in history. It lies at the heart and core of how God has decreed each one of us today must learn the very “Way” of His Own Divine Nature – His Character. May God help us *all* to understand! May God help us all to truly “*get it!*” May God help us all to get “*Back on Track!*” There may be very little time in which to do so.