

THE OPENING OF THE 7TH SEAL

In the last two issues of *News Watch*, we covered the opening of the first six seals of the Book of Revelation. It is indeed sobering to understand that the first five seals of Revelation are no longer a matter of future prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled, but are now a matter of history—seals that have already been opened, that were about the spiritual Israel of God—the Church of God.

We are now in a unique time between the great tribulation that came upon the Church in the opening of the first five seals and the beginning of great physical tribulation that will begin when the seventh seal is opened.

As we have covered before, Jesus Christ is the one who opens the seals. Although the Church has understood some basic knowledge concerning those seals, much has remained hidden because it was God's will that most revelation be given at the time that Jesus Christ opened the seals.

So before we go any farther, it must be understood that there is still much that cannot be known about the seventh seal because it has not yet been opened. This article will focus on those things that God has given His people to understand before that seal is opened.

Because of those things we have already experienced as a Church and because we are rapidly nearing the opening of that last seal, God has given more insight into what is to come so that we can be more fully prepared and ready when it does take place. We are to be watchful and spiritually on guard as this time approaches. The time is extremely short!

Great Confusion

From now, up until the time this last seal is finally opened, and continuing

on as each trumpet is blown, there will be great confusion in this world. There will especially be great confusion in the so-called religious world as well.

Man has long been aware of things written in scripture that speak of events at an end-time, although man has not understood those things. Those who claim to be religious will flood the world with nonsensical theories as to what is unfolding, just before and after this seventh seal is unveiled. And some will be correct in one primary thing—it is the end!

As time progresses farther into the period of final tribulation, once it comes upon this earth, religious profusion and confusion will gush out of the mouths of mankind as they try to explain what is happening. Yet they will not grasp the severity nor the condemnation of their own evil ways, their own false beliefs, and pride-filled hypocrisies that fill their foolish reasoning and vain interpretations.

Even those who have been scattered within the true Church of God will be filled with similar confusion, although closer to the truth of what is taking place because they were given basic truth of this time long ago. But most will still not understand! Why?

Most scattered brethren will not confess—will not acknowledge—the time we are in now. Most cannot accept that we are in Laodicea and that Philadelphia is long over. Not only that, but they cannot accept the truth that God completed a work through His end-time Elijah, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong—a work that many believe they are continuing or that they themselves are going to fulfill. Not only do most not accept this truth, because they refuse to believe what God says to the Church, but many become very indignant when anyone

tells them that God has already completed His work of the gospel going into all the world "as a witness," just before the end would come, and that when this was complete, the abomination of desolation would begin to work upon the Church.

It is by this very refusal of so many that they condemn themselves to a stronger, hardhearted pride and arrogance against what God would otherwise lead them to see. This is the very reason they will be so confused when the great tribulation finally strikes. It will not happen in the way most have believed, although all have been given basic understanding of the foundational elements of the seals of Revelation. We have already covered most of those things, as God has blessed us to build upon them. Most cannot build upon the basics given to us through Mr. Armstrong because they cannot admit our history in the light of Bible prophecy which has already come to pass. That refusal has led to great ignorance of what is about to come.

Last Warning

This is the last warning to God's Church that will come through this publication—*News Watch*. As one led by God's Spirit, I can only give—and only want to give—that which God inspires. God has shown that we have reached the end of time for any more warning witness to His people through this publication. When the seventh seal is opened, God will begin to deal through different means with His scattered people.

It has been made clear that this is to be the last publication of *News Watch*. Because of this, some will be sobered to a deeper sense of urgency, but most could care less one way or the other.

But God will prove His Word to everyone! We will either hear His voice and repent and seek to become more zealous toward Him or we will stubbornly hold onto our own ways of seeing Him and become more entrenched in hard-hearted pride—resisting God's grace.

God seeks to deliver those who will hear Him. The seventh seal is nearing the time it will be opened. Seven trumpets are about to be blown! They will change the course of this world. They will bring this world to its knees. It will also bring some of the scattered Church to its knees, but not all! Even in the midst of such chaos and tribulation in this world, most of the scattered Church is going to die while in rebellion to God, but a few of those in rebellion will be brought through it all as a witness against all who stubbornly hold to their own will. Thankfully there will also be a few who are brought to their knees in true repentance who will also be brought through this time of great tribulation.

Even now, due to escalating problems in the Middle East, and primarily those things involving the nation of Israel, religious leaders from many different backgrounds are theorizing and attempting to interpret Bible prophecy concerning the end-time. Adding to this that Iraq has been in the news, some religious leaders go even farther astray by trying to read their own ideas into this area of the world once known as Babylon and therefore misinterpret prophecies at the end-time that speak of Babylon.

All this can be expected by those in the world who have never known the true ways of God. But sadly, there will be some in the scattered Church who will also fall prey to false ideas from professing religious leaders. But beyond all this, most scattered brethren are going to be completely blind-sided by what does finally come to pass. Why is that?

Because brethren have failed to repent of going to sleep spiritually and being spued out of God's mouth and scattered, they have failed to learn the lessons and receive understanding that comes from admitting we are deep into Laodicea. As a result they cannot see that Matthew 24 is about the Church and that Christ's Olivet Prophecy parallels the first five seals of Revelation.

So instead of scattered brethren understanding that the first seals being opened are about the Church, they will be holding onto an older belief that leads to a united Europe rising up during the fifth seal that is supposed to conquer the modern-day nations of Israel at that time. But, as we addressed in the last issue of *News Watch*, such is not the case. The opening of the fifth seal was not about the beginning of great physical tribulation on this world.

The Beginning of Tribulation

"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets" (Revelation 8:1-2).

The great physical tribulation that will come on this world will actually begin when the seventh seal is opened. God has divided the opening of this seventh seal into seven specific stages. These stages are revealed through the blowing of seven specific trumpets. Each trumpet announces a specific disaster—a specific calamity that is to come on this world.

The reason that so many in the scattered Church will be totally caught off guard and in confusion over what is happening is that they do not expect the great tribulation to begin at the blowing of the first trumpet when the seventh seal is opened. When the great tribulation begins, they will still be looking for Europe to rise under the combined leadership of often rulers who

give their power as one. Yet, this does not occur until the fifth trumpet is blown.

Notice how the great tribulation does begin.

It comes swiftly upon the world, because the first four angels sound their trumpets at the very beginning. They had previously been held back from unleashing the beginning of this great tribulation until the sixth seal had been accomplished, which was the time for the final sealing of the remaining firstfruits of God's plan.

*'And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to **the four angels**, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea. Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads" (Rev. 7:1-3).*

However, once the seventh seal has been opened, those four angels will sound and great tribulation will come on this earth.

"And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of

the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise" (Rev. 8:6-12).

God has not yet revealed what this specifically means. We will know when it is unleashed upon this earth because, when the world experiences this destruction, it will be of catastrophic proportions.

These then are the very events that finally bring together a fully-united portion of Europe that will fulfill even more prophetic events that bring even more destruction on this earth.

The Fifth Trumpet

Great destruction is brought upon this earth as a result of the first four trumpets being blown, but even more devastating events are about to unfold when the last three trumpets are blown. *'And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!'" (Revelation 8:13).* Each trumpet that remains to be blown is given as a great warning to mankind—a "woe" upon the earth. The first woe comes as the fifth angel sounds his trumpet.

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the

scorpions of the earth have power" (Revelation 9:1-3).

The previous four angels that sounded are the catalyst that prompts this event, when the fifth angel sounds his trumpet. It is at the time, when this fifth trumpet is blown, that Satan has power to stir up certain European nations to combine their power as one. The locusts coming upon the earth has long been understood by the Church to be a great army that is given power to conquer. The key that opens this bottomless pit is what releases Satan to once again do his bidding over a final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire.

The real power behind this final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire, that emerges out of the bottomless pit, is indeed Satan. *"And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon" (Rev. 8:11).*

This last resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire is described even more fully later in the book of Revelation. We are given more understanding about the influence that Satan has had over the previous resurrections of this same empire and the final one that is about to come on this earth.

"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns" (Revelation 17:3). These verses have long been understood by the Church to refer to the seven resurrections of the Holy Roman Empire beginning in 554 A.D. under the rulership of Justinian. He was the first to recognize the supremacy of the Pope and submit to him. Thus, this became the revival of the old Roman Empire that was now the first revival to become known as the Holy Roman Empire.

There is a unique verse that could only be understood as actually

occurring in one moment of time. It was revealed to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong as actually occurring at the very time it was prophetically taking place. *"And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space" (Rev. 17:10).* The sixth revival actually occurred during the life of Mr. Armstrong.

God revealed to Mr. Armstrong that five rulers had already arisen and fallen in the Holy Roman Empire and that he was actually living through the sixth revival during the time of Mussolini and Hitler. Even the title of "Third Reich" gives some truth of what was being attempted by these leaders. (Of interest, look up the meaning of "Reich.") There is only one time in history that this verse could be understood as actually being fulfilled. It was when Mr. Armstrong came to understand that seven rulers were to emerge who would prophetically fulfill seven revivals of the Holy Roman Empire. When God gave understanding of this verse to Mr. Armstrong, five revivals had already arisen and fallen and one now existed (the sixth revival)—*"one is"*—at the very time this prophecy was revealed to him. Mr. Armstrong was also given understanding that one more was going to arise—the seventh and last resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire.

"The beast that you saw was [This beast has been the one who has influenced and led all the previous revivals of this Empire.], and is not [This is prophetically true at the moment, just as Mr. Armstrong understood verse 10 to be true in his day. In other words, this beast was over six previous revivals and "is not" over any at this very moment in time, but is about to emerge over the last revival.]; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit [This is referring to the seventh and last revival of the Holy

Roman Empire mentioned in Revelation 8 at the time of the fifth trumpet in the seventh seal.], and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is [People will once again witness the power and influence of this being that has led each revival of this empire. He has exerted his power over this empire six times before—**"the beast that was"**—and yet at this very time he is not exercising power over this empire until its time comes—**"and is not"**—but he has always existed on this earth and exercised influence over man from the very beginning of Adam and Eve—**"and yet is."**]. And here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sits [This is the false religious system that gives the so-called name of "Holy Roman Empire."]. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he comes, he must continue a short space " (Revelation 17:8-10).

"And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goes into perdition. [Satan **"was"** the one behind the previous six revivals. Yet at this very time he **"is not"** over a revival, but soon will be over the seventh and last one. Since he has been over all seven, **"is of the seven,"** he is counted as **"the eighth."**] And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast" (Revelation 17:11-13).

Again, verse 3 previously mentioned that there were seven heads and ten horns, and as was stated, the Church has long understood these seven heads to be the seven revivals of the Holy Roman Empire. What is unique in

Revelation 17:12 (just quoted) is that there will be ten kings who *"have received no kingdom as yet,"* because the seventh revival has not yet occurred. These ten horns [vs. 3] or ten kings [vs. 12] are ten leaders often nations that will comprise the seventh and final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire that is about to be revealed to this earth. The one who has true power over these leaders and this seventh and final resurrection is the beast that has already been mentioned—Satan. When the fifth angel sounds the fifth trumpet of the seventh seal, this being will emerge from his place of restraint (translated into English as "the bottomless pit") as the beast over this final revival.

Last Two Woes

Once this revival of the Holy Roman Empire emerges for the final time, with her powerful army that seeks to take control of this chaotic earth, then other far eastern nations prepare for war in order to seize control over much of the earth, which eventually brings them into a final and great conflict with the seventh revival of the Holy Roman Empire. It is the result of the fifth trumpet being blown—the first woe—that leads to the second woe when the sixth angel sounds his trumpet.

"One woe is past; and, behold, there two more woes coming hereafter. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them" (Rev. 9:12-16).

This second woe is harsh upon the earth and a third of all mankind will die because of this fierce army.

Six trumpets have been blown. The time of great physical tribulation will now begin to come to a close as we approach the time of the seventh and final trumpet that remains to be blown—the third and final woe upon this earth. It is at this time that God will bring an end to both of these powerful armies which have come upon the earth bearing so much destruction. God is about to intervene and bring an end to 6,000 years of man's self-rule and usher in His Kingdom to reign on this earth when Jesus Christ returns a second time—this time as King of kings.

The great army that emerged out of the far east will eventually be drawn into a final conflict with the final revival of the Holy Roman Empire. They will come together to do head-on battle in an old Hebrew area known as Megiddo.

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. [These are the nations of the far east that united as a 200-million-man army when the sixth trumpet was blown.] And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. [Satan moves the revived Holy Roman Empire to gather for this battle against the hordes coming out of the east.] For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16:12-14). This is the time that God will intervene to destroy both of these great armies before they even begin their confrontation.

It is God who has brought these armies together in order to swiftly

bring an end to great physical tribulation on this earth. *"And he [God] gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon "* (Revelation 16:16). There is much more to this story, but to summarize it, these armies, that have come together for the purpose of destroying each other, will actually turn to fight against that which they then see coming out of the heavens. They do not understand what they behold, but they fear what they see.

They will behold a sight that man has never seen nor been able to conceive. Hollywood has imagined many spectacular events in sci-fi movies, but this event far surpasses those imaginations. It is at this very time these nations come together for battle that Jesus Christ will return and take control of all rulership on this earth. His Kingdom will come at this very time! When He returns, it will not be as a lamb when He first came to this earth as our Passover sacrifice, but now, He will return in a great and swift war to conquer these armies.

'And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteous-ness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as aflame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying

to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him... " (Rev. 19:11-20).

Caught Off Guard

These seven trumpets that are blown after the seventh seal is opened bring about a swift and final succession of end-time events. Not only will this world soon be caught off guard as to what is about to come, but most of the scattered Church of God will be caught off guard as well. As we have already covered, when the seventh seal is opened, the first four angels will sound their trumpets and great destruction will begin on this earth. This initial destruction of great physical tribulation is not caused by a revived Holy Roman Empire, as many believe.

Remember, the seventh seal has not yet been opened and there is knowledge and understanding that God has not yet revealed. But because of a basic outline of understanding that God gave to His servant Herbert W. Armstrong and due to our having lived through the first five seals that have already been opened, God has given us a much clearer outline of those things that are close at hand.

We should be able to clearly see that great physical tribulation does not begin with a revived Roman Empire, but with great devastation unleashed when the first four angels sound their trumpets. Although we cannot know exactly how this is made manifest, we

can know the result in the lost ten tribes of Israel being brought to their knees as great end-time nations on this earth. The old Biblical nation of Ephraim (Great Britain and her old commonwealth of nations—including Canada, Australia and New Zealand), Manasseh (the United States of America), and the rest of the "lost ten tribes" (nations of Biblical Israel that make up other modern-day nations of Western Europe) will be made impotent as world powers by those events that accompany the blowing of the first four trumpets.

This is what leads to the timely emergence of a great revival of the Holy Roman Empire for one last time. Ten nations will swiftly come on the scene to fill this power vacuum that is thrust upon the nations of this earth. Portions of Europe already have the desire in their hearts and minds to unite in greater power and influence. A United States of Europe has been in the making for a long time now, but the time "is not yet" for them to fully exert this power on the earth to the magnitude that they are destined to fulfill in a great and final resurrection of the old Roman Empire that God gave prophecy concerning long ago to the prophet Daniel. God gave prophecy concerning our time today about a revival in the Roman Empire when He revealed to Daniel the emergence of three world empires that were to follow the Babylonian Empire. God revealed to Daniel the Medo-Persian Empire that would quickly come to pass, the Greco-Macedonian Empire, and finally the Roman Empire that would emerge out of Europe with many revivals leading up to the end of this age and the coming Kingdom of God that will begin to rule over all mankind, when Jesus Christ returns a second time as King of kings.

Yes, few will see and few will understand. The world will be caught off guard and most of the scattered Church will be caught off guard. Most

who hear will not believe right now, but they will come to believe God as He brings this world to its knees through great tribulation on mankind. All of this is necessary and there is no other way that God's Kingdom can be ushered in except that mankind be humbled as never before throughout the 6,000 years of human history. Mankind will be humbled, brought low in order to be called into the Church of God during a time when the knowledge of God will fill this earth. Mankind must first be humbled so that he can receive the truth of God, and with God's design be able also to receive of His spirit.

We are at the time in all human history when one final revival of a world Empire will come swiftly on this earth. The physical tribulation that is about to come on this earth will be the worst the world has ever witnessed, but mercifully, it will be for a short time. *'And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space'* (Revelation 17:10).

God's Witness

What a shame that any in the scattered Church should be caught off guard. But because of pride, most will not receive what God tells them. Just as the gospel went into all the world at the end of this age, it has also gone into the scattered Church, but brethren have not believed God.

When God gives a witness of man, it is indeed sobering. God raised up Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong as the prophetic "Elijah to come" who would restore foundational truth to His Church that had lost those truths by the end of the Sardis era. He also used this same man to preach the gospel throughout this world "as a witness." The gospel—good news of God's soon-coming Kingdom—was sent out to this world through the means of end-time technology that made

possible mass printing of a magazine called "The Plain Truth." This gospel message also went out through extensive worldwide coverage on radio and television. Mr. Armstrong also went personally to world leaders with this message.

It would be good for everyone to stop and consider the extent, both small and great, of this message that went out to the world "as a witness," that witness being that mankind would reject the message! It is good that we consider the leaders who received this witness. Although Mr. Armstrong received awards and honors from some of these leaders and nations, with many leaders being drawn to him with a remarkable fondness, they nevertheless rejected the message he brought them of the gospel about the Kingdom of God that was soon to come to this earth.

Early on Mr. Armstrong received a very unique award from King Leopold III. It was the fourth watch made from a cannonball taken off a battlefield in World War I by King Albert I of Belgium. He had the cannonball cast into the four watch cases, with the desire that they would be presented to the four individuals that he felt had made the most significant contribution to world peace. The king never found anyone he felt worthy to receive the fourth watch, and so, he passed it on to his son, Leopold III, who was moved to give it to Mr. Armstrong in 1970. Yet today, many do not know the name of Herbert W. Armstrong, even though many world leaders were drawn to him. God is the one who gives favor to whom He will, and he gave favor to Mr. Armstrong in the sight of world leaders, yet they still did not receive the message he carried about the Kingdom of God that was soon to come.

Mr. Armstrong became known to many as an "ambassador without portfolio for world peace." He carried that gospel message to Prince Makasa

and a number of the members of the Japanese Diet. Emperor Hirohito conferred on Herbert W. Armstrong the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Second Class — one of the highest decorations that can be presented to a non-Japanese. During a period that covered two decades, seven successive Japanese Prime Ministers counted Mr. Armstrong as a personal friend and counselor. There were members of the Japanese Diet that referred to their relationship with Mr. Armstrong as being his Japanese sons. Yet none of these leaders received the message of the coming Kingdom of God.

Mr. Armstrong was endeared in friendship with King Hussein of Jordan, King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit of Thailand, and Prime Ministers of Israel including Golda Meir and Menachem Begin. Others who counted him as a personal friend were Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, Jomo Kenyatta who was Founder and first President of Kenya, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, Mayor Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem, and longtime friend Nagendra Singh who was a Justice at the World Court in The Hague, Netherlands.

Mr. Armstrong also had personal meetings with leaders like Margaret Thatcher who was the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Juan Carlos, the King of Spain, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Yet of all these world leaders, none received the message he carried of the soon-coming Kingdom of God.

President Ferdinand Marcos decorated Mr. Armstrong with the Presidential Merit Medal "for his moral presence and compelling influence in moving people toward the creation of a just and peaceful world order." He received the decoration of "Commander of Our Most Noble Order of the Crown of Thailand." Yet, neither these leaders nor their people

received the message of the soon-coming Kingdom of God.

Other leaders with whom Mr. Armstrong met included President Allende of Chili, President Suharto of Indonesia, South Vietnam's President Nguyen van Thieu. Mr. Armstrong was invited to Romania by President Nicolae Ceausescu. Mr. Armstrong also met with Deng Ziaoping of the People's Republic of China and was the first Christian leader to officially visit leaders inside China. In this unprecedented visit he addressed officials from 76 nations in the People's Great Hall in Beijing concerning the way to real peace and why humanity fails to achieve it.

Mr. Armstrong received many more honors and met with and visited numerous other world leaders. But the gospel message that God sent throughout all the world through Mr. Armstrong stands as a witness in the end-time—toward the close of 6,000 years of man on this earth—that man is still the same—he rejects the message of God of His coming Kingdom to this earth.

Yes, at the end of this age, a gospel message went out to world leaders, was preached for years over radio and television, and was published in numerous publications—primarily through "The Plain Truth" magazine, yet this witness that went into all the world was rejected by the world. That is the witness! Man is still the same as he has been from the beginning. Only a few received that message—specifically those that God personally called into a relationship with Him.

But in the scheme of things, Mr. Armstrong did not meet with all world leaders during the time of Philadelphia. Neither did "The Plain Truth" nor the World Tomorrow broadcast reach the whole populations of this earth during Philadelphia. In reality, only a few million Plain Truth magazines went out monthly, and those were mostly in the United States

and English speaking nations. But all of this worked to be a sufficient witness of mankind in the end of this age—man still rejected the gospel message from God.

There is a parallel to this that has been occurring in the scattered Church of God. God has been giving a message to the Church that is a witness of Laodicea. Most will not hear! Only a few that God specifically awakens and calls to be a remnant of this last era are able to truly hear. Not every minister, not every person in the scattered body must hear that message to Laodicea. The entire world did not have to personally hear the gospel message and warning, and neither does everyone in the scattered Church have to personally hear the warning message given to Laodicea in order for it to be a witness of the primary spirit of Laodicea.

It is because the overwhelming majority of the scattered Church is filled with a haughty estimation of itself that it will not repent and believe God. It is a spirit that looks down on many within the Church. It is a spirit that sees itself as an image that claims it is of a different spirit than Laodicea—an image that reflects a kind of goodness seen in "being Philadelphian." Such brethren fail to see the purpose of the era—the time of Philadelphia and the work that was to be accomplished at that time. Instead, brethren have created an image of being Philadelphian that is better than reality, an image of self that could not be guilty of those things God says to this time of Laodicea—all of whom have been spued out of God's mouth and away from His presence. That means it happened to every one of us! How ironic that it is only through the admission of who we are that we can truly come to repentance and again become zealous toward God. We must all choose whether or not we truly **believe** God's own witness against us concerning the description He gives

Laodicea because only when we believe God are we able to truly see ourselves and repent!

Again, how blind and how ironic that the very name by which unrepentant Laodiceans want to see themselves (Philadelphia) is by a name that only describes a love that humans are capable of without God's spirit. They seek to hold onto a description that defines a human fraternal love and not the true love that comes from God—agape.

Some that are being awakened are being called by God to repent and believe Him—to believe His witness against them. God promises that there will be a remnant called by Him out of the sleeping, pride-filled, lukewarm spirit that has engulfed the scattered Church. That is the Word of God contained in the book of Joel that should give encouragement to all who will receive and believe what God says to Laodicea! *"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call"* (Joel 2:32).

The spiritual condition of the Church, at the very time when end-time prophecies are being fulfilled and Jesus Christ is nearing His return as King of kings, is a condition of slumbering and sleeping just as the parable of the ten virgins declares. All ten virgins failed to be spiritually on guard and alert to the return of Jesus Christ. No person can awaken someone out of a spiritual sleep. Since this is a spiritual condition, it requires that God do the awakening. The witness at the end of the age is that there is a large portion of the Church that was shaken and awakened as the result of a scattering, when God spewed the Church out of His mouth, because all were slumbering and sleeping and had become spiritually lukewarm. All have not accepted God's correction or

faithfully recognized their Laodicean condition, much less repented of that condition of which we are all guilty.

The Church has not repented even though the last third has been awakened and chastened by God. That is a strong witness! Our condition is so bad that God has not only severely chastened us, but He is working to again awaken people out of that condition. This calling is not a second calling to receive His Spirit, which is given once after baptism and the laying on of hands, but a calling that involves further chastening in order to bring about a remnant, humbled and brought low, to repent and once again become zealous toward God—if they will exercise ears to hear. Some are given this choice, but not all—for it is by the grace of God that we can now come to the kind of repentance necessary to be included as a remnant! None of us deserves this grace and mercy, yet God has a purpose to call a remnant (Joel 2:32) out of the last third of the Church that was scattered. These are called to be a faithful witness of Laodicea and the end of this age.

There will also remain a great witness of those scattered who live on into the millennial period and some that will even be in the hundred years to follow—a witness that even with the impregnation of God's spirit, man can refuse God—man can fall asleep spiritually and become spiritually lukewarm—a condition that God cannot work with in order to bring to spiritual maturity. If none of these has committed the unpardonable sin, they will be offered repentance during these periods of time yet to come—for they must be witness of Laodicea.

There is great warning in Laodicea! Satan, who is made of spirit, became filled with pride. And even mankind, who is able to receive the impregnation of God's spirit, can become filled with pride, seeing self as spiritually better than it actually is—

rich and increased with goods, when actually asleep and lukewarm of spirit.

Yes, many will be caught off guard. That is the final testimony to any who will hear it! Have you been given the ability to see and hear something that you are still resisting and fighting against? Repentance is still being opened to some, but not many more, because even the remnant that God will bring through all this is limited. Because it is God's purpose to give witness of those that will hear and those who cannot or will not.

This world and the modern-day scattered nations of Biblical Israel did not receive the message given to them by God at the end of this age. That witness was against them. Yet there was another witness at the time of Philadelphia. God **called** a few out of this world so that they could spiritually see and decide if they would respond to the gospel. Of the few out of this world offered this opportunity, thousands did respond to that calling, but many more thousands refused it even when they were given the ability to hear it.

In like manner spiritual Israel, during the time of Laodicea, is going to be a great witness in God's plan. Some have been **called** out of that lukewarm condition as a part of God's design and purpose. Few in Laodicea have been given the opportunity of being spiritually awakened and called to see. Two-thirds of the Church became a part of a desolation very early on and the remaining third was given warning by being scattered—spued out of God's mouth. Of all that remain, only a few will respond to God and have opportunity for another kind of calling to be a remnant of that final third that was scattered. If you have been called to that, are you repenting and becoming zealous to God?

Just as many were given the ability to see the truth through a calling to the Church in these end-times, with only a

few responding, there are many who were given the opportunity to be called out of a lukewarm spirit, out of a pride-filled spirit, out of spiritual slumber and sleep, yet have not responded to that calling. Indeed many are called, but few are chosen!

What a remarkable thing! An Ezekiel warning went out to this world at the end of this age. There is a witness of this world that would not hear God and there is a witness of a few who were called to a special ability to hear and choose that calling. An Ezekiel warning has also gone out to God's Church to the degree that God determined would be sufficient to fulfill His righteous judgment upon the Church, just as a warning went into all the world to the degree that God determined would fulfill His righteous judgment on this end-time world.

The primary thrust of God's warning to this world was over when Mr. Armstrong died. The primary thrust of a warning to the Church has also come to an end. There will be some who are able to receive benefit of both warnings as this end-time concludes during the great tribulation. Some in the world will yet benefit and some in the Church will yet benefit. But most will not!

If only it could sober each of us to the core of our being—the Kingdom of God is upon us! We are so very close to the opening of the final seventh seal. We are rapidly approaching the blowing of the first four trumpets that bring great physical tribulation on this earth. Remember—it will last but a short time, although it will be the worst of times upon all the history of mankind's 6,000 years on this earth—it will be followed by a new world. That gospel message means more now than ever before. The Kingdom of God follows this great tribulation. It is our hope and the only true hope of all mankind!