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**BUT IF THAT EVIL SERVANT SHALL BEGIN TO SMITE HIS FELLOW SERVANTS...**

Matthew chapter 24 is a very well-known section of Scripture. It is in this chapter that we find a rundown of the events that lead up to the second coming of Christ. It is this chapter that helps us to identify the first six seals that are described in Revelation chapter 6. The setting of the whole chapter is clearly a discussion of events that culminate in the return of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 24:31 is a reference to the 7th Trumpet of Revelation 11:15. Verse 31 reads:

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matthew 24:31)

Then, having concluded the discussion of the events leading up to His return, Christ gave a parable which refers specifically to His return ... the parable of the fig tree. He concluded this parable with the statement that at that point in time (i.e. just over 1960 years ago now) only God the Father knew precisely when the second coming of Christ would take place:

But of that day and hour knoweth no [man], no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. (Matthew 24:36)

During His earthly ministry there was no need and no reason why Jesus Christ should have known the precise date of His second coming. This would be especially the case if, as it seems, God has built a small measure of flexibility into the time schedule of bringing His plan to completion. Christ Himself had just hinted at that possible area of flexibility in Matthew 24:22, saying that God will "SHORTEN" those days at the end time. "Shorten" implies that there is a specific time frame that God has mapped out. And that time frame God will shorten at His own discretion. In other words, God has mapped out the maximum amount of time that could be taken to fulfill His plan. It absolutely cannot go beyond that, but in fact God has already decided that He will to some degree "shorten" that time at the end. The way God will "shorten" those days is by stepping in and intervening EARLIER than He had originally planned.

However, TODAY Jesus Christ also knows the precise time when He will return to this Earth at the command of the Father. After His resurrection Jesus Christ clearly said to His disciples:

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. (Matthew 28:18)

There is absolutely nothing that God the Father AT THIS POINT IN TIME has hidden from Jesus Christ, absolutely nothing! That is the relationship they have, and that is the same relationship we in the future will have with the Father and with Jesus Christ, once we have become the sons of God. That is the family relationship God is working to establish, one of total and complete trust and loyalty and commitment and understanding between all members of that Family. God the Father and Jesus Christ are "one mind", they have total trust and confidence in each other.

I mention this because people sometimes think that even today God the Father still has not yet revealed

to Christ exactly when He is to return to this Earth. That view overlooks the relationship that exists between members of the Family of God.

Back to Matthew chapter 24.

Having concluded the parable about His return, Jesus Christ then repeatedly focussed on TWO DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE that would be around at the time of His return.

THIS IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND!

Most people understand that there is no break between chapters 24 and 25. They are one specific occasion. It is only in Matthew 26:1 that Christ had finished saying the things He wanted to say in this regard.

1) In Matthew 24:37-39 the discussion is still somewhat general. The two groups in this context are:

A) those who are protected at the place of safety;

B) all the rest of mankind who are not protected.

After this general comment, Jesus Christ became more specific. From here on He repeatedly contrasts TWO groups. But neither of those two groups represents the world at large. Both of those groups represent people who really SHOULD BE His "servants"; they both should be doing God's work, and they both should be protected from the end time events, but only one group actually is protected.

The two groups that Christ repeatedly contrasts in the next section appear to represent:

A) the Philadelphian Christians

B) the Laodiceans.

In repeatedly referring to the same people, who are alive at the time of His return, Christ is highlighting different aspects about these two groups. So notice:

2) In Matthew 24:40 the Philadelphians are taken to the place of safety, and the Laodiceans are left behind.

3) In Matthew 24:41 this is repeated, the Philadelphians are taken to the place of safety and the Laodiceans are left behind.

Note: the repetition is to emphasise the ratio between these two groups. They are numerically equal! The parallel account in Luke 17:34-37 is even more emphatic. There the ratio of one to one is repeated three times, in verses 34-36. In Luke 17:37 the disciples are, in effect, asking: WHERE is the place of safety? WHERE are they taken?

And they answered and said unto him, WHERE, LORD? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body [is], thither will the eagles be gathered together. (Luke 17:37)

Regarding this section of Scripture I have often pointed out that they asked the wrong question, but it is the same question that most of us would also have been inclined to ask. We want to know WHERE the

place of safety is, as if that was somehow important. What they really should have asked is: "WHY LORD?" Why are some left behind?

What is the difference between these two groups? Why are some who are seemingly in the Church not going to be protected? Because it was the wrong question, the answer to which Christ did not want to divulge, therefore Christ gave a rather cryptic answer. It was a polite way of saying: "I am not going to tell you that right now". However, this cryptic clue appears to be a reference to Petra, more than to any other place.

4) Matthew 24:42-44 is another admonition to be ready for Christ's return. Again this is a warning for these two specific groups at the time of the end.

5) Matthew 24:45-51 is a reference to THE LEADERS of two groups, because those two leaders have a tremendous influence on the people in those two groups. They are the two "Pastor Generals", for lack of a better designation.

They are both identified as "RULER" over an era, with some influence and authority over a group of God's servants.

A) Matthew 24:45-47 refers to the "faithful and wise servant". That seems to be a reference to the Pastor General of the Philadelphian era, i.e. to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

B) Matthew 24:48-51 refer to the "evil servant". That seems to be a reference to the "Pastor General" of the Laodicean era, which will at some point follow after Mr. Armstrong's time.

Let's continue our overview.

6) Matthew 25:1-13 is again a reference to these two groups at the end time. Here they are represented by "10 virgins". Again the division is into exactly half. The 5 wise virgins represent the Philadelphian Christians at the time of the end. The 5 foolish virgins represent the Laodiceans at the end.

7) Matthew 25:14-30 is the parable of the talents. Again these two groups are compared. Don't be confused by the fact that Christ actually made reference to THREE different servants. The two servants that were given 5 talents and 2 talents respectively represent the Philadelphian Christians. Christ chose to represent the Philadelphians with two different examples to illustrate that within that context of growing and developing there exist different starting positions ... we are all different and God certainly takes this into account. The Laodiceans are represented by the servant with the one talent. That is not to say that all Laodiceans are only "one talent people" ... not at all! The one thing they all have in common though, is what they DO with the opportunity God has set before them ... they have a wrong attitude towards God and they "bury" their opportunity. It would not have added anything to the account to also have some "5 talent" and "2 talent" servants burying their "talents".

When a 5 talent servant doubles his starting capital and a 2 talent servant also doubles his starting capital, then you require a judgment from God as to how their respective growth is going to be rewarded. We already know God's answer, but there were different possibilities when viewed from a human perspective.

However, if a 1 talent servant who buries his starting capital is punished then that is enough information for us. OBVIOUSLY a 2 talent servant and a 5 talent servant who also bury their starting capital will receive that same maximum punishment, there is no other possibility even from a human perspective, given the judgment for the 1 talent servant. If Christ had chosen to have the 5 talent servant bury his starting capital and then pronounce a penalty on this servant, that still would have left a question

unanswered. That question is: I can see that a servant who has received SO MUCH TO START WITH is punished. But what about some POOR servant who is only given one little old talent ... is he also going to be punished so severely? This question becomes totally unnecessary with the way Christ told the parable.

Can we see the wisdom Christ used in giving this parable? Don't assume for one moment that all Laodiceans and all those who "neglect their salvation" are only "one talent servants"! Not at all! God is not unjust, by stacking the odds against "one talent servants".

Realize that King Solomon was certainly not a "one talent servant", not with the direct contact he had with God on two occasions (see 1 Kings 11:9). Yet his foreign wives caused Solomon to sin and "Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD" (1 Kings 11:6) and did not keep that "which the LORD commanded" (1 Kings 11:10). So don't misunderstand WHY Christ chose to represent different servants with different starting amounts.

Anyway, in the same context Christ has already told us THREE times that the two different groups (with two different attitudes) represent equal numbers.

8) In Matthew 25:31-46 there are again two different groups. But this time there is no hint as to the numbers that are involved. The two groups are those who go into "life eternal" (verse 46), i.e. those who will be in the first resurrection; and then those who "go away into everlasting punishment" (also verse 46), i.e. those who end up in the lake of fire.

That's the end of this particular context.

To summarize: In this context CHRIST GAVE 5 DIFFERENT PARABLES (if we exclude the general fig tree parable) about two groups at the time of the end. When we put all of these parables together, then the following picture emerges:

A) Matthew 24:40-41 = twice Christ shows that one group "IS TAKEN" to the place of safety, while another group stays behind.

B) Matthew 24:45-51 = here Christ revealed THE LEADERSHIP that is responsible for these two end time groups. One is "faithful" and "wise", and the other leadership is "evil" and thus obviously NOT "faithful"!

C) Matthew 25:1-13 = here Christ shows WHAT the difference between these two groups is. One group has "oil" (i.e. the Holy Spirit) and the other group does NOT have any oil (they don't have God's Spirit).

D) Matthew 25:14-30 = here Christ shows the reason WHY the one group has "oil" and the other does not. Those who have "oil" have worked and laboured to produce. Those who don't have God's Spirit are unrepentant, they have a wrong attitude towards God, and they are not really "working" with what they were given. They are "WICKED" and also "SLOTHFUL" (see verse 26).

All four of these parables are talking about the same people, THE SAME TWO GROUPS, the Philadelphians and the Laodiceans at the end time.

E) Matthew 25:31-46 = here Christ broadens the explanation out to the point of showing THE ULTIMATE END RESULTS OF THESE TWO DIFFERENT ATTITUDES. Because those ultimate end results will apply to all mankind and not just to these two groups, therefore the discussion is not limited to these two groups.

Matthew 25:31 refers to Christ returning for the purpose of ruling. He will rule over ALL mankind. So verse 32 says:

And before him shall be gathered ALL NATIONS: and HE SHALL SEPARATE THEM ONE FROM ANOTHER, as a shepherd divideth [his] sheep from the goats: (Matthew 25:32)

This process STARTS with Christ's return and will be concluded at the end of the 100 years after the millennium. The ultimate final outcome for "ALL NATIONS" (i.e. for all human beings who have ever lived) is the same as for the two groups Christ talked about in the previous four parables ... one group will enter "life eternal" and the other group will "go away into everlasting punishment" (see Matthew 25:46).

The difference in the two groups is brought down to their attitude towards fellow-man. One group has God's attitude of love, outgoing concern and consideration and service to other people; the other group rejects God's way of life and prefers the "get-way", as Mr. Armstrong used to call it. They put "self" above other people, and they don't really see the real picture, what it is that God wants them to learn.

With this overall perspective in mind, let's now go back to Matthew 24:45-51.

### THE EVIL SERVANT

In Matthew 24:44 the subject is the second coming of Christ. Now notice verse 45:

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, WHOM HIS LORD HATH MADE RULER over his household, to give them meat in due season? (Matthew 24:45)

This is speaking about someone who is "made RULER". Christ is not speaking in a secular sense but in the context of the Church of God. Today such a "ruler", who is in charge of an era is known by a title like "the Pastor General". Later I'll show you why I believe that this verse quite clearly identifies Mr. Armstrong. The very first attribute of this ruler is that he is "FAITHFUL". Remember, without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). This servant is also "wise" ... he understands God's will and therefore rules wisely. He will be rewarded with rulership in the kingdom of God (Matthew 24:47).

The parable is about "servants". This symbolism of "servants" is frequently used to mean "MINISTERS". After all, the word "minister" means "servant". And again, a servant who "rules" would be THE LEADING MINISTER.

Now let's move on.

But and if THAT EVIL SERVANT shall say in his heart, MY LORD DELAYETH HIS COMING;  
(Matthew 24:48)

This is a different servant. So again we have two distinctly different categories, first the faithful and wise servant, and second the evil servant.

Notice the reason why this evil servant departs from the ways of the "faithful and wise" servant. He says: "Christ is coming back MUCH LATER than we thought!" This very statement implies that the faithful and wise servant thought otherwise; he believed that Christ's return was imminent. And Christ called him "WISE" for believing this!

Because of this attitude of the evil servant of wanting to relegate Christ's return into the distant future, THEREFORE this "evil" servant does two things:

A) HE BEGINS TO SMITE HIS FELLOW SERVANTS!

B) HE LEADS THE CHURCH BACK INTO THE WORLD!

And shall begin to smite [his] fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; (Matthew 24:49)

The Greek text translated as "and shall begin to smite" reads "kai arxetai tuptein".

The word "arxetai" is the aorist middle subjunctive of the Greek verb "archomai", the middle voice of "archo". This verb "archo" means "to be chief, to rule, to lead, to reign". And so "archomai" means "to be the first to do anything, to be chief, to make a beginning".

The word "tuptein" is the present active infinitive of the Greek verb "tupto", which verb means "to strike, to beat with a staff or whip or fist". This is something this evil servant does actively (active voice).

Now in the context of this verse exactly WHO are "his fellowservants"? That should be clear. They are HIS FELLOW MINISTERS, over whom he has been appointed "ruler".

Putting this whole expression together, it means that this evil servant INITIATES AND ACTIVELY LEADS THE WAY, BY BEING THE FIRST TO BEAT HIS FELLOW MINISTERS!

The expression "and to eat and drink with the drunken" shows that this evil servant goes back to the people in the world, and that he therefore also leads the Church of God back into the world.

Exactly WHEN did this "smiting" start? It started very soon after Mr. Armstrong's death in January 1986! Very quickly the vast majority of the men who had been appointed by Mr. Armstrong to key leadership positions were demoted. Many leading ministers were also moved out of Pasadena, to facilitate the transfer of power within the Church, to give the new administration a chance to establish themselves and to solidify their positions of power.

Now, APRIL 1995, we are nine years further on in the history of God's Church. Now the "SMITING OF FELLOW MINISTERS" is going on in full force!

Matthew 24:49 tells us that the new administration does not have any concern for the wellbeing of the ministry as a whole. They will not hesitate to "smite"! And those who will not compromise and go along with their agenda will surely be "smitten".

Ministers are "USED" as long as they are "useful". Then they are "DISCARDED", just like they want the left-over bread after the Passover service to be "discarded". Many men have been "used" in the last 9 years to achieve the goal of destroying everything that God used Mr. Armstrong to build and to establish, and then they were discarded. It is always the same process.

Understand that Satan is the author of these changes. Understand also that Satan is the one who wants to see the ministry "smitten". The wicked are going to do wickedly and NONE of the wicked shall understand (see Daniel 12:10). And this is the time when those who are being tried are going to be "purified" (same verse).

Understand also that Satan never inspires "RIGHT" changes, he NEVER does! He will inspire changes that will "appeal" to you and to me, but they won't be right before God! Don't be fooled! You just do not get any sweet water from a bitter fountain!

For most people the problem started by accepting some apparently minor and ever so insignificant and inconsequential change in the teachings and traditions of the Church. If we have said "yes" one time, it becomes awfully hard to say "no" the next time. That's true with most sins, isn't it? Satan knows this very well. It is one of his most common tactics.

Anyway, by now it should be clear to many people in God's Church that the time of "the smiting of the fellow servants" has fully arrived.

Understand also that, since Satan is the real one behind this "smiting", it will not stop until "ALL" his fellow servants have been smitten. There is no benefit and no reward from going along with the changes Pasadena is forcing on the Church. The "best" it will produce is a "delaying of the time when you too will be smitten". However, the longer the smiting is delayed for you, the harder the actual smiting is going to be. That's also always the case, isn't it?

Think about this.

The other thing this "evil" ruler over the servants of God does is "eat and drink WITH the drunken". Please note that it does not say that he himself necessarily gets drunk. Through this expression God is showing us THE ENVIRONMENT INTO WHICH THIS "EVIL" SERVANT LEADS THE CHURCH!

"The drunken" is simply a codeword or symbol for the world at large! That's all. It is an apt descriptive term for modern societies in general, with alcohol being a major and prominent feature in our societies.

So this leader, who wants to push Christ's return into the distant future, will lead the Church back into the world! Into closer contact with those who are "the drunken". It is the opposite approach to the one Mr. Armstrong had. Under Mr. Armstrong's leadership the emphasis was: "COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE!" (see Revelation 18:4).

Are you one of those who feels Mr. Armstrong's approach was wrong in this regard? Mr. Armstrong was not exclusivist by any means, but he certainly taught us to ... COME OUT! The new emphasis has constantly been TO GO BACK INTO THE WORLD! The whole PERSPECTIVE has been to "go back in". That has been evident all along for those who have the eyes to see it. And it is now evident in the local congregations being encouraged to become more involved with the world.

It is not a matter that any of these specific things in themselves are wrong. The real point is that THE WHOLE FOCUS is on getting back into the world. It is an attack on every front. Today we teach the same things the world teaches, we sing the same songs the world's churches sing, we use the same corrupt NIV translation of the Bible that the world advocates, we teach our small children from the Bible lessons that the world has prepared, our appearance in dress and with makeup is identical to the world, we accept the unclean meats that the world eats, we accept the world's religious days and their Sunday as being just as valid as God's Holy Days and God's Sabbath, etc.. On every front we are being urged to eat and to drink with the drunken. But it all started with references to General Patton and to the Pasadena Rotary Club and with the ritualistic singing of the German national anthem ("Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken") whenever the Pastor General is present. Those things were the thin edge of the wedge being tapped, ever so gently, into the fabric of the Church of God. Most of us didn't even feel that tapping, because it was so well disguised.

Do we still feel that the Church has a responsibility to get involved in "community projects"? Is that really

what God called us to? Was the Apostle Peter supposed to organize "community projects" for the city of Jerusalem after the Day of Pentecost in 31 A.D.? Did Jesus Christ set the example of getting involved in "community projects"? Did the Apostle Paul urge Christians in Rome and in Corinth and in Ephesus and in Colossae to get involved in "community projects"? Does 2 Corinthians 6:14-17 really sound like Paul wanted to encourage "community projects"?

BE YE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED TOGETHER WITH UNBELIEVERS: for WHAT FELLOWSHIP hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and WHAT COMMUNION hath light with darkness? And WHAT CONCORD hath Christ with Belial? or WHAT PART hath he that believeth with an infidel? And WHAT AGREEMENT hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM, AND BE YE SEPARATE, saith the Lord, and TOUCH NOT the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you, (2 Corinthians 6:14-17)

Was Paul encouraging the Corinthians to "get involved in their community"? Really? What does "come out" mean? What does "be separate" mean? What does "don't even touch" mean?

These verses are very clear. They require no interpretation. They say exactly what they mean. So let's not use HUMAN REASONING to reach conclusions that contradict the clear instructions to the Church of God recorded in the Bible! We can't get much clearer than these verses I have quoted here.

Oh yes, there are problems, and there is suffering in the world. Oh yes, we are to have mercy and compassion and to help where we can. But does God really want His Church to focus on establishing "Meals on Wheels" for the needy? What about Christ's admonition to let the world sort out its own problems, to "let the dead bury their dead" (Matthew 8:22)? Where should the emphasis really be? And where do we find a focus on projects for the world: in the gospels ... in the Book of Acts ... in the epistles? Where?

Mr. Armstrong was a "wise" servant. His focus was correct. The new focus is NOT correct. Oh, we can reason and rationalize and justify it, but it is not correct according to the examples in God's Word. The new focus DETRACTS our attention away from the focus that we should really have, and we become ensnared by the ways of the world we are trying to serve. That's what happened when Lot got involved in "community projects", remember? That is equally true for us. It all works together, as a package. It is the new administration which has used this phrase "as a package", to refer to all of God's laws. Well, the same is true for our dealings with the world. All of this emphasis on community projects, "as a package", is wrong. And this was predicted in Matthew 24:49.

It was not Mr. Armstrong, but his successor, who has led the Church to eat and to drink with the drunken.

But take courage!

The very fact that the evil servant is leading the Church back into the world is a sign that Christ's return is approaching:

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, (Matthew 24:50)

Do we understand what Christ was saying here? When we see the ministry being "smitten" by the Pastor

General and when we see the Church being led back into the world, THEN Christ's intervention is rapidly approaching. Matthew 24: 49 lists two things that must happen in the Church of God before God will intervene, and BOTH of them are happening right now. Both conditions are extant right now. Can we grasp this?

The last verse in this section reads:

And shall cut him asunder, AND APPOINT [HIM] HIS PORTION WITH THE HYPOCRITES: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 24:51)

Why would God lump this "evil servant" together with the hypocrites? A hypocrite is an actor, a pretender, someone who puts up a false facade. People who can do this well are the highest paid individuals in our society, the superstars. This "evil servant" has been pretending all along! He is putting on a facade. He is not what he appears to be. Therefore in Matthew 24:51 Christ exposes him for what he really is ... a hypocrite.

Right, that leaves just one more thing for me to discuss. I mentioned that Matthew 24:45 identifies Mr. Armstrong as the "faithful and wise servant". So notice:

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over HIS HOUSEHOLD, to give them meat in due season? (Matthew 24:45)

This verse contains a mistranslation, which has hidden the true meaning of this verse. The key lies in the word "household".

In the New Testament of the KJV the English word "household" appears 13 times. In two places there is no Greek word at all ... it was just added by the translators who felt it was implied in the Greek. That leaves 11 other places, where there is a Greek word that has been translated as "household".

In 9 of those 11 places the original Greek word is either "oikos", or words that are derived from "oikos". The word "oikos" means "a house". It is the root of our English word "economy". So these 9 words really DO mean "household". That is easy to establish.

That leaves only two other places where the English word "household" is translated from an entirely different Greek word. Those two places are actually parallel Scriptures, referring to the same statement by Jesus Christ. So we are talking about ONE OCCASION when a different word is used (though this incident is recorded twice), which the translators then MIS-translated as "household".

The two places are Matthew 24:45 and Luke 12:42. The Greek word used in these two verses is "THERAPEIA"! Does that word look familiar? Sounds like "therapy", doesn't it? Correct!

"Therapeia" means HEALING!

It doesn't mean "household" at all! It was just because the translators didn't have a clue as to what Jesus Christ was talking about, that they chose to translate this word here as "household". They knew very well that this word means "healing".

While this noun "therapeia" is used only 4 times in the N.T., it is actually derived from the verb "therapeuo", and this verb is used 44 times in the N.T.. And it very clearly means "healing" and "curing". Apart from Matthew 24:45 and Luke 12:42 "therapeia" is nowhere else translated as "household",

because that is not really what it means.

Don't be fooled by the definitions you may find in dictionaries. They will tell you that "therapeia" in a certain way can also mean "a household". But that isn't really correct. The dictionaries say this for the simple reason that this word was used by Jesus Christ in Matthew 24:45 and in Luke 12:42, and the real meaning of this word simply did not make any sense to them in Christ's statement. They can only understand (actually they misunderstand) Christ's words by giving "therapeia" the meaning of "household".

**BUT YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND!**

Let's look at verse 45 again:

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over HIS HEALING, to give them meat in due season? (Matthew 24:45, corrected)

Do we understand what God means when He says that He has made the Pastor General of the Philadelphian era "RULER OVER HIS HEALING"? It may not make sense to the world, but it should be a powerful statement to us, who have God's Spirit guiding and directing our minds.

This statement is telling us that God put the truth about HIS healing back into His Church through Mr. Armstrong. God did this very deliberately. You probably recall the account? Remember how a young Mrs. Loma Armstrong was "sick unto death"? That was the event that God Almighty used to have the "faithful servant" restore "the plain truth about healing" to the Church of God.

This verse reveals that "the doctrine of healing" would be the first one to be attacked by any Laodicean leadership. Jesus Christ knew this nearly 2000 years ago. That's why He used the word "therapeia" in Matthew 24:45.

Do we understand WHY "healing" is the first thing that Satan wants to see Laodicea remove from the teachings of God's Church? "Healing" requires FAITH! According to your FAITH be it unto you. When "healing" goes out the window, so does faith. And then we are left with people who are NOT "faithful" any more. They don't have faith. It was specifically in reference to the Laodiceans at the end time that Jesus Christ asked:

I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, SHALL HE FIND FAITH ON THE EARTH? (Luke 18:8)

The changing of the healing doctrine has had a PROFOUND effect and impact on the spiritual health of the members of God's Church. It is difficult to overstate this effect. Here in Matthew chapter 24 Jesus Christ chose to focus in on this one teaching (over which the leaders of the last two eras have been made rulers) to show up the difference between Philadelphians and Laodiceans.

Well, that's all I wanted to discuss.

The smiting of ministers today is very blatant. Ministers who don't agree with the heresies are being pressured to resign! Those who stand up and take a stand against the heresies are disfellowshipped. The message to those who seek to have these things discussed in a large conference-type setting is simple: either teach what we tell you to teach or get out! There is not the slightest consideration or concern for the questions of conscience that many ministers now have. Satan never makes concessions

to those who compromise; he only pushes them further. This is something that people who desperately seek to find some common ground with the heresies never understand. The only thing they will get is that they will be pushed again ... and again ... and again.

One last thing I would like to draw your attention to. Notice that it is GOD who has allowed "the evil servant" to come into the position of rulership within the Church. This is exactly the same point as in Zechariah 11:16, where God says:

For, lo, I WILL RAISE UP A SHEPHERD IN THE LAND (Hebrew 'erets' means THE EARTH), [which] shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. (Zechariah 11:16)

This is speaking about the same Pastor General of the Laodicean era. Notice that God accepts responsibility for this "foolish" (Zechariah 11:15) and "idol" (Zechariah 11:17) shepherd getting into this position of power. And in Matthew 24:51 Christ tells us that this "evil" servant is acting in hypocrisy. This means that he does not openly reveal his real intentions.

WHY would the "evil" servant change all the true teachings? WHY would he do away with all of God's laws? WHAT is he REALLY hoping to achieve? WHY would he smite all his fellow ministers? Can we see his REAL intentions?

THINK!

The OBVIOUS intention is to destroy the Church! The obvious intention is to force the ministry out! The obvious intention is to pressure people to leave the Church! That is the way "the scattering" is achieved.

They want to see the Church totally and completely destroyed!

Satan knows that eventually all truly converted Christians get to the point where we say: "Enough is enough! I am getting choked by all these tares around me. I'm pulling my roots out of here and I'm going to where there is a healthier and more fertile soil for me to grow in." And in order to survive we are forced to leave the Worldwide Church of God. In the process the Worldwide Church of God has clearly ceased to be "God's Church"!

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