

# The Laodicean Era

## Who and When?



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**By Robert G. Theophilus**

**THIS BOOKLET IS NOT TO BE SOLD. The information provided is for the benefit of former members of the congregations of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), and of current and prospective members of God's Church.**

*Much confusion exists about who are the Laodiceans and when the Laodicean Era will start. Many are afraid of becoming Laodiceans and some think the Laodicean Era has already started. Who are they and when will that era begin?*



## *Preamble*

**Please Note:** All comments in brackets [ ] or in parentheses ( ) as well as highlighted text (bolded and/or in blue) are from the author of this study. Bible quotations are in maroon.

I think it is essential to clarify the question of the “Holy Spirit” before we begin this study. If we say that who or what is the “Holy Spirit” is the question that needs to be answered, we are starting from the assumption that there exists such a being as the Holy Spirit and that it is a separate and distinct being from God and the Word. The question which should be asked is who are the beings the Bible tell us are holy, whose composition is spirit and who have existed eternally? Either the Bible plainly tells us who are the separate and distinct beings that existed from all eternity who created all things (spirit beings and the material universe) or we have no way of getting an answer to our question.

### **The Holy Spirits of the God Family**

The Bible tells us in Gen 1:1 that:

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The Hebrew word translated “God” is “Eloheem” which is the plural form of “Eloah which means “God”. The word “Eloheem” refers to “gods.” It is a uniplural noun like family, group, team, etc. In the beginning, there was therefore more than one God being in existence but how many were there?

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth there was God and there was another being with God who was also God, the Word. How can these two beings both be God; isn't that impossible?

The word God indicates the kind of existence of these 2 beings: their nature is to be God in the same way that all human beings have the same human nature. However, having the same nature does not mean that all human beings constitute a single being; indeed, they are all separate and distinct beings with their own personalities. God and the Word have in common the same nature or, level and type of existence, but they are separate and distinct beings just like all human beings who have the same human nature are separate and distinct beings.

### **God the Father**

We read in the Bible that God became a father when the Word became flesh (Phi 2:5-8) by being born of woman after having been conceived in the virgin Mary by the holy spirit being called God (Luke 1:35). God from that point on became God the Father and the Word, who was born as the flesh-and-blood Jesus of Nazareth became God's Son or the Son of God. He was both fully God (his father was God and fully human (his mother was the virgin Mary).

Jesus was God the Father's only begotten son at the time when He was conceived in Mary's womb but He was not to be the only one begotten of the Father. God the Father is the holy spirit being in the Godhead that calls men to salvation.

**Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.**

**Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.**

**Joh 18:9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou [God the Father] gavest me have I lost none.**

**1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

### God the Word and Spokesman

The Bible term for being called is to be spiritually begotten by God the Father (1Pe 1:3). When we are begotten, we become a spiritual embryo that can be born again as a glorified spirit being with eternal life. Those begotten of the holy spirit God the Father who follow their calling are then able to come to the holy spirit being called the Word and Spokesman (John 6:44; 65; 18:9) who then teaches them. The glorified Jesus-Christ as God the Father's Word and Spokesman is the holy spirit being that works in the minds of God the Father's called and chosen ones.

**Joh 7:39** (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus had to first be glorified for it to be possible for Christians to have access to the holy spirit called the Word and Spokesman because the glorified Christ is the holy spirit being who works in the minds of God's saints (John 14:17) in the same way that Satan is the evil spirit that works in the minds of the children of disobedience (Eph2:2).

**Joh 14:17** Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he [Christ] dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. [On the day of Pentecost, it would be in them and in all true Christians.]

**Eph 2:2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, [Satan] the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The holy spirit God the Father calls men and those who follow their calling are then taught by the holy spirit called the Word and God the Father's Spokesman.

**Joh 14:26** But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

### The Holy Ghost

The expression “Holy Ghost” used in the Bible is in error as there are no ghosts in the Godhead but rather 2 beings that are holy (John 17:11; Isa 6:3) and spirit (John 4:24).

**Joh 17:11** And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

**Isa 6:3** And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy**, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

**Joh 4:24** **God is a Spirit:** and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

These 2 God beings who are holy and spirit are the holy spirit beings of the God family who existed in the beginning at the creation of all things.

**Joh 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

**Joh 1:2** The same was in the beginning with God.

**Joh 1:3** All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And, the Word who was with God is before all things i.e., *nothing* existed before He created them whether made of spirit or matter.

**Col 1:15 [Christ]** Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

**Col 1:16** For by him [the Word who became Jesus-Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

**Col 1:17** And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

In the beginning before anything either physical or spiritual was created, there was God and the Word who existed before all things and no other being is mentioned as having existed with them. There is no bib-

lical evidence that there ever existed a third, separate and distinct personage in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit” who dwelt in eternity with God and the Word.

### **God is a Family**

Throughout the Bible we can find many verses which clearly indicates the existence of family relations between God and the Word and God’s called, chosen and faithful.

**Mat 11:27** All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

**Mat 12:50** For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

**Joh 20:17** Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

God is clearly a family in which many can be ultimately born again by a resurrection from the dead to eternal, glorified spirit life in God’s Kingdom.

**Rom 8:29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [God’s Son] might be the firstborn among many brethren.

**Col 1:18** And he [the glorified Christ] is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Christ was the first to be born again by a resurrection from the dead to be followed by many brethren.

### **Bible Writing Convention**

The practice in the Bible has been to simply use the expression “the Holy Spirit” without indicating which God personage in the Godhead the expression represents. Over time, because of this practice, just about everybody has come to believe that the Holy Spirit is a separate and distinct God being in the Godhead but, there is no single verse or group of verses in the Bible that prove the existence of such a third being in the Godhead. The words “holy” and “spirit” are adjectives that describe the nature of

God the Father and of God the Word i.e., they are holy beings made of spirit.

Whenever we encounter the expressions the “Holy Spirit” or simply the “Holy Spirit” in the Bible we must look at the context to determine of which holy spirit being of the Godhead the Bible is talking about: the holy spirit, God the Father or the holy spirit, the Word and Spokesman.

The Word is the holy spirit being in the Godhead who carries out the instructions and wishes of the holy spirit, God. He is the faithful son who seeks to do his father’s will in all things. He is the member of the God family that did the work of creating the heaven and the earth, who ruled over ancient Israel through Moses and his human successors, He is the one who became a man who suffered and died to be God the Father’s perfect sacrifice for sin and make the salvation of mankind possible, etc. and He came to reveal the Father to those who follow the Father’s calling.

### **Making Things Clearer**

In this study, when referring to God’s spirit who, depending on the circumstances can be the holy spirit personage called God the Father or the holy spirit personage called God the Word and Spokesman, I will not capitalize either of the adjectives “holy” and “spirit”. This is in order to not perpetuate the false impression in the minds of readers that there is a 3rd being in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit.” Instead, I will refer to either of the holy spirits in the God family as being God’s spirit without capitalizing the word “spirit” to make it plain that we are not referring to a third God being in the God family called the “Holy Spirit” but to one of the 2 God beings in the Godhead.

God’s family is presently made up of 2 holy spirit beings to which are to be added thousands and possibly millions of other holy spirit beings when God’s plan of salvation for mankind has reached its end. The saints that endure in the faith until the end of their natural human life, will be resurrected as individual holy spirit beings in God’s Kingdom when it is established.

There are two studies which you can read regarding what is the “Holy Spirit” and decide for yourself in light of the Bible-based evidence offered if such a being exists in the Godhead. These studies are: [What is the Holy Spirit? Cliff Notes Version](#) and [Who or What is the Holy Spirit?](#)

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**T**his study already dates back many more years than I thought it did. It was written in October 2001 and it is amazing that time has gone by so fast. Still, the truth contained in this study remains unchanged and as valid today as it was when this study was first written as a means of ensuring that the knowledge and understanding of who are the Laodiceans and when the Laodicean Era Church appears would not be lost.

The knowledge of who is the Laodicean Church and of when it would appear has been something that has not been clear for the great majority of those who attended the services of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) in the days of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA).

Since the death of Mr. Armstrong and the destruction of the corporate body of God's Church this has become very evident with there being a great diversity of beliefs about the Laodiceans. Some say, the Laodicean Era started with the death of HWA; others say that all the false churches of God that have arisen after the death HWA are Laodicean churches except the one which they have adopted as being the continuation of God's one true Church. There is great confusion on this matter and no lack of individual opinions which unfortunately are not firmly based on the truth God gave His Church through HWA.

This study is wholly based on what HWA taught but which few apparently understood.

I am sharing this study with you as it was written now some 20 years ago and hopefully, it will make clear to those reading it, who are the Laodiceans and when the Laodicean Era of God's Church will begin.

Last Sabbath (October 20, 2001) we (the author and a few faithful) were going through an article by HWA on end-time prophecy called «1975 in Prophecy». In this article, HWA explains the sequence of events to occur leading up to the Second Coming of Christ.

I had always thought that the 5<sup>th</sup> seal of Revelation which the Church always used to say is the Great Tribulation i.e., the martyrdom of saints was something that was to occur after the events of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal, the heavenly signs which leads to the apparition of the Laodicean Church. HWA said that :

*The Laodicean era of the Church shall rise OUT OF, through and in the latter part of the Great Tribulation. They shall be IN it, and turn to God out of and durin it (Revelation 7:9-15). They come out of the Great Tribulation and are converted as a result of it, which will open their eyes to the fact that what the Philadelphia Church proclaims was true, although now, while we proclaim it, they are not heeding.*

(Ref. Letter to Co-Workers 81/01/20)

Since the Laodicean Church only appears in the latter part of the Great Tribulation i.e., after the great martyrdom of saints (the 5<sup>th</sup> seal events) and following the events of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal (the Heavenly Signs) and just before the beginning of the Day of the Lord (7<sup>th</sup> seal) this means that the Laodicean Era Church is not part of the great end-time martyrdom of saints. They are not part of it because at the time when the events of the 5<sup>th</sup> seal occur, the 7<sup>th</sup> Era Church has not yet come into being; the conversion of those who will constitute the 7<sup>th</sup> Era Church is yet future i.e., it occurs only after the events of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal (the Heavenly Signs) and just before the start of the Day of the Lord (the events of the 7<sup>th</sup> seal).

The Great Tribulation occurs in two parts; the first is the national captivity of end-time Israel (the physical descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh) and the second is the martyrdom of truly begotten children of God. Mr. Armstrong says :

*In Matthew 24:29 you read in your own Bible that the heavenly signs*

*in the sun, moon, and stars would occur immediately after the Great Tribulation. In Revelation 6 you saw with your own eyes that the heavenly signs in the sun and moon of the sixth seal follow immediately AFTER the Great Tribulation, or the martyrdom of saints, of the fifth seal. Also you saw there, that following these heavenly signs of the sixth seal was to come the terrible day of God's WRATH.*

(Ref. *Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last*)

This makes it clear that the Laodiceans are not in the Great Tribulation because at the time when the conversion of the individuals that will make up God's last Era Church occurs, the Great Tribulation (the 5<sup>th</sup> seal) is already over. HWA says that only in the Book of Revelation do we find the prophecies correlated in time order of their actual occurrence; so there is no great martyrdom to occur of the Laodiceans. This Church is to last between the 6<sup>th</sup> seal and the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet of the 7<sup>th</sup> seal; only a short time.

Mr. Armstrong says that :

*?The sixth seal, we have seen, will mark the beginning of the intervention of God in world affairs – the terrifying signs in the heavens – and then men shall cry out, "The terrible day of God's WRATH is come!"*

(Ref. *Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last*)

And to really make it clear beyond all doubt Mr. Armstrong adds: (from page 34 of *The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last*):

**Who Are the 144,000?**

*You have probably heard many interpretations. They are all in error. Men are unable to interpret this prophecy. The first thing to notice is that the TIME of the **sealing of this 144,000** is yet in the future—it is **after** the Great Tribulation and the heavenly SIGNS, and **just before** the plagues of God's Judgments! It has not happened yet!*

*Second, this prophecy is plain, and means just what it says—144,000 of the 12 tribes of Israel—12,000 of each tribe. Where are they today? Where are the lost ten tribes?*

*But these 144,000 are not all! "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and*

*kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands... And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9, 13-14).*

**And what is sealed in the foreheads?** They are sealed by the Holy Spirit, in their foreheads. If you will turn to chapter 14:1, you will see that it is the Father's name that is written there. Jesus' very last prayer for His Church was that they would be kept in the FATHER'S name. Today we find the churches of this world under every possible manmade name; many named after men. But 12 times in the New Testament His own Church is the Church OF God—yes, God's Church.

#### Who Constitute the Innumerable Multitude?

Now how about this innumerable multitude? They have come through THE Great Tribulation. God will not send His frightful PLAGUES to punish the world (NOT end-time Israel who already has disappeared as a nation), until He has first sent a great supernatural warning. God has warned the world through all His prophets—through His Son, Jesus Christ—He is warning the world right now through this very work. But God is a God of mercy and compassion. **He will yet warn this world once again—by supernatural signs, in the sun, the moon, and the stars.** God will leave men no excuse.

And after the Great Tribulation, when men are seized with stark terror at these supernatural heavenly signs, multiplied thousands will at last recognize that it is really God warning them! Yes, multiplied thousands who now hear this warning from God will not heed it now. They are deceived. They still believe and follow their various human leaders, or groups. Their minds are not fully opened to recognize this as God's last warning to this world! They are not repenting or turning to God, now! Oh, how well I know that! But when they see these things actually occur which they heard from no others—when they have seen how the world was deceived and isled about the Great Tribulation, and they have gone through it—

*when they see these terrifying supernatural SIGNS in the heavens, then, at last, hundreds of thousands of them — perhaps even some of you—will at last recognize the TRUTH, and at last turn to God in complete submission, fully repenting, and coming through Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world! We of this ministry well know that our real reward in the harvest of precious lives will mostly come after our labors are finished!*

(Ref. *Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last*)

What is becoming apparent here is that there is a progression in how God will deal with humans in the end. First, He will deal with end-time Israel, then He will turn His attention to all the non-Israelitish nations. First, the Gospel was preached to end-time Israel; then, it was preached to the world (1972). The same pattern was followed in the first century Church with the Gospel first being preached to Israel and Judah (Israel was then divided into two kingdoms) by the apostles and then to the Gentile nations by Paul. The very same pattern is followed in the end time. What is interesting to note here is that God's Laodicean Era Church will come mostly from the Gentile nations; they are the innumerable multitude. Israel will have 144,000 converted.

Then Mr. Armstrong had this to say about the Laodicean Era Church:

*Continue this prophecy. Next, when our Great Commission is in God's sight completed, we are to be taken—symbolically flown on the two wings of a great eagle—which could mean by a friendly government made friendly to us by my contacts with heads of so many governments these past 12 years—we shall be taken to a place of protection from the Great Tribulation, which in itself is the furious wrath of a mad and infuriated Satan (verse 14). While we are in this **place of safety three and a half years**, the **two witnesses** shall be **preaching to the whole world**, protected from Satan. But Satan in his mad wrath will then make war with the REMNANT Church. [This can't be the Laodicean Church as it has not then yet appeared. The remnant church at this point in time can only be those of national, physical Israel who repent during the Great Tribulation and are martyred by the Beast Power at the behest of the Great False Church of Revelation 17. This is end-time physical Israel in captivity during which time many who had not heeded God's warning given through Mr. Armstrong, repent and die as martyrs.] Finally, what of the Laodicean era of God's Church? Re-*

*member, it, too, is GOD's Church—having the commandments of God and Testimony or Word of Jesus (Revelation 12:17).*

***But that era of the Church is pictured in Matthew 25.*** Matthew 24 shows the sign Jesus gave prior to his coming to end the present world order, and the Great Tribulation, Day of the Lord and Second Coming.

*Matthew 25 shows the time just before Christ will return. It pictures the Laodicean Church as 10 virgins who took their lamps [their Bibles] and went forth to meet Christ at His coming. But five of them—half of the Church—took their lamps [Bibles] but without extra oil to light their lamps [having the Holy Spirit to enlighten their minds to UNDERSTAND the Bible]. Some translations render this into English indicating they were losing the Holy Spirit, because of negligence, lack of prayer, fellowship with the brethren and with God and Christ and being overcome with materialistic and worldly interest. Are some of us like that, even now? They all had oil but 50% took no extra oil with their lamps as the others had done.*

*While they—the backsiding half of the Church—were trying to get back closer to God, the coming of Christ shall take place, and the door into God's Kingdom will be SHUT in their faces! WHAT A TERRIBLE AND AWFUL TRAGEDY! It could happen to you or me.*

(Ref. Letter to Co-Workers 81/01/20)

According to HWA, half of the members of the Laodicean Church which arises out of the Great Tribulation [they are not killed and are not part of the 5<sup>th</sup> seal Great Martyrdom of Saints because they were not then converted; their conversion occurs only after the events of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal] lose their salvation because they drift back to the life they knew before their conversion and as a result are losing or no longer have enough of God's Holy Spirit to correctly understand their Bibles.

Mr. Armstrong says in lesson 3 of the AC BCC 32 lessons that :

*Obviously, then, the “saints”—true Christians of God's Church—*

*will be on the earth during the Great Tribulation—not up in heaven as proponents of the rapture theory believe! But Christ promises the “saints” a place of safety—on this earth. Take note, however, that not every Christian will have qualified himself for this protection, and **many will have to go through that Tribulation.***

(Ref. Lesson 3 AC BCC 32)

They would then be some of the true saints that are martyred by the Beast power during the Great Tribulation as the conversion of the Laodicean saints does not occur until the latter end of the Great Tribulation. These are saints who are presently part of God's Church and who are neglecting their Christian lives. As a result, they will not be found worthy to escape the Great Tribulation when it comes. These are Philadelphia Era saints who will be in the Great Tribulation.

But they are only a small part of the saints that will be martyred during the Great Tribulation or the events of the 5<sup>th</sup> seal. Mr. Armstrong has often said that people will not heed the warning message that he is preaching but they will remember it in the tribulation :

#### *World War Resumed!*

*All this is now only a few years off. WHEN we are stricken with the greatest national tragedy ever to befall a nation — people dying in nearly every home — your loved ones — perhaps your children, or your parents, and scores of your close friends — perhaps even YOURSELF dying in this calamity, and the nation's economic prosperity suddenly tail-spinning into its lowest ebb of depression, then the Nazi-Fascist colossus will strike its hydrogen-bomb blows — and another third of our populations will be killed — our major cities and industrial centers destroyed.*

*Only one in three of your friends — of your loved ones — will remain alive — UNLESS they heed the warning and come under God's divine protection according to HIS conditions!*

*And remember! Every individual will then stand on his own feet before God. YOU cannot secure the protection of your loved*

*ones. Nor can the prayers, the godliness or righteousness of any friend or loved one save you. Each individual must come to real repentance, total and unconditional surrender to GOD'S will, and His Word and its authority, through Christ as personal Saviour, in order to have the proffered divine protection from these impending catastrophes. See Ezek. 14:12-14; and Jer. 31:29-30.*

*I know this is not pleasant to contemplate! I know well, too, that it won't be believed by more than a few. I know only too well that our proud and stiff-necked nations will heedlessly refuse to take WARNING! But also I know that these prophecies are as certain as tomorrow's sun — unless our nations do heed God's warnings, repent and turn from their established ways and customs and return to ALMIGHTY GOD and HIS LAWS and WAYS!*

*And, knowing that such an unbelievable catastrophe is soon to strike, I HAVE TO WARN YOU!! You can read what God says to me in Ezekiel 33:1-6. THINK OF IT! Unbelievable? Preposterous? No, IT'S REAL — very soon, — of this very present generation — of all people you know now — ONLY ONE THIRD of them will be left alive!*

**Americans — Britons — Made SLAVES** *And that surviving third will be uprooted from their homes — transported like cattle as slaves to Europe, and probably some to South America (the Germans are fast gaining dominance and control in South America).*

*There they shall not only be forced under lashes of cruel task-masters to do the work of slaves — but **they will be forced to give up whatever belief they may have in real BIBLE Christianity!** They will be literally forced to accept the idolatrous PAGAN beliefs and customs that masquerade as Christianity, or state police will arrest them, and **they will be TORTURED inhumanly until they either give in, or die in martyrdom!***

*Yes, millions of lukewarm inactive professing Christians will suffer MARTYRDOM — and that before the anticipated*

*push-button leisure-year of 1975 dawns upon us! You'll read of this martyrdom — the Great Tribulation — in Mat. 24:9-10, 21-22; Rev. 17:6; 6:9-11; 12:11, and in many other verses. [professing Christians are members of the deceived Christianity of today who will repent during the GT, be converted to true Christianity and die martyred. these will also be Philadelphians in the Great Tribulation as the time of their conversion is during the Philadelphia Era; the Laodicean Era has not then yet started.]*

**PHOTO CAPTION:**

*A rally of unemployed at Madison Square Park in New York. The sign above speaker's stand proclaims "Jobs for all — at decent pay." This typical scene will soon become wide spread throughout western world. Economic ruin is coming!*

**PHOTO CAPTION:**

*The first beginnings of the new German Luftwaffe. German pilots and their American flight instructors head for their planes at Landsberg, southern Germany.*

**PHOTO CAPTION:**

*West German soldiers march to firing range carrying various American-made weapons and wearing American uniforms.*

*This coming **Great Tribulation** is not the Wrath of God upon the world's wicked — it is the wrath of Satan the devil upon Christians, and upon the democratic nations (Rev. 12:12-13). Millions of repenting SAINTS [were in the world but became converted only during GT remembering HWA's preaching which they had not heeded up to that time] will be IN it, and the very objects of it — because it is for their sake that God will intervene to CUT SHORT that hellish time of torture (Matt. 24:22). [These are the Philadelphian era saints in the Great Tribulation; those of God's Church who were lukewarm and were not taken to the place of safety and the professing Christians of this world who convert during the Great Tribulation.] This, I well know, is not the popular orthodox teaching of a "Christianity" that is a part of THIS WORLD and has LOST*

*the PURPOSE and the PLAN of God. But this is GOD'S TRUTH, straight and direct to YOU!*

***This [the Great Tribulation] is the impending time of SUPREME TROUBLE for Americans and Britons, and for all true Christians [these are Philadelphia era Christians as the Laodicean era only starts after the events of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal] who are not watching, praying constantly and so yielded to God's Will that they shall be accounted worthy to ESCAPE it all (Luke 21:36; Rev. 12:14)***

(Ref. 1975 in Prophecy)

This excerpt makes it clear that there are two categories of individuals that will go through the Great Tribulation : first, those saints of God's Philadelphia Era who are neglecting their Christian duties and secondly, the millions of Americans and Britons who have heard Mr. Armstrong giving them God's Ezekiel warning and who refused to heed it. This last group will repent while in captivity where they will remember the warning that had been given out and become converted after having seen these events come to pass. They repent, believe and the holy spirits of the God family come to dwell with them. In captivity they will be under the dominance of the Beast Power controlled by the Great Whore of Revelation 17 and will be forced under torture to renounce their true Bible belief [whatever true Bible knowledge they have] and if they refuse to do so, lose their lives.

This is the great martyrdom of saints that will constitute the Great Tribulation. The ante-type is always greater in fulfillment than the type. The type of the end-time martyrdom of saints by the Great Whore is the persecution and martyrdom of saints which lasted 1260 years. The ante-type in the end-time is a martyrdom of saints under the Great Whore which lasts 1260 days or 3 1/2 years. Millions were killed in the type and in the ante-type, an even greater number of saints will be killed. Mr. Armstrong says that during the great persecution that lasted 1260 years, over 50 million true and false Christians were killed.

This is new understanding which completely changes our previous comprehension of how end-time events were to occur. It was always thought that it was the Laodiceans who were to be in the Great Tribulation. **This comes from the false teachings we have been exposed to from end-of-the-WCG ministers and the false churches of God that sprang up after HWA's death; especially the Philadelphia Church of God.** This makes

it clear that they will not even be in it. In fact, God's Laodicean church will be made up of individuals who come out of the Great Tribulation and who, while in it, had not then yet repented. Their conversion occurs only at the time of the events of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal which take place after the Great Tribulation which are the events of the 5<sup>th</sup> seal. This is the cry that went out at midnight that the Bridegroom is coming; the 6<sup>th</sup> seal event is the sign of the imminent personal return of Christ.

Therefore, those who will be in the Great Tribulation are Philadelphian Era saints who are not praying always and watching so as to be found worthy to escape; they are not taken to a place of safety with the rest of the Philadelphians. And the others will be American and Britons who will be the 1/3 surviving the famine and the pestilence and the nuclear attack who will be taken captive by the Beast Power's armies, transported to Europe and South America and made slaves. Upon their conversion during the GT they become Philadelphia era saints too; the Laodicean era of God's church starting only after the Great Tribulation i.e., after the events of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal; the GT are the events of the 5<sup>th</sup> seal.

The Philadelphia Era therefore continues until the 6<sup>th</sup> seal as it is only at that time that the Laodicean Era Church appears. And as Mr. Armstrong says on tape, this era is to last but a short time and indeed it will. That would be between the time of their conversion during the 6<sup>th</sup> seal and the Second Coming of Christ at the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet of the 7<sup>th</sup> seal. HWA says that the events of the Day of the Lord would last about a year and the events of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet, the pouring out of the vial plagues would last an approximate 24-hour time period.

Therefore, it is true as HWA often said that the greatest fruit of his labour would be in the future i.e., during the Great Tribulation when millions will be converted and be martyred by the Beast Power under the direction of the Great Whore. The Philadelphia Era has a great number of saints but who appear only during the Great Tribulation. They have to give up their lives because they did not heed God's warning when it was given to them before the Great Tribulation. Not having heeded it, they must now go through the Great Tribulation and be martyred.

All of this matches up perfectly with everything Mr. Armstrong has ever taught. We had just never been given to understand it until now. It is doubtlessly a gift from God to us who are keeping the patience of His word when everybody else has gone their own ways. God is encouraging us to continue and is showing that He is among us though we continue to struggle against much sin that is in our lives; are not letting ourselves be discouraged and are calling on Him for the help we need to keep going when

we feel overwhelmed. It is at once very humbling and very encouraging to realize God is with us though we still are sinners. We have wonderful truth in these little clay pots which are our temporary bodies given us while we live out our lives whose purpose it is once called to resist Satan, yield to God and in this way allow God to build in us His Perfect, Holy, Righteous Character.

## References

All are available from: <http://www.herbert-armstrong.org/> and <http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.com/>

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