

Truths Restored to the Church during the Philadelphia Era



By G. E. Michelson

TRUTHS RESTORED BY HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

SERMON BY MR. ARMSTRONG

Below is a compilation of notes and quotes from a sermon Mr Armstrong gave on 17 December 1983, titled: *'Mission of the Philadelphia Church Era'*.

Preamble

The church today is the Philadelphia era. HWA came to realise that the Bible was written more for the Philadelphia era than any other previous era. It had not been fully understood until this time. The Bible was not fully written during the Ephesian era. There was no printing and very few copies of the Bible were available. Most prophecy in the Bible refers to our time now. Today's mission of the church is to preach the gospel of the Kingdom; the gospel Jesus preached.

The disciples at the time of Jesus thought that the end of the age would come in their lifetime. Jesus warned his disciples not to be deceived. The doctrines, customs and practices of the early church came from the apostles, who in turn received it from Jesus Christ. They did not have the Bible like we do today.

Unless the days of the end be shortened, there would not one person survive. Immediately after the tribulation, the sun shall be darkened and the moon will not give her light... the powers of the heaven shall be shaken. Then Christ shall return as king of kings and lord of lords. The gospel shall be preached in all the earth and then the end shall come.

After the church started there was great opposition from the Jews, denying that Jesus was the Christ. The 12 were selected (like a jury) to show unanimously that he was indeed the Christ. The resurrection was the proof. Many of the Jews did not accept that Jesus was the Christ. The Church consisted mainly of Jews who had accepted. After the door had closed on the Jews, the gospel went to the Gentiles, but the Gentiles had trouble accepting the law of God as a way of life. The Jews that accepted Christ then wanted to inject the law of Moses.

Prior to 70AD when Paul turned to the Gentiles, there was a great controversy of what the true gospel should be. Practically no history of the early church exists from about 50 to 150AD. What we do know is there was a controversy about whether the gospel should be about Christ or the gospel of Christ. Jesus Christ came preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God; the family of God; a governing family; into which those of the true church may be born.

Protestants and Catholics don't have any contact with God the Father. They only talk about Christ. They say the law was nailed to the cross. God the Father is the law giver. When you break the law you need to be reconciled to the Father, not Christ. They say that you are born again if you just receive Christ. They are in gross error. They are the ministers of Satan the devil but they pose as the ministers of Christ. By the blood of Jesus Christ we are reconciled to God the Father

and by his life and resurrection we are saved. Christ is God and he has the power to resurrect us.

It was prophesied that they would turn away to another gospel. Moses was the mediator of the First Covenant and Jesus came as the messenger proclaiming the New Covenant. In Malachi 3:1 is a prophecy for our day. God's messenger shall prepare the way for Christ's second coming. John the Baptist was apparently the messenger to come. He was a type of the one it was speaking of in Malachi. John the Baptist was one crying out in the physical wilderness of the Jordan River, preparing the way for a physical Jesus; to a physical temple; to his physical people. So Malachi is talking about another messenger to come before the day of God's refining and judgement. Jesus Christ first came as a lamb to the slaughter. Before the end comes God will send Elijah the prophet and restore all things. John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah. Just as John cried out in a physical wilderness, so there would also be one crying out in the spiritual wilderness of the latter part of the 20th C; preparing the way for the spiritual Jesus; to His spiritual temple... and we, the church, are that temple. John the Baptist didn't restore anything; he called people to repentance.

What is Christ coming to restore that had been taken away? He is coming to restore the Government of God. That is the whole story of the Bible; it is everything. Lucifer was given a throne on earth. The earth at the time was inhabited by angles. Nebuchadnezzar was a type of Satan. Satan is also paralleled with the King of Tyre. He exalted himself above everything and it led to destruction of the earth.

The basic law of the whole universe is love. God and the Word were in complete agreement. God was the leader. They created together. The two trees were merely a test of character. The Tree of Life represented obeying God and God revealing His law. The law is merely a way of living. If Adam had only eaten from the Tree of Life, God would have revealed His way of living; His law; to Adam. But he took to himself a way of life; self-knowledge; good and evil. God's purpose was to reproduce Himself. God is perfect spiritual righteous character. Man had to have the spirit implanted in him, but only by his consent.

God's law is the foundation of God's government. God put government in the church. Jesus came to restore the government of God. Judgement is only on those in the church. We are being called to be teachers and to judge. We have to be called first. We are the firstfruits. The rest of the world will be called later.

Truths Restored to God's Church

1. The True Gospel of Jesus Christ

'Now the gospel was suppressed and, as I say, they turned to a gospel ABOUT Christ, but they have not talked of His message. And His message talked about God as being the supreme ruler, and His message had to do with the government of God and God is the lawgiver, and when you sin, the sin is the transgression of the law, and that has cut you off from God, the Father.'

'Elijah was to come and restore things. Jesus is going to come and restore the government, and through the government, everything. But what was Elijah to restore?'

And brethren, has it happened yet? Has it been restored? And what was restored? The world had lost the gospel, they didn't know what the gospel was. I came among the true Church of God of the Sardis Era. They didn't know what the gospel was, they thought it was what they called the third angel's message. They didn't know what the gospel really was. They called it a third angel's message. God revealed it to me, and through me, to the Church. That the gospel is the Kingdom of God, that is the gospel Jesus preached, that's the gospel Paul preached to the Gentiles, that's the gospel that Peter and John preached. You'll find when Jesus sent them out and sent out a 70, He said preach the Kingdom of God. That is the only gospel, is the gospel OF Jesus Christ. The world preached and has a gospel ABOUT Christ. Now the first thing to be restored to the Church is the true gospel.'

2. The Purpose of God to Reproduce Himself

'And the second thing to be restored is the PURPOSE of God. And the gospel has to do with that. That God IS reproducing us and that MAN CAN BECOME God! ... And now let me tell you, I'm going to reveal to you, now, things that have been restored in this Church. Let me tell you, THESE ARE ALL THINGS THAT SOME OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN MINISTERS IN THIS CHURCH IN HIGH OFFICE, HAVE GONE OUT AND NOW ARE SAYING, AND SAYING PUBLICLY, THAT WE ARE DEPARTING FROM THE FAITH AND THAT WE ARE GOING FARTHER AND FARTHER INTO ERROR BECAUSE THEY WILL NOT RECEIVE THE TRUTHS THAT GOD HAS BEEN RESTORING INTO THE CHURCH. God's purpose is that He's reproducing Himself and that we, ultimately, become God.'

3. The Holy Days Reveal the Plan of God

'Now another thing that has been restored is, through the Holy Days, God's plan, His Master Plan for accomplishing that purpose, and the annual Holy Days. And no other Church has had those Holy Days, and understands them.'

'The fact of the annual festivals, that they represent God's plan.'

Interlude – Some Things Have Continued & Others Restored

'The true church has kept the commandments of God and the true name. And the Sardis era did have that, and many of them had tithing, but they didn't all even believe in tithing, but I think you can say the church did, and God's true church has believed those three things through most of the time, but many of these other things had to be restored to the church which had been lost. That the end-time was coming after World War I and Malachi 3, 1 to 5, I've just read that to you. But to go on with the things that have been restored... The true gospel was first preached to the world precisely 100 time cycles after it was lost in 53AD, it went out to the world on Radio Luxemburg... 1900 years after Paul wrote in Galatians 1 that they turned to another gospel.'

4. The Government of God

'The government of God has been restored to the Church, and the government of God has been placed in the Church. You read that in Ephesians 4 and I Corinthians 12. Christ is the head of the Church and under Christ in the administration of the government are an apostle or apostles, then evangelists, then pastors, then all are called elders, all ministers

all the way up clear down to the lowest. So then there are teachers and elders both speaking elders and preaching elders, deacons and deaconesses. And the Church is restored in that form of government. The Sardis Church even didn't have the right form of government.'

5. Who and What God Is

'Who and what God IS. NO RELIGION ON EARTH KNOWS WHO AND WHAT GOD IS! NO RELIGION ON EARTH! BILLY GRAHAM DOESN'T KNOW IT! JERRY FALWELL DOESN'T KNOW IT! ROMAN CATHOLICS DON'T KNOW IT! GOD IS NOT A TRINITY! GOD IS NOT A SINGLE PERSON! God is a family of persons, and the family began with God and the Word. You read of that in John 1: 1-5. And you read of it in Genesis 1 beginning with verse 1. You should learn about God first, and it begins first both in the New Testament and the Old, because many experts feel that, so-called experts, that the book of John should be placed first in the New Testament, although it was not written first. That God is a family and it began with the two, and we can be born into that family.'

6. What and Why is Man?

'Now the next thing that's restored to the Church — what and why man is! WHAT IS MAN? WHY DID WE COME TO BE ON EARTH? The Sardis Church didn't know, they didn't know in the Middle Ages. Man was made from the dust of the ground. Man was made with one spirit and he needs another spirit, the Spirit of God which unites him with God, and is the impregnation of God-life in him, and he will be born of God.'

'The knowledge that he that is born of the flesh IS flesh, mortal, that's what we are.'

7. The Spirit in Man

'Next the human spirit IN man. No other Church knows about that. That has been revealed to the Church. That is knowledge that has been restored to the Church of God. And this Church has that knowledge.'

8. The First-Fruits

'Another, the next piece of knowledge that has been restored to this Church, that the rest don't know and no other Church knows it, that this Church is the first-fruits, that God is not trying to save the whole world now. He's calling us out now and He'll use us as teachers to help save the others in THEIR turn, and they'll turn, from the Millennium, will help save all the rest in the great White Throne of Judgment. And ultimately, God's going to go after the saving of everybody who ever lived. But no Church understands that, that we are the first-fruits, we are the embryo of the kingdom of God. The fact that we have to be called by God, and salvation is not open to just anyone, whosoever will. That whosoever will may come is found in the last chapter of the Bible, and does not pertain to this time at all. And no other Church seems to know that. That knowledge has been restored to this Church.'

9. Knowledge of What the Millennium Is

'The knowledge of the Millennium and what it is. Now the Sardis people knew that Christ would rule a thousand years. They knew it would be a Millennium. They had NO IDEA IN THE WORLD about what would happen in the Millennium. They HAD NO IDEA WHAT IS THE PURPOSE of the Millennium. We know when we assemble for the Feast of Tabernacles, that's what we're celebrating, and we know what's going to happen in the Millennium and that salvation will be open, then, to all that are still alive. But it is not open to all now. No other Church knows that. These are things that YOU, brethren, are privileged to know. YOU, God has blessed you with this knowledge, has restored this knowledge to you.'

10. Truth About the Holy Spirit

'Now truth regarding the Holy Spirit' [does not explain in this sermon]

11. Begotten Now and Born-Again at the Resurrection

'And the fact that we are begotten now. You're not born yet, only begotten.'

'You're not born yet, only begotten, that we will become born at the time of the second coming of Christ, when this mortal puts on immortality, when we won't be human any longer, we'll be divine. The knowledge that he that is born of the flesh IS flesh, mortal, that's what we are. That that is when you're born in the Spirit you BE Spirit. Someone please go tell Jerry Falwell that, so he'll know he's not born again (laughter).'

12. The Identity of Israel

'Another thing restored to us is our own roots, our identity, who we are. We are the tribe of Manasseh of the lost ten tribes of Israel, and no other Church on earth knows it. That knowledge has been restored into this Church, and God restored that to me 53 years ago.'

13. Identity Opens Up Understanding of Bible Prophecy

'Our identity. And that opens all the doors...and the understanding of prophecy has been opened to this Church. That has been restored to this Church.'

14. Second and Third Tithe

'The second and third tithe, what other Church knows about that? And that was restored by this Church, that knowledge restored by this Church.'

15. The Identity of Babylon and Her Daughters

'Then the great deception, the counterfeit of Revelation 17:5, Babylon, the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, her daughter churches and who they are.'

16. Satan Has Deceived the Whole World

'And the fact that Satan, the devil, has deceived the whole world. Brethren, Satan is the

one who is guilty. Those people in the Catholic Church and the Protestant churches have been deceived. And I think they really believe. God just hasn't opened any more truth to them. We don't sit in judgment of them. We're not judging them YET. We're going to do it and when WE judge them, then all truth will be opened and God will take away the blindness from their eyes so they can understand if they're willing. Today they couldn't understand it, even if they're willing. I don't think they're willing, either, as far as that goes.'

17. We Are to Be Separate

'And how in Revelation 18:4 that God has called us out from among them, to be separate.'

WORLDWIDE NEWS ARTICLE

A list of 18 restored truths were compiled under the direction of Mr Armstrong's successor, Joseph Tkach, and listed in *The Worldwide News* of 25 August 1986.

'In his last book, Mystery of the Ages, the late Herbert W. Armstrong wrote: "This Church, until after the year or 1933, had lost many... vital truths. At least 18 basic and essential truths have been restored to the true Church since that year" (page 251, hardcover edition). Mr. Armstrong listed some of these truths in a sermon Dec. 17, 1983. He listed a few others and enumerated them when he spoke to the Ministerial Refreshing Program May 2, 1984. It's good to review this list to better appreciate how much we have benefited from what God restored through Mr. Armstrong. These points are listed basically in the words Mr. Armstrong used when he spoke to the Ministerial Refreshing Program' (The Worldwide News, 25 August 1986, p.5)

The following are quoted excerpts from the Worldwide News article of 25 August 1986 titled: 'God restored these 18 truths: How thankful are you for them?'

1- 'The Government of God'

'When Christ comes, He will restore God's government to the whole earth. So you can be sure the one to come in the spirit and power of Elijah 'would restore God's government in His Church. When Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong came among the Oregon Conference era of the Church of God Seventh Day), the church had the right name, the law, the Sabbath and the tithing system. But they also had a government of men, with a biannual conference, voting just like they do in the world. Today, the government of God has been restored to His Church. That's the kind of government you find in Ephesians 4 and I Corinthians 12.'

2- 'The gospel of the Kingdom of God'

'The Gospel of the Kingdom of God has been restored after 1,900 years. The Church of God (Seventh Day) did not have a clear understanding of the Gospel; they emphasized what they called a "third angel's message."

3- 'The purpose of God'

'The purpose of God, that we are to be born of God and become God. God is reproducing Himself, and no other church on earth knows that or preaches it. As a counterfeit they talk about being already born again. Christ is the firstborn of many brethren. Has anyone else been born again by a resurrection from the dead like He was?'

4- 'Who and what is God?'

'The Jews think God is one person. Many people mistakenly think that God the Father is the God of the Old Testament and then Christ came as His Son. Traditional Christianity believes in the trinity, that the Holy Spirit is a person. God is neither one person nor a trinity. God is a Family into which we may be born and also become God. His Spirit

witnesses with our spirit that we are the begotten children of God. And when we are born of God we will not even be able to sin.'

5- 'What is man?'

Do we have an immortal soul? Or are we just an animal? What happens at death? The dead are unconscious and they don't know anything. The Church of God (Seventh Day) people understood some of what happens at death, but not fully. They believed that man did not have a spirit. That's been explained more fully now.

6- 'The human spirit in man'

'What makes the difference between a human mind and an animal brain is that there is a human spirit with the human brain. That spirit is not the conscious part of the man: And it needs to be united with the Spirit of God.'

7- 'The Church is only the first-fruits'

'The Church is only the firstfruits, and not the end of God's plan of salvation. God isn't trying to save the whole world yet. It starts with us, and we're being taught and trained so that we, under Christ, will be the teachers and rulers when Christ comes to rule in the Millennium, when He starts to save the rest of the world.

We have the great opportunity of being made God and, in the future, to rule over others and teach them and help them be converted so they can become children of God, also. And those who are converted during the Millennium will, with us, be kings, priests and teachers for the rest of the world that will be resurrected after the end of the Millennium.'

8- 'The Church is not yet the Kingdom of God'

'The Church is not yet the Kingdom of God, but we are the embryo that will become the Kingdom of God.'

9- 'Only those whom God the Father calls and draws to Him can be converted now'

'No other church knows that or believes it. That's another truth restored to the Church through Mr. Armstrong. None of us had ever heard that before, except as we got it through Mr. Armstrong. Only those God chooses and calls now can come in and become part of the firstfruits. Satan has deceived the whole world, and the Church is called out of that world.'

10- 'The resurrection to judgement'

'The resurrection to judgment, the Great White Throne Judgment. God has a plan to save those who have not had an opportunity for salvation and who are now dead in their graves. They have not had the Holy Spirit. Their time is coming. But our time comes first, and we have to fight the devil, and they won't. In the judgment, they'll be found guilty and condemned to death. They'll have their first chance to know that Christ came and paid the death penalty for them. They'll be allowed to accept that payment, and they'll have 100 years to prove they want to live differently than they did in their first life. They can be

saved at last.'

11- 'The Millennium'

'The Kingdom of God will rule nations on earth, and Christ and the saints will rule and bring prosperity to the entire earth. The Church of God (Seventh Day) understood the time duration, but, because they did not adequately grasp the full meaning of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, they knew little in the 1930s of what the Millennium would be like. Salvation will be open to all for the first time since Adam sinned and God closed the tree of life.'

12- 'The Holy Spirit coming into us only begets us'

'It opens our minds so we can understand the coded book, the Bible. Eye has not seen nor ear heard the things God has in store for us, described briefly in the Bible. God does reveal them to His Church by His Spirit that resides in us. Without that Spirit we cannot understand the Bible. Spiritual knowledge comes from the Bible, but by the Holy Spirit.'

13- 'We are only begotten now, not born again'

'We are heirs, not yet inheritors. The Holy Spirit begets us as children of God, but we are not yet born.'

14- 'The identity of modern Israel'

'What are America's roots, our national identity? We are Manasseh, one of the lost 10 tribes of Israel. Numerous other groups have some knowledge of this truth, but no major denomination does. The Church of God (Seventh Day) officially rejected this truth Mr. Armstrong wrote up the proof in an article and sent it to the leader of that church.'

15- 'Prophecy can be understood only if you know that we are the Israelites'

'Prophecy can be understood only if you know that we are the Israelites, and what prophecies apply to us and which do not. Others who do not know Israel's identity can't understand, for example, the 30th chapter of Jeremiah and scriptures like that, which show the Great Tribulation will be the time of Jacob's trouble.'

16- 'The annual festivals'

'What other church knows about them or keeps them? Where did you hear it from? God revealed it to Mr. Armstrong. For seven years he and his wife kept the annual Holy Days alone. And for seven more years they kept God's Holy Days with the Church in Eugene, Ore., before God revealed their meaning. It was not until the end of World War II in 1945 that they began to see that we have to get away from our homes for the Feast of Tabernacles. These Holy Days picture the seven major events in God's plan of salvation. How many of us would have kept God's days for 14 years without fully understanding their meaning?'

17- 'The authority of the sacred calendar, preserved by the Jews'

'Before Mr. Armstrong revealed this to the Church of God (Seventh Day), they were

confused as to when the year should begin. Mr. Armstrong also made clear the importance of the Jews' preservation of the weekly cycle.'

18- 'Second and third tithe'

'What other church knows these points? The second tithe is for God's feast days. Other churches do not keep the feasts, so they have no reason to have second tithe. Third tithe is for the needy, primarily within God's Church.'

**COMBINED LIST OF THE 18 TRUTHS RESTORED
DURING THE PHILADELPHIA ERA**

	Mr Armstrong's Sermon on 17 December 1983	Joseph Tkach's article in the Worldwide News of 25 August 1986
1	The true gospel of Jesus Christ	(2) The gospel of the Kingdom of God
2	The purpose of God to reproduce Himself	(3) The purpose of God
3	The Holy Days reveal the plan of God	(16) The annual festivals
4	The Government of God	(1) The Government of God
5	Who and what God is	(4) Who and what is God?
6	What and why is man?	(5) What is man?
7	The spirit in man	(6) The human spirit in man
8	The first-fruits	(7) The Church is only the first-fruits (9) Only those whom God the Father calls and draws to Him can be converted now (10) The resurrection to judgement
9	Knowledge of what the Millennium is	(11) The Millennium
10	Truth About the Holy Spirit	(12) The Holy Spirit coming into us only begets us
11	Begotten now and born-again at the resurrection	(13) We are only begotten now, not born again (8) The Church is not yet the Kingdom of God
12	The Identity of Israel	(14) The identity of modern Israel
13	Identity opens up understanding of Bible prophecy	(15) Prophecy can be understood only if you know that we are the Israelites
14	Second and third tithe	(18) Second and third tithe
15	The identity of Babylon and her daughters	
16	Satan has deceived the whole world	Mentioned in (9)
17	We are to be separate	
		(17) The authority of the sacred calendar, preserved by the Jews

CONCLUSION

As can be seen from the combined list, the points relating to Satan's deception of the world and the need to be separate from false churches have been omitted from the truths listed by Mr Tkach. Although I don't have a recording of the Ministerial Refreshing Program in May 1984, and therefore can't confirm the list as given by Mr Armstrong then, it seems there was a deliberate avoidance of those three points that were clearly part of Mr Armstrong's sermon.

Perhaps this is an indication that only a matter of months after Mr Armstrong's death, the Tkach administration was already set about changing the understanding that the majority of the Christian world has been deceived. Indeed, it was the declaration that I heard made from the pulpit that, 'there are Christians in other churches', that preceded the major doctrinal changes in the church. What began as a subtle sleight-of-hand soon became a full-blown apostasy! The first signs of apostasy are not necessarily apparent changes in doctrine, but omissions of truths that do not fit the agenda of those undermining the whole truth of God.

Mr Armstrong never claimed to have a definitive list of only 18 restored truths. Some points in the list of 18 can be combined or expanded and therefore the list of restored truths is not limited to only 18. The point listed in the *Worldwide News* article about the authority of the sacred calendar was indeed one of the teachings of the Philadelphia era of God's church, but was not mentioned by Mr Armstrong in his 1983 sermon. In the *Mystery of the Ages*, Mr Armstrong had this to say regarding the mystery of the church:

'Many Protestant denominations, and some personal "ministries," quote certain scriptures, especially concerning Christian living, faith, love, etc., correctly. But they ignore numerous basic scriptures, cited in this book. Satan seems willing to let the deceived have parts of the truth. But these run afoul on pivotal truths. Usually they do not have the proper name, The Church of God. Neither do they know or proclaim the kingdom of God or what it is—that is to say, they do not have or proclaim the true gospel of Christ. They do not have God's government headed by Jesus Christ, with apostles, evangelists, pastors and other elders. They do not know what salvation is. They do not understand God's purpose or plan. One original Church, much persecuted and opposed, but still in existence, has these evidences proving it to be the original true Church. And even this Church, until after the year of 1933, had lost many of these vital truths. At least 18 basic and essential truths have been restored to the true Church since that year.' (*Mystery of the Ages*, 1985, p.251)

It is vital that the whole truth of God is taught. Many of the preceding eras of God's church did not have the whole truth. Many of the Protestant churches have elements of the truth, but they are blinded to major doctrines that are essential for understanding God's salvation of mankind. The Church of God must not lose sight of truths that have been restored to the church. Unfortunately many groups have either added false doctrine or turned a blind eye to vital teachings that ensure a complete understanding of God's way of life; His plan for mankind; and the prophesised events about to unfold.