
The End-Time Elijah - Has He Already Come?

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"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."—Malachi 4:5-6

The Prophet Elijah came on the scene at a time when the Northern Kingdom of Israel was reeling in idolatry and religious confusion. Yet for a short time, this great man succeeded in turning the hearts of many of the people to the God of their fathers (cf. 1 Kings 18). For more than two decades, Elijah proclaimed God's Truth—not only as a witness to rulers, powerful men and a wayward society, but also in a more in-depth manner to the three schools of the prophets he oversaw. Finally, the Eternal decided to take him away by a fiery chariot into the sky. In later years, the Jews would look for him to return—a notion fueled by the prophecy quoted above from the book of Malachi.

But like all men, Elijah died. And he will not be resurrected until it is time for ALL of God's people to be raised in perfection (cf. Heb. 11:39-40)—at the END of the year-long "dreadful day" of the Lord. How, then, would the prophecy be fulfilled that Elijah would come *before* that time? Part of the answer can be found in a statement Jesus Christ made in Matthew 11: "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John [the Baptist]. And if you are willing to receive it, **he is Elijah who is to come**" (vv. 13-14). So was John the Baptist actually Elijah the person? Clearly not. Indeed, when the Jewish priests and Levites asked John, "Are you Elijah?," he replied, "I am not" (John 1:21)—that is, he was not the same person who had walked the earth 900 years earlier. So why did Christ identify him as Elijah, as prophesied in Malachi?

The explanation can be found in the message the archangel Gabriel brought to John's father before John was born: "And [John] will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in **the spirit and power of Elijah**, '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 1:16-17). In essence, John came holding a similar office and bearing a similar commission to that of Elijah—to do an Elijah-like work. John was empowered by the same motivating force and spirit that Elijah was.

There are other elements to John's mission that should be brought out. His father Zecharias prophesied of him, "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; **for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways**, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (vv. 76-79). John was no doubt aware that he was to fulfill these prophecies as his father must have told him of them as he grew up.

Indeed, when he denied being Elijah, and the priests and Levites asked just who he was then, John identified himself as "the voice of one" foretold in Isaiah 40 (John 1:21-23), and the Gospels confirm this (Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:3-6). Notice the citation in Luke: "And [John] went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: **'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled and every**

mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'""

Zecharias' prophecy was in part a reiteration of Isaiah's prophecy—and of another prophecy about preparing the way before the Lord that had been given in Malachi. Jesus said that John "is he of whom it is written [in Malachi 3:1]: **'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You'**" (Matt. 11:10; Luke 7:27). This prophecy is directly linked to Isaiah 40 in Mark 1:2-3. Putting all this together, we see that the "voice of one" and the "messenger"—both preparing the way for the Lord—as well as the "Elijah to come," are all the same prophesied figure. But there is a major element yet missing here.

John certainly prepared the way before Christ's human ministry—but that did not immediately precede the "dreadful day of the Lord" heralding Christ's return in power and glory. When the disciples witnessed what is known as the "Transfiguration"—a vision of the Kingdom wherein Jesus, Moses and Elijah were all glorified—they asked Christ, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus answered and said to them, **'Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him....'** Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist" (Matt. 17:10-12). They understood this because, as we've seen, He had earlier *told* them that John was "Elijah to come" in Matthew 11. But in Matthew 17, John the Baptist had already been *dead* for some time (13:1-12). So in the passage just quoted, Christ was referring to *more than one* "Elijah"—one who had "come already" (i.e. John) and one whom Christ said "is [yet] coming" or "SHALL first come" (KJV) and "WILL restore all things." The restoring of all things, then, is another element of the Elijah commission—to be fulfilled by, at least, the later Elijah.

Now some have taken Christ's statement that "indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things" to be a mere reiteration of the scribes' position that "Elijah must come first"—and that Christ was pointing to John the Baptist alone—not any future person—as fulfilling the Elijah prophecy. This would mean that John had *restored all things*—whatever that would then have meant, as we otherwise have no record of him doing so. However, whether John restored anything or not is somewhat irrelevant since the way Christ said what He did certainly seems to indicate that there would have to be an Elijah in the *future*—that is, after the time of His statement—*besides* the one who had already come and was now dead. Adding weight to this is the fact that the scribes are not recorded as having mentioned that the coming Elijah would "restore all things." Neither is there any prophecy that he would do so recorded in the Old Testament for them to have been quoting. There is, then, no real support to the conclusion that Christ was reiterating an already-extant idea when He said this Elijah "WILL restore all things." Indeed, this definitely appears to be a *new* prophecy Jesus was giving. We are, therefore, much safer in concluding that He was speaking of a yet future individual—making the Elijah prophecy *dual*.

Then, there are those who do believe that Christ must have been speaking of a *future* Elijah who would restore all things, but think that He was referring to *Himself*—since the return and rule of Jesus Christ will mark the "times of restoration of all things" (Acts 3:19-21). Now it's true that Jesus will be the *ultimate* Restorer. But remember that He said the future Elijah would come "first"—that is, *before* the time portrayed in the Transfiguration and thus *prior to* the establishment of His Kingdom. And in this regard, it makes absolutely no sense that Jesus would precede His own coming. While He did precede His Second Coming when He came in the flesh, this was certainly not the future event that He was speaking of—as He, like John, had already come.

The understanding that makes by far the most sense is that John, coming in the spirit and power of Elijah before Christ's First Coming, was the forerunner of a future person, not Christ, who would come in the same spirit and power before Christ's *Second* Coming as a later fulfillment of the Elijah prophecy.

Have the prophecies of the end-time Elijah been fulfilled yet? Are they now *being* fulfilled? Or are we still waiting for the Elijah to appear on the world scene? And just what value does this understanding have for us today?

Past Teachings

We understand the Work of the Global Church of God to be a continuation of the ministry of the late Herbert W. Armstrong, who pastored the vast majority of God's people for more than 50 years. Ever since the Apostolic Era, numerous apostasies and scatterings due to persecution had taken their toll on the true Church. Over the centuries, many important biblical doctrines had been lost. And when Mr. Armstrong came among God's people around 1930—after being called directly through the Scriptures—he found a few thousand people stagnant in growth and "ready to die," as the "Sardis" Church is described (Rev. 3:1-2).

Yet Mr. Armstrong, ordained under their ministry, was zealous to proclaim and live by the *whole* truth, as God revealed it to him from His Word. And God blessed him for it. Many vital truths were restored through him. And from a humble beginning of 19 people in Eugene, Oregon, the Church Mr. Armstrong pastored grew to an international attendance of around 150,000. Millions heard the true Gospel preached through the mass media. And world leaders actually sat down with Mr. Armstrong and had the message communicated to them directly.

Over time, Mr. Armstrong—in looking back over what God had accomplished through him—came to see himself as fulfilling the prophecies of the end-time Elijah. Indeed, he said so in numerous sermons and publications (see box "Herbert W. Armstrong's Statements on the Elijah"). In fact, this was the official doctrine—that is, teaching—of the Worldwide Church of God. For instance, notice this from Lesson 18 of the 32-lesson *Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course*:

"Recall that John the Baptist was the 'messenger' whom Malachi prophesied would come to *prepare the way* before Christ's ministry during His first coming to earth (Mal. 3:1; Mark 1:4, 7-8; Luke 1:13-17). An angel prophesied that John would go *ahead* of Christ "in the spirit and power of Elias (Elijah), to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and... to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17).

"1. After John was put in prison and Christ had begun His ministry, did Jesus prophesy that *another* 'Elijah' was yet to come? Matt. 17:10-11. Is it clear that John the Baptist was a *type* of yet another Elijah? Verses 12-13. Did Malachi also prophesy of another Elijah's coming? Mal. 4:5. What would this 'Elijah' do? Verse 6; Matt. 17:11.

"COMMENT: These verses show that John was a *type* of the future 'Elijah'—one who would also be sent by God to the world in the spirit and power of Elijah the prophet, this time *prior* to Christ's coming in great power and glory as World Ruler (Mal. 3:1-6). *Before* the day of the Lord, a human messenger would be commissioned by God to prepare a spiritual people for God, and turn the hearts of the children to the fathers and vice versa *before* the second coming of Christ—much the same as John did before Jesus began His ministry.

"Jesus also said the Elijah to come would 'restore all things' (Matt. 17:11)... Just as Christ shall restore the government of God over the entire earth, the one who was to come in the spirit and power of Elijah would restore it *in God's Church*. God's government *has been* restored in the one true Church of God! In the process of restoring the government of God in the Church through **the modern Elijah**, God has used **him** to restore many related truths. Of primary importance was the restoration of Christ's true gospel of the Kingdom of God! That gospel was restored when Pastor General **Herbert W. Armstrong** of the Worldwide Church of God first went on the air with 'The World Tomorrow' radio program" (pp. 13-14).

Moreover, even for some time after Mr. Armstrong's death, this was still the official position of the Church. Mr. Armstrong's successor Joseph Tkach Sr. and the WCG Editorial Staff printed the 18 truths restored by Mr. Armstrong with the following as part of the introduction: "Shortly before the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord, someone would come in the spirit and the power of Elijah... and would restore all things to the Church.... Though Mr. Armstrong didn't know it at the time God began to call him, God had a lifelong job for him: to restore to His Church truth that the centuries had dimmed" (*Worldwide News*, Aug. 25, 1986).

But over time the official teaching was changed. Two years after Mr. Armstrong's death, Mr. Tkach wrote, "Just as Malachi prophesied of John the Baptist and just as the angel Gabriel expounded, a people would be prepared for God. From the Ephesian era until now, the Church of God fulfills that role of preparing a people for God" (*Worldwide News*, Feb. 15, 1988). And of course, as more time went on, the WCG abandoned *many* of Mr. Armstrong's teachings—even essentially rejecting him, as being a false minister.

In 1993, when the Global Church of God was beginning, many people were anxious to see where we would stand on the Elijah question. At the time that I, Raymond McNair, came to Global in April of that year, Roderick Meredith and I were in almost complete doctrinal agreement—as we had been for the past 50 years. But a significant point about which we then *disagreed* was that concerning the Elijah to come. I firmly believed that Mr. Armstrong *had* fulfilled this prophetic role. Dr. Meredith, however—while rejecting the idea that the Church in general primarily fulfills this role—did not believe that Mr. Armstrong had fulfilled it either. The reason he gave was that Mr. Armstrong and the Work he did weren't well enough known—that Mr. Armstrong didn't make a big enough impact on the world to qualify him as the one who fulfilled the Elijah prophecies. I heartily disagreed. Furthermore, over the course of Global's six-year existence, our ministers had numerous discussions with Dr. Meredith—at private ministerial lunches and doctrinal meetings—concerning this question. But in all those discussions, he held steadfast to his position.

Now I must say here that I believed this to be his private opinion—even if made in a public context. After all, our stated objective early on was to stick to the doctrines taught at the time of Mr. Armstrong's death unless there was a *consensus* among the leading ministry that a point should be changed. Most of the ministers I spoke to about this believed that Mr. Armstrong *was* the Elijah to come—indeed this was the prevailing belief. Although Dr. Meredith talked to us a number of times about the Doctrinal Team officially taking up the Elijah question, we never did. However, I have since learned that personal correspondence department (PCD) letters were being sent out with Dr. Meredith's viewpoint on the matter as Global's official position. This should never have happened—though those in PCD were not to blame as the Church's position had essentially been misrepresented to them.

Here's an example of a response Dr. Meredith gave in 1993: "You asked 'Was Mr. Armstrong Elijah?'... The original Elijah was well-known to all Israel. And the second Elijah, John the Baptist, also virtually 'shook' the whole nation (Mark 1:5, 'Then ALL the land of Judea, and those from

Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins'). But in my own broad experience, and through extensive interviews and research, it becomes very obvious that Mr. Armstrong was virtually unknown to at least two-thirds or three-fourths of the American people. And all the leading men in the Worldwide Church of God's British Work have told me that even Mr. Armstrong's name would not be recognized by ninety-nine percent of the British people—let alone what he preached. So it may be that God will raise up a powerful spiritual leader just before the Great Tribulation, and that this man will perform great miracles and shake the nations! In fact, he might end up being one of the 'two witnesses.' However, Mr. Armstrong did do an Elijah-like Work to the extent he could."

Interestingly, Dr. Meredith related to a number of us that he felt God would use *him* to "really shake the nation and the world" with a powerful end-time message. Let it be stated here that we do not agree with his assessment of the scope of Mr. Armstrong's work, as will shortly be explained.

Herbert W. Armstrong's Statements on the End-Time Elijah

Good News, April 1980, pp. 25-26:

"I did not know it as a young man, late teens, 20s and into my 30s, but God was guiding my life from birth.... Jesus Christ, through His written Word, opened my mind to the PRIME BASIC TRUTHS He wanted me to have in starting me out as His servant.... God's TIME had come! **His time for one, of whom John the Baptist was type and forerunner, to prepare for Christ's SECOND coming....** I did not seek these basic foundations of TRUTH of my own volition! Jesus Christ revealed them.... He was preparing one called and chosen by God, even against that one's will, for an important service IN RESTORING THE LAW AND GOVERNMENT OF GOD to earth—even in the comparatively small Worldwide Church of God. **He was preparing one whom HE conquered and brought to repentance and faith, for this great END-TIME commission.**"

Worldwide News, March 6, 1981, pp. 10-11:

"John the Baptist was a man in the power and spirit of Elijah. John the Baptist came to prepare the way before the first coming of Christ. He was a type of someone to prepare the way for the Second Coming of Christ. So now prior to the Second Coming of Christ, there is someone... with a voice in the spiritual wilderness... crying out amid religious confusion... and preparing the way not for a physical Jesus, but a glorified Christ.... I'm going to say something to you now, that I would not have said five or six years ago under any circumstances. **I DON'T GO OUT TRYING TO FULFILL PROPHECY. BUT Jesus said, BY THEIR FRUITS YOU KNOW.** And sometimes you look back on fruits and you can tell some things you couldn't tell in advance before the fruits had been performed.... God was going to raise up SOMEONE who is going to prepare the way for the Second Coming and calling people, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. That's exactly what Elijah did physically. He reminded them that they had gotten away from the Kingdom and the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, and needed the RESTORING OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD. And now before the Second Coming, as John the Baptist

fulfilled that before the first coming, someone had to build the spiritual temple. Of course, God is doing it all. Christ is the One who is doing it.... **God has built it, but He has used me....** Do you think that has happened? Do you think we're near the time of the coming of Christ? Has anyone proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom of God? Has anyone proclaimed the law of God? Has anyone been calling on them to repent?... **The job God has called me to do is a prophesied job. It has been being done."**

Co-worker Letter, March 19, 1981:

"As John the Baptist prepared the way, in the PHYSICAL wilderness of the Jordan River for the first coming of the HUMAN Jesus (both man and God), then coming to His MATERIAL temple, and to His PHYSICAL people Judah, ANNOUNCING the Kingdom of God to be set up more than 1,900 years later, so God would use a human messenger in the SPIRITUAL wilderness of 20th-century religious confusion, to be a voice CRYING OUT the gospel of the KINGDOM OF GOD, about the SPIRITUAL CHRIST, coming in SUPREME POWER AND GLORY to His SPIRITUAL TEMPLE, to actually ESTABLISH that spiritual KINGDOM OF GOD. **Brethren, HAS THAT BEEN DONE BY THIS CHURCH?** Did God raise up a one-man LEADERSHIP [a 'voice of one'] to be used by Him... in proclaiming after 1,900 years the true GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD in ALL THE WORLD—to even go to kings and heads of nations (Rev. 10:11)—in bringing the Church back to the faith once delivered (Jude 3)? **HAS THIS HAPPENED, IN YOUR DAYS, AND HAS GOD BROUGHT YOU INTO THIS PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT AS A PART OF IT? HAS ANYONE ELSE DONE IT?"**

Sermon, October 2, 1982:

"Jesus said the Elijah shall yet come and restore all things. [The original] Elijah did not restore what was taken away.... The government of God was taken away. It was to be restored.... **God raised me up to restore it. God raised me up to restore the government of God.** But it is only restored so far in the Church. I have no authority from God, no ability, to restore the government of God any further than just over you brethren in the Church. **But that has been done. That has been done, brethren.** You go back and read Malachi 3:1-5 and Malachi 4. [And] where Jesus said, 'Elijah truly shall come'—even after John the Baptist was put in prison, he was yet to come. He [the Elijah] was to restore. John the Baptist didn't restore. You'd better realize what this Church is and what you are behind when you say you are behind me 100 percent."

Mystery of the Ages, 1985, pp. 9-10, 290-291:

"**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 is 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....' (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... refers to a human messenger preparing the way before Christ's now imminent Second Coming....

"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 *aphysical* 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!...

"It is revealed in Malachi 3:1-5 and 4:5-6 that God would raise up one in the power and spirit of Elijah, shortly prior to the Second Coming of Christ. In Matthew 17:11 Jesus said, even after John the Baptist had completed his mission, that this prophesied Elijah 'truly shall first come, and restore all things.' Although it is plainly revealed that John the Baptist had come in the power and spirit of Elijah, he did not restore anything. The human leader to be raised up somewhat shortly prior to Christ's Second Coming was to prepare the way—prepare the Church—for Christ's coming, and restore the truth that had been lost through the preceding eras of the Church. Also a door was to be opened for this leader and/or the Philadelphia era of the Church to fulfill Matthew 24:14: 'And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come'.... **These prophecies have now definitely been fulfilled.**"

Last Sermon, Feast of Trumpets, Sept. 16, 1985:

"There was an *Elijah* to come and to restore things *in the Church*. **THAT HAS HAPPENED** and what has been restored is the GOVERNMENT OF GOD—and many of the truths, at least *17 or 18 principal*, vital doctrines of truth, have been added to about the three that had survived in the Sardis era of the Church."

Can We Identify Him?

So was Herbert W. Armstrong the Elijah to come? Or will it be someone else—perhaps one of the two witnesses? Remember that there was to be a "voice of ONE crying in the wilderness"—not the voice of TWO witnesses. What is clearly indicated is a *lone voice* in a wilderness of spiritual confusion—one man fulfilling this role, just as John the Baptist did. Now that doesn't mean this person would be *absolutely* alone and would have no help. Elijah ran three schools of the prophets—in Jericho, Bethel and Gilgal—and his students, including Elisha, assisted him. John the Baptist also had disciples (John 3:25). And in an interesting parallel to Elijah, Herbert Armstrong founded three Ambassador College campuses—in California, Texas and England—to train ministers to assist him in his work. Still, Mr. Armstrong could clearly be described as the "voice of ONE."

What *message* was to be conveyed? Continuing in Isaiah 40, the commission is to announce how fleeting this life is and the importance of trusting in God's Word—and to warn that God will destroy those who don't (vv. 6-8). John the Baptist preached a warning of the "wrath to come" (Matt. 3:7). But he also came to "give knowledge of salvation" (Luke 1:76), preaching a "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). Remember his famous announcement? "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). But the Elijah was also to lead "Zion," the Church, in relaying a message of good news about the future, saying, "**Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him**" (Is. 40:10). In this spirit, John preached the Kingdom of God (Matt. 3:1-2). And it cannot be disputed that Mr. Armstrong preached ALL of these important elements of the Elijah's message—indeed, he restored a great deal of understanding about each one mentioned.

What was to be the *purpose* of the message? As so many verses we've looked at say, it was to prepare the way of the Lord—specifically, to prepare a *people* for the Lord (Luke 1:17). This preparation was to be done, as we've seen, by giving this people the knowledge of salvation, by giving "light to those who sit in darkness" and by guiding our feet "into the way of peace" (v. 79). God's Word—His Truth (John 17:17)—is the "light" that guides us (Ps. 119:105). But what people were to be prepared? Remember, the "messenger" of Malachi prepares the way for Christ to return to His temple (3:1). Today that temple is spiritual—the Church (Eph. 2:19-22). And Mr. Armstrong certainly restored and taught God's Truth to the Church, preparing its members with the true knowledge of salvation. Indeed, concerning the way of peace just mentioned, national leaders saw Mr. Armstrong as an *ambassador* for world peace. And so he was.

Then there is the commission in Malachi 4:5-6 that the Elijah would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers lest God strike the earth with a curse—that is, wipe out its inhabitants. We have often associated these verses with someone strengthening families, especially within God's Church. And there is no doubt that Mr. Armstrong did this. Besides restoring the truth about the *very purpose* of the family, he taught parents the importance of loving and properly

rearing their children. And for the development and godly training of the Church's young people, Mr. Armstrong instituted three Imperial Schools, established several summer camps, published *Y.E.S. Bible Lessons* and the *Youth* magazine, and created Youth Opportunities United (YOU)—all for turning our young people's hearts to God and their parents. But though all of this may be intended by Malachi's prophecy, there may also be a dual application.

Turning the hearts of the children to the fathers is specifically interpreted in Luke 1 as turning "many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God" and turning "the disobedient to the wisdom of the just"—again, to "make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (vv. 16-17). This makes sense because immediately before giving the Elijah prophecy in Malachi 4, God says, "**Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb [Mount Sinai] for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments**" (v. 4). Essentially, then, we may perhaps understand the prophecy this way. The "fathers" are the patriarchs and prophets, whose hearts' desire was for their descendants to be blessed through obedience to the Lord, which they taught. The Elijah to come would proclaim their wisdom and instruction about obeying God to the disobedient descendants of Israel in his generation—as the original Elijah did in his day among the Northern Kingdom of Israel and as John the Baptist did in his day among the Jews of Judea (in both cases, only *part of* Israel). Thereby, the Elijah would turn the hearts of many of these "children" to the "wisdom of the just"—to obeying God.

Mr. Armstrong definitely did this. Perhaps as many as 20 million people have read his book, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, telling the modern Israelites their identity. Even "British Israelists" acknowledge that he did more for this understanding than anyone in modern times. Also more than anyone else in the modern era, Mr. Armstrong reintroduced God's law, and the need to obey it, to a wayward society. Seventh-day Adventists have acknowledged him as single-handedly doing more for the Christian observance of the Sabbath than anyone else in this century. Furthermore, God used Mr. Armstrong to bring back many important statutes, such as the Holy Days. Though not keeping them, a number of evangelical preachers today are teaching the significance of God's Festivals—understanding that seems to have come, directly or indirectly, from the work of Mr. Armstrong. But thankfully many people *are* keeping them—many people who have come into the Church of God, spiritual Israel (Gal. 6:16), as a result of Mr. Armstrong's ministry. And because of this—because many have become the elect of God and are remembering to obey the law that Moses delivered—the Almighty will not eradicate mankind (Matt. 24:22).

When was the Elijah to appear on the scene? "Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5). Of course, John the Baptist did so in that he came *long* before the terrible time described here. However, we can be confident that the later Elijah would not precede the day of the Lord by hundreds or thousands of years as John did. Why? Because Malachi 3:1 says that Christ would come "suddenly" after the Elijah messenger's work. John, the first messenger, immediately preceded Christ's First Coming. And to ultimately fulfill this dual prophecy, the later Elijah would appear soon before Christ's *Second* Coming. Mr. Armstrong fits this picture also. We have numerous proofs that his work was done in the last days. Indeed, we *must* be living in the end time—unless our whole understanding of end-time prophecy is completely wrong. And as everything fits so well, that seems extremely unlikely. Furthermore, the fact that Mr. Armstrong died before the Great Tribulation poses no problem. For as the two witnesses prophesy from the beginning of the Tribulation until three days before Christ's return (Rev. 11), it is evident that the "voice of one" would *precede* them.

Next, let's observe the fact that God said He would send Elijah "the prophet." Indeed, the original Elijah was a prophet. And so was John the Baptist—in fact, Christ called him "*more than a prophet*" (Luke 7:26). Some have argued that this disqualifies Mr. Armstrong since he wasn't a prophet—and then point to the prophesying of the two witnesses. To answer this, let's first notice a problem in that

only "the prophet" is in quotes above. The Bible says "Elijah the prophet"—or simply, the Prophet Elijah. It doesn't say "a prophet in the spirit of Elijah." Indeed, just as the Elijah to come is not Elijah himself, there is no clear requirement that he be a prophet either. Rather, he simply comes in the spirit and power of Elijah the prophet.

Yet let's carry this further and, for the moment, assume that being a "prophet" *is* a requirement. Now it's true that Mr. Armstrong claimed he was not a prophet in the sense of seeing visions or actually hearing God tell him what to say: "Emphatically I am NOT a prophet, *in the sense of* one to whom God speaks specially and directly, revealing personally a future event to happen or new truth, or new and special instruction direct from God—separate from, and apart from what is contained in the Bible" (*Tomorrow's World*, Feb. 1972, p. 1). But Mr. Armstrong long taught that "prophesying" could be interpreted as simply *speaking for God*—that is, *inspired preaching* from the Bible (cf. p. 1). Indeed, though John the Baptist *may* have heard a supernatural voice or received visions from God, we have no record that he did. He may have simply communicated the meaning of Old Testament prophecies. Yet we would all acknowledge him as an inspired preacher who, Christ explained, was a prophet. Likewise, although the *two witnesses* are to "prophesy," the Bible doesn't specifically say whether or not they will see visions or hear voices. As for Mr. Armstrong, then, we certainly believe that he was often inspired in preaching from the Word of God.

Besides that, we understand that Mr. Armstrong was an *apostle* who was taught what to say directly by Jesus Christ—that is, by the Bible, which is essentially Jesus Christ, the *Word of God*, in print. **And the office of apostle, it should be realized, supersedes that of prophet—and includes it.** Paul wrote that Christ "gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists [i.e. preachers of the Gospel], and some pastors [i.e. shepherds] and teachers" (Eph. 4:11). That these are ministerial ranks and not merely separate job functions is apparent from the fact that some of the "tasks" described are the same. For instance, *apostle* means "one sent forth"—that is, with the Gospel—and *evangelist* means "preacher of the Gospel." What's the difference? Their scope of oversight and accompanying ministerial authority. As far as job functions go, notice that each succeeding rank includes the functions of those beneath it. No wonder we find the apostles recording prophecies in their writings—they were also prophets in function, as well as evangelists, shepherds and teachers. Of course, oftentimes they were merely giving inspired explanations of prophecies that had already been given in the Old Testament—just as Mr. Armstrong did.

We have always used Amos 3:7—"Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets"—as part of the reason Mr. Armstrong's ministry existed. Were we not, then, attributing to him a prophetic role? And perhaps most significant of all in this regard is the fact that **the whole panorama of end-time prophecy was to be opened during the time of the sixth "head" of the Holy Roman Empire.** Remember "five have fallen, one IS, and one is yet to come"? (Rev. 17:10; cf. *The Beast of Revelation*, pp. 36-37). And it *was* opened at this time—to primarily one man, Herbert W. Armstrong. Clearly, he played an important end-time role in generally revealing the events of the last days to God's people—indeed, with more clarity than ever before, as these prophecies were "closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Dan. 12:9). His preaching from the Bible was, therefore, *specially* inspired—not just as any minister expounding the Scriptures. It is therefore not at all far-fetched to see Mr. Armstrong as occupying a prophetic office—since, like John the Baptist, he was apparently "*more than a prophet.*"

Of course, **the strongest supporting evidence we have for Mr. Armstrong being the Elijah to come is what he RESTORED to the Church.** Remember, Christ said the end-time Elijah would

"restore all things." Now as we've seen, the Bible does elsewhere mention the "times of restoration of all things," but this clearly refers to the reign of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21)—when God's direct rule and precious Truth will be restored to this earth as a whole. The Elijah work occurs *before* Christ's return—preparing the way. The restoration under the end-time Elijah is clearly on a smaller scale. Does he, then, restore God's way, including God's government, to the people of physical Israel? No—as they are destroyed "for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6) and will not repent, as many scriptures show, until after Christ returns. What Mr. Armstrong said makes much more sense—that the restoration described is to *God's Church*, those who are truly His people. And what Mr. Armstrong did restore to the Church is staggering to grasp. As Joseph Tkach and the Worldwide Editorial Staff noted in the 1986 article mentioned earlier, "Without Herbert W. Armstrong's legacy of these 18 restored truths—there isn't much left." Further, consider that if Mr. Armstrong *wasn't* the Elijah to come, the restoration is yet to happen. This would mean that we are still far from the faith once delivered—and that either Mr. Armstrong was wrong about most of what he said or the truth he restored is insignificant with respect to what is *still* to be restored from the Apostolic Era. Yet can you imagine all that Mr. Armstrong restored—which includes the understanding of who and what God is, as well as the overall purpose and plan of God for mankind—being paled into insignificance? This seems highly unlikely.

Scope of the Elijah Work

But what about the scope and magnitude of the end-time Elijah's work? We've already seen the opinion of some that this person would be world-renowned, shaking the nations with miracles and the message he preached. But the Bible doesn't say this. Now it's true that the original Elijah performed miracles—eight are recorded in Scripture. Moreover, he proclaimed a drought upon Israel that lasted a few *years*, and he had 450 false prophets executed (1 Kings 18). But did he really shake the nations? The Bible says that there were many widows in Israel but Elijah was sent to only one in a neighboring country (Luke 4:25). And though he was known to Israel's king, Elijah usually went unheeded. The queen wasn't afraid of his miracles—even threatening to kill him after he had the false prophets executed. He didn't preach to Judah at all, though it was just a few miles to the south. And although his ministry spanned around 25 years or so, he was unknown in the greatest nations of his day—Assyria and Egypt.

What about John the Baptist? Dr. Meredith stresses that "ALL the land of Judea" came out to John (Mark 1:5). According to Flavius Josephus, that would constitute just a few million people at most. But it should be noticed in the same verse that "ALL [were] baptized by him... confessing their sins." Yet he called the people a "generation of vipers" (Luke 3:7 KJV). So, obviously, he would not have baptized *all* of them. What must be meant is that people from all over Judea came out to him and he baptized all those among them who confessed their sins. He probably baptized a few thousand—or a few *tens* of thousands, at most. Remember, John was a voice of one crying out in the wilderness. And although this was literal, we should also see it the way we do today. His voice was lost amid the general religious confusion of the day.

The Bible also says that "**John did no miracle**" (John 10:41 KJV)—that's right, not even one! Consider too that his ministry was extremely short. "Assuming that John began his ministry shortly before he baptized Jesus, it lasted about a year and a half" (*Halley's Bible Handbook*, p. 497). And how well-known was his work throughout the vast Roman Empire? It wasn't. Furthermore, unlike Elijah, who preached to Israel, John preached to only the remnant of Judah and didn't go to the Ten Tribes at all. Although Jesus Christ was "well known" for a time also (Mark 6:14), this was mainly in a local sense. And even in Judea, He had to be kissed by his betrayer to be recognized (Matt 26:48). It should,

of course, be noted that Jesus *eventually* became the most famous person in the history of the world—at least in name—while John and Elijah, like other major biblical characters, were posthumously *among* the most famous.

So there is really no biblical requirement that the Elijah to come be extremely well known during his ministry or that he shake the nations with miracles—or that he even perform miracles at all. Nevertheless, in the case of Mr. Armstrong, God *did* perform miracles through him. Though not highly visible, like Elijah calling fire down from heaven, Mr. Armstrong certainly had the miraculous "signs of an apostle"—"signs, wonders and mighty deeds" (2 Cor. 12:12)—such as divine healing, casting out demons and doing a great work. Indeed, the organization that God built through Mr. Armstrong was *quite* miraculous in its development and growth—a truly "mighty deed."

Notice the scope of what Mr. Armstrong did with God's help, after beginning with only 19 people. He trained thousands of ministers, teachers, office personnel, etc. to serve in the Work of God. Hundreds of congregations were raised up all over the globe, and were pastored by hundreds of ministers, who were well-trained at the three Ambassador College campuses to serve the needs of those who were baptized and became members of the Worldwide Church of God. Mr. Armstrong and those working under him probably baptized more than 125,000 people during the course of his ministry. As mentioned earlier, even after thousands had died through natural death or had dropped out of the Church, about 150,000 were in regular attendance at Sabbath services when Mr. Armstrong died. At its apex, the *Plain Truth* magazine had more than eight million subscribers—more than *Time* and *Newsweek*—and thus an estimated 20 million people reading it each month. One in eight Canadian homes received it! The *Good News* magazine, the *Worldwide News* and many other publications were sent out to hundreds of thousands. Hundreds of powerful booklets, books and reprint articles—along with a well-written Bible correspondence course—were produced and mailed out from Pasadena by the millions. Over several decades, the *World Tomorrow* radio and television broadcasts were heard and viewed by many millions, with weekly responses at the end ranging anywhere from 20,000 to 80,000. In fact, the telecast was one of the top religious programs in the country. So whereas John the Baptist preached to mere thousands for just a year and a half, Mr. Armstrong preached to scores of *millions* over the course of his 52-year ministry. Thus, his work was thousands of times bigger than that of John! **Indeed, it is possible that Mr. Armstrong reached more people with the Truth than all of God's ministers in history combined.**

During his later ministry, Mr. Armstrong, like Paul, brought the Gospel before world leaders (cf. Acts 9:15). He had personal visits with presidents, prime ministers and kings of nations, small and great, as well as various other leaders, including the secretary-general of the United Nations. Mr. Armstrong thus became well known to some of the major leaders of this planet—as the outpouring of condolences from them upon his death can attest. Under Mr. Armstrong, the Worldwide Church of God's beautiful headquarters in Pasadena became a showplace, visited by thousands, including famous people in government, education, music and entertainment. Thousands attended Ambassador Foundation cultural events in the world-renowned Ambassador Auditorium.

What about the religious leaders? Was he well-known among *them*? Certainly. Of course, *they* despised him. To them, he was *infamous*—a cult leader who defied their traditional doctrines. Part of their ministries became a reaction to his teachings. The Protestant message that "the law is done away" is not so blatant as it used to be. Shot so full of holes by Mr. Armstrong, they've had to increasingly employ crafty wording to disguise it. Nevertheless, they actually *copied* a lot of concepts from him—such as the meaning of God's Feasts, a great deal of understanding about end-time prophecy and the way to go about proclaiming their message. Mr. Armstrong was a pioneer in broadcasting the Gospel through the electronic media. **A few years ago, one religious commentator**

remarked that he thought Herbert W. Armstrong had made a bigger impact on religion in America than any other man of the 20th century! Indeed, his dynamic message became a powerful witness to *many* nations.

The truth is that Mr. Armstrong was familiar to *many* people as a "radio preacher" and "televangelist" for some time—particularly during the 60s. As a major British publication, *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, states, "Armstrong began as a preacher on radio in the USA in the 1930s, and became **widely known** through the radio programme "The World Tomorrow" ("Armstrong, Herbert W.," 1997, p. 90). Dr. Meredith points out that 2/3 to 3/4 of Americans didn't know about him. But that would mean that 1/4 to 1/3 *did*—and that's 60 to 80 million people! And considering how many Americans today don't even know who the vice president of the country is, that would be pretty incredible. Even if the figures aren't as high as just mentioned, how many heard Mr. Armstrong or read something of his and just don't remember? Keep in mind that he too was a *lone voice* crying out in a wilderness of spiritual confusion. How surprised should we be, then, that people have forgotten him? How surprised should we be that if he *was* the Elijah, he wasn't recognized by the world as such. Christ said that John was the Elijah "**and they did not know him**" (Matt. 17:12).

Bear in mind also that just as Elijah, John and Christ have become extremely well-known posthumously, the same thing could happen with Mr. Armstrong—indeed, it could happen *overnight* with mass communications. Consider that if the Global Church of God or any of the other offshoots from Worldwide becomes well-known—whether through a big work or just by getting dragged in front of television cameras in being persecuted—the world would refer to us as believers in "**Armstrongism.**" In this event, Herbert W. Armstrong's face would no doubt be plastered all over the news, and thus not even by our doing. So he could yet be very famous and his teachings more widespread—even before Christ's return. But again, there is no requirement that this be the case.

Completing the Commission

So if Mr. Armstrong *was* the end-time Elijah, did he finish the Elijah commission? This is an interesting question. Some say yes, and assert that there is therefore nothing left to *restore* and no more turning of the hearts of the fathers to the children and vice versa. Some even maintain that since—in their view—the Work is over, we no longer need to preach the Gospel as a witness to the world. But an important fact that seems to have gone overlooked is that the *original* Elijah did not complete his *own* commission, as we will see. Now it is true that Mr. Armstrong said that if he died, what God had called him to personally accomplish would have been completed (*Worldwide News*, March 6, 1981, p. 11). And that was no doubt true in the sense that it was God's time for him to be taken out of the picture—just as it was time for Elijah to go when God took him away by a fiery chariot in a whirlwind (1 Kings 2:11). Nevertheless, it is also true that God had given a direct three-fold commission to Elijah that was only one-third finished when he was finally removed from the scene. After Elijah fled for his life from Jezebel, God encouraged him at Mount Sinai and then gave him the assignment of anointing *Hazael* as king over Syria, *Jehu* as king over Israel, and *Elisha* as a prophet to follow in his steps (1 Kings 19:15-16). But Elijah did only *one* of these things—he anointed Elisha. Hazael and Jehu, on the other hand, would not be anointed until about 25 years later—nearly a decade after Elijah was taken out of the picture. So who anointed *them*? It appears that *Elisha* anointed Hazael—between verses 13 and 14 of 2 Kings 8. And it is certain that Elisha had one of the sons of the prophets anoint Jehu, as is recorded in 2 Kings 9:1-6. **Elisha and the sons of the prophets, then, saw it as their duty to finish Elijah's commission—and they did.**

Now it's apparent that John the Baptist was not succeeded by others—even his disciples—in his work of preparing the way before the Messiah. For he preached right up until Christ appeared on the scene (Mark 1:14). Yet if Mr. Armstrong was the end-time Elijah, what are we to make of the fact that Christ has not yet returned? Remember, the Elijah was to prepare the way before Him—to prepare a people, God's Church. Clearly, the Church is *not yet ready*. The preparation of Christ's bride, His Church, *continues*—**in fact, Mr. Armstrong told his successors to finish this task!**—and the Elijah commission would therefore now be *unfinished*. Yet who, at the end, makes Christ's wife ready? *She* does (Rev. 19:7)—with Christ's help (Eph. 5:27). Thus, all of us are to have a part in finishing the preparation begun by the Elijah to come. But should we also expect an "Elisha" to appear? Mr. Armstrong said, "If I have been someone in the power and the spirit of Elijah [for that's what he considered himself to be!], remember there is no prophecy that God will have an Elisha following Elijah" (p. 11). That, of course, did not mean there *wouldn't* be—merely that we should not *expect* one. And indeed, we should not. **Nonetheless, we do have a solid biblical example from the original Elijah that someone's commission can be finished by others.** Perhaps that's part of the mysterious reason God *removed* Elijah—to teach *us* this lesson (cf. 1 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4). And if Mr. Armstrong was the *end-time* Elijah, then all of us have a part in finishing his commission. Perhaps that's also why God, in giving Elijah a commission He knew that Elijah would not personally fulfill, immediately informed him that He had reserved 7,000 faithful men in Israel (1 Kings 19:18). Of course, Elijah's commission was *particularly* fulfilled by those trained as prophets under Elijah—and so we would expect those Mr. Armstrong trained in the ministry to lead the way in finishing what God started through him. Perhaps, then, there may yet be some truths to restore in the Church. And in any case, we are still to preach the Gospel until the end of the age, as Christ told us to (Matt. 28:19-20).

It should also be noted here that it appears the two witnesses will essentially complete the warning aspect of the Elijah commission. Many have viewed the fire proceeding from their mouths (Rev. 11:5) as really meaning that fire can be called down from heaven at their word—and have then seen here a picture of *Elijah*, as he is immediately identified with this miracle (cf. Luke 9:54). The two witnesses also pray for and deliver a 3 1/2-year drought (Rev. 11:6)—again, just as Elijah did (James 5:17-18). But they do not exactly parallel Elijah as he ministered to one widow out of the country during the drought of his day—which was only a tiny part of his overall work—while the primary work of the two witnesses occurs during the end-time drought, when they really do "shake the nations." And again, they are TWO while Elijah was ONE—just like the *end-time* Elijah. This all makes sense if we understand the two witnesses to be *completing* an Elijah commission that has already been partially fulfilled when their major work begins.

But how could the two witnesses be doing far greater miracles than Mr. Armstrong if *he* was the Elijah to come and they are merely *succeeding* him? Well, **Elisha did a greater work and was involved in more recorded miracles than Elijah**—14, and 15 if you count the one after Elisha's death where a man was resurrected by touching his bones (2 Kings 13:21). But Elisha certainly wasn't greater than Elijah (cf. John 13:16). He did receive a "double portion" of the Holy Spirit that Elijah had (2 Kings 2:9). But as this terminology was used in Israelite inheritance laws, this most likely meant that the amount of God's Spirit Elijah had was divided out to the sons of the prophets, with Elisha receiving a double portion—not that Elisha received twice as much as Elijah. Also notice that **Jesus Christ told His disciples that after He was taken away from them, they would do greater works than He Himself had done** (John 14:12). And indeed, Peter's shadow healed people, the apostles preached for decades, taking the Gospel to the far reaches of the known world, and they gave people God's Spirit by laying hands on them. Yet these men obviously weren't greater than Jesus Christ.

Today, if we had a way to accurately tally the figures—for income, membership, television responses, distribution of publications and other indices of "achievement"—of all the "corporate" offshoots of the

Worldwide Church of God, we would no doubt see that all of them together are doing very little in comparison to what God accomplished through Mr. Armstrong and those working under him. In fact, all these present efforts combined amount to a mere *whisper* of the powerful globe-girdling work that was done under his leadership. But it is important to recognize that even *if* one of the current organizations "took off," so to speak, and did a Work even *greater* than Mr. Armstrong's, that wouldn't necessarily mean its leaders—*taught* by Mr. Armstrong—were then somehow greater than *he*. And it wouldn't take away in the slightest from Mr. Armstrong being the prophesied Elijah to come—they would simply be completing what he started.

There are, then, strong indications that Mr. Armstrong *was* the end-time Elijah. And for the record, let it be known that the current stance of the Global Church of God on this issue—from our present understanding and all we've been able to see—is that he probably did fulfill this role. Again, this is not some new doctrine we are just now coming up with. Rather, we are reaffirming our belief in a doctrine that was taught in the Church from at least the late 70s until 1988. **We certainly do not consider it to be a point of salvation or a tenet of faith someone must hold to be baptized or to fellowship with Global.** Indeed, many sincere Christians within our fellowship may feel differently on this matter. But as it is not a major issue—and *we do not intend to make one of it*—it should certainly not be something that divides us. We will assuredly *not* bandy Mr. Armstrong's name about and invoke it in all of our articles in a cultic way. But we will, of course, quote him from time to time as an authoritative source, just as we always have. Our purpose for publishing this article at this time is to answer those who are asking where we now stand on this issue—as well as the fact that we do feel there is a benefit for God's people in recognizing, prophetically, who Mr. Armstrong was.

Just what IS the value of understanding this? Is there really *any* value in it? Well, clearly the recognition of the end-time Elijah must have *some* value or God would not have foretold him in the pages of the Bible. Remember, ALL Scripture is profitable (2 Tim. 3:16).

Certainly, this understanding helps to define part of our role and purpose. We believe we are continuing the Elijah commission of helping to prepare the way before Christ's Second Coming. Though Mr. Armstrong, it appears, was the end-time Elijah, we are continuing the work he was given to do, just as others completed the original Elijah's work. We can use the Elijah commission to help focus what we are doing as God's Church.

Also, this knowledge gives us a proper perspective about where we are in end-time events. We are not still waiting for Elijah to precede the two witnesses. In our view, he has already come. This helps to give us a healthy sense of *urgency*, rather than being lulled to sleep on the notion that Christ's return is yet a long way off.

Beyond this, understanding these things helps our focus in studying the Bible. If Mr. Armstrong was *not* the Elijah, then—as we've seen—almost nothing has been restored compared to what *needs* to be and we should therefore be dissecting the Scriptures in search of the lost volumes of Truth that constitute the faith once delivered. All of our doctrines would need to be thoroughly reexamined. On the other hand, if Mr. Armstrong WAS the end-time Elijah, as we believe, then we should tread very carefully on what he has delivered to us—focusing more on *preserving* what we have, as God told the Philadelphians (Rev. 3:11). This must not, of course, devolve into a Laodicean attitude of "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing" (v. 17). Rather, we can still be searching the Scriptures for refinements of understanding in what we already basically know—realizing also that there may be *some* fairly major points of knowledge still to be added.

Moreover, in light of the whole Church government issue, all of this helps us to better understand why there was one-man leadership during Mr. Armstrong's tenure. We firmly believe that Mr. Armstrong was inspired to restore God's hierarchical, top-down form of government to the Church. However, we also believe the Bible reveals that this hierarchy is to go from God the Father to Jesus Christ—the Head of the Church—and then to a Spirit-filled *group* of elders leading God's people. Why, then, during Mr. Armstrong's ministry, did it go from God the Father to Jesus Christ to Mr. Armstrong and then to the leading ministry? How do we explain the legitimacy of Mr. Armstrong's one-man rule? Simple—he had a very *special calling* from God.

1) He was the *only* human **APOSTLE** of his day, just as the Apostle John was after all the other apostles had died—automatically leaving John as the authority over the Church.

2) Also, Mr. Armstrong was a "**SPIRITUAL FATHER**" to all of us, just as Paul was to his converts (cf. 1 Cor. 4:15; Philem. 10). Like Paul, Mr. Armstrong could say regarding the message he preached, "But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12)—in Mr. Armstrong's case, directly from the Bible. Most of those in the Body of Christ today have come in because of his teachings. In fact, even if someone is brought into the Church now by a former Worldwide minister's preaching, that minister is not this new person's "father" in the Gospel. Rather, *Herbert Armstrong*—as this minister did not receive the Truth directly from God's Word but instead received it, directly or indirectly, from Mr. Armstrong.

3) Moreover, as we've shown, available evidence strongly suggests that Mr. Armstrong was the **END-TIME ELIJAH** through whom God restored His Truth to the Church. Thus, Mr. Armstrong was in a unique position. No single individual can now "fill his shoes"—though a few misguided people have assumed they can. But together, we can "walk in his footsteps."

The Global Church of God is diligently striving to help complete the Elijah work of preparing the way before Jesus Christ's Second Coming—the work which God began by the hand of His faithful servant, Herbert W. Armstrong. And with God's help, we will continue to do so until Jesus returns in power and glory. Then we can *continue* the Work with Him, in restoring God's Government and Truth to the entire world. May Christ now help us, His people—His bride—in making ourselves ready for that awesome and wonderful day.