

A formal dinner table setting with white plates, silverware, and crystal glasses. The table is set with a white tablecloth. In the foreground, there is a large white plate with a gold rim. Behind it, two crystal glasses are visible. The background is dark, and the lighting is warm, creating a sophisticated atmosphere.

Royal Vision

January–February 2005

The POWER of Fasting

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About the cover Abstaining from both food and drink offers a powerful, spiritual tool to draw close to God. (Aubrey Mercado for *Royal Vision*)

Editor in chief Gerald Flurry

Senior editors Stephen Flurry, Dennis Leap

Managing editor Wik Heerma

Associate editors Joel Hilliker, Ryan Malone

Contributing editors Gary Rethford, Max Rumler, Craig Winters

Contributors Fred Dattolo, Ron Fraser, Mark Nash

Proofreaders Donna Grieves, Nancy Hancock, Ken Jeffries

Prepress production manager Ryan Malone

Circulation manager Mark Jenkins

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PART THREE

PROPHECY AGAIN

Deep study of this subject will sweep your imagination from this most evil world ever into a wonderful civilization beyond any of mankind's dreams. God prophesied that Jerusalem would be like Sodom today, but then would become the most beautiful and inspiring city ever on this planet. The extremely bad news ushers in the best news ever.

By Gerald Flurry

AMERICA SUFFERED ITS WORST TERRORIST ATTACK EVER ON Sept. 11, 2001. Quite a few of the journalists talked about the HORRIFYING NEW REALITY we have to live with, but we only see the tip of the iceberg. This horrifying new reality is 10,000 times worse than the world can even imagine! Most of this massive crisis is invisible and hidden from the world.

It all began in 1986, when Herbert W. Armstrong died and Satan was cast down.

What we actually saw on September 11 was trivial compared with what is coming upon Britain, America and the Jewish nation. It will envelop the whole world.

Satan has been cast down to this Earth, and he is FULL OF WRATH because he knows he has a *short time* (Revelation 12:12). This world has *never* before faced what it is facing now. The Earth is practically full of weapons of mass destruction! And this is when Satan's wrath is raging at its peak, because his time is so short.

God's very elect must also be acutely aware of how short our time is to *prophesy again*! It's quite a frightening scenario, but we can thank God it's all directly connected to the return of Jesus Christ.

God's very elect, in this last hour, face a new reality. God's people have never faced anything like this before. We have to do a work somewhat differently than any of God's people have ever had to do and that is the work of *prophesying again* in the midst of Satan's worst wrath. We must conduct ourselves accordingly in this most urgent crisis. We must adjust to this new reality.

"I Know Your Works"

Revelation 1:5 calls Jesus Christ "the first *begotten* of the dead." The translators made a mistake: Actually He was the *firstborn* from the dead. Most people seem to get nothing but bad news from the prophetic book of Revelation. But here in the first chapter it talks about Jesus Christ being the FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD. That's a most inspiring statement. Romans 8:29 calls Him the "firstborn among MANY BRETHREN."

Seeing a human child being born is an overwhelmingly emotional experience. But imagine our *spiritual* birth! God says we are going to be BORN AGAIN FROM THE DEAD!

Right here in verse 5, Satan's deceptions begin. He gets mankind to overlook our being born into the Family of God. Why would the translators use the word "begotten"? That completely obscures the truth of our incredible human potential. Isaiah says that a *whole nation* is to be BORN in a single day! The world will be in shock and disbelief at a *spiritual nation* being BORN INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD (Isaiah 66:8). That's an inspiring message that the world knows nothing about. Men refuse to receive that message—though they need it badly.

As you begin this majestic book of Revelation, keep this awesome future in your mind. Without this vision, the temporary bad news will discourage you.

The truth about being born into God's Family is the gospel, which means *good news*. And it is the only good news there is!

Jesus Christ's mind was saturated with this magnificent future. That is why there were four Gospel writers. Christ is trying to etch the gospel into our minds. Then no trial is too difficult to overcome.

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks" (Revelation 1:12). This is talking about the *lamp*. *The book of Revelation is introduced with the LIGHT of God—seven burning lamps that give light to this world.*

The book of Revelation is seen by this world as nothing but gloom and doom—and this is a dark, dark world—but it shouldn't be. God's brilliant light should fill the Earth. Men, however, have rejected the light. They don't want to hear about *changing* and being born into God's Family. That is why they killed Christ.

God's very elect have the distinct honor to bring light and joy into a miserable world. That is especially true in this end time.

THERE IS A PROFOUND SPIRITUAL GLOW IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION. Even the bad news is leading this world into God's light.

Each one of us has the responsibility to let our light shine—to show this world God's light. We are now being judged by how much light we bring into God's Church and the world.

How much glow do you add to God's lamp?

OUR BIG CHALLENGE IS TO SEE THE BOOK OF REVELATION THROUGH GOD'S EYES—not through carnal eyes. The first three chapters give a foundational light to the whole book. Revelation chapter 1 pictures the fiery splendor of God. Chapters 2 and 3 are about the seven lamps of God—the light of God that glows in God's true Church on Earth.

God's people are called to deliver a message of light in a gloomy, black world. The world's only hope is to receive that light.

In chapters 2 and 3, when the eras of the Church are described, SEVEN TIMES God says, "I know thy works." The great God who inspired this book of Revelation wants us to know that He knows what we're doing. Anytime God repeats something like that, you can be sure it's important to understand it. He's aware of every good work, and He's also aware of every time we let down. He is intently focused on the works of His elect.

Satan has worked feverishly to destroy the truth about the Church eras, and about the Head of the Church described in Revelation 1. These first three chapters give us the big picture.

The Head of God's Church is described in the first chapter of Revelation. Satan's number-one target is to get our minds off the fiery God who is our Head! The second area Satan attacks is Church eras. If Satan destroys this knowledge, we become confused and blind about who we are. Our commission is vague or lost. Understanding Church eras gives us context as to who we are and what we should be doing.

This knowledge makes this Philadelphia Church of God aware of why we must *prophesy again* during the Laodicean era. How can we know what our commission is if we don't know which era we are in? How can God use us to fuel His lamp if we don't know where the lamp is?

Church eras give us a God Family context. The book of Revelation starts with the Father and Son (Revelation 1:1). Then God gives us a picture of these fiery Beings and their power. After that, God describes His bride and the work she is to do (Revelation 2 and 3). The time span is from the First Coming to the Second Coming of Christ.

Along with the prophets, this is *the foundational governmental structure* of the World Tomorrow. The governments of

You can die and know you're going to live forever! That's how we remove the fear in our lives: by having that kind of vision. We have nothing to fear!

this world are on their death bed. A new civilization is almost here.

This is a monumental, earth-shaking truth that the world doesn't see, but that it will see quite soon.

We show people what their Creator is doing right now. And He is extremely active.

God knows the works of every era. Each one had a different job, a different commission. Christ says, *I know what you're doing, and I'm showing you what to do*. He knows, and so must we.

In this era, our job is to *prophesy again*. And God knows how zealously each one of us works to complete that job.

Do Not Fear

To those in the Smyrna Church, Christ said, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer..." (Revelation 2:10). Do you sometimes fear? Do you fear to face the challenges of doing God's work? Christ tells us not to fear what's coming. We don't have to fear anybody but God.

Look at the trials they experienced: "...behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (verse 10). What a challenge—but what an end! Who will cast some of them in prison? Not men, but the devil! Men are used by Satan. He orchestrates all of the serious persecution against God's loyal saints.

Many in the world scoff at Satan because they don't know him or understand his power! That power has them in abject bondage.

John knew God and the devil. Satan was very real to him. John knew that Satan is our great adversary. If we get thrown in

jail or killed, the devil empowers such evil. He is the real source of our persecution.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (verse 11). Satan's primary goal is to destroy God's work and His people. His main passion is to keep us from *prophesying again*. Do we hear what the Spirit says about Satan?

God is talking about a profound understanding: You can get into this message so much that you really don't even fear being thrown into prison, or dying physically. God says you don't have to fear that—you can die, absolutely KNOWING you won't be hurt by the second death. YOU CAN DIE AND KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO LIVE FOREVER! THAT'S HOW WE REMOVE THE FEAR IN OUR LIVES: BY HAVING THAT KIND OF VISION. WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR!

Satan's primary goal is to destroy God's people and His work. We must see and understand *our adversary* or we can't defeat him—he will conquer us, as he already has already conquered 95 percent of God's people today!

The devil has God's people thrown into jail and killed. Satan tries to conquer us through fear. It takes a lot of intensive Bible study to grasp that to the point where it really eliminates fear in our lives. Perfect love casts out fear. If you love God and His truth, the fears will disappear.

What does it mean *not* to be hurt? The second death hurts and it hurts forever, because we are dead forever! No matter what we say now, the second death hurts. It is the greatest hurt we can suffer. You can die for God, however, and the next waking moment you rise into majestic splendor forever! You receive a crown of eternal glory.

The book of Revelation is not about the first death. It's about avoiding the second death!

We will face many trials from *prophesying again*, but we must not *fear* those trials if we are to proclaim God's message to the world.

Joyful Vision

The end of Revelation 3 talks about us sharing Christ's throne. Then, in chapter 4 comes a magnificent description of God's throne. Notice the excitement here: "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts

had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (Revelation 4:6-8).

These angelic beings are not depressed; they are giving God praise for everything. They have never been given the potential to be sons of God, yet they are still expressing their joy and thanksgiving to God day and night. Apparently their job is just to praise God—and they're thrilled to have it.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT MAKES THEM HAPPY? THIS TWO THIRDS OF THE ANGELS WATCHED LUCIFER'S REBELLION AND REMAINED LOYAL TO GOD. THAT IS WHAT MAKES THEM HAPPY. And our loyalty to God is what makes the PCG happy today when 95 percent of God's people are rebellious and unhappy!

These angels are behind God's commission. The firstfruits—not the angels—are going to share this breathtakingly beautiful throne with *Christ*. Still, the righteous angels are 100 percent behind the PCG's commission today, which helps prepare us for that throne.

THE LOYAL ANGELS ARE NOT SELFISH. THEIR WHOLE FOCUS IS ON GOD AND HIS WORK. THAT MAKES ANGELS AND MEN ECSTATIC!

"The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (verses 10-11). God is worthy to receive glory and honor. He created all things, including us, and He has sacrificed EVERYTHING for us. It keeps us humble to remember that. LUCIFER FORGOT THAT HE WAS A *CREATED* BEING. We must never forget our humble beginning. A newborn baby wouldn't be able to do anything if someone didn't take care of it. Yet mankind, and even God's people, can get arrogant and forget how much they need to be taught and cared for by God. So many of God's people have turned away because they became more excited about *things* than about their potential to become sons of God. That is why the Creator created us!

These angels have it right. They know who created them. They are simply rejoicing because God gave them life! They're thrilled to be alive, and they're going to live happily—forever.

The Laodiceans have their minds on *things*—they are "rich, and increased with goods." The greatest treasures ever found

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on this Earth are but dung, compared to our potential.

We all must learn a lesson from the righteous angels. They focus on the *cause* of their existence. They think on the beginning of their lives—their creation and the Creator. They understand *why* they were created.

So must we. We must always see through God's eyes. Why did the Creator create us? That is what causes us to be filled with *praise* for God. It is this understanding that brings joy and excitement into our lives! The Creator's view and our potential makes the greatest treasures on Earth as dung by comparison! God has given us a temporary, chemical existence, only to prepare us for eternal bliss.

The Laodiceans have lost the real treasures of this life. They are "rich, and increased with goods" of this world, but spiritually they are in the most wretched poverty imaginable.

Our transcendental potential must always be our greatest passion, or we will lose everything of value.

We need the gratitude of these angels. We need the joy and excitement that they have. If we don't have a lot of that joy in our life, something is wrong. Obviously, a serious trial can weigh you down; God says He puts those burdens upon us. We need to be rejoicing and praising God like these 24 elders—and even more, because our potential is so much greater.

These angels see the vast difference between the Creator and the created! Lucifer and one third of the *created* angels made a pathetic attempt to rule over the *Creator*.

The righteous angels hated that rebellion. They never rebelled against the Creator when He decided to recreate Himself through mankind. They still see a fabulous future for themselves. That attitude makes

them happy. It will do the same for us.

Let me give you an amazing thought I believe came directly from God: IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE RIGHTEOUS ANGELS HAVE GREATER POTENTIAL NOW THAN THEY HAD BEFORE LUCIFER REBELLED!

Before man was created, the angels were going to beautify and rule over the universe, under the Father and the Son. Now, that is the transcendental potential of man. The righteous angels are still going to help rule the universe, but this time they will be under billions of created sons of God.

WOULD THEIR FUTURE HAVE BEEN MORE WONDERFUL WITHOUT THE BILLIONS OF CREATED GODS? I DON'T THINK SO.

IT SEEMS THEY COULD BE PRAISING GOD FOR MAKING THEIR FUTURE EVEN GREATER BY CREATING SO MANY SONS OF GOD!

Was it a win-win situation for the righteous angels, even if one third of the angels did rebel?

I believe that is an extremely strong probability.

This is all consistent with the profound love of God. God is striving to give all of us the most awesome future possible. This is how God thinks.

If we are to do God's work and *prophecy again*, then we must think like God. We must have His vision to do His work.

Watch Jerusalem

Very soon, serious problems are going to accelerate in this world. "And he said unto me, Thou must prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings. And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out [or cast out] and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" (Revelation 10:11; 11:1-2).

This is what we face: One way or another, we must be measured. The Laodiceans who go into the Tribulation will lose a big part of their reward. THEY WON'T HUMBLE THEMSELVES AND ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BE MEASURED, so they must go into the Great Tribulation with the rest of the world.

The times of the Gentiles are truly horrifying. "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over" (Daniel 11:40). This "push" actually

triggers World War III! The king of the north, the Holy Roman Empire, will win. What is that push? Just like the Crusades, there will be two great religions fighting over Jerusalem. That *push* will probably revolve around Jerusalem. (Request our booklet *The King of the South*.)

"He [the king of the north] shall enter also into *the glorious land...*" (verse 41). That's Jerusalem. Why, after conquering the king of the south, would this power enter Jerusalem? There must be a lot going on in that city that he's concerned about. These two kings are warring over Jerusalem, and the king of the north wants to secure it for his religion.

"And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain..." (verse 45). **THIS GREAT FALSE CHURCH HAS A LEADER WHO WILL PLANT HIS THRONE IN JERUSALEM. You must have the greatest passion for Jerusalem to move your headquarters there!** I believe this too indicates that Jerusalem is where the "push" occurs.

I suspect there is another big reason why that clash is over Jerusalem. Satan knows our immediate future will be in that city! That's where Christ and His true Church will be serving at headquarters. That's where God the Father will bring down New Jerusalem to this Earth. Satan knows all about that dazzling future and it enrages him! Matthew 24:2 tells us that there won't be *one brick left upon another* at the Wailing Wall. The beast power doesn't want Judaism or Islam around; that church-state combine doesn't want any competition. After all, JERUSALEM BELONGS TO THEM, they reason. That is coming right out of the mind of the devil. He wants to stop God's plan and His rule of the universe from Jerusalem.

God tells us to watch Jerusalem. You can tell a lot about world conditions by watching that city, like no other city on Earth. "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh [speaking of the imminent coming of Christ], and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations *against Jerusalem* to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city" (Zechariah 14:1-2).

This is getting down to what's happening in your newspapers every day! Jerusalem is half Arab already. These verses prophesy that the Palestinians are going to take over half of Jerusalem very soon. I don't believe that the Palestinians, by themselves, could do that—but they could if the king of the south supported

This great false church has a leader who will plant his throne in Jerusalem. You must have the greatest passion for Jerusalem to move your headquarters there!

and helped them. We need to watch: Iran wants to take over that city. Such a conquest would galvanize the whole Islamic world to get behind the king of the south—a goal Iran has been working toward all along.

That event will be THE TRIGGER to start a chain of events that will culminate in this: "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee" (verses 3-5).

When we look at these prophecies, we need to realize what they are all tied to. What you're seeing in Jerusalem today is a prelude to Christ's return. It will all lead to that climactic event, step-by-step!

So watch Jerusalem! God's very elect must watch Jerusalem and *prophecy again*.

In the Olivet prophecy, Christ talked about seeing "Jerusalem compassed with armies" (Luke 21:20). Why are these European armies surrounding Jerusalem after they've already won a war with the king of the south?

The prophecy continues, "... then know that the desolation thereof is [near]. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto"

(verses 20-21). There is coming a time when we will need strong faith to flee. It will take real faith to flee for your life, when people are calling you all kinds of names and heaping persecution on you and on this Church. You and I won't be able to endure and flee if we don't have the faith of Christ. God says we had better be ready.

But here you can see that even *after the king of the north has won this battle, he's still concerned about Jerusalem*. The Jews in Jerusalem are deeply concerned about themselves and their security, and are probably going to *invite the Holy Roman Empire in*. That will lead them into a deadly trap.

"For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people" (verses 22-23). This is what God must deliver us from. It's not going to be easy for the elderly; nursing mothers and children are going to have horrible times. The only way we can escape that is to prophesy again and have God protect us.

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*" (verse 24). And that, of course, is when Christ returns. We're about to see Israel trodden down like the mire of the streets. Is that what it will take to get its people's attention? The Laodiceans will be right there in the middle of that. Because they were so hard, God says, *You're going to be trodden down, because I want to get your attention and save you! I want you to be in My Family!*

Verse 24 is directly tied to Revelation 10:11 and 11:1-2. We must prophesy again about the times of the Gentiles.

Lift Up Your Eyes

Hosea 5:5 prophesies that those three primary nations fighting terrorism right now—America, Britain and Israel (or Manasseh, Ephraim and Judah)—are going to fall together. Isn't it interesting how united they are today—and how isolated from the rest of the world? It's pretty obvious, as well, that Ephraim will be moved out of the European Union.

This war against terrorism is just the outer edges of a coming storm—the times of the Gentiles!

These three nations of Israel are going to lose. (For more information request our Hosea booklet.)

These prophecies are being fulfilled today in your newspapers. We must all be acutely awake or be caught in the worst storm ever on this planet! There will *never* be a greater storm than this one.

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke 21:25-26). But notice the good news: "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (verses 27-28).

This passage is so critical. If we're not careful, when these difficulties break out in the world we will be prone to get depressed. We have a propensity to hang our heads and get caught up in the calamity, which is getting worse all the time.

God knows our human nature, and He is warning us not to do that. *Don't let this get you down*, He is telling us. *Lift up your head because your redemption draws near! Jesus Christ is about to return! Don't lose your hope or your positive attitude! You're getting awfully close to the end!* That's the battle we have. We must not look only at the bad news!

Look at the little nation called Israel today. The Israelis have been coping with a very consistent terror threat for years. They've lived in fear; they've had loved ones die. And it's robbed them of hope. The majority of them are convinced their children's lives will be worse than their own, and THEY LIVE IN OPEN DESPAIR! They don't see hope in their country. What if you lived there? Would you go around in open despair, downcast and crestfallen because of what's happening to your land? It would certainly be difficult not to.

But God says, *No! No! Don't do that! Lift up your heads! This is good news!* We MUST BELIEVE GOD and prophesy again.

Israel is trusting its worst enemies rather than trusting God. Its double-cross is coming (to learn about this, request our booklet *Ezekiel—The End-Time Prophet*).

We have to be able to connect what's happening in Jerusalem—and in the U.S. and Britain and Canada and Europe and Asia—to the return of Jesus Christ! That's nothing to hang your head about! Because when He comes back, His saints are coming back WITH HIM!

Can you feel the times of the Gentiles? Can you see and sense that everything's

**We are facing the
times of the Gentiles!
God says we can
see the sword, and
we can feel the storm
already building.
We must prophesy
again while there
is time!**

going so well for the Gentiles? And that God Himself has actually put it in their minds to do what they're going to do to Israel? Can you see what's happening in the Middle East? It's all right there before us. The nations of Israel—America and Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the Jews—keep wondering, *Why is Germany against us? Why is Russia against us? And China, and Europe?* Why is everybody against us? It's BECAUSE WE ARE FACING THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES! GOD SAYS WE CAN SEE THE SWORD, AND WE CAN FEEL THE STORM ALREADY BUILDING—THE OUTER PERIPHERY OF THAT PERFECT STORM. We must prophesy again while there is time!

But it's all leading to the best news ever! So don't let it get you down. Lift up your head. Because if we don't lift up our heads, *we're not going to prophesy again*. We'll be too discouraged. We have to be a positive people, and we have to understand what's happening on this Earth.

You and I must *connect* what is happening in Jerusalem today to the imminent return of Christ. This is where we must keep our minds. This is the *only hope* there is.

Sodom Today

In Revelation 10:11, God gives us our commission. It is really a grand VISION of what we're going to be doing: PROPHESYING AGAIN before many peoples, and nations, and tongues and kings.

Notice, then, how God follows that vision with correction. He immediately talks about *measuring us* in chapter 11. God begins to measure us and show us where we need to change. That's a wonderful thing, coming from our loving Father. Every loving father measures his children so they can

be happy and successful. If we are going to prophesy again, we have to worship in that temple and we have to be measured. That includes the altar, which is talking about the ministers, including me. We all have to be measured. We won't accept that correction if we don't have the vision.

First, God gives us the commission to *prophesy again*. God's Church had become Laodicean and stopped proclaiming God's message. The very elect had to resurrect God's work and understand their new commission to *warn* the Laodiceans and the world.

So God revealed and inspired us with a new commission. God established His government again through one man. We were given "a reed like unto a rod" (Revelation 11:1). Then God could measure His ministry (the altar) and His very elect.

First God gave us the vision, then His law and government. The Laodiceans rejected the vision and were unable to keep God's law—submit to His government—and be measured. God is in the inner court. The Laodiceans were put into the outer court to be trodden down by the Gentiles in the Tribulation (verse 2). They will have to repent the hard way. But 50 percent of them will never repent. They will be plunged into the lake of fire.

That is what happens to those Laodiceans who refuse to be measured. So let's be positive about being corrected or measured by our loving Father.

Revelation 11 then talks about the two witnesses, and how the beast power is going to hate them and kill them. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city [Jerusalem], which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" (verse 8). God prophesied how evil we would become in this end time. The book of Revelation came from God the Father. And here He is calling Jerusalem, and Israel, SODOM—the filthiest city ever on the planet!

Do you view the nations of Israel the way God does? He sees *total perversion!* Israel was the only nation **FOUNDED BY GOD**—He wanted it to be a kingdom of priests! Instead, Israel's descendants have become a deeply vile example to the rest of the world! God is going to incinerate them with fire, just as He did Sodom, which happened as an example (Jude 7). Sodom is a type of the lake of fire, which is where they are going if they don't repent. *If you live like Sodom, you're going to die like Sodom!*

This end-time catastrophe is going to be 10,000 times worse than Sodom's destruction! And time is running out. This coming crisis of all crises must motivate us

to prophesy again while there is time. You can be sure God the Father is concerned about the rise in homosexuality. Today it's a constitutional right to practice sodomy in Israel. Paul called it *abominable*! Many scriptures tell us it is abominable, the worst adjective in all the Bible. Like Paul, many people are ashamed to even talk about the details! IT IS A LIFESTYLE SATAN IS PUSHING TO DESTROY THE FAMILY!

Physical family prepares you to enter the Family of God. When the sanctity of family is gutted, it blots out man's potential to become God! How long will it take to straighten out those homosexual minds to the point where they can understand about marriage—the way God defines it? And grasp FAMILY and FATHER the way God defines them? If they want to defy God, they're going to answer for it. That sin destroys your will to do anything that requires character. They have reprobate minds, and they'll NEVER be in the God Family until they get rid of that perversion. Their potential is being marred and blackened by the devil.

Is God going to back off and be timid about what Satan is doing? Satan tries to intimidate people into thinking it's okay, or that it's a private matter and an individual choice. But God is white-hot with indignation about it! And we had better view it God's way.

Spiritual sodomy is far more than just homosexuality. The physical family is the primary institution to prepare us for God's Family.

Genesis 18:20-21 says *the cry of Sodom went up to God*. He knew exactly what was happening there. Do you think that cry has gone up to God today? God told Lot to get his family out; He protected them from the destruction (as He will the very elect today), but when Lot's wife looked back, God turned her into a pillar of salt. She still found something appealing about Sodom! God wants us to begin to hate spiritual Sodom as He does, and tell this world what God thinks!

What did Jesus Christ have to say about it? "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:28-30).

This is God talking! Just before Christ returns, FIRE is going to come down from heaven to destroy modern-day Sodom—and that just happens to be the nations of Israel, the only people who have had a history with God.

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Today it's a
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God says we have to watch and warn. Nuclear bombs are coming on Israel. We can be sure of that, because Jesus Christ Himself said so. When Satan gets people deep into those types of sins, it's getting pretty close to the time when God is going to blot out the people who commit them—and if they don't repent, it will be for eternity.

You have a Father who gave His Son to die for you. But He's not going to use His Son to die for people who want to live in such twisted evil. They follow their queer god, the devil. When God says that city is Sodom, He's saying even the Laodiceans are into sodomy, spiritually and physically. You can't get anything through to those people because they're not listening to their Father; they have another father, who is twisting their minds.

If people don't heed this message, cities will be incinerated! Those who remain alive will be taken into captivity to a foreign country. They must get to the point where they realize there was a PROPHET in their midst and repent, then God can begin to work with them. This is God's message, and He's not going to accept anything other than repentance.

We must keep the overview in mind. The book of Revelation came from God the Father—not Christ.

The sin of sodomy destroys the family structure—a type of God's Family! This sin rejects the father as loving head of the wife and children—a God-plane relationship.

Spiritually, sodomy rejects the Father as Head over the God Family. That is the very *gospel* of God—the good news of the coming Kingdom, or Family, of God.

Sodomy is satanic to the core. Spiritually, it destroys God's Family plan. Generally, the people who commit this sin have no concept of how evil it really is.

The ashes of ancient Sodom tell us clearly what God thinks of this abomination!

We must proclaim to Israel what is coming.

The Rod of God

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein" (Revelation 11:1). The word *rise* occurs 141 times in the Bible, and 70 times it's referring to *resurrection*. God really wants us to *rise up*! His Church is dying. He needs someone to rise up and measure! That is talking specifically to one man, supported by a group of faithful people who are willing to be measured.

We all have to be corrected and measured; otherwise, we can't fulfill our commission. If we have a problem and we won't allow God to measure us, how can He reach us? We can't let anything stand in the way of our being measured. EVERYBODY gets corrected.

The *rod* in that verse is a symbol of government. Numbers 17:2-3 talk about the princes of Israel. Each was commanded to bring a rod, which was an ensign, or a sign, that he was the leader of his tribe. In 1 Corinthians 4:21, Paul asked, "[S]hall I come unto you with a rod ...?" Revelation 2:26-27 say Christ is going to give His people a *rod of iron* to RULE with. There is authority in God's Church. We're all corrected by it.

In the ark of the covenant in ancient Israel were the *Ten Commandments*, some *manna* (symbolizing the spiritual manna that we receive today, God's truth), and *Aaron's rod*, representing the authority that God gave a man to rule over Israel. Somebody had to apply the Ten Commandments in Israel, and it takes authority to do that. If you have a law, you must have a law-implementer.

God isn't upset with the Laodiceans because they rejected *Mr. Armstrong*—He is upset because they rejected their spiritual Head, JESUS CHRIST! You don't have to accept a government of any man, but God help you if you reject the government of God. We're not asking anybody to follow a man. In fact, we're telling you that you're under a curse if you do.

How our carnal nature hates the rod of God! The religions of this world have a come-as-you-are approach because they don't like God's government!

Aaron's rod was either wood or some kind of metal. Whatever the case, God made it bloom and bear almonds (Numbers 17:8). Why? Because He wanted to

show how God's government produces growth. Did you ever notice that a little correction for your children brings growth? We all have to keep ourselves humble. I do too; I'm human and have a carnal mind too much of the time, just like you. God corrects me—sometimes pretty hard—but what a wonderful blessing it is. What growth we experience as a result of God's correction. REVELATION 11:1 SAYS THIS ROD IS "GIVEN." IT'S A GIFT THAT SHOWS WE ARE GOD'S SUBMISSIVE SONS!

You can see in verse 2 that if we don't allow ourselves to be measured and corrected by God, we get into a lot of trouble.

That ark was called the ark of the testimony. It was a testimony that God was with them. The PCG today has all the ingredients of that ark. It's a testimony that God is with us. You don't have to *guess* about where God is, you can *KNOW* He's here!

It is through God's government that we are directed to prophesy again.

Mourning for the World

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth" (Revelation 11:3).

Sackcloth here is not really referring to humility; it's talking primarily about MOURNING. These two witnesses are among those who *sigh and cry* because of all the abominations in Israel (Ezekiel 9:4). This is why we warn: We're mourning for our people Israel, and we're warning the whole world because they are, after all, created sons of God, and they have the potential to become God! We're mourning what's happening in the world.

We have to realize that Satan the devil is deeply discouraged. There has never been a being so discouraged as the devil is right now. If you find yourself getting bogged down in discouragement, you need to realize that Satan is getting to you. He is bitter because his time is so short. He knows what we're doing, and he knows about the God Family. Satan has been rejected by God and confined to this Earth. No being has ever hated God more. So he persecutes God's people far more than anyone else. He knows he's blown it, and he's trying to get us discouraged the way he is—and he's a master at that. This cast-down dragon is raging in discouragement. And his primary goal is to keep us from prophesying again.

But God is giving us the armaments to fight him and win. We have more truth than God's Church has ever had.

The Church and the Man Child

I want to show you something very inspiring. "And she [the true Church] *brought forth a man child*, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne" (Revelation 12:5). This verse provides quite an overview. It depicts Christ being born as a child, and His future ruling all nations with a rod of iron, and His present responsibility at the right hand of God in heaven as our High Priest.

Now notice how this thought is *repeated*. "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which *brought forth the man child*" (verse 13). This verse tells about this crisis in the end time where God's Church has been attacked by the devil and 95 percent of the people have turned away. In this context, God points right back to the fact that this Church brought forth the Man Child who will rule all nations with a rod of iron, and now sits at the right hand of His Father.

There is a vision in this verse! You can clearly see why the Laodiceans fell: because *they didn't realize who they were!* They never deeply understood or they forgot their own history!

When Christ repeats an expression in one short chapter, we need to see *why* He emphasizes it. *The PCG is the same Church that brought forth Jesus Christ as a baby! And look where He is now!* And if you follow Him, that's exactly where you're going to be—except, of course, you'll be ruling with Him on Earth; nevertheless, you're going to be on the throne of David.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO US TO BE A PART OF THE CHURCH THAT BROUGHT FORTH THE MAN CHILD? What wonderful history. God loves you very much, and He wants you to really understand this history.

We are going to rule with Christ and help Him change this world and the universe—this same Church that brought forth the Man Child!

It's hard to imagine Christ's sacrifice for us. It's even harder to imagine our eternal future with Him. We must not forget what we are a part of and who we are!

Satan can conquer people who lack this vision. That is *why* there was a great falling away from God's truth. This *past* history of the Man Child gives a mind-staggering vision of our future and keeps us on track!

The Word, who was God, came to this Earth as a helpless physical child. This unparalleled sacrifice could have cost Him everything—His eternal glory. But His success gives us the potential to be very sons of God.

How can we "neglect so great salvation"? We have seen a gigantic falling away of God's people because they didn't get this vision.

These verses give us *cause and effect*. There is a *cause* for such a mountain-sized failure.

Mr. Armstrong told us that we must not forget our rebellious 1970s history, or we were destined to repeat it. And so the Laodiceans have—on a scale even greater than Mr. Armstrong imagined.

VERSES 5 AND 13 HAVE THE SOLUTION TO THE LAODICEAN PROBLEM. THE VISION IS RIGHT THERE IN THE SAME VERSE WHERE SATAN ATTACKED THEM! You can see why he was successful. Are they going to prophesy again? Can God use them to prophesy when they don't even get it? They don't understand what the God Family is all about, and they let Satan take it all away!

"And the dragon [the devil!] was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (verse 17). They have the commandments and the testimony—but it doesn't say they have the *faith* of Jesus Christ, and that's what got them in trouble. Here, they are in the Tribulation. This is the fate of those who fail to prophesy again.

The Beast

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy" (Revelation 13:1). *This is probably the paramount prophecy of evil in all the Bible.* There is nothing like this beast that is talked about in Revelation 12, 13, 17 and 18. Look at all the space that's given to this monster—and in the most important book of prophecy in the Bible. That means we need to give special attention to this beast.

How many people in the world understand about the Holy Roman Empire—this beast of Revelation? It is already rising out of the sea!

But notice what this beast receives from the dragon. "And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (verse 2). The all-powerful dragon gave him his seat and great authority. Where is there a church-state combine on this Earth where the devil is actually giving it authority and power? We ought to be able to see it!

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (verses 3-4). People of the world will wonder after the beast. They'll be virtually hypnotized and in amazement as they worship it.

Daniel saw four beasts. John saw one beast. If you compare all these scriptures, John is saying that this one beast has the strength of *ALL* the beasts. This will be the *beast of all beasts*! It will cause unparalleled destruction. It is on the scene, and the world is going to know it very quickly—because the *DRAGON* has given the beast *POWER AND AUTHORITY*! This is what we are heading into! The *times of the Gentiles*. We're about to see the worst beast ever—horror of horrors!

Mr. Armstrong talked about this prophecy for many years. God's Church has been talking about it for as long as it has existed, for many hundreds of years. It has seven heads; it has been going on for a long time. Still, nobody on Earth today really understands about the beast—but they ought to. God's people have told them.

This world is about to see the worst leaders of that beast ever in the history of the Holy Roman Empire. We're going to see a *ROARING times of the Gentiles* worse than any storm ever on Earth, and we're going to have to be strong people to stand up to that and thunder what is happening to this world. We must prophesy again now.

Defending the Family

"And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and *THEM THAT DWELL IN HEAVEN*" (verse 6). *THE BEAST POWER IS GOING TO BLASPHEME OUR FATHER. WE MUST BE INFURIATED BY THAT! IT WILL BLASPHEME HIS TABERNACLE—SPEAKING OF GOD'S PEOPLE. WE HAVE TO STAND UP AND FIGHT FOR OUR FAMILY!* Because we love our Father and our Family, when they start casting these vile aspersions, we must let them know what we think! *WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO CALL THAT WHORE WHAT SHE IS, AND THAT BLASPHEMER WHAT HE IS!*

Revelation chapters 13 through 15 and 17 show that a number of the Laodiceans won't accept the mark of the beast. Many of them will repent and stand up for God. "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hun-

dred forty and four thousand, having *his Father's name* written in their foreheads" (Revelation 14:1). This 144,000 who repent in the Tribulation will have the Father's name written in their foreheads. They will honor their *Father*, realizing that Jesus Christ really isn't the center of our religion. The Kingdom of God is about the Family of God!

So what do the Laodiceans have to repent of? Not honoring their Father (Malachi 1:6). Most of them say that Jesus Christ is the center of their religion (Matthew 24:4-5). But Jesus Christ Himself says they are deceived by not looking to our Father. We must declare the Father as Christ did (John 1:18).

Why do so many have to go through such suffering to receive such a majestic message from God? Why will so many lose so much because of rebellion? Those who wait until the Tribulation to repent will lose their headquarters reward. Why is the human mind so hard that we won't let the loving God give us *EVERYTHING*? Look what they have to go through: They have to resist the mark of the beast—the great whore is going to get to them.

Those who are faithful today truly are special to God. You stand out like a beacon in the darkness. You are a lamp shining and letting the people of the world know what their real hope is. There's nothing more exciting than this Church of God going to the world and letting our lamp burn brightly! How exciting that is to God! So many scriptures tell us how God loves that very elect—those people who love Him and His truth. God loves us because we prophesy again.

The Faith of Christ

Satan really is in a rage. He's going to come after us by trying to poison people's minds against us. Expect that. But we can take care of that, and anything else they throw at us. Here's how: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). Do you have the *faith of Jesus*? God's very elect do more than just keep the commandments of God—they have the faith of Jesus Christ.

When we printed *Mystery of the Ages*, there really wasn't a scripture that I could point to and say, *God says do it*. We had to get out and do it because we had the faith of Christ. Why were we prepared to fight for it in court? Because we had the faith of Christ. That's the kind of faith it's going to take to prophesy again. (After we stepped out in faith, God revealed several

scriptures that apply to our court case!) God is helping us to grow in that faith. We don't want you to follow men; we want you to follow Christ. We want you to have the very *FAITH OF CHRIST*. The same faith that Christ had! If He could endure what He did with that faith, then so can we.

Everything is going to turn out right. As Mr. Armstrong said, you can read the end of the Bible and see that *WE WIN*.

Bride Reigns With Christ!

Revelation 18 and 19 show that old Babylon is going to be blotted out forever!

This is truly a cause for rejoicing in heaven. "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand" (Revelation 19:1-2).

God's saints will have had their heads lopped off by this great whore in the name of God! And God is going to avenge that! He's going to judge the whore. So we have to judge her, too, in the context of our work. We're not supposed to stand by while a great whore corrupts the Earth. God says to cry aloud and tell the nations!

"And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four [living creatures] fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia" (verses 3-4). These spirit beings are really excited about this. This is the last act of the 24 elders and the four living creatures in the Bible: They just fall down and say, *Oh, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, praise God!*

Why all the excitement? "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (verses 5-6). This is a tremendous burst of song about the great, all-powerful, omnipotent God reigning! It's like the voice of many thunders and a great multitude or many waters! And about that time, Christ will be coronated by the Father. This will be the greatest coronation ever by our Father.

But notice, further, the context: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to

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PROPHESY

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him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (verse 7). That's what it's all about: the marriage of the Lamb! That's what these 24 elders and the four living creatures are really getting excited about, the marriage of the Lamb to the bride of Jesus Christ!

This is why we are tried and tested. WE MUST GET READY! We're going to rule with Jesus Christ! This is already there in the Book. It's going to happen so soon. There is *nothing*, NOTHING, *NOTHING* on Earth like it, and never will be! And it's really about YOU! We have a key role to play right here in this end time.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and *they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years*. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and *SHALL reign with him a thousand years*" (Revelation 20:4-6).

In one instance there it says God's people "reigned" with Christ; two verses later it says they "shall reign." Jesus Christ is talking to us, and He uses those words interchangeably as if we **ALREADY REIGN!** God sees the picture as if we're already reigning. That's reality! This future is ours for the taking! We must view our future as our Husband does—have His perspective. All of those martyrs who were put to death by the great whore are going to rule and reign with Him for a thousand years. After that, God is going to resurrect those multiple billions of people, probably more than 50 billion people, on the Last Great Day, and this is where it's all leading. God needs help for all this work. He needs you! Christ needs a *helpmeet*, and that's why you are here.

Revelation 21 says that in the New Jerusalem, there is no more need for the sun or the moon because of the glory of God. **WE WILL BE A PART OF THAT GLORY.**

God says we have to prophesy again about this Family vision. It's not going to be easy, but *oh, what an inspiring message it is!* When you understand that, nothing else really matters.

So let's get out and fervently prophesy again! ❖

To be continued

FASTING

from page 11

give up because you feel bad or because you have a headache. David said his knees were *weak* because of fasting. God uses that physical discomfort to prove an important point.

Paul wrote, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy [Spirit]" (Romans 14:17). God's Kingdom is not about physical food and drink. God wants us to use the tool of fasting to learn a spiritual lesson. Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do *hunger* and *thirst* after RIGHTEOUSNESS: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). God's Kingdom will be composed of righteousness. To be a part of it, we have to hunger and thirst for that righteousness now, while in the flesh. Nothing drives that spiritual lesson home more than fasting. During a fast, we realize just how strongly we hunger for physical nourishment. God wants us to know that we need spiritual nourishment far more if we are to ever survive spiritually. Without physical food, we will die physically. Without spiritual food, we will die spiritually.

We often review John 6 during the Passover. In that passage, Christ expounded upon this subject of spiritual food. Anciently, God provided a continual supply of manna—physical nourishment—to the Israelites. For those of us living according to the Spirit, Jesus said, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). This is the only kind of food that will ever really satisfy. This kind of food will truly keep us full—living an abundant, joyous life. This kind of food will also provide everlasting life. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever ..." (verse 51). God wants us to eat spiritually to live forever!

Paul continued in Romans 14, "For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (verses 18-19).

Let's all learn the valuable lesson proper fasting teaches. Man's biggest problem is in trusting *man*. Yet fasting teaches us that we are nothing but dust without God. Be afflicted and humble the self toward God in prayer and fasting. That's when God can really use us. That's when God will begin to answer our prayers in the most powerful way. That's when we will finally be filled and satisfied. Hunger and thirst for righteousness so that we might all live forever, teaching others how to use the valuable tool of fasting! ❖

FROM OUR READERS

Every month I am so excited to receive my copy of the *Trumpet* magazine. Then once I have read it all, I can't wait till the next issue arrives or possibly a copy of *Royal Vision* or *True Education* in between. Since being drawn to the Church and receiving and requesting as much literature as possible, I find it difficult to think of anything else, and now I can't get enough of the information put out by Mr. Flurry and his helpers. I just wish others could have as open a mind to be able to experience what I and others no doubt have from reading the literature, as well as watching the television program, *Key of David*, every week.

Queensland, Australia

I enjoy your books, and I'm always looking for the truth in everything I read. The book I'm reading now is called *The Incredible Human Potential*. I find it truly an eye-opening message. I would like to have a copy of *The Missing Dimension in Sex*. I've just recently gotten married; I can use all the help I can get.

Corcoran, Calif.

I love reading *Royal Vision*; it stirs me up to play an active role in supporting the work God has called Mr. Flurry to do. I like reading Mr. Flurry's inspiring articles with pen and highlights and find them motivational and uplifting. It is inspiring to read the spiritual depth of the articles all your ministers can write. I thank God for their spiritual insight. There is dynamism in your work. I feel it, know it and am convinced. I would like a visit by one of your ministers to pursue the high calling God has given me and the pathway in which I should walk.

Salina, Kans.

I saw your advertisement for the *Imperial College Bible Correspondence Course* and I would like to enroll. I took the 32-lesson *Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course* by mail from 1986 to 1989, but I would like to do it all over again. I severed my coworker relationship with the WCG in 1996 and asked God to show me where He had moved His true Church and within just two weeks He showed me (and made it very clear to me as well in no uncertain terms) that it was the PCG.

West Mifflin, Pa

❖ Letters may be sent to **Royal Vision**, P.O. Box 1099, Edmond, OK 73083, or faxed to (405) 359-6280 or e-mailed to letters@pcog.org. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.