

HUMAN NATURE
 Did God Create It?
 by Herbert W. Armstrong
 1976 edition

Here is a bombshell of truth almost no one has understood. The world's evils are attributed to human nature. But are babies born with this selfish, evil nature?

I OVERHEARD one say: Just look at that beautiful, sweet little baby -- and to think it's filled with all that evil, despicable human nature!"

But was it?

Think of this paradox! How can it be explained? The human mind can produce wonders. We have sent successive teams of men to walk on the moon. We have returned them safely through the earth's atmosphere.

Yet these marvelous human minds cannot solve our problems here on earth -- cannot bring the world PEACE! WHY?

All the violence, war, crime, corruption, dishonesty, and immorality is blamed on HUMAN NATURE. But where did HUMAN NATURE come from? Did the Creator instill it within us from creation? Were we born with it? Why, as the Bible says, is the heart deceitful above all things? (Jer. 17:9). Did God create in us a nature that "is enmity [hostile] against God"? (Rom. 8:7.)

The answer requires a knowledge of the composition and nature of the human mind -- accessible only by revelation. WHY does such wonderful MIND power work so much evil?

Did an all-loving, all-merciful, almighty GOD deliberately plague the human race He created with an inborn nature of vanity, lust, and greed -- with a heart of hostility against God, of deceit, envy, jealousy, and hatred?

Adam at Creation

Few indeed know what a human being really is, HOW we humans came to be here on earth, the real human potential, where we are going, or what is the WAY.

In preceding writings I have shown what caused God to create man, why we came to be put on earth, the real PURPOSE for human life, the AWESOME human potential. Yet we humans seem to be cursed with this evil human nature!

In this booklet I want to show what is the real source of this evil nature -- why the human mind works as it does. The Bible is our source.

So first, let's see what is revealed about the first man, Adam, and his nature at the time of his creation.

The Bible reveals only the most brief high points of human history for the first two thousand-plus years -- a third of all the time from the creation of man to now! Only eleven chapters are devoted to the history of that span of time. The account of the first created couple is merely the briefest possible summary.

The first humans were the last act of creation on the sixth day of what is commonly called "creation week," recorded in the first chapter of Genesis.

God had created plant life -- the flora -- on the third day of that week, animal life -- the fauna -- on the fifth and sixth, each reproducing "after its own kind." Cattle reproduced after the

cattle kind (verse 25), lions after the lion kind, horses after the horse kind, etc.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

In other words, "Let us make MAN after the GOD kind!" God was actually reproducing Himself!

And notice, the name God -- the Hebrew name as originally written throughout Genesis 1, is Elohim. It is a uniplural noun, like family, group, church. It is ONE family composed of more than one person. It is like one team, one church, but each composed of multiple persons. The God to whom Jesus prayed is the FATHER of the FAMILY that is GOD. God IS a FAMILY -- but ONE family, ONE GOD.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them." WHY? Because human reproduction is the type of God's reproducing Himself. And physical reproduction requires both male and female.

But continue: "And God blessed them" Did He bless them by creating in them an evil sinful nature, utterly unable to be subject to God's right way of life? But continue this passage: "... and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1:28).

"And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (verse 31). If the first humans -- as God had created them -- were VERY GOOD, could it include a hostile and evil nature that was very BAD?

That ought to give every reader something to think about!

No Rebellion

Now what does this record of the creation of the first humans reveal as to Adam's nature at the time of his creation? I repeat: Only the very most brief high spots are recorded here. The little that is revealed gives us, however, all we really need to know.

Here it is: "And out of the ground the Eternal God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them ..." (Gen. 2:19).

Here, in the briefest of summaries, we may see clearly whether this short account reveals a rebellious and disobedient nature in Adam, or one of compliance and obedience.

Absolutely NO REBELLION is indicated here. We find, instead, the response that Adam gave names to all cattle, to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field.

This incident reveals Adam's attitude and nature as he was created, PRIOR TO his temptation by Satan (which is recorded in chapter 3). Notice carefully. Absolutely NOTHING in the account of this pre-temptation incident indicates in Adam the presence of an evil, hostile, rebellious attitude or nature. It does not reflect a heart that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, as human nature is described (Jeremiah 17:9), nor a carnal mind that is enmity (hostile) against God and which "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

Nor, on the other hand, does it reveal a nature filled with the Spirit of God. Adam had not yet been confronted by Satan, had not disobeyed, nor had he taken of the "tree of life" to receive the indwelling LOVE and POWER of God's Holy Spirit, which would have imparted the DIVINE NATURE (II Peter 1:4).

So prior to the temptation by Satan, we have only the revelation that Adam's NATURE, as God created him, was not evil, hostile and diabolical. There may have been the physical and mental

nature of self-preservation and such things. But NOT the evil

nature of SELF-centeredness.

We need to realize that God created Adam and the human race for a PURPOSE. We need to have clearly in mind, at this point, WHAT that purpose is.

A Super King

Angels had inhabited this planet before the creation of man (II Peter 2:4-6). These angels had sinned. God had set over them a king -- Lucifer, a super archangel -- to govern them with the GOVERNMENT OF GOD (Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:11-17).

This super king, Lucifer, was, of all created beings, supreme in created perfection (Ezek. 28:12,15). But, remember, holy and righteous CHARACTER is something that cannot be created in one instantaneously by fiat. It must be developed in an independent entity through a process in which one comes to recognize the right way from the wrong, to choose the right and reject the wrong even against self desire.

The great Lucifer and the angels who followed him (apparently a third of all angels) were originally created as holy beings, composed of spirit, immortal. But in order that they have personality and individuality as independent beings, it was necessary that they be provided with faculties for knowing, thinking, reasoning, and making their own decisions and choices.

These angels followed their king Lucifer in the decision to turn from and rebel against the GOVERNMENT OF God -- God's WAY OF LIFE. That is THE WAY OF LOVE -- outgoing concern for the good of others -- the way of humility, obedience to and love for their MAKER, of giving, serving, cooperating, and sharing. They turned to THE WAY of vanity, lust and greed, of rebellion, jealousy and envy, of competition, strife and violence, of resentment, bitterness and destruction. Obviously the other two thirds of the angels and archangels have remained holy, loyal, and obedient to God's government.

God's Purpose

But now, to carry out God's purpose for the inhabitants of this earth, to accomplish the grand and awesome PURPOSE throughout the entire universe that could have been theirs, GOD IS REPRODUCING HIMSELF THROUGH HUMAN BEINGS!

The super archangel Lucifer was the supreme pinnacle of God's creative power in a created being. When he turned to rebellion, it left ONLY GOD Himself who could be utterly relied on NEVER to deviate from God's WAY -- God's GOVERNMENT. It is impossible for God to sin -- because he WILL NOT! It now became God's purpose to reproduce Himself through human beings.

That required the development in human beings of God's own holy, righteous character. It was necessary, for this purpose, that man be composed of physical matter, that he CHOOSE God's government, reject Lucifer's (now Satan's) self-centered rebellious way, and strive to overcome it. God's PURPOSE in having put humans on earth can be achieved only by man coming to choose God's GOVERNMENT as God's way of life -- to reject with utter finality Satan's way, completely overcoming it.

So God created MAN out of physical matter. God created in man a MIND like God's, though of course inferior, because it was composed of physical brain, empowered with intellect by a human

spirit (essence) in each.

Although the holy and righteous CHARACTER to be developed

□

within man must actually come from God, each human must make his own decision. He must make his own choice to reject Satan's WAY, and to obey God's government.

Adam's Choice

Adam was compelled, therefore, to make the choice. God purposely allowed Satan opportunity to confront Adam with his way of rebellion. But He did NOT allow Satan to get to Adam first. God Himself instructed Adam in GOD'S way -- the way of the GOVERNMENT OF GOD based on the LAW OF GOD, just as Lucifer and his angels had been first instructed in the ways of THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

Then God allowed Satan to confront Adam. Satan got to Adam through his wife. Satan subtly deceived Eve into DISBELIEVING what God had taught them. Adam followed her in choosing rebellion and rejecting God's rule and government over them. They took to themselves the knowledge of what is good and what is evil -- deciding for themselves right from wrong.

Then, something happened to the minds of Adam and Eve -- the eyes of both of them were opened (Gen. 3:7). The spirit and attitude of rebellion had entered their minds. Their minds (hearts) now had become perverted -- deceitful and desperately wicked.

And THAT EVIL IN THEM CAME FROM SATAN, NOT FROM GOD! They were NOT created with this evil nature.

But how did humanity, today, come to have this evil attitude we call "HUMAN Nature"? Did the children of Adam and Eve inherit it from them? Or, was it passed on by heredity?

Let me give you an example of heredity. God put Adam to sleep and removed one of his ribs, out of which He made Eve. Do all men today find themselves short one rib by heredity? Of course not. Acquired characteristics are not passed on by heredity.

Evil Nature by Heredity?

Adam and Eve chose and acquired the "nature" or attitude of sin from Satan. It was not passed on by heredity. Jesus Christ called their second son "righteous Abel."

Then how do we humans come to have (universally) this evil attitude we call human nature today?

It's partly explained in the apostle Paul's second letter to the Corinthian church. He said he desired to present that church "as a chaste virgin to Christ. BUT I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Cor. 11:2-3).

Satan was still around when Paul wrote. (The reason is explained elsewhere.) The people at Corinth had not received this evil nature by heredity. Rather, the apostle feared lest they (in this NEW Testament time) should be beguiled into evil attitudes in the same manner as was the original mother Eve -- directly by Satan.

Eve did not have a mind that was evil before Satan came along and confronted her. But Satan, by subtlety, deceived Eve. Eve's children were not born with this evil nature. Nor were the people of the Corinthian church. But Paul feared lest Satan, still around after some 4,000 years, pervert Corinthian minds directly, as he had done to Eve.

Satan was still around when Christ was born. He tried to

HN

destroy the Christ child by having Him murdered. Satan was still around when Jesus was thirty and baptized. And he tried to destroy Jesus spiritually then, in the temptation. As Satan destroyed

5

(spiritually) Adam, he tried to destroy the "second Adam." Satan is still around TODAY!

But the wily Satan has succeeded in deluding many, if not most, of the best minds into believing he is a nonexistent myth. The best minds, unsuspecting, are deceived (Rev. 12:9).

Here is a truth you, the reader, need to know!

Satan's wavelength

To the church at Ephesus, God said through the apostle Paul (Ephesians 2:1-2): "And you [who] ... in time past ... walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience"

GRASP IT! Satan is here called "the prince of the power of the AIR!" I could not have understood that 60 years ago. I did not then realize how communication by sound and by picture can be broadcast instantaneously through the air.

I have stressed the point that Satan, the former great archangel cherub Lucifer, was the most perfect and powerful being that God could create as an individual being. He was perfect as originally created. But he is composed of spirit, and thus he is invisible to human eyes.

This great and powerful being, even though evil, has power literally to surcharge the air around this earth. HE BROADCASTS!

Wherever you are as you read these words, chances are there are voices and perhaps music in the air around you. A radio or television set tuned to the right wavelength would make them audible to you.

The spirit in every human being is automatically tuned in on Satan's wavelength. You don't hear anything because he does not broadcast in words -- nor in sounds, whether music or otherwise. He broadcasts in ATTITUDES. He broadcasts in attitudes of SELF-centeredness, lust, greed, vanity, jealousy, envy, resentment, competition, strife, bitterness, and hate.

In a word, the selfishness, hostility, deceitfulness, wickedness, rebellion, etc. that we call "Human NATURE" is actually SATAN'S NATURE. It is Satan's ATTITUDE. And broadcasting it, surcharging the air with it, Satan actually NOW WORKS IN the unsuspecting all over the world today! That is HOW Satan deceives the whole world today (Rev. 12:9; 20:3). Being invisible, Satan is not seen by people.

This prince of the power of the air -- this god of this world -- IS THE REAL SOURCE OF WHAT WE HAVE COME TO CALL "HUMAN Nature"!

Here is the real CAUSE of all the world's evils!

But it seems nobody understands it, and therefore the world does nothing about it -- except to go along with it, blaming human nature and supposing it was GOD who created us with an evil nature. Actually, it is Satan's nature.

Spirit Communication

Let me give you an illustration of how we can be swayed, influenced, and driven Satan's wrong way by his broadcasting through the air. When God wanted to cause captive Jews in ancient Babylon to return to Jerusalem to build the second temple, He put

it in the mind of Cyrus, king of Persia. The Persian Empire had taken over the rule of empire from Babylon. Following is the explanation of how God moved Cyrus to do what God wanted.

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia ... the Eternal

□

stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom ..." (Ezra 1:1) that a contingent of Jews return to Jerusalem.

God did not speak to Cyrus in words or direct communication, as He talked with Moses and God's prophets. God reached Cyrus through Cyrus' spirit. God stirred up his spirit, causing him to want to do it. God did cause King Cyrus to know that in issuing this proclamation he was doing it according to the will of God.

Utilizing this same principle, Satan, prince of THE POWER OF THE AIR, stirs the spirits of humans, injecting into them attitudes, moods, and impulses of selfishness, vanity, lust, and greed, attitudes of resentment against authority, of jealousy and envy, of competition and strife, of resentment and bitterness, of violence, murder, and war. People do not recognize the source of these attitudes, feelings, motives, and impulses. As I said, they do not SEE the invisible Satan. They hear no audible voice. They do not know the attitude comes from Satan (Rev. 12:9). But they come to FEEL such attitudes, impulses, and desires. That is how Satan DECEIVES THE WHOLE WORLD.

Self-Centered Attitude

People will feel depressed and won't realize why. But those unaware of this phenomenon, with this self-centered attitude being broadcast and injected into their unsuspecting minds from earliest childhood, do, to a greater or lesser degree, absorb it until it becomes their normal attitude. It becomes habitual. It does not, of course, exhibit the same degree of effect in all minds -- one person will become more evil than another. But the natural tendency is there. They come to have it naturally. It becomes their very NATURE. And we call it "human nature."

All this is an outstanding example of just how subtle Satan is! The finest and most brilliant human minds have been deceived by it. Thus the WHOLE WORLD has been swayed by Satan into what I often term, simply, the "GET" way of life -- the way that has become HABITUAL and NATURAL which we term "HUMAN NATURE."

Few realize how many passages in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, warn us about Satan and his subtlety. But first, before I take you to more of these, let us follow on through the 2nd chapter of Ephesians.

In chapter 1 of this letter to the church at Ephesus, the apostle Paul gives thanks and praise to God who has blessed "us" (the converts at Ephesus and Paul -- all Christians) with every spiritual blessing within the heavenly sphere. God had chosen us before we were born -- before the foundation of the world -- predestinated to be called to spiritual studentship. God has richly lavished on us His grace. He shows that we being called in this time -- this New Testament "church age" -- are the first to be called to this glorious grace (emphasizing that this is NOT the time God is trying to save the world, but only those predestined to be called NOW). Paul has heard of their faith and never ceases to give thanks for it. He prays for their eyes to be opened fully to the awesome human potential -- the supreme greatness of their divine heritage.

I urgently suggest the reader carefully read this first

HN

chapter in the Moffatt translation. As translated by Moffatt I think it is one of the most beautiful, uplifting, and inspiring pieces of literature I have ever read.

Power of the Air

7

Now the highlights of chapter 2: You Christians at Ephesus were spiritually dead, but Christ has given you the impregnation of eternal life. You are now spiritually alive. In the past you lived according to the way of this world (the SELF centered way), according to the PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR. In II Corinthians 4:4 Satan is called the god of this world, who has blinded the minds of those who do not believe Christ and His truth. NOT that they inherited this spiritual blindness -- but that Satan blinded those living in that generation directly.

But here in Ephesians 2 Satan is referred to as the PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR! Notice the word POWER -- the POWER of the air. Then it calls him the SPIRIT (being) that NOW -- the time when they were living -- actually was WORKING IN those of the world who were not obedient -- that is, the world in general. The Phillips translation in modern English renders this: "You [then] drifted along in the stream of this world's ideas of living, and obeyed its unseen ruler [who is still operating in those who do not respond to the truth of God]."

Emphatically this shows Satan is the UNSEEN one who, unrealized by the people, is actually swaying their minds, leading them in what I term the "GET" way.

The Phillips translation continues (verse 3): "We all lived like that in the past, and followed the impulses and imaginations of our evil nature ... like everyone else." This "nature" has been acquired from Satan. It was not inherited from our parents. It was not created in us by God. That which has become habitual and therefore natural becomes a NATURE within us.

Such nature IS NOT hereditary, but an acquired characteristic. This very passage shows the AUTHOR of this "nature" to be Satan, NOT GOD. The next words in the Phillips translation are: "being under the wrath of God by nature." It would make no sense at all for God's wrath to be on us BECAUSE OF WHAT GOD PUT WITHIN US. Adam was NOT created with this "EVIL nature." Adam acquired it from Satan. Lucifer (Satan) was created PERFECT. He acquired it by false reasoning. These Ephesians, in their generation, had acquired it from Satan. But now, IN CHRIST, through His grace, Christ had given them LIFE, who were spiritually dead because of this acquired evil nature.

Effect on Converted Christians

But how about the converted Christian? His spirit, like all others, is tuned on Satan's wavelength. The same tendency, just as if this evil nature were inherent in him from birth, is present. Satan has been injecting it since early childhood. But the true Christian has repented of that attitude and WAY. He has REJECTED it. He has turned from it. He has accepted and turned to GOD'S attitude -- the way of GOD'S GOVERNMENT!

The passage in Ephesians 2 explains it. People generally, in the world, are spiritually dead. They have gone along with the rest of the world in the self-centered way. As the Phillips translation renders it, they have "drifted along on the stream of this world's way of living." They have "obeyed its UNSEEN ruler [who is still

operating in those who do not respond to the truth of God]."

I have quoted from the Phillips translation, not because it is a more accurate or dependable translation, but because it brought out the meaning more clearly in this particular passage.

Conversion does not disconnect Satan's wavelength. The tendency to become resentful over real or fancied wrongs or

8

injustices from others, the tendency to try to get the best of others, may still prove a temptation. THESE are the things the converted Christian must strive to overcome!

When Jesus spoke of OVERCOMING, He referred to overcoming these attitudes and WAYS of Satan, which are contrary to GOD'S way. The Christian must, as Peter was inspired to write, GROW in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ -- be a spiritual student.

We read in James 4: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." This is speaking of resisting these very self-centered thoughts, attitudes, tendencies, and ways which Satan injected into us from childhood and is constantly broadcasting and injecting into unsuspecting minds through the spirit in man.

However, no man is IMPELLED to respond to and obey these impulses being broadcast by Satan. Satan has no power to FORCE anyone to think or do wrong. But the unsuspecting automatically do without fully realizing what is taking place in their minds. They drift along.

Evil Nature Acquired

The passage in II Corinthians 4:4 adds clarity to the entire thesis that this evil spiritual nature in humans has been acquired, individually by each person, from Satan.

Before I became familiar with radio, I could not have understood HOW Satan injects this evil attitude into humans. He is a SUPER POWERFUL spirit being. He was set on a throne as king over the earth. He himself, by his own reasoning processes, acquired this evil nature. God did not create it in him (Ezek. 28:15). Though disqualified now to administer the GOVERNMENT OF GOD over the earth, he must remain here UNTIL his successor has qualified AND been inducted into office. There is a REASON why Christ has not YET come to take over that office, remove Satan, and restore the government of God.

Before Jesus Christ could qualify to restore the GOVERNMENT OF GOD and RULE all nations, He had to withstand Satan's most severe temptation. You'll read of that supreme struggle in the 4th chapter of Matthew. Jesus had to -- in human flesh -- reject Satan's way and teach and prove OBEDIENT to the GOVERNMENT OF GOD -- so He can RESTORE it on earth!

It was immediately after that -- after Christ QUALIFIED to restore the GOVERNMENT OF GOD to earth -- that Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the KINGDOM OF GOD, and saying, "The time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:1,14-15). It was never fulfilled until that titanic struggle in which Jesus resisted Satan, conquered him, and showed His MASTERY over him.

Now notice something you probably never realized before:

I have said repeatedly THIS IS NOT THE TIME GOD IS TRYING TO CONVERT THE WHOLE WORLD. He is calling only a comparative VERY FEW, now.

WHY? WHY does not God call everyone on earth NOW?

Are those of us called NOW getting a real SPECIAL deal?

HN

Well, THINK OF THIS: We, now called, must resist Satan, who will PULL OUT ALL STOPS to attack and DESTROY those of us called Now!

All others are drifting along SATAN'S WAY ANYWAY. Sure, he broadcasts to sway everyone to his SELF-centered way, contrary to GOD'S WAY. But he has the whole world already going his way. But those of us who have turned from his way are fighting to OVERCOME

9

his way, and turning to GOD'S way -- the WAY of God's GOVERNMENT -- are the ones Satan HATES. He seeks specially to destroy us! Without God's protection and restraining power over Satan, we could never make it!

We Must Withstand Satan

Few, even among professing converted Christians, realize the vital and SUPREME NEED to be conscious and constantly aware of Satan's efforts to get to US, who already have turned from Satan's way and to the WAY of the GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

Few actively heed what God, through Paul, said later to the Ephesians: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Payout on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against POWERS, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [wicked SPIRITS] in HIGH PLACES" (Eph. 6:10-12).

There is a reason WHY God allows those predestinated to be called NOW to have to withstand Satan and his REBELLION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

It is necessary -- in order for us to QUALIFY to become rulers (under Christ) in the KINGDOM OF GOD -- that we NOT ONLY reject Satan's false way but strive against it until we OVERCOME IT, relying all the while on GOD for the power to do so.

As we, from earliest childhood growing up, acquired Satan's nature, so, through conversion and the struggle of OVERCOMING, we rid ourselves of it. We ACQUIRE, instead, the DIVINE NATURE. Peter wrote that we become "PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE" (II Pet. 1:4). We most certainly were not born with it.

So, Lucifer ACQUIRED that Satanic nature by his own reasoning and choice. Humans have ACQUIRED Satan's nature from childhood and call it "human nature." But converted Christians, who reject Satan's way and OVERCOME it, turning to GOD'S WAY, BECOME PARTAKERS OF -- i.e., ACQUIRE -- the DIVINE NATURE. But for God's PURPOSE, it was necessary that we first know and totally REJECT Satan's way and accept GOD'S GOVERNMENT.

When God does set out to CALL EVERY HUMAN ON EARTH to spiritual salvation, Satan will be BOUND a thousand years, unable to broadcast his impulses and attitudes. The world will be at PEACE! Those called then will not have to battle what we do now.

But why? There has to be a reason!

Qualify to Rule

To those of us being called, now, Jesus said: "And he that overcometh [Satan and his own self], and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ..." (Rev. 2:26-27).

When Christ comes to RULE, as the KING of kings and LORD of lords, we who are called now will rule with and under Him, as He

HN

restores the GOVERNMENT OF GOD to this earth.

Notice again: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21). Those who shall reign WITH Christ, when He comes to restore the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, MUST OVERCOME (and that includes overcoming SATAN), EVEN AS JESUS DID!

Now does this apply equally to those who shall be converted after Christ comes, during the millennium?

□

10

The answer is NO! These two quotations (above) are found in Jesus' message to the seven CHURCHES that span this CHURCH AGE! They do NOT apply to those called later! Do they apply only to the era of Thyatira and Laodicea? No, they apply to ALL the church age. These seven messages DO apply to seven successive church eras. BUT they also apply to the WHOLE CHURCH through ALL eras. In other words, the Ephesus characteristics DOMINATED in the first era, and the Laodicean will dominate in the last, but SOME of these characteristics are found in EVERY era. The messages apply to the WHOLE church (and so I have said and written for over 50 years) but certain characteristics predominate in the various eras.

But GET THIS CRUX POINT! Jesus had to QUALIFY to RULE the earth. God's WHOLE PURPOSE IS TO RESTORE THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD on earth and set up the KINGDOM OF GOD. Jesus had to resist and overcome the temptations -- very special ones -- of SATAN. Are WE to rule without any such qualifications? Of course not! Those who are to rule with and under Christ when He restores the GOVERNMENT to the earth MUST QUALIFY -- must turn FROM Satan's WAY TO GOD'S WAY, that is, to the GOVERNMENT OF GOD. We must root out -- root and branch -- Satan's ATTITUDE and WAY, and so thoroughly that we shall make it IMPOSSIBLE ever to turn again to Satan's way -- IMPOSSIBLE TO SIN (I John 3:9).

Those called to spiritual salvation after Christ comes will not have to battle Satan.

God's Government Restored

Notice, Matthew 25 and Revelation 20:

First, Matthew 25, beginning verse 31: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." Christ is coming in all the supreme POWER and GLORY of the Creator GOD! He is coming to RESTORE THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD over the WHOLE EARTH -- over ALL NATIONS! One SUPER WORLD GOVERNMENT! He will restore the throne of David at Jerusalem.

Continue: "And before him shall be gathered all nations" (verse 32). He is coming to RULE the WORLD -- to RESTORE the GOVERNMENT OF GOD! Every government is founded on a basic LAW.

The law of God is unlike any man-made law of any human government. It is a SPIRITUAL law (Rom. 7:14). Unlike man-made government laws, it regulates not alone deeds, doing, BUT attitudes toward God and man that lead to WAYS or ACTIONS. And it is a HOLY law (Rom. 7:12). It is A WAY OF LIFE -- God's way! When people are governed in that attitude and way of life, there will be PEACE, HAPPINESS, JOY, ABUNDANCE!

But that basic LAW of the GOVERNMENT OF GOD is also the law of the Christian WAY of life. Sin (spiritually) is the transgression of that law (I John 3:4).

Christ is coming also to call ALL PEOPLE to spiritual salvation and eternal life. That is when God will seek to spiritually save THE WHOLE WORLD -- and NOT TILL THEN!

HN

Continue: "And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:32-34).

The nations before the king on his throne are the nations of this world. Those called to salvation during the church age and previously (prophets, etc.), will have been resurrected to meet

11

Christ in the air, as He descends to earth on His return (I Thes. 4:16-17). They will be ruling with Christ, already being immortal, composed of spirit (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10). They, with Christ, will compose the Kingdom of God.

Government and Kingdom

It is necessary, here, to explain the difference between the GOVERNMENT OF GOD and the KINGDOM OF GOD. The GOVERNMENT of God was established on earth IN PRE-HISTORY OVER THE ANGELS.

But the KINGDOM of God is BOTH the GOVERNMENT of God and the FAMILY of God. Those now being saved spiritually will, in the resurrection, INHERIT the Kingdom of God. They shall have been BORN of God -- born into the divine FAMILY of God. They shall be married to Christ. Of this divine spiritual marriage will be begotten and born spiritually children of God all during the thousand years commencing with Christ's return to earth as KING.

Now let's notice the 20th chapter of Revelation:

The apostle John is recording what he saw in vision: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:1-2).

When Christ comes again to earth in supreme POWER and GLORY, He shall already have been crowned with many crowns. The coronation ceremony will have taken place in heaven (throne of God the Father) before His return. Christ then shall have been qualified AND inducted into office. I have said before, Satan must remain on earth swaying the nations his way UNTIL Christ, the successor, has both qualified AND been inducted into office.

Immediately on Christ's return, Satan shall be BOUND.

Continue: "And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (verse 3).

Those resurrected then shall reign over all nations with Christ -- and a thousand years of PEACE on earth will ensue.

Imagine what it shall be like with Christ and resurrected saints forming the KINGDOM OF GOD, ruling with the GOVERNMENT OF GOD over all living humans who shall be left alive. Satan will be restrained from broadcasting. Christ will be ruling with God's way of life.

Satan Loosed

But now notice! Verse 7: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth ... to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (verses 7-8).

Grasp it! These are people at PEACE! They have not been

HN

inoculated with the satanic NATURE we now call "human nature." They shall have been living happily in PERFECT PEACE. Now Satan once more BROADCASTS. Remember these nations are HUMAN. Satan is INVISIBLE to them. But notice the CHANGE come over them as soon as Satan is loosed and able again to sway humanity:

Verse 9: "And they [the human nations] went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city" Immediately "Human Nature" shall have entered into them! Immediately they shall have been filled with envy and jealousy against the saints of God, filled with wrath and violence!

12

But God will not allow them to destroy. They shall have been told -- have been warned about Satan. "... And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone ... and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Great White Throne Judgment

After this shall occur the "Great White Throne Judgment" -- the resurrection of all humanity from the time of Adam to Christ's coming who had not been in the first resurrection or called by God. In this judgment is to be "the book of life," meaning many, perhaps most, shall then find spiritual salvation and eternal life. In the time of their judgment, Satan will be GONE!

Up to now, God has called VERY FEW to spiritual salvation, contrary to general tradition and opinion in the "Christian" world!

From Adam to Noah we have the record of only Abel, Enoch, and Noah -- some 1,900 years! From Noah to Christ, there was Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, prior to calling the children of Israel out of Egypt. God NEVER offered spiritual salvation (eternal life) to the Old Testament nation of Israel, but only to the prophets and those called to SPECIAL DUTY.

From Adam to Christ, NONE were called to spiritual salvation except those called to perform a SPECIAL MISSION.

From Christ to now, only a VERY MINUTE PORTION of humanity has been called, and they for the SPECIAL MISSION of THE GREAT COMMISSION -- "GO ye therefore and TEACH (Matt. 28:19) those who are to be RULERS and TEACHERS (Rev. 5:10) in the Millennium.

We who have been called in this "church age" have been called to qualify as rulers with and under Christ in the Kingdom of God, restoring the GOVERNMENT OF GOD; in other words, to develop the holy, righteous CHARACTER of God. But OUR PART in the GREAT COMMISSION is the assignment God has given as the means of preparing us for rulership with and under Christ when He comes -- and that is now soon!

Little Children and Human Nature

This booklet began with the question of whether this evil "human nature" is born in a sweet tiny baby. Let me now, before I conclude, quote three passages from the Bible.

"And they brought unto him [Jesus] also infants, that he would touch them Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:15-16). The evil nature which some erroneously have supposed was born in babies is the nature of Satan's kingdom, but "of such" -- these babies -- is the Kingdom of GOD.

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, who

HN

is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:1-3).

"Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14).

We humans start out at birth all right. But soon we begin to absorb and ACQUIRE the selfish, self-centered attitude broadcast by Satan. But Satan's kingdom of angels -- now turned to demons -- rejected the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, and it was thus removed from earth.

□

13

GOD'S PURPOSE in having created and put HUMANS on earth was to develop in them GOD'S own holy and righteous character. God wants a people who will REJECT and overcome Satan's WAY OF LIFE and turn to THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD -- which is GOD'S WAY of life.

That GOVERNMENT OF GOD exists at this time on earth only in the one true Church of God. Satan is angry. He hates it! He subtly tries to inject into minds under that government of LOVE a hostility that MISrepresents it as a harsh and cruel government of Satan.

But I repeat, LUCIFER was created by God "perfect in all his ways, until iniquity was found in him." He acquired the nature of rebellion and evil by false reasoning. Adam acquired it from Satan. The Ephesians (Eph. 2:1) acquired it from Satan -- as has all humanity, except Jesus Christ. But now, IN CHRIST, through His grace, we may ACQUIRE the DIVINE NATURE (II Pet. 1:4).

God's GREAT PURPOSE is to RESTORE THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD to this earth, in and through the KINGDOM OF GOD!

We CAN, by Christ's grace, CHANGE "human nature" and eradicate it entirely from us, replacing it with the divine nature!

□