

# Was Herbert Armstrong REALLY the “Elijah to Come” as Some Claim?

**Many people today believe that Herbert W. Armstrong, the founder of the Worldwide Church of God, was the “Elijah” prophesied by Malachi to come in the “last days.” Could this be true? Of course, he died in 1986, some twenty years ago. Much has occurred in the world since that time. His own church has broken up, gone into apostasy, and been divided into hundreds of small groups, churches, cults, and splinter groups. What is the no-holds-bared TRUTH about Herbert Armstrong? Was he really a “prophet” of God? Here’s the good, the bad, and the ugly – but the TRUTH.**

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In the book of Malachi, we read of an astonishing prophecy. God declared:

“Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse” (Malachi 4:5-6).

Many remnants of the Worldwide Church of God think Herbert Armstrong was the end-time “Elijah.” The so-called “Philadelphia Church of God” under Gerald Flurry makes this belief a condition for baptism!

Was Herbert Armstrong the prophesied “Elijah” – that is, one who was to come in the same office and likeness of the Old Testament prophet?

What does the evidence show?

Although God did use Herbert and Loma Armstrong to raise up a Work of God during these end-times, restoring knowledge about the Sabbaths and annual Holy Days, and the identity of the English-speaking peoples, when we examine the life and teachings of Herbert Armstrong, and the church he built, we find serious errors which we must not ignore.

Notice, first of all, that “Elijah” was to come immediately before the “Day of the

Lord,” which prophecy reveals is the final time of awesome calamity and judgment upon the earth, at the intervention of God Himself (see Zeph.1:14-16; Isa.13:6-9; Joel 2:1-3, 30-32). Herbert Armstrong died in January, 1986 – 20 years ago – long before the culmination of prophetic events to occur at the end of this age.

What about the prophecy that Elijah would “turn the hearts of the fathers to their children” and vice versa?

Herbert Armstrong’s own family deserted him and left the church he founded. His daughters left the Church years ago when the Church legislated on the issue of cosmetics and make up. His son Garner Ted Armstrong, rebelled against Herbert Armstrong in 1978 in a power struggle over who was to run the Church.

The Church has not had much success in dealing with its young people, and the children of members. Most of them, fed up, left the church and wanted nothing to do with it. Its lauded programs for its young people were sadly lacking. The church never had a true Bible Sabbath school for its young people.

Yet the Elijah to come is to be one who “shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers” (Mal.4:6). Herbert Armstrong did not even succeed with his own family!

The church itself has had a terrible record in dealing with young people, alienating them, and turning them off.

Herbert Armstrong could hardly have been the Elijah to come who truly will bring families back together. Because of the teachings of Herbert Armstrong on divorce and remarriage, he did more to *break up homes* and marriages than any other minister in modern times! And his neglect of spending time with his own children as they grew up, and abuse toward them, set a tragic example for the entire Church of God, today. We will discuss his own sad example later on in this article.

In addition to teaching a flawed divorce and remarriage doctrine for over thirty years, causing the break up of families, even those with young children, Herbert’s teaching about divine healing caused many thousands to avoid medical examinations, medical doctors, and all drugs and medicines as instruments and ‘poisons’ of the devil. There were many cases of young children and elderly people dying because of this abominable teaching. (Write for our free booklet, “Does God Heal Today?”).

These facts alone would seem to prove conclusively that Herbert Armstrong, who himself admitted at times that he was not a “prophet,” could not be the prophet Elijah who is to come preparing the way for the Messiah.

If he was NOT the prophet Elijah, this means that Gerald Flurry, of the so-called Philadelphia Church of God, could not be his successor, “Elishah,” nor is he “that Prophet” who was to come, as he himself so audaciously claims to be!

### *The Big Mistake*

So many today seem to almost worship the memory of Herbert Armstrong. Since his death on January 16, 1986, Joseph Tkach has taken the Worldwide Church of God in a completely opposite direction, and revoked and changed ALL the basic teachings of the Church. He himself has proven to be a Judas Iscariot – a modern day “son of perdition.”

Yet the question remains – why did Herbert Armstrong ever appoint this man as an “evangelist” in the Church during his later years? Why did he appoint him to be his “successor” when he died? Why did he put so much trust in this man, who has proved to be a heretic and false teacher who has trampled on ALL the fundamental teachings that Herbert Armstrong imparted to the Church?

Would “Elijah” have made such an enormous error in judgment?

What went wrong? Where did Herbert Armstrong go astray? There is much more to the saga and life story of Herbert W. Armstrong than many thousands of people imagine. The truth will boggle your mind. The evidence shows, today, in retrospect, that Herbert Armstrong was a great teacher of many truths of God, many of which he restored to the Church during these end times – but he was also a deeply flawed man of God.

When I think about the life of this man, and the Church and religious Work he built, I feel much like David felt, when hearing of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. David lamented their deaths. He sorrowed for them, even though Saul had totally disqualified himself from office. David cried out, “How have the mighty fallen!”

Even though Saul had been God’s selected, chosen “anointed,” he had begun abusing his office and finally sinned greatly and totally disqualified himself from being the king of Israel (see I Sam.15). Even after that point, however, God left him in office for many more years, until the time came for David to be given the throne.

So I have pondered about the truth about Herbert W. Armstrong. The parallels between the lives of King Saul and Herbert Armstrong are plentiful. But there are other amazing Scriptural parallels, also.

Let’s examine the “fruits” of the ministry of Herbert W. Armstrong, and determine once and for all, whether he was indeed “the Elijah to come.”

If indeed Herbert Armstrong came in the power and spirit of Elijah, a mighty prophet, then we would think that his prophetic utterances would have been inspired by the Spirit of God. What was his “track record,” in terms of Bible prophecy?

#### *Prophetic Errors – Could “Elijah” Be So Wrong?*

In 1956-57, as a teenage boy, I became awestruck by the prophetic booklets

written by Herbert W. Armstrong – especially two called *1975 in Prophecy*, and *United States and the British Commonwealth in Prophecy*. The first booklet has not been in print for many years, for obvious reasons -- it predicted the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in 1975! When it became increasingly doubtful that Christ would return by that date, the booklet was quietly withdrawn from circulation in the 1960's. But when I first read it in 1957, I assumed it was probably true. Herbert Armstrong seemed to have everything figured out!

When I began attending the local Church in Tacoma, Washington, in 1957-58, and read the co-worker letters and Church literature, Herbert Armstrong was preaching that the original apostolic Church had two "19 year time cycles" to spread the gospel – from 31 A.D. to 50 A.D., and from 50 A.D. to 69 A.D., the year the Romans attacked Jerusalem. Herbert Armstrong was fond of drawing an amazing parallel: He pointed out that exactly "100 19-year time cycles later," in 1931 A.D., he was ordained to the ministry by the Church of God, Seventh Day. Because of doctrinal differences, he separated from them and began a separate, independent work of God in 1934 A.D. Then, he used to tell us, he preached to the United States for 19 years, but expanded the broadcast to Europe in 1953 – exactly 19 years later. He theorized that the Church would have one more 19-year time cycle to complete its work – by 1972 – and then it would be carried to the wilderness to a place of protection during the Great Tribulation, from 1972-1975, culminating in the return of Jesus Christ!

All this seemed reasonable to my youthful, impressionable mind, in 1957-58. I entered an intensive study of Church literature, and found Mr. Armstrong to be correct in many basic doctrines taught nowhere else. So I began attending Ambassador College, founded by Herbert Armstrong, in Pasadena, California, in the fall of 1959. Four years later I graduated and began working full-time in the Letter Answering Department, and subsequently began writing articles for the Church publications.

Needless to say, it was a major disappointment for most of us in the Church when 1972 came around, and instead of the Church fleeing to the wilderness as so powerfully predicted by Herbert Armstrong for decades, nothing happened – except the temporary disfellowshipment of Garner Ted Armstrong for supposed "spiritual problems," but which actually concerned sexual involvement with young women other than his wife.

### ***1975 In Prophecy!***

In the booklet by the above title, Herbert Armstrong struck fear into readers by proclaiming a German-led European combine would "blast our cities and industrial centers with hydrogen bombs" (p.14), and added, "It's later than you think!" He declared that "these prophecies are as certain as tomorrow's sun," and went on to proclaim confidently, "*MILLIONS* of lukewarm inactive professing Christians will suffer martyrdom – and that **BEFORE** the anticipated push-button leisure-year of 1975 dawns upon us!" (p.20, emphasis mine).

Herbert Armstrong was so confident of his accuracy that he asserted: "You have been warned! . . . You can take this lightly, let it slip from your mind . . . If you do, you

have now read your fate -- and . . . *I SAY TO YOU ON AUTHORITY OF GOD ALMIGHTY THAT IT IS ABSOLUTELY SURE!*" (p.31).

Now, that is powerful "authority"! But did Herbert Armstrong REALLY have "authority of God Almighty" to make that prediction? Was he the powerful "prophet" of God that he seemed to THINK he was?

Obviously, Jesus Christ did not return in 1975, as so confidently predicted for almost 20 years! Herbert Armstrong's prophetic insight was in error – his prophetic timetable was shot to pieces! From that time onward, he did not attempt to pinpoint the exact year, or even the approximate time, of Jesus' second coming.

### *The "Space Race"*

Also back in the early 1960's, Herbert Armstrong became very interested in the race for space – especially after the Russians put their first "sputnik" satellite in orbit around the earth in 1957. He wrote articles, gave sermons, and wrote a booklet entitled "Who Will Rule Space?" In those years, Herbert Armstrong was very impressed with the fact that human beings could not survive in outer space without a self-contained "earth environment" – a "space suit." To him, this indicated that man's proper habitat was the earth – not outer space!

Herbert Armstrong sincerely believed that man would never "conquer space." In fact, he said several times, and even wrote, that if man attempted to "conquer space," that God would destroy him, even as He destroyed the tower of Babel when mankind attempted to build it to "reach heaven" (Gen.11:4). Even so, Herbert confidently predicted that God would thwart and frustrate man's attempt to rocket into space. He said that if man succeeded in going to the moon, he would not return alive!

As the major proof text to support this theological idea, Herbert Armstrong turned to Psalm 115, where we read: "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the EARTH hath he given to the children of men" (Psa.115:16).

Of course, after the United States first successfully put men on the moon, in 1969, and several times during the 1970's, this prediction and teaching of Herbert W. Armstrong was again quietly shoved aside and dropped – forgotten, except by those of us who personally heard his teachings in the late 50's and early 60's.

Herbert Armstrong was supposed to be renown for his knowledge and perception of Bible prophecy. And I believe that he probably did pick up much basic understanding of prophetic portions of the Bible during his studies – such as the basic understanding of the book of Revelation, the world kingdoms of Daniel 2 and 7, and their correlation with the beasts of Revelation 13 and 17. I also believe that he stumbled across a major Biblical discovery when a woman challenged him whether he knew the locations of the "lost ten tribes" of Israel.

Notice what the Scriptures say about self-appointed “prophets.” In the book of Deuteronomy, God told Moses: “But if any prophet DARES to speak a message IN *MY NAME* when I did NOT COMMAND HIM TO DO SO, he must die for it and so must any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods” (Deut.18:20).

This is serious business, with God! He THUNDERS rebuke against those who “presume” to speak a message “in His name,” when He Himself has NOT given them the message! He says the penalty for such a thing is – DEATH! If nothing else, it would at least appear that Herbert Armstrong got carried away with himself, in his predictions, and was very over-zealous in some of his pronouncements, claiming God’s inspiration and authority for his own interpretations!

Isn’t that plain? But notice further! God Almighty Himself goes on, explaining further:

“You may wonder how you can tell when a prophet’s message does NOT come from the Lord. If a prophet speaks IN THE NAME OF THE LORD and *what he says does NOT COME TRUE*, then it is NOT the Lord’s message. That prophet has spoken on his OWN authority (NOT GOD’S!), and you are not to fear him” (Deut.18:21-22, *Good News Bible*).

If Herbert Armstrong truly feared God, then it seems to me that he would not have been so presumptuous and “positive” in his statements, when he was really only theorizing or speculating! He had no revelation from God, no “Thus saith the Lord,” no dreams or visions from the Almighty. His predictions were based entirely on personal Bible Study, as well as his own speculation, based on various thoughts and ideas. But when he went on to claim “AUTHORITY OF GOD ALMIGHTY” for his erroneous predictions, then he stepped way over the line – and history has proved him to be in utter error! In being so dogmatic, he misinterpreted God's Word and sinned against God!

Now, it is not a “sin” to speculate, or to make predictions based upon available evidence. We all do that in various aspects of our lives. Stock brokers do it regarding the stock market. Farmers take their “best shot” at predicting the weather, so they can know what crops to plant, and when to plant. Weather forecasters make predictions based on latest available evidence also – and because of the vagaries and temperamental nature of the weather, they are often forced to “eat their own words.”

### ***The Fall of Ancient Tyre***

It seems that whenever Herbert Armstrong launched out on his own, and made predictions, he was invariably shown to be in abysmal error. But sometimes he simply “copied” the errors of other Churches, or organizations, or writers, but simply never gave them credit! That is to say, he “plagiarized” their writings and idea, and never gave them one line of credit, making any reader to think HE was the sole author of the material!

A case in point is one of the booklets which for many years was one of the staple booklets of the Worldwide Church of God. Titled *Proof of the Bible*, in early editions of this booklet Herbert W. Armstrong wrote that one way critics might attempt to “disprove” the Bible would be to REBUILD ANCIENT TYRE! He quoted the Bible prophecies regarding ancient Tyre, claiming that Tyre was prophesied to NEVER BE REBUILT!

In the booklet, Herbert Armstrong boldly challenged skeptics, “Here is how you can DISPROVE the Bible and the very existence of God. If there is no God, and IF the Bible is not inspired! Just go over and build a small city on the site of New Tyre.” Herbert said there is nothing to prevent skeptics from building a city on that site, “except that the Bible they scoff at says they CAN’T” (p.20).

Back in the 1950’s I was impressed by these challenging statements, as I read them. But one day, as I was visiting a Church family near Portland, Oregon, in 1958, before I attended Ambassador College, I noticed a small booklet lying on the kitchen table. Curious, I picked it up and began reading it. I was rather shocked! As I read, it sounded like the very words of Herbert Armstrong in his booklet on *Proof of the Bible!* Only this particular booklet was written and published by the *Seventh Day Adventist Church!* I was dumfounded! I asked the lady about the booklet and she assured me that she had received it from the Adventist Church. It was word-for-word identical, in most respects, to the booklet Herbert Armstrong published later under his own name! Needless to say, Herbert Armstrong had obviously “borrowed” the material, and used it wholesale, without giving any credit to the original author! I thought at the time that this was not good, but I put the matter on the shelf, and decided that this one act did not of itself invalidate any of Mr. Armstrong’s other teachings which I had proved from the Bible.

At that point, I didn’t know quite what to think. But I assumed the booklet was true, regardless of who really wrote it. I really didn’t question it much at the time. It discussed ancient Biblical predictions against Tyre and Babylon, claiming that since neither of these cities had been “rebuilt,” as the booklet stated, and the Bible prophesied, that this proved the Bible had to be inspired by God.

In Ezekiel 26 and 27 God did foretell the fate of ancient Tyre. He said the city would be destroyed in an awesome paroxysm: “How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which was strong in the sea” (Ezek.26:17). God said, “thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord” (Ezek.26:21).

As the prophecy said, God did bring Nebuchadnezzar, and later Alexander the Great, against Tyre, and destroyed the city. It did become “a place to spread nets upon” (Ezek.26:14), “like the top of a rock” (same verse). God said ancient Tyre would be “built no more” (v.14).

*The Worldbook Encyclopedia* points out that Alexander the Great conquered Tyre

in 332 B.C., and built a road or causeway from the mainland to the island, creating a peninsula upon which the *present town of Tyre now stands*. Tyre became a part of the Roman, and then the Byzantine Empire. Christian crusaders occupied it from 1124 A.D. until Moslems captured it in 1291 A.D.

Says the *Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary*, the prophecy that Tyre would become like a rock, and “be built no more” (Ezek.26:14), was “fulfilled as to the *mainland Tyre* under Nebuchadnezzar. The insular Tyre recovered partly after seventy years (Isa.23:17-18), but again suffered under Alexander, then under Antigonus, then under the Saracens, at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Now its harbors are all choked with sand, precluding all hope of future restoration: ‘Not one entire house is left, and only a few fishermen take shelter in the vaults’ (Maudrell). So accurately has God’s Word come to pass.”

Regarding the phrase, “thou shalt be no more,” the Commentary points out, “not that presently there was to be no more a Tyre, but she was no more to be *the* Tyre that *once* she was; her glory and name were to be no more. As to Old Tyre the prophecy was literally fulfilled, not a vestige of it being left.”

Adam Clarke in his Commentary quotes Maudrell, who visited the place before 1825 A.D., as follows: “It is a Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, etc., there being not so much as one entire house left! Its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, harboring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly on fishing; who seem to be preserved in this place by Divine Providence as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, that it should be the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry their nets on.”

As to the prophecy “yet shalt thou never be found again,” Clarke declares: “This is literally true; there is not the smallest vestige of the ancient Tyre, that which was erected on the main land. Even the ground seems to have been washed away; and the new Tyre is in nearly a similar state.”

Clarke adds, “Notwithstanding the former destructions, Tyre was a place of some consequence in the time of St. Paul. There was a Church there (see Acts 20:3-4, etc.), which afterwards became famous.”

Herbert Armstrong would have done his cause much better service, and God greater service, if he had been much less naive and accepting of Adventist literature, copying their ideas and plagiarizing their material on “Tyre,” if he had only done his own research, and used the Commentaries referred to above.

Attempting to use the example of Tyre to “challenge the skeptics” was a foolish device. Skeptics would argue that since there was a city called Tyre which still existed in that area in the time of the apostle Paul, and exists today, that this prophecy does not constitute “proof” of the divine inspiration of the Bible. Certainly not the way Herbert Armstrong claimed! He obviously misinterpreted the prophecy!

In 1973 Herbert Armstrong visited modern Tyre, and was forced to admit “there were quite a number of new high-rise buildings.” Careless and uncritical exegesis in his research on Tyre caused the Worldwide Church of God a great deal of dismay and consternation, forcing them to withdraw the booklet from circulation in 1972.

### *Early Predictions that “Bombed”*

Herbert Armstrong, like many evangelicals, had a general sense of Bible prophecy. Like them, he saw that the Bible predicts a union of 10 nations which will coalesce in the end time, and fight Christ at His return. This belief, of course, is not original to the Worldwide Church of God. Many evangelical, Sunday-observing Churches also believe it!

However, in his attempt to fit this fact into his own prophetic framework and timetable, Herbert Armstrong often went astray.

In the June-July 1934 issue of *The Plain Truth*, for example, he wrote:

“. . . the year 1936 will see the end of the Times of the Gentiles . . . we may expect the present worldwide depression, time of trouble and fear of war to continue until the year 1936! . . . quickly after that time, we may expect to see the heavenly signs of the sun and moon becoming dark, the stars falling . . . which shall be followed by the ‘Day of the Lord.’” (page 5).

But 1936 came and went – and nothing earthshaking happened. Nothing like heavenly signs, stars falling, and the beginning of the “Day of the Lord”!

In the March 1938 *Plain Truth*, page 8, however, Herbert Armstrong was even more bold. He audaciously asserted:

“Mussolini and the pope will hatch up an idea . . . of setting up a world-headquarters at Jerusalem – and so Mussolini’s armies will enter into Palestine (Daniel 11:41), and eventually will capture just half of the city of Jerusalem! (Zech.14:2).”

Notice how clearly and forcefully Herbert Armstrong spells out the exact sequence of future prophesied events! Unfortunately for his dogmatic and unequivocal assertiveness, he was totally wrong! Again, his prophecies failed to come to pass. Mussolini’s armies never got near Palestine – much less to Jerusalem! And suffice it to say, he and the pope never got a chance to capture half of Jerusalem!

Herbert Armstrong continued to make these kinds of predictions. In the January 1939 *Plain Truth*, page 4, he dogmatically prophesied,

“MUSSOLINI WILL FIGHT CHRIST!”

Was he right in his prediction? Let history judge. As everyone knows, Mussolini, far from fighting Christ, was killed by partisans, and hanged, toward the end of World War II. He was not the prophesied “beast” of Revelation that Herbert Armstrong thought he was!

Herbert Armstrong wrote in the August-September 1939 *Plain Truth*, page 6,

“Once world war is resumed, it must continue on through the Great Tabulation, the heavenly signs, the plagues of the Day of the Lord, and to the Second Coming of Christ, at the last battle, at Armageddon! . . . But this you may KNOW! THIS WAR WILL BE ENDED BY CHRIST’S RETURN! . . . WE ARE JUST THAT NEAR CHRIST’S COMING!” (Emphasis mine).

Notice again how dogmatic Herbert Armstrong was! Did GOD ALMIGHTY inspire him to predict those errors? Did God mis-communicate His intentions to His “servant”? Did God get His signals crossed? Or was it Herbert Armstrong who presumed to speak when God had not spoken?

Truly Amos the prophet was inspired of God to write, “*The Sovereign Lord NEVER DOES ANYTHING without revealing his plan to his servants, the prophets*” (*Amos 6:7*). Obviously, therefore, Herbert Armstrong did NOT understand the prophetic plan of God, did not have God’s plan REVEALED to him – and therefore was not inspired of God when he made these self-proclaimed, dogmatic prophecies during the 1930s! In retrospect, his prophecies seem utterly foolish and uninspired.

During World War II, Herbert Armstrong *continued* making false prophecies and predictions based on his understanding of Scripture. In the August-September 1940 *Plain Truth* he boldly asseverated,

“The Italians will capture both Palestine and Egypt.”

Less true words were never misspoken! It appears to me that Herbert Armstrong was trying mightily to BE a prophet, but he never succeeded! God Almighty NEVER gave him this “gift”! But he never called it was it really was – mere speculation and guessing!

In the November-December 1940 issue (which, ironically, was one month before my birth), Herbert Armstrong continued his bold foray into Bible prophecy and its interpretation. He unerringly predicted,

“God has decreed that Joseph -- Great Britain and the United States – are to utterly consume and annihilate the Turks from off the earth!” (p.7).

Although the Turkish Empire was ended by the victory of the Allies during World War I, in 1917, the nation of Turkey continued to exist, and still exists, today! This “blazing prophecy” of the heralded “spokesman for God” also has failed to come to pass. In actual fact, there is NO prophecy of the Bible that predicts the “annihilation” of the

Turkish people from “off the earth,” as Armstrong claimed.

At the beginning of World War II, when Britain was suffering its darkest hour, and Nazi invasion seemed imminent, it is interesting to note that Herbert Armstrong quickly got on the bandwagon of the pessimistic, and he joined in the chorus of nay-sayers and doom-predictors. With seemingly unshakable confidence and unflappable insistence, Herbert predicted:

“It is part of God’s prophesied plan that Britain shall be invaded and conquered” (Nov-Dec 1940, *Plain Truth*).

Herbert certainly did not foresee the glorious “battle of Britain,” or the stout-hearted courage and tenacity of the British people, led by Winston Churchill! Rather, he thought the Nazis would overrun England and Scotland, and conquer all the British isles.

When Hitler then launched his blitzkrieg against the Soviet Union, Herbert Armstrong again was not found wanting for words, to interpret the invasion in the light of Bible prophecy. Seeing Hitler’s troops initially cut through the Russians like a knife through hot butter, he proclaimed “God’s truth” on the invasion. Apparently he had learned nothing from his dismal record of continuous mistakes. He tried his hand at prophecy once again. He asserted:

“Bible prophecy does indicate that HITLER MUST BE THE VICTOR IN THE PRESENT RUSSIAN INVASION! . . . Hitler will emerge from the Russian campaign stronger than ever, free to turn the entire might of his forces against Britain – and America” (Sept-Oct. 1941 *Plain Truth*, p.7).

As history shows, far from winning his Russian winter campaign, Hitler’s armies were defeated by the Russian winter at Stalingrad. Germany lost over a million soldiers in the Russian invasion. The German army was mired in the snow, ice, and mud at Stalingrad, and was forced to retreat in bitter defeat.

Again, Herbert Armstrong was diametrically in error – 180 degrees from the truth! But at least he was persistent – and consistently wrong! He tried with all his bravado and vocal strength to sound “authoritative” – but it made no difference! God never used him as a prophet, and his predictions consistently failed to come to pass – even when pronounced with great bombast and “authority”!

As late as 1943, Herbert Armstrong was still whipping a dead horse. He wrote in the March-April 1943 *Plain Truth*, page 6,

“But Hitler (or his successor if there is one), and the False Prophet shall fight against Christ!”

Talk about “false prophets,” Herbert Armstrong’s batting average, during the late 1930’s and early 1940’s was on a scale of one to ten, *hovering at absolute ZERO!* He was wrong every time! Hitler did not “fight against Christ” He had no successor! There

was none. Hitler died in a Berlin bunker, as the Russians invaded the city, thus ending the “Third Reich” in flaming ruins.

### ***Why Was Herbert Armstrong So Wrong, So Often?***

It seems incredible that any man could have been so wrong about Bible prophecy – and yet so insistent on proclaiming his own ideas and interpretations. What possessed him to do it? Why was he so smug and overconfident? Why didn’t he have more humility, and willingness to admit that he could be wrong?

For some reason, during the 1930s and 1940s, God had blinded the mind of Herbert Armstrong from rightly understanding Bible prophecy. He allowed him to make a “fool” of himself. Although Herbert’s booming voice on radio may have sounded like the resonant tones of a Walter Winchell or Gabriel Heater, or a Lowell Thomas, his prophetic words turned to mush. Nothing came to pass that he so officiously and dogmatically foretold.

Why would God leave him so completely in the dark?

I believe that God did use Herbert Armstrong in the very early 1930s on through the 1960s and 1970s to reveal much Biblical truth concerning the Sabbath, Holy Days, Plan of God, and some aspects of Biblical prophecy. God did use him, in a strong manner, to lay the foundation for the End-time Work of God. But why did God allow Herbert Armstrong during the explosive 30s and 40s, and even into the 50s and 60s, to make such flagrant prophetic blunders?

Notice what the prophet Isaiah wrote:

“Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But YOUR INIQUITIES have separated you from your God; your SINS have hidden his face from you, so that he will not Hear” (Isaiah 59:1-2).

What were the things that separated Herbert Armstrong from God, so that all his prophecies turned out to be so much hog wash? We will examine the facts of his life later in this article.

### ***More Prophetic Errors***

As late as 1962 Herbert Armstrong was still insisting that Bible prophecies foretold

“a revolution in the weather – leading to unprecedented famine BY AROUND 1970-72 . . . In its wake is prophesied frightful disease epidemics! A third of the people of the U.S. and British Commonwealth nations will die of this scourge” (February 1962, *Plain Truth*).

In February 1967 Herbert W. Armstrong himself was still loudly and dogmatically making similar predictions. He asserted:

“The ‘Day of the Eternal’ – a time foretold in more than thirty prophecies -- is going to start BETWEEN 5 AND 10 YEARS FROM NOW! . . . I am not writing foolishly, but very soberly, ON AUTHORITY OF THE LIVING CHRIST!” (February 1967, *Plain Truth*, p.47).

Was he writing “foolishly”? Yes he was! Could he himself see it? No, he couldn’t. Did he really have “authority of the living Christ” to back up his prediction? No he did not. But his claim to the authority of the living Christ to back up his erroneous pronouncements was, unfortunately, typical of his on-going personal style. His ego could stand for no less “authority.” He refused to admit he was really only speculating, or guessing. In his vanity and self-importance, he only made matters worse. But the more unreasonable his claims became, the more dogmatic and dictatorial his style, the more overwhelmingly confident – the MORE WRONG and FOOLISH he became! Over and over again, he missed the mark – he never once hit the nail on the head – repeatedly, he was DEAD WRONG!

Eventually, in his own mind, he thought of himself as the end-time “Elijah,” who would restore all things! How he could begin to believe this, in view of his prophetic errors and blunders, over many decades, blows my mind! Yet for years he was the only one teaching obedience to God’s Sabbaths AND annual Holy Days. He DID restore much truth. Apparently, God will use a person, in many respects, even though he also ALLOWS them to make egregious errors from time to time!

But let’s face it, honestly: Would an end-time “Elijah,” or one coming in the spirit and power of Elijah the prophet, have stubbed his toe so consistently and persistently in terms of Bible prophecy? Would he make so many thundering, shrill errors, often at the top of his voice?

What do *you think*?

Some lessons appear to be hard to learn. For forty years Herbert Armstrong never seemed to learn from his past mistakes. When one prophetic prediction failed, he just offered up another one. An endless stream of prophetic errors thus were paraded before the public. Old errors were quickly forgotten, and swept under the rug. New errors sprung up like dandelions, spreading their pernicious seeds around the world. But to the very end, it would seem, Herbert W. Armstrong still insisted it was “BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE LIVING CHRIST” that he made his predictions and prophetic interpretations!

That sounds to me like it is bordering on blasphemy!

The day is coming, of course, when he will “eat” those words – he will have to give account for them before the very judgment seat of Christ Himself!

I know that many people, today, virtually worship the memory of Herbert W. Armstrong. In one way, I hate to have to disillusion them. But truth is better than error, no matter how much it hurts. Bitter medicine is good, if it cures the patient's disease.

No doubt many of the basic teachings of Herbert Armstrong were scripturally sound and valid. Some of his prophetic insights in a *general* way were valid. So are the insights of some evangelical teachers. But for some reason, Herbert could not control himself – he often went to extreme excesses when it came to Bible prophecy, and sometimes made a “fool” or “laughing stock” of himself – and became an embarrassment to God and to Christ! And to the Church! No wonder these false predictions were always quickly swept under the rug so that no one would know or remember, except the ‘old-timers’!

I do not write these things to “expose” the man, or to ridicule him. In many ways, God did use him to restore much truth during the past fifty years. Were it not for his ministry, how many of us would have known about the Sabbath, holy days, what it means to be “born again,” the purpose of human life, the truth about heaven and hell, the immortal soul doctrine, and many other truths?

But lets be candidly honest, and not ignore the truth. Herbert Armstrong was *very* human. And he was *very* fallible. He made *many* mistakes. I write these things, therefore, as the apostle Paul said, “. . . that ye might learn . . . *not to think of men above that which is written*” (I Cor.4:6).

Let's not put men on a pedestal, and worship them, or think of them more highly than we ought! Don't worship mere men – worship God!

### ***Herbert Armstrong Versus Elijah***

Why did Herbert Armstrong make so many errors in prophecy? Why did his teachings turn families upside down, and cause great hardship and grief, and even drive a number of men and women to commit suicide?

On the surface, he appeared to be a magnetic personality, with a gift of sounding authoritative, with a writing skill to influence and convince people of his understanding. He looked good, dressed in a snappy business suit, with white hair, and an imposing manner. He gathered around himself all the appurtenances of success – a Rolls Royce, a Jet airplane, and gained worldwide audiences with princes and prime ministers and royalty. He looked the part of an imposing, important man. And through his advertising and promotional efforts, he built a church which grew to some 150,000 baptized members and which received at its peak an annual income running over \$250,000,000 – no small accomplishment. His flagship magazine, *The Plain Truth*, at its peak had a circulation of about 6-7,000,000 subscribers (it was free).

Would an end-time ‘Elijah’ be the head of a vast church organization, wealthy, with all the accoutrements of success?

The original Elijah had none of those things. In fact, he was a solitary figure, not the head of a vast organization with great wealth. He abode in the desert (I Kings 17:12-7), where the ravens brought him food for a time. He abode with a widow woman of Zarephath, near Sidon, a Gentile community, and subsisted miraculously on food God provided (verses 8-16). He was even used of God to raise a dead child from the cords of death (verses 17-24).

None of those things characterized Herbert W. Armstrong.

John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and likeness of Elijah, as the one preceding the first coming of the Messiah, also lived in the desert. He dressed in a camel's hair coat, and ate wild honey and locusts (Matt.3:4). He did not possess chariots, or great luxurious possessions. He was a simple man, of simple tastes – but a man with a flaming spirit and powerful virtue – a man of righteousness and integrity, humility, and boldness. He never shirked his responsibility to PREACH the gospel to all who would hear, and even to REBUKE kings and politicians of his time (Matt..14:3-4).

John the Baptist, the 'Elijah' of his time, DIED serving God, boldly rebuking king Herod for marrying his brother's wife. In sharp contrast, Herbert Armstrong NEVER rebuked a single political head of state, but instead spoke smooth words, seeking audiences with them by providing expensive gifts of Steuben crystal. He never preached the gospel to them, but showed them pictures in the Ambassador College Yearbook, a very expensive production made so lavishly in order to gain the admiration of men. It was another form of deception, making tiny Ambassador College appear to be something almost regal and marvelous.

When Herbert spoke in foreign lands to the senators of the Japanese Diet, or to the Rotary Club in Singapore, he spoke on "the seven laws of success" – laws he himself devised and made up – rather than mention the name of Christ or the true gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Does that sound like "Elijah" to you?

However, we must realize that the true Elijah, and John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, were above all, righteous men who obeyed God and kept His commandments. They were men of strong virtue – not hypocrites or false wannabe's. They were strong in righteousness, mighty men of spiritual valor. The Messiah Himself said John the Baptist was "a burning and a shining light" (John 5:35).

What is the true story of the real life of Herbert W. Armstrong? Let's take a good look. Let's begin by a comparison of intriguing insight cogency.

### ***The High Priest Eli***

In the days of the Judges of Israel, a young child was born who was destined to be

a prophet of the Lord God. His name was Samuel. He grew up in the Temple of God, under the auspices of the high priest, one whose name was Eli.

Notice what Almighty God had to say about His own anointed high priest, the one occupying the highest spiritual office in the land. “Now Eli was VERY OLD (much like Herbert Armstrong became!), and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

“And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord’s people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them” (I Sam.2:22-25).

Eli had a very serious problem in the sight of God. He was overly indulgent of his own sons, who were committing adultery and fornication with the women of Israel. They were seducing them at the very tabernacle of God! Yet beyond this rather mild reprimand, and “slap on the wrist,” Eli did nothing about the problem. The story continues:

“And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh’s house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest . . . ?

“Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering . . . and honorest thy sons above me, to make yourselves FAT with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?

“Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me forever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

“Behold, the days come, that I will CUT OFF THINE ARM, and the arm of thy father’s house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house... And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age” (I Sam.2:27-33).

As Samuel grew older, God then spoke to him in a vision, regarding the fate of Eli. “And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle” (this was a prophecy of the coming judgment on Eli’s house, and also a prophecy of the future Great Tribulation! Eli was merely a TYPE of a leader of the Church of God during this end-time generation!). “In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house

(family) for ever for the INIQUITY WHICH HE KNOWETH; *because his sons made themselves VILE, and he restrained them not*" (I Samuel 3:11-13).

Does God change? Is He a respecter of persons?

Malachi was inspired to write, "For I am the Lord, I change NOT; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal.3:6).

God will deal with any modern-day servant of His who lives and acts like Eli, just as He dealt with His servant Eli, over 3,000 years ago! And he will deal with their adulterating sons just as He dealt with the evil, fornicating, womanizing sons of Eli!

Make no mistake! As the apostle Paul surely wrote, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal.6:7).

The sad tragedy and truth is, our generation has seen and witnessed another "Eli and son"! It is possible that the modern "Eli" sincerely repented late in his life, of his "indulge" of his remaining son, who also was a high-ranking minister in the Church – but God Himself will have to be the judge of that.

### ***Herbert and Ted Armstrong***

A similar story could be written about Herbert Armstrong and his son Garner Ted Armstrong. What were the actual facts?

In *The Broadway to Armageddon*, a book written by former minister of the Worldwide Church of God, William B. Hinson, several sensational, shocking facts are pointed out. In his informative, very helpful book, Hinson quotes another former high ranking minister, Al Carrozzo, whom I knew personally for many years. He and I used to play softball together on the Church league softball teams. In answering questions put to him by ministers, Carrozzo admitted, "Yes, it is true that Herbert W. Armstrong forced Ted and Shirley to get married. The fact that Shirley was pregnant was a source of great embarrassment for Herbert. Rod Meredith relates the profound embarrassment he experienced when Herbert Armstrong tried to explain how Shirley gave birth to a premature eight pound baby boy. It is a matter of record substantiated by scores of people who were there."

This was but the barest beginning. According to knowledgeable sources, Ted Armstrong carried for years seducing young maidens at Ambassador College. In 1965 it came to light, but Hebert covered up the transgressions.

Evangelist Al Carrozzo declared, "Herbert Armstrong had known about Ted's sexual shenanigans from the very beginning. By the beginning I mean 1952 and before. The majority of the Evangelists *did not know* years in advance of Ted's exile in 1972."

When asked how many women Ted had had affairs with, Al Carrozzo answered:

“Absolutely yes, Ted admitted to having affairs with over 200 different women . . . He said ‘by conservative estimate’ there were 200 women. This was on January 30, 1972, in his home in Pasadena” when he made this confession.

In a full-color, high quality publication called *Ambassador Report* which was published in 1977, Al Carrozzo wrote a thorough expose of Garner Ted Armstrong's sexual misdeeds, entitled “The Profligate Son.” In it Carrozzo quotes Ted Armstrong as telling him in a private meeting, at 10:05 A.M., May 16, 1973, “Al, let’s get one thing straight! I’m a no good, fornicating, adulterating son of a bitch!” (Apparently, he knew himself quite well – but he was seldom so candid or truthful!)

Carrozzo goes on, “This was not the first or the only time Ted ever admitted that he was an adulterer. In spite of repeated public denials, Ted has privately admitted that he has been guilty of flagrant, continuous adultery and fornication for almost a quarter of a century – as a church member, an executive, and an evangelist!”

Carrozzo points out how he first learned of Ted’s problem in 1965 when the “whole sordid affair was swept under the rug, while Ted came out lily-white.” In 1967 the husband of one of Ted’s victims informed Carrozzo that his wife had had sexual relations with the handsome radio evangelist. When Al confronted Ted with the allegations, he admitted it was true, but blamed the girl for flaunting her exciting body in front of him, until in weakness he gave in. Al did not pursue the matter further, as Ted talked him out of telling his father.

In an article in the *New Times*, dated December 4-10, 1997, entitled “Honey, I Shrunk the Church,” by Ron Russell, we find an astonishing report made about Ted Armstrong’s infidelities, and his own personal admissions. The author interviewed Al Carrozzo, who had been an evangelist in the Church. The author wrote:

“The word had leaked out during the 1960s, the result of a minister having been caught having sex with an Ambassador College coed. It was a big scandal on a campus where Herbert had forbidden girls to wear makeup and where holding hands was a punishable offense. Before being excommunicated, the fallen minister let it slip that Ted also had been sleeping around.

“His comments prompted Carrozzo, then dean of students, to conduct his own investigation, which convinced him that it was true. Among Ted’s avowed conquests were dozens of wide-eyed college women, including some who became ministers’ wives. Carrozzo says – adding that he shared his knowledge with a superior who told him that Ted had been fooling around for years and that Herbert had given up trying to do anything about it. Much later, the former dean says, he confronted Ted after listening incredulously to a distraught young married woman confess to committing a carnal sin. After much hesitation, she declared that the younger Armstrong had seduced her. ‘He admitted it,’ says Carrozzo. ‘Then, I’ll never forget, he said: “Put me behind bars, slip my food to me, keep me in solitary confinement, but just don’t take my microphone away because I must preach the message God has given me”’” (*New Times*, Dec.4-10, 1997, p.16).

But in mid-1971 Ted's problem once again surfaced. Ted's vast promiscuity became known to top administrators in the Church, and Herbert sent him on a leave of absence for several months. Members of the Church were led to believe Ted was gone for "health reasons."

### *Herbert's Cover-up*

During these events, Herbert Armstrong was never candid to the Church. He covered everything up and threatened anyone who would pry into matters with expulsion and disfellowshipment from the Church! In his own mind, I suppose, he thought he was "protecting the Church." But as he allowed his son to return, without evidence of TRUE repentance, the problems continued.

After Ted was brought back, and allowed to preach at the Feast of Tabernacles sites in the fall of 1971, things once again came to a head. During his stay at Squaw Valley, after he preached a sermon entitled "What The World Needs Now Is Love, Sweet Love," Ted spent that very night in the arms of his new "girlfriend," who was an Ambassador college student, and the stewardess of his Falcon jet, which he used to fly around the country. That very night, Ted seduced the young girl shackled up in a Lake Tahoe cabin on the south shore. Once again Church investigators discovered Ted's adultery – they caught him red-handed, in the act. And his father was again notified.

In a subsequent letter to the members of the Church, Herbert Armstrong wrote that Ted felt he would be up to speaking at all the Festival sites, but after speaking at Squaw Valley "his fourth site, tensions had built up until his nerves were at razor-edge, and he could not continue." What a joke!

This was of course a carefully constructed "lie," deliberately hiding the true nature of Ted's real "problem." Once again Herbert Armstrong prevaricated, and rather than face the unvarnished truth of the situation, and publicly rebuke his philandering son, he chose to deliberately lie, to once again *cover up* the adulterous liaison! Herbert knew perfectly well why Ted was unable to continue preaching after Squaw Valley. To say that Ted's nerves were at "razor-edge," and therefore he could not continue, was a blatant DECEPTION – an absolute LIE!

Herbert Armstrong knew better. But he had known of his son's problems all along, just as Eli the high priest had. And he did not want the truth known to the membership whose tithes and offerings supported the Church. He felt that the revelation of Ted's promiscuity would be devastating to the Church's finances and income. So the charade continued.

### *Phony Repentance and "Exile"*

Shortly after this, Ted was "exiled" to Hawaii – of all places – with his wife and two close friends. The friend was to "watch" Ted every second, like an eagle. He evidently failed or was careless. While Ted was in Hawaii "recuperating," a letter

arrived at the Ambassador College Mail Receiving Department from a woman who managed a massage parlor (euphemism for “whore house”) in Hawaii. The woman complained that there was a young masseuse in her employ who had been trying to come out of a life of sin, and who often watched Ted Armstrong on television. This young masseuse had been “horrified into nightmarish disillusionment,” Carrozzo writes, when she recognized Ted one day, sitting in the massage parlor, waiting to be “serviced” by one of the prostitutes! The madam indignantly wrote that her masseuse was extremely upset from seeing the suave preacher sitting there, especially after learning of his real reason for being there! (Hint, hint – it wasn’t to preach the gospel to the prostitutes!)

Some time later, after more “defaults,” Ted was sent to an A-frame condo in Colorado to ostensibly “repent.” After spending about two months in “exile,” he was brought back, to resume his ministry. Soon, Ted’s adulterous affairs were once again discovered. Herbert Armstrong was forced to take further action. Al Carrozzo explains what happened:

“Around 10:30 p.m. Garner Ted came home from a Los Angeles Laker basketball game and was stunned to find his father, most of the headquarters leadership, and Stan Rader waiting in his living room. Upon learning the purpose of their visit, he flew into a reactionary rage during which he openly admitted he had had illicit sexual relations with some 200 women -- and that was his ‘conservative estimate’ – during his two decades of association with his father’s church. Among his consorts were literally dozens of youthful, wide-eyes coeds, plus several who became executive or ministerial wives. On this occasion Ted was given an official letter of disfellowship” (“The Profligate Son,” by Al Carrozzo, *Ambassador Report*, 1997, p.46).

During this meeting Ted admitted he had been having an intimate sexual affair with an Ambassador College stewardess ever since the summer of 1970. This clandestine, adulterous affair continued unabated, until Herbert Armstrong had been informed of it in the summer of 1971. At that time, Herbert Armstrong took no action at all.

Says Carrozzo, “Instead of removing Ted from the ministry for good – as he had done with other ministers guilty of adultery – he precipitated a vast cover-up, much like former President Nixon attempted. There is one major difference though: Herbert had been covering up Ted’s sexual looseness since the early 1950s” (*ibid.*).

This hypocritical “cover-up” continued throughout the seventies. Herbert Armstrong *NEVER* made public mention of his son’s sexual indiscretions, adulteries, and wickedness.

Only after Ted himself was disfellowshipped from the Church, for other reasons, in 1978, did any one in an official capacity in the Worldwide Church of God admit to Ted’s adultery. Interestingly, it was Stanley Rader, Herbert Armstrong’s personal assistant and the attorney for the Church, who had the temerity to admit Ted’s adultery in public. He did this on the Tom Snyder late night television show.

### ***What God Must Think***

What does Almighty God think of these things?

Jeremiah the prophet, under divine inspiration, thunders, with the message of God, to these modern day “prophets” and “ministers” – regardless of WHO they themselves think they are –

“For the land is full of adulterers . . . For both prophet and priest are PROFANE; yea, IN MY HOUSE have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord. . . . And I have seen FOLLY in the prophets . . . they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people to err. I have seen also in the prophets . . . an horrible thing: *they commit* ADULTERY, and walk in LIES: they strengthen the hand of evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as SODOM, and the inhabitants thereof as GOMORRAH” (Jer.23:10-14).

But there is an old saying which says, “The acorn falls close to the tree.” There is another old saying, “Like father like son.” What about Herbert Armstrong? What was the real reason he never publicly acknowledged the egregious sins of his son, even when he disfellowshipped him *three times*, and finally banished him from the Church *permanently* in 1978?

As enormous and terrible as the sins of Garner Ted Armstrong, the long-time voice of the World Tomorrow radio and television program, really were, in many respects the sad truth about Herbert Armstrong himself is even more difficult to believe. Herbert himself was deeply flawed, in many ways.

It is time we take a close look at the true life of Herbert W. Armstrong. Those who worship Herbert Armstrong, and regard him as the “End-time Elijah,” are in for a shock! But anybody willing to face the truth – without fear or flinching – will be strengthened spiritually as a result.

### ***The Hidden Life of Herbert Armstrong***

Initiating a vast cover-up of his son's sins of continuous adultery is one very blameworthy act for which Herbert Armstrong will no doubt be held accountable by Almighty God.

However, the record shows also that Herbert Armstrong, while he led the Worldwide Church of God during more than fifty years, himself was also guilty of gross sins and abuse.

As author David Robinson explains in his book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, during the latter part of the 1930's and early 1940's, Herbert Armstrong was carrying on with an illicit incestuous affair with his daughter Dorothy – over a period of *ten years!*

Robinson wrote:

“Incest is a terrible and unnatural crime, an extreme perversity. That is why I was shocked beyond measure to hear that Herbert Armstrong was, himself, guilty of this vile sin. I learned of this in the summer of 1979 from members of his own family. The story, sordid beyond imagination, was told in awful detail.

“One family source was Garner Ted Armstrong. Last summer, as HWA attacked his own son in such savage fury, his son was in the depths of despair. His emotional mix included anger and deep hurt. In such a state he told family secrets that otherwise would have been locked within him forever. He said that he had learned in 1971 of his father’s incredible conduct during the ‘30s and ‘40s. The story came directly to him in lurid detail, but he kept it sealed in his own consciousness for all those years. But in the spring of 1978 while in his father’s house for the last time, his father had threatened to ‘destroy him.’ Ted, in response, replied, ‘Dad, I will destroy *you*. *I know* about you and ----- [He was speaking of the younger of his two sisters.

“His father had been on a high-handed autocratic binge. But at that comment he sat down quietly and responded, ‘Well, Ted, there have been times when I *have* been very far away from God!’ (*Tangled Web*, p.266, emphasis his).

What does this tell us about Herbert Armstrong’s relationship to the Almighty, the “revealer of secrets” (Dan.2:2-22), from the mid-1930s to the middle 1940s? God revealed “secrets” to Daniel because he was a righteous man (see Dan. 10: 12) – but not to Herbert W. Armstrong! Why? Isn’t the answer now quite obvious? God will never reveal the future, or what He plans to do, to the WICKED. Sin cuts men off from God. Herbert Armstrong’s prophetic embarrassments during the 1930s and ‘40s, as we will see, were largely and directly due to his being “far off from God” at many times during his life!

The archangel Gabriel told Daniel,

“Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and SEALED until the TIME OF THE END. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. *None of the wicked shall understand*, but those who are WISE will understand” (Dan.12:9-10).

It was the gross sins of Herbert Armstrong during the ‘30s and ‘40s which cut him off from God, and which caused God to give him the spirit of error and misunderstanding of Bible end-time prophecies, at that time. He was so sure he was right – yet he was dead wrong!

God surely would not reveal His prophetic secrets to a man living in sin, and committing continual, habitual incest, for years, with his own daughter! Even though Herbert Armstrong may have repented of this sin in later years, God severely punished

him and allowed him to make a fool of himself prophetically, during the years this relationship continued.

### *Self-Admitted Sins of the Apostle*

Former minister David Robinson reveals some of the shocking details in his blockbuster book, *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web*, written in 1980.

After the death of Loma D. Armstrong in 1967, his wife of nearly 50 years, Herbert W. Armstrong was very lonely. He confided to David Robinson and several other ministers at Big Sandy how lonely the evenings were without a woman, and how badly he needed one. He told them about a romance he had been having with his secretary who was about 25 at the time. He thought he had been in love with her. Others have told me that he even fondled her breasts at times, but she wanted nothing to do with him. Eventually they were separated by the intervention of Ted Armstrong.

Nevertheless, sex was often on the mind of Herbert Armstrong. Herbert Armstrong confided to David Robinson at Big Sandy, Texas, that his wife Loma had been a very poor bed partner, so he would often just turn over and relieve himself through masturbation. He then told Robinson that he still masturbated – the last time had been just two weeks previously.

Herbert Armstrong then got up, reached into his briefcase, and pulled out a small black book and showed him the last entry. As Robinson writes, “He had kept books on his own masturbation! He said, when checking over the record, it occurred about every two weeks” (p.80). When Robinson asked him when he started masturbating, Armstrong replied he could never remember when he didn’t.

With this in mind, it is interesting to note that Herbert Armstrong fancied himself a great authority on sex and marriage. In his book *God Speaks Out on the New Morality*, he wrote, “On the other hand, masturbation is a form of PERVERSION. It is a SIN!” Isn’t it strange, for one who wrote such words, that he himself had been one who constantly indulged himself in what he called “perversion” and “sin”?

### **"INCEST!"**

Chapter twenty of David Robinson’s book *Herbert Armstrong's Tangled Web* is simply titled, “Incest!” Incest has long been regarded as one of the most traumatic of sins performed against one’s own children or relatives. As shocking as it may seem to some, as unbelievable and cruel as it may sound, Herbert Armstrong committed this evil sin over a period of some ten years with one of his daughters!

Writes Robinson: “Incest is a terrible and unnatural crime, an extreme perversity. That is why I was shocked beyond measure to hear that Herbert Armstrong was, himself, guilty of this vile sin. I learned of this in the summer of 1979 from members of his own family. The story, sordid beyond imagination, was told in awful detail.”

Robinson continues: “One family source was Garner Ted Armstrong. Last summer, as HWA attacked his own son in such savage fury, his son was in the depths of despair. His emotional mix included anger and deep hurt. In such a state he told secrets that otherwise would have been locked within him forever. He said he had learned in 1971 of his father’s incredible conduct during the ‘30s and ‘40s. The story came directly to him in lurid detail, but he kept it sealed in his own consciousness for all those years. But, in the spring of 1978 while in his father's house for the last time, his father had threatened to ‘destroy him.’ Ted, in response, replied, ‘Dad, I will destroy *you*. I know about you and -----.’ (He was speaking of the younger of his two sisters.)

“His father had been on a high-handed autocratic binge. But at that comment he sat down quietly and responded, ‘Well, Ted, there have been times when I have been very far away from God’” (Robinson, *Tangled Web*, p. 266).

Robinson goes on, “None who have objectively heard of the incest story in its awful detail doubt it. *This* is a vital chapter left out of HWA’s own autobiography. This sin occurred over a long span of years – about ten years – from the 1930s into the 1940s – for a decade after his ordination to the ministry, according to his own family members” (p. 267).

*The Ambassador Report* (April 1984) relates, “In 1971 Garner Ted Armstrong paid a visit to his younger sister Dorothy. He had long been suspicious of the kind of relationship his father and sister maintained during his youth. They chatted over a few drinks and then Ted told her bluntly of his suspicions. She did more than admit the allegations. With candor she related detail after shocking detail.

“For a number of years GTA kept the information to himself. But Dorothy did not. She divulged the same information to many others including David Antion (GTA’s brother-in-law) and Lois Chapman (who had been married to the late Richard Armstrong, Ted’s older brother).”

Dorothy told Ted and others that Herbert had begun fondling and heavy petting her in 1933 when she was thirteen years old, but he did not begin going “all the way” with her until three years later, when she was 16. What happened was, one day she came home from a date and informed her father she had been “half raped.”

This report was traumatic enough. But after hearing the story, Herbert decided it was time to show her how sex should really be done. It was 1936 and Dorothy was 16 years of age. He took it upon himself to teach her about sexual intercourse by having sex with her himself. From that moment the incestuous relationship lasted for many more years.

On one occasion in a hotel room Dorothy so strongly resisted her father’s advances that the hotel manager came knocking on the door to find out why they were making so much noise. Herbert told him that his “young bride” was a little uncooperative

due to inexperience. Satisfied, the manager left. “Dorothy has claimed that Herbert then overpowered her, and after tying her to the bed and gagging her, proceeded to rape her” (*Ambassador Report*, April 1984).

During those year while Herbert was preaching the gospel and ministering, he would sometimes take Dorothy out dancing on Friday nights. When she asked him if he wasn't afraid Church members would discover what he was doing, he told her gruffly that they were well trained in Sabbath observance and would never see them.

In 1980, shortly after the Robinson book appeared, Henry Cornwall, then one of Herbert Armstrong's assistants, asked him point blank if the chapter about incest was true. Herbert told him it was. Later his wife Ramona, who also had a copy of the book, asked Herbert about the incestuous relationship. He admitted to her it was true, also, and pleaded with her not to let it get in the way of their marriage. He blamed the problem on his first wife Loma.

Dorothy has said that her sexual relationship with her father continued into the early forties. She married Vern Mattson in 1943. Around the time of her engagement however, her father told her that her marriage need not put an end to their own special relationship!

The July 1984 issue of *Ambassador Report* stated that one reason Herbert Armstrong was able to exert great coercion over his daughter wasn't only because he was her father, and physically stronger, but also because he repeatedly told her, “God gave you to me.”

It is interesting that although David Robinson's book first exposed the incest committed by the errant apostle, the publication of his book was vigorously fought by the Worldwide Church of God attorneys, who attempted to suppress it. Although they totally failed in their attempt, it is interesting that since publication they did not assert even once that the incest allegation was untrue. Dorothy Mattson, Herbert Armstrong's younger daughter, never denied the truth of the allegations, either.

An old friend of mine, when he learned of these allegations years ago, went directly to Mr. Vern Mattson, who had married Herbert Armstrong's younger daughter. He was a golfing buddy and friend of Mattson, so he asked him point-blank if the accusations and rumors were true. Mr. Mattson sadly informed him that they indeed were factual. In fact, when Mr. Mattson himself learned of the truth of Herbert having had sex with the woman who later became Mattson's wife, he was furious, and in a rage took a pistol, and burst into Herbert Armstrong's private office, waving the pistol around. Herbert, shaking like a leaf, apologized profusely and promised to never do such a thing again.

According to the laws of Almighty God, we should not receive an allegation against a man, unless it be confirmed by two or three witnesses. The evidence against Herbert Armstrong is very strong and convincing. He was not the man thousands thought

him to be. As a spiritual leader, he was not above the Law of God, and one day he will have to appear before the Throne of God to answer for his actions.

Some may object that these sins occurred over 40 years ago (when Herbert Armstrong was in his forties and fifties). They are now “water under the bridge.” That, of course, may well be true. Certainly God can forgive sin, if and when it is sincerely and totally repented of. But where’s the evidence of repentance?

### *Sex and the Single Apostle*

The towering sin of hypocrisy, deceit, lying and immorality continued right up until Herbert Armstrong’s last years.

Robinson wrote in 1980, “Herbert Armstrong has been in love’ a number of times during the past decade. He said himself he had been ‘in love’ with Amy [his secretary on the fourth floor of the Hall of Administration] when she was 25 years old. He reported this to a group at Big Sandy in 1974. He did say, when it was over, that he thought it might have been infatuation.

“But earlier there had been the young Filipino girl whom he had brought over to this country, according to widespread reports. However, he never did bring her to church with him! He apparently kept her under wraps” (p. 88).

Along these lines, a former evangelist in the Worldwide Church of God – Albert J. Portune – told me personally that Herbert Armstrong had brought two Filipino girls to the U.S. and had put them in an apartment in Pasadena – nobody knows what for. However, later upon learning that one of the girls had found another boy friend, her own age, he grew furious and shipped them back to the Philippines! Knowing about his preoccupation with sex, the purpose those nubile young girls served for him seems rather obvious.

Another woman, secretary to the head of the Personal Correspondence Department manager some years ago, told my wife and I she was privy to a mysterious secret concerning Herbert Armstrong. This woman’s credentials and respectability are impeccable. She told us that one day an elderly woman who was a Church member came into the office to the Richard Rice, the minister in charge. She later began talking to her. She had something very serious on her mind. She told her she lived in an apartment house in Pasadena, and across the hall from her own apartment there lived a known prostitute. She knew the woman was a prostitute.

One day, she saw two men – whom she says were Stanley Rader and Herbert Armstrong – go into that woman’s apartment. She was shocked. Floored. So the next time she saw them coming, she stood in front of the other woman’s door, barring their way. When they asked her why she was there, she explained that she didn’t think God’s apostle should be visiting a prostitute! They denied that they were aware that the woman was a prostitute, and beat a hasty retreat, and she never saw them there again.

However, the incident so distressed this elderly church woman, that she felt she had to confide in someone – and that is the reason she showed up at the office of the Personal Correspondence Department, to speak with the minister.

### *Herbert Armstrong Remarries*

Herbert Armstrong remarried when he was in his mid-80s. Ramona Martin, his new wife, was a divorcee who was in her forties. What few realize, however, is that there is evidence which would have come out at their divorce proceedings which would have shown that Herbert and Ramona were sleeping together, having a sexual relationship, *as much as THREE YEARS prior to their 'legalizing' their relationship!*

Herbert Armstrong, who was 91 in 1984, divorced his wife Ramona, 45 years of age, on May 11 of that year, after seven years of marriage. After a bitter divorce fight, the couple settled out of court, thus ending their seven-year-old marriage.

In the divorce proceedings, reported the *Los Angeles Times* (May 12, 1984), “Armstrong’s lawyers had sought to *limit evidence of a sexual nature.*” Ramona’s “attorneys felt such evidence was crucial, however, to their case. According to Ramona’s attorney, the couple had an understanding” about Herbert’s “*prior incestuous conduct with his daughter for many years.*”

Ramona’s own intimate relationship with Herbert Armstrong predated their marriage by a number of years, according to *Ambassador Report*. The *Report* asserted in the April 1984 issue, “In recent months Ramona has admitted to friends that *she and Herbert maintained a sexual relationship for THREE FULL YEARS PRIOR TO THEIR MARRIAGE*” (emphasis mine). The *Ambassador Report* article continues,

“At some point along the way Ramona had some misgivings and so asked Herbert what he would do if he discovered some man in the church was involved in a non-marital sexual relationship with one of the church women. He answered that he would immediately disfellowship them both. 'But, questioned Ramona, 'isn't what we are doing also wrong?' To her surprise Herbert said, 'No.' When she asked why, Herbert explained, '*Because I am an Apostle!*'”

During the divorce trial, Ramona said she was sterilized in 1976 at Herbert Armstrong’s insistence. (In *The Tangled Web*, David Robinson claimed Herbert Armstrong admitted this same thing to him personally.) However, Herbert and Ramona were not married until April 1977!

This “footnote” to the marriage of the elderly “apostle” to the younger woman provides further insight into the thinking of Herbert Armstrong. Why did Herbert insist Ramona become sterilized in 1976, unless they were already having sexual relations at that time? Was he afraid that Ramona might become pregnant, while they were still unmarried, and he might be the father of a bastard child? Was he remembering the fact that his own son got Shirley pregnant before they were married, and the shame and

consternation it caused him at the time? We can only guess at the answers, until those who were involved are more forthcoming.

However, when I stop to think about these shocking, disturbing revelations about a man many believed was “God’s true apostle” for this end-time generation, I can only shake my head for sadness and grief, at the sad spectacle of a man of God straying so far from God and His commandments! Both David Robinson, author of *Tangled Web*, and John Trechak, publisher and writer of *Ambassador Report*, are men of impeccable veracity and truth. John himself studied at Loyola Marymount to become a lawyer.

Truly, as David lamented the fate of Saul, *"How are the mighty fallen!"*

The sex life of Herbert Armstrong would normally be something of a private nature, something the public would not be interested in. However, when a public figure such as Herbert Armstrong preaches one thing and lives in a totally inconsistent manner, that is something else again. For fifty years or longer, Herbert Armstrong preached the Word of God. He stood for chastity, fidelity, and thundered against adultery, fornication, and sexual vices. For many years, he claimed the marriage relationship was a “GOD PLANE RELATIONSHIP.” Yet when it came to his own life, the truth becomes much more mundane, carnal, worldly, and physical.

As shocking and unbelievable as it may seem to many who read this, because of the enormous respect they have held toward Herbert Armstrong, the sad facts of the case are that he was much less than he appeared in public. His private life reads more like a lurid novel fantasy, than the life of a true, bona fide servant of God. How long will some allow blinders to cover their eyes? How long will entire churches build their foundation on this errant “apostle,” a foundation of quick-sand, claiming to be his divinely-appointed “successors”?

Other men who knew Herbert Armstrong personally, testify to his being drunk and inebriated on many occasions. One former minister, Dale Hampton, himself a recovered alcoholic, told audiences that in fact Herbert Armstrong was an “alcoholic.” After Herbert heard this, he canceled Hampton’s special ministerial program dealing with alcoholics in the Church. Al Carrozzo sums up the truth in these poignant words:

“During this time I maintained a wait-and-see attitude. It was difficult to make myself believe that the two men I respected most -- Garner Ted and Herbert Armstrong -- were total frauds! It was even more difficult for me to believe that Herbert was less than 100% sincere and honest. However, on May 22, 1973, at 1 p.m., Ted left me with no doubts as to his father real motivation, intentions, and modus operandi. In a private, three-hour meeting in his office, Ted told me he specifically disagreed with his father on many issues, including doctrine. He explained that his dad desperately wanted to be accepted by the world, and that was the reason he was traveling around the world continuously, seeking the favor and audience of world leaders.

“Ted admitted that he had seen his father 'stone drunk' on dozens of occasions. He stated that his father had told him that he (Herbert) would do anything to keep the ‘Work’ afloat -- including lying, stealing, and bribery. I was shocked, of course, but

I later saw Herbert stoned' on several occasions and caught him in numerous lies. I began to see those lies in his member and co-worker letters, and these lies have to this very day" ("The Profligate Son," *ibid.*, p.46-47).

Shocking as these statements no doubt are, to many people, Carrozzo continued his person account:

"The year 1973 was one of revelation for me. I learned of Ted's profound and long-enduring sexual activities. Herbert's total cover-up, corruption at the highest level in the WCG, Herbert's pleasure blasts around the world under the guise of preaching the true gospel, squandering of vast sums of money on extravagant art treasures, exploitation of gullible and hard-pressed people, gross doctrinal error, and suppression of human beings -- mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. Yes 1973 proved to me that dishonesty was a way of life with Ted and his father, and that way of life hasn't changed to this very day" (p.47).

Al Carrozzo came to his conclusion back in 1973. Of course, much more evidence of sin and dishonesty have come to the forefront since that time, over 30 years ago!.

When I read first-hand accounts of the many "sins" of a man who claimed to be "God's apostle" on this earth during these end times, and who on occasion hinted or led others to believe that he was the "prophesied Elijah to come" at the very end of this age, I could only shake my head in sadness and utter disgust. What a legacy!

How could such a man be "Elijah"? How could entire churches today literally revere his memory and idolize him? Personally, when I think of the evil things he did, and how abusive he often was in the conduct of his ministry, and unfair in judgment, I can only think of the terrible words of Christ Himself who said, in a prophecy for the days just before His second coming,

"But and if that EVIL SERVANT shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to SMITE his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the DRUNKEN; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall CUT HIM ASUNDER, and appoint him his portion *with the hypocrites*: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt.24:48-51).

For years I suffered in silence and said nothing. I watched as the Church drifted away from some of the foundational principles of the Word of God. I watched, horrified, as Herbert Armstrong compounded error on error, and at times falsely accused and attacked his fellow servants. For years I saw his famous volcanic temper work its way. I saw him threaten, bully, and bluster others in sheer indomitable intimidation.

I kept silence. What could I do about it? What could I say? Who would listen to me?

### *A New Work*

So, in 1974, upon being terminated from the position of being a writer for the Church and its magazines, I began the lonely work of publishing the truth of God, in books, as God made me able, and as He opened the doors. I wrote and published such books as *The Keys to Radiant Health*, *The First Genesis: A New Case for Creation*, *Beyond Star Wars*, *The Last Days*, *Escape from Armageddon*, *Overcoming Satan*, and others. I remained in the Church, but operated on my own, as God blessed my endeavors. I turned my attention to serving God as he enabled me.

But in the meanwhile, these terrible buried truths gnawed at my stomach. I was greatly depressed by the state of the Church, and more directly, the sad state of the “apostle” who was leading the Church, and his sinning son. It made no sense. Why would a man of God allow these things to happen? Even more, why would God in heaven allow such things to go on in His very Church?

But one thing we can all know, if we trust God and have faith in Him. God will not justify or excuse the wicked. No matter how righteous and pure they may look on the outside, Jesus Christ said of such miserable hypocrites,

“WOE unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear *beautiful outward*, but are within full of DEAD MEN’S BONES, and of ALL UNCLEANNESS. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are FULL OF HYPOCRISY and INIQUITY. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! . . . Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, *how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*” (Matt.23:27-29, 32-33).

A more fitting description of the hypocrisy and venality of some of the most “righteous appearing” men of God, and so-called modern “apostles,” during these “Last Days,” I could scarcely begin to even remotely imagine.

### *“The IDOL Shepherd”*

In these last days, many members of the Worldwide Church of God, and all of its split-off groups, such as Philadelphia Church of God, Living Church of God, and United Church of God, are for some reason or another BLIND to the faults and flaws of Herbert Armstrong. They are delusional. They perpetuate the cover-up. They won’t discuss the truth of these allegations. Many refuse to admit he could do any wrong, that he could have made MAJOR mistakes in his life. They hold him up on a pedestal; they virtually WORSHIP the man, although they would deny it if you mentioned this to them.

Many people today are blind to the real truth. When we look at the fruits of his life, with honesty and willingness to face the facts, then we find that Herbert Armstrong was seriously flawed. He was far from perfect. However, Almighty God did use him at various points in his life to restore and recapture certain major truths of God’s Word.

Nevertheless, God also allowed him to make incredible mistakes and blunders – both in prophetic utterances, in certain doctrinal teachings that impacted severely on the lives of people, and in his method of government of the Church of God.

There is an amazing prophecy found in the book of Zechariah. Some have wondered if it is actually a prophecy of Herbert W. Armstrong. Dr. Herman L. Hoeh, years ago, raised this possibility to me as I sat in his office. It was around 1972. We were discussing the Work of God, and Herbert Armstrong and some of the problems in the Church. Herman Hoeh turned to the prophecy of Zechariah 11, where we read that God told His prophet, “Take unto thee yet the instruments of a FOOLISH SHEPHERD. For, lo, *I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall NOT visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still; but he shall eat the flesh of the fat (live high and mighty off the tithes of Gods people!), and tear their claws in pieces.*

“Woe to the IDOL shepherd [an “idol” shepherd is one who is *worshipped* and esteemed like a “god”!] that leaveth the flock! [Herbert Armstrong was noted for his many trips abroad in his private corporate jet plane, meeting and hobnobbing with the princes of this world, leaving the Church behind]. The sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his *right eye* [as he grew older, Herbert Armstrong went blind in his right eye and almost blind in his left eye]: his *arm* shall be clean dried up, and his *right eye shall be utterly darkened*” (Zech.11:15-17).

What was Herbert Armstrong’s “arm”?

For many years, his right arm was his son, Garner Ted Armstrong. Could this prophecy be a reference to the fact that Ted Armstrong would himself eventually “dry up” completely, spiritually? With all the evidence of Ted Armstrong’s incessant philandering and womanizing, even up to his death a few years ago, he certainly did become totally “dried up” as to being the “right arm” of Herbert Armstrong! In fact, he has been his “enemy,” leading a competing branch of the Church of God, since 1978 when he was finally disfellowshipped by his father!

Is this a prophecy that Garner Ted Armstrong – Herbert Armstrong’s “right arm” for MANY YEARS – the one whom he at one time appointed as his heir and successor, even as David so appointed Solomon his son to succeed him three thousand years ago – would go astray and become “clean dried up” spiritually, bereft of the Spirit of God? Look at the evidence! Let’s face the facts, honestly, boldly, courageously, without pity or compromise!

Almighty God Himself speaks of this end-time shepherd as a “foolish” shepherd. Herbert Armstrong in his later years, and during various times of his ministry, was indeed a very “foolish” man. An old saying says, “There is no fool like an old fool.” In his later years, Herbert Armstrong often completely misjudged people. He himself “ordained” as evangelists in the Church the likes of such men as Stanley Rader, church attorney, and Joseph Tkach, who later betrayed both his memory and his doctrinal teachings. Was this

not an example of outright “foolishness”?

Yet in the prophecy of Zechariah, God refers to this “foolish shepherd” (Zech.11:15) as one who He said “I will raise up” (v.15). This shepherd was specifically prophesied to *not heal* that which was broken, but would live off the fat of the people. Herbert Armstrong’s teaching on “healing” for decades referred to drugs as poisons, and medicine as “idolatry.” Thus in fact he taught against the medical establishment and taught those who went to doctors had no faith in God. As a result of this teaching, many heart-wrenching stories can be told of church members, refusing operations, who lost their eye-sight, who died when a simple operation could have saved them, and many small children were sacrificed to this false teaching. In retrospect, this fanaticism did untold and incalculable evil.

This end-time shepherd whom God says *He* “raised up” (Zech.11:16), also spent MILLIONS of dollars on expensive jewelry, original paintings, candelabra, ornate salt cellars, and fabulous dinner settings for his table. He lived in a mansion in Pasadena, and owned other mansions in Big Sandy, Texas and Bricket Wood, England. He flew around the world in his own jet airplane, and commanded a salary from the Church of over \$250,000 a year plus an unlimited expense account. As the prophecy states, “he shall eat the flesh of the fat.”

Does Herbert Armstrong fulfill this amazing Biblical prophecy? Think about it.

Gene Scarbrough, was a long-time friend and elder in God’s Church for over forty years. He was ordained in 1967, came out to Pasadena, California, in that year began to serve full-time in the ministry. He told me that years ago his daughter Peggy, spent some time visiting with Mrs. Loma D. Armstrong, who took a liking to her. While they were together one time, Mrs. Armstrong reminisced about how the Work and Church began. While reflecting on how the ministry of her husband Herbert and his eldest son, Richard David Armstrong, originally got started, Mrs. Armstrong told Peggy, “They got into it for the money!”

This type of candid statement would not be surprising if heard from the lips of an enemy of the Church. But, coming straight from the lips of Mrs. Loma D. Armstrong, it packs a wallop!

Another friend corroborates the above story in part. According to his information, Garner Ted Armstrong once told a teacher in the church at Big Sandy and a personal friend that when his father was in the aluminum siding business back in Oregon, he got a call from far away to make a bid on a job. Herbert jacked up the price because he didn’t want the job, the location was so distant. To his surprise, the customer said, “When can you get started?” It turns out the customer was the minister of a Seventh Day Adventist Church, and had plenty of money from tithes and offerings. According to Ted Armstrong, upon returning home that evening, Herbert – who all his life wanted to be considered successful in business and make lots of money – told his wife, “Honey, I now know how we’re going to get rich!”

### *Should These Things Be Made Public?*

Some people might ask, “Why do you bring up these old sins of the past? Isn’t this just a form of muck-raking? Shouldn’t we just forget these scandalous things? Aren’t you engaging in wallowing in filth and mud-slinging? Besides, if Herbert and Ted have sincerely repented of their sins, then shouldn’t we forgive and forget them?”

Neither Herbert Armstrong nor Garner Ted Armstrong ever confessed to their sins, publicly. For years they covered them up and hid them from view. David’s sins were admitted publicly and even written about in Scripture. But the sins of Herbert Armstrong and Garner Ted Armstrong were NEVER admitted or confessed to the Church membership! They were denied, covered up, whitewashed, and glossed over. Those brave individuals who sought to have them revealed were summarily disfellowshipped and put out of the Church!

What does Almighty God say about spiritual “cover ups”? The apostle Paul wrote, “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. *Them that sin REBUKE BEFORE ALL, that others also may fear*” (I Tim.5:19-20).

The Living Bible has this, “If he has really sinned, then he should be *REBUKED IN FRONT OF THE WHOLE CHURCH.*” The Good News Bible says, “REBUKE PUBLICLY all those who commit sins, *so that the rest may be afraid.*”

When sins are covered up, made little of, ignored and swept under the carpet, this encourages other ministers to play around, commit adultery, fornication, sexual perversion, thinking they can get away with it. It also encourages a spirit of immorality among the Church membership!

Not only did Herbert Armstrong have sex with a woman and her daughter – he did it to his OWN daughter! Not just once, but repeatedly, over TEN YEARS! And then he covered it up for over 40 to 50 years!

Therefore I make no apology for having to write these things, and exposing the TRUTH, no matter how unpalatable it may be. It is high time the truth were told! We need to have the courage to face the truth, honestly, unafraid – no matter what the consequences! I know it seems like a dirty job. But somebody has to do it! And it seems of all those who came out of Worldwide, during the past ten years, *I am the only one who has been publicly willing to confront these things head on!*

Jesus Christ said, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Free from the shackles of deception and sin!

But sometimes, we must face it, the truth *hurts!* It hurts to *be* deceived, and it hurts to have to *admit* we have been deceived!

***“Tried Them Which Say They Are Apostles”***

God says to His Church of Ephesus, “I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast TRIED them which say they are APOSTLES, and are not, and hast found them LIARS . . .” (Rev.2:2).

The apostle Paul wrote, “For *such are FALSE APOSTLES*, deceitful workers, transforming *themselves* into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed *as* the ministers of righteousness; *whose end shall be according to their work*” (II Cor.11:13-15).

Paul was saying there are ministers who have entered the Church of God down through history who have not been true apostles of God. They misled the Church. They claimed to be apostles, even transformed themselves into apostles, but God Himself never made them such.

God commands us to beware of such men. They may appear just like a true minister of God, but they are spiritual “tares” in the sight of God and will burn up in the lake of fire!

What about Herbert W. Armstrong? Was he a true apostle of God, although severely flawed? Or was he a false apostle?

The apostle John tells us, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but TRY [TEST, PROVE] THE SPIRITS [messages, attitudes, teachings] whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (I John 4:1).

Like many others, I carefully checked up and investigated the teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong back in the late 50s and early 60s, before I became involved with the Church and became a member. At the time, I was convinced that what I had read and proved was true. I studied diligently. I looked up every Scripture. I proved Christmas was pagan, Easter was pagan, the Sabbath should be observed, and even the annual Holy Days should be remembered and observed.

As time went on, I found that many of Herbert Armstrong’s teachings were truly based on the Bible, and I could prove them. But some others I came to see, over the years, were in error to one degree or another.

Many of these doctrinal “shady” areas came to the light in the mid-1970s. At that time, many ministers left the Church for two essential reasons: First, they despised the cover up and misuse of authority shown by Herbert Armstrong in dealing with his son’s sexual sins. Second, there were honest questions and disagreements on certain doctrines. Some of these questions were discussed and changes were made; others were buried and suppressed at the time. Nothing could be changed except what Herbert Armstrong wanted to change. At that time, he made a change in observing the day of Pentecost,

changing the manner of “counting,” and he made a more fundamental change in the doctrine of divorce and remarriage. Interestingly, with the change that was made, he gave himself the “right” to marry a divorcee! Most other areas demanding investigation and change – such as the doctrine of divine healing, wearing make up, and the like – were ignored.

### *Herbert and King Solomon*

Over the years I have come to see that flawed as he undoubtedly was, in many areas, nevertheless, Herbert Armstrong did teach the truth of God in a way unlike any other man at that time. It was sad for me to see him gradually go further and further astray, after the death of his wife in 1967.

In some ways, his life was like that of king Solomon. Soon after Solomon became king, God came to him in a dream, and then said to him, “Lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee” (I Kings 3:12).

God allowed Solomon to build the Temple of God in Jerusalem, even as He allowed Herbert Armstrong to build the “house for God” in Pasadena. The Temple was razed to the ground by the Babylonians; Herbert Armstrong’s “House of God” has been taken over by tongues-speaking, radical Pentecostals – modern “Babylonians”!

Solomon was used by God. He wrote Scripture. But did all this guarantee that Solomon would remain faithful to God? Solomon had the same kind of problem as Herbert Armstrong – sex. And vanity – pride. We read, “But king Solomon *loved many strange women*, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in unto them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will *turn away your heart after their gods*: Solomon clave unto these in love.

“And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives *turned away his heart*. For it came to pass, *when Solomon was old*, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and HIS HEART WAS NOT PERFECT with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

“For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon DID EVIL in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

“And the Lord was ANGRY with Solomon, *because his heart was turned away from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice*, and had commanded

him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded.

“Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, *I will surely REND the kingdom away from thee*, and will give it to thy servant” (I Kings 11:1-11).

Notice the incredible parallels. Solomon, like Herbert Armstrong, had a problem with “sex.” And pride. These things undoubtedly caused him grief throughout his life. Even so Herbert Armstrong’s sexual problems lasted all through his life. He blamed his first wife for being frigid and said she caused his problems. Whatever the case, his incest with his younger daughter has been carefully documented. His masturbation throughout his life was admitted to by himself. And his pride is evident in the way he dealt with people, those working under him, and his seeking “eminence” by visiting and hob-knobbing with heads of state, and building fabulous buildings, like Solomon!

The comparison between Herbert Armstrong, to whom God granted much precious, divine knowledge, during the years of his ministry, and Solomon, to whom God granted great wisdom and understanding, cannot be denied.

And both of these men, as they grew old, began to compromise with the truth and knowledge of God. Both of them became autocratic and tyrannical demagogues and abusive in their administration of authority. Of course, this goes hand in hand with departure from the laws and commandments of God, three of which are: “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” and, “Thou shalt not bear false witness,” and “Thou shalt not covet.”

Solomon became a despot. After God sent a prophet to tell Jeroboam he was to become king over ten tribes of Israel, Solomon learned of it (he had “eyes” and “ears” throughout his kingdom, like the CIA), and “sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon” (I Kings 11:40). Solomon sought to stop the prophecy from being fulfilled! He was no longer the “friend” of God.

Even so, Herbert Armstrong went astray during various stages of his life, as he himself admitted to his own son. Even during the last years of his life, he strayed. He sinned against God, and like Eli, he put his son before God. When he finally put his son out of the Church, it was not for the reasons of adultery and immorality, but because of a difference in opinion over administrative decisions in the Church.

Like Solomon, Herbert tried to cover up his own sins, and his sexual weaknesses. No mention of these things can be found in his official autobiography. Not even a hint!

How, then, will God judge this man? How will God judge Solomon?

In the examples of faith listed in Hebrews 11, the name of king Solomon is

conspicuously absent. Does this mean he will not be in the Kingdom of God, at the resurrection of the righteous at the coming of Christ? Apparently so. He will come up in the second resurrection, it would seem, with those who have not yet proven faithful, and will be judged according to his “works.” Or, he may have repented later when he was old, and then wrote the book of Ecclesiastes!

In his old age, the high priest Eli went astray from God, and sinned grievously, bringing upon himself and his family the wrath of God.

Throughout his ministry, and in his old age, Herbert Armstrong likewise sinned grievously against God, and ruled the Church of God with an iron tyrannical hand.

How will God judge him? Only God knows. However, I think it is safe to say, that he is definitely NOT the prophesied to come at the end of this age!

In another Scriptural parallel, God Himself chose Saul to be king over Israel. In the beginning Saul was very humble and meek. He even “hid among the baggage” when they came to make him king! (I Sam.10:22). But after he became king, Saul never quite turned wholeheartedly to serve the Lord. He himself became a “problem” to the congregation of Israel, and at one time in misguided zeal even threatened to kill his own son Jonathan who had brought great victory to Israel (I Sam.14:44-45). Saul began to listen to the people rather than the simple commands of God (15:24). He “eared the people.”

### *The Elijah to Come*

When John the Baptist was asked if he was the “Elijah” to come, he humbly denied it, and put all the emphasis on Christ. “And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’ Then they said to him, ‘Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?’ He said, ‘I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord’” (John 1:21-23).

He said he was merely “a messenger from the wilderness” (see Isaiah 40:1-3). He had a humble, self-effacing, meek attitude. He did not strut around, like a vain peacock, he did not associate with kings and prime ministers, he did not live in lavish houses, or build great buildings. He just preached the message, the word, the truth of God.

Showing an opposite spirit, Herbert Armstrong actually claimed to be the end-time “Elijah”! He often “hinted” he was Elijah! He called His “Work” the “Elijah Work”!

Yeshua said, “You shall know them by their fruits” (Matt.7:20). The fruits of the life of Herbert W. Armstrong are not the fruits of “Elijah”! But the truth is, the REAL end-time Elijah is almost surely living today. He has not yet been revealed to the world. Will you recognize him? How do you know?