

I had mentioned that we would be going through a particular series. This is probably going to be quite long because of the article and I do intend to go through the article (at this point, anyway), word by word and expound upon it. I don't know how else to say this except that in going through some of this I've been very inspired by going back through it because this article began to be posted on the site May the 30th of 2013, my birthday. Anyway, I was a little younger back then. But that, to me, is incredible. 2013, because we've been given so much since that time, but we were given so much right here to be able to understand some of the things, a beginning of an understanding of some of the things of what we'd gone through and why we had gone through it and going back and reviewing it I am dumbfounded because of what God has revealed and because of what we've gone through since that time. That should be very moving to everyone as we go through this.

I don't know how else to put this, but I'm going to say it here anyway. I used to not like individuals when we first began, after we'd had the Apostasy and we had a beginning, anyway, of this group here, of people who began to come along in PKG before we were even PKG; but toward the end of that 3½ years, first 3½ years that we went through, some individuals would make comment, "Well, what you have written, some of the things you say sound like Mr. Armstrong." I didn't like that because I didn't like the comparison, because I know who I am.

But I understood their heart and what they were saying. It's where it comes from. It wasn't Mr. Armstrong, it isn't Ron; it's God Almighty and if the message comes from God Almighty there's going to be a pattern and that which we're going to recognize is true and sound and powerful and strong that comes from God because that's how God works with us. As He helps us to become more deeply grounded in truth, or reveals new truth if it is that particular case then there's going to be something that we see and we grasp and we hear that otherwise we wouldn't and we recognize the author, in other words, is God. That which is true comes from God Almighty. He reveals things in an orderly fashion and after a while you begin to hear that voice and it becomes obvious this is from God, because it is, in that respect, spiritual, "of God's spirit."

As I was going through some of this - I'll be candid with you - some of this is like, for me, reading through the book, some of the books of Paul or of Peter or of John, of things that were inspired to be given. And what we're getting ready to go through right now, it's the same author. That's what inspires me deeply, mightily.

I know that when this was written we didn't grasp it all. Candidly, we didn't come close to grasping all this. It's very much like what we do in our lives when we go through books or different things we read in here, when we go through God's word and we can go through it again and again and again and God continues to reveal things to us. We don't get everything all at once.

Let's take 2 Thessalonians 2 about the Apostasy. We never got it in Worldwide. We didn't understand what that was all about. We knew a great falling away was going to come, but we had no idea the magnitude of it. We didn't grasp what was going to take place. We didn't grasp all the other examples of all the stones of the temple, there wouldn't be one left upon another, what God said to Laodicea: "I'm going to spew you out of My mouth because of being lukewarm. I cannot accept you like this. I cannot receive you. I cannot work with you like this." So God separated us from the Body. That's what that means, separated us from the Church. He cut off His holy spirit to us. All those things that came together we began to understand.

It's really awesome to understand the things that God reveals to us, but we're always learning, we're always building upon what God gives in our understanding. So it is with so many scriptures in here that we have read, and yet there is time when God has reserved something, which we're going to be reading about here, talking about that. If He's reserved something to be given at a specific time you can't understand it until then. Until it's God's time you can read it and think you understand it, think you see it, think you know what it's all about, or feel pretty good about understanding it, and then all of a sudden it's like, "Why didn't I understand? Why didn't I 'see' that before?" But we know - because God didn't give it, and when He gives it then we can see it, but only at that time.

So that's the way it is with so many things in this book and in what we're getting ready to go through here. Just because you read the article doesn't mean you got it. That's the part of the message here at the beginning of this sermon. You can read certain things that are given sometimes that are inspired by God and we can feel we have a handle on it. Not if it's God's purpose that there's more that He's going to reveal as we grow, and especially in something like this, of this magnitude, that's exactly what has been happening. So we have to wait on God.

Sometimes we have questions that we want answers. Sometimes I'm sent questions that I don't have answers. At that moment I understand that God's working with something and going to reveal more, but until He does I can't give the answer and I won't even try. I'm not going to speculate in those things when it comes to certain kinds of answers.

So let's start through the article, *An Extraordinary 4½ Years*.

Introduction

God continues to reveal more understanding and clarity to all that the Church experienced for 4½ years...

Now we plugged in dates and this has been rewritten with the context of time has gone on, and as we look back now at that period of time it's referencing this specific period of time. So a lot of this had to be reworked, in that respect, because otherwise people could go through it and just think we're talking about right now and looking back over the last 4½ years, and that's not the case. This goes back to a specific period of time.

... (December 14 of 2008 to May 19 of 2013) ...

That's the 4½ years being referenced and talked about, a year past the period of time that we had focused upon, that Pentecost, past 2012. So there's another year in there. That's why it's referring to a specific 4½ years of what we experienced, which was unique only to us in God's Church because of what happened. There's never been a time like this, everything we're living through and things happening prophetically.

Just like the Apostasy, there were those in the Church who lived through that; some of you here lived through that. You experienced that. You heard the sermon that was given and you had to make choices and decisions according to what you heard. That was unique to you, no one else. Other people can hear about that story, other people can hear about the Apostasy and what it was like to be in a congregation all of a sudden, just like a wave that goes through the congregation, and you know something has happened today, you know, in a massive way. I knew on that day, as so many others did there, that something has happened here. It's just almost to the point of sending chills up and down your spine. "This is an incredible event that's taken place. I don't understand it, don't know what has happened, but it's never going to be the same again. It's never going to be the same again." It was gut-wrenching.

But see, for those who experienced it something was molded and fashioned within us. We had the opportunity to grow in something and to learn things that others can read about but never experience. You experience things at different times in your life as God molds and fashions you. You have experienced different things if you've been with us since 2008 or 2009 or whatever it is, that is very unique. Others in the future are going to read about it, but they're not going to have molded and fashioned in them what you have the ability to have molded and fashioned in you. That's so much of what this 4½ years is all about. So again:

God continues to reveal more understanding and clarity to all that the Church experienced for 4½ years (December 14 of 2008 to May 19 of 2013), both in the Church and in the world. The Church has been living through the most intense prophetic times of all human history, yet the world is totally oblivious to what has been taking place. Even the scattered body from the Apostasy is in deep darkness to the realities of what God has been working out.

They don't know because they don't recognize this group, and anything they hear they scoff at and it sounds insane to them, somebody that, well, took a 3½ year, 3 year sabbatical, sort of forced upon him by the government. Anyway, that, because to them that is proof that he "can't be a minister of God." Then the fact of what happened with 2012, and then the fact of 2005 and the sermons that were given there that Jesus Christ has not eternally existed. They can't take that because they've been asleep. So they haven't been able to see it yet. One day they're going to be able to see it and they're going to have to make choices about what they see.

So we lived through some incredible things in our lives and we have to make choices all along the way.

Nearly a third of the Bible contains prophecy and the overwhelming majority of it is about this end-time.

I was just thinking here, even talking about the fact of what we've experienced and the fact that the first sentence there, that God is revealing more understanding and clarity to the Church of what happened then, He's still revealing more. As we go through this we're going to see that He's been revealing more and more and more that we didn't even know when this was written back in beginning in May the 30th of 2013.

We have been living through it, and the closer we come to the return of Jesus Christ as the world's Messiah, the more intense the fulfillment of prophetic events will become. We have learned and are still learning that much of that which is prophetic for the end-time is about God's own Church first and foremost.

That's powerful to understand. I think it's difficult for us sometimes to grasp that God could be so concerned with such a small body, but the Church throughout time, as a whole, has been relatively small. We experienced something, those who were a part of Worldwide because they lived two particular periods of time there in essence, that that was very large. There wasn't a time like that ever before of so many having been called and baptized and being able to walk to God's house side-by-side as they did, to believe the same things as so many did. Not all did, but the vast majority did.

So it's difficult for us sometimes to think that we're that important to God...to God. The more we grasp what God is doing and what God is finishing, especially with some of the things we addressed last Sabbath, the more we will come to grasp that and understand that. This is exceedingly important to God Almighty. He is finishing a work that He has been doing for 6,000 years and every part of the Temple is not the same. There are different ones to be fit into the Temple for different purposes and different areas. We don't know what that is yet. There are different ones being prepared to live on into a new age, to be a beginning of something as they were a witness of something that took place toward the end. You don't have to have a lot to be that witness. You don't have to have a lot to be that witness. If it's twelve, it's twelve, the things that God has used in times past as a matter of a witness in time.

These events are completely unseen by the world. Yet the major events to occur next and take place in the world will clearly be seen by all. We have already seen most of what has been prophesied about the Church, and we will yet see all that has been prophesied about the world.

As a result of all that we went through during that specific 4½ years, God is continuing to reveal more about **what** and **why** we experienced things as we did during that time. There is more to understand about Daniel's prophecies...

God has still been revealing more of that. The last book that came out, God gave more at that time to understand about that. But anyway...

There is more to understand about Daniel's prophecies and about the awesomeness of prophetic events that we lived through in that period of time. First, this article will address the background and basis for understanding what God is now more fully revealing to us as we move from Pentecost to Pentecost...

That's what God made very, very clear to us that we had to do. It's hard to keep this period of time in mind, when this is being addressed, in 2013, mid-2013 and on, until the article was complete, several installments of this. God made it very clear to us we are moving from Pentecost to Pentecost, because we didn't know, have any idea, any concept of time. We didn't understand, "Why didn't something happen in 2012?" We had no idea why it didn't happen in 2012 or why it didn't happen in 2013, that Jesus Christ would return. So we had to wait on God. We had sermons about what do you do? You have truth; you hold on to that. Who has that truth? Who has the truth about Jesus Christ not eternally existing? And on and on it goes and so you hold on to the truth and you keep moving forward and you wait on God, and God will reveal to His people. He won't leave His people in darkness. There's a reason why He takes us through this.

That's what a lot of this article is about and when we start to grasp that in a greater way we'll be thankful. Truly! We'll be deeply thankful because it molds and fashions something unique in you that cannot enter into you, become a part of you or you become a part of it, until you have experienced it and gone through it. That's the only way it can happen. To me that's exciting! I am so excited!

As we go through this one of the most exciting things to me is that God has been revealing to the Church how He molds and fashions the mind. We've never understood that to the depth we do now. Not even close in times past! Now that we're getting closer to the return of Jesus Christ God is giving us more understanding of those things, of how God works with us as human beings, how He works with the mind. Awesome! So again "moving forward from Pentecost..."

...as we move from Pentecost to Pentecost – until Jesus Christ returns.

Learning From A Personal Experience

Shortly after I became baptized in the Church of God, I moved to Wichita, Kansas, for a few months so I could get away from the pulls of my previous friends and kind of party life I had been living in college up through age 19. So it was right after being baptized in very late summer of 1969, I had returned to college to begin my senior year, but as I started back, I quickly dropped out because I knew I had to get away from that past environment. It was then that I decided to head out to another city in Kansas to find a job and not return to college until I knew I was strong enough to refuse my past.

There are times you have to do things of this nature. You have to change and work on your environment and if certain things in your environment keep coming up over and over again and you're having battles, you have to do something to change the environment. You are the only one that can make those kinds of choices and decisions in your life. Some of you need to change some things in your environment in God's Church. Truly!

Right away, I found work and a place to live. Each Sabbath I met with a congregation of the Worldwide Church of God that numbered over 500 people.

Actually, my recollection, it was actually a congregation of nearly 600 people, but when they got to that point they generally split-up a church and have an east and west or north and south type of thing so people could be close, but at this point here it hadn't been split up yet, but it numbered well over 500 every Sabbath. "That in itself was an incredible..." Think of that, one little area, Kansas, you know, had that many people in it. They had other congregations, up in Salina, over in Hays. I think Hays had started at that time. Yes. Salina, Hays, and then I don't know what was over toward Kansas City. I don't know where anything was over here. I don't know. I'll just stay out of it.

Anyway, I think back at that time there, you know, 1969, and thinking that's incredible! 500 people, nearly 600 people, larger than what we are worldwide. Awesome! One congregation!

That in itself was an incredible experience for me, since I had gone through high school in a town of only about 100 people.

Actually, there weren't 100 people in the town. If you count all the ranches and all the farms that were in about a 30-35 mile radius then you can get about 100 people. Anyway, I was in one of the largest graduating classes since the 1930's, and it was because I skipped a year and was able to graduate a year earlier that we were able to make that class one of the largest classes since the 1930's. We had 8.

So this contrast. Sometimes people don't realize this is not a small thing when you grow up in a little area like this and all of a sudden you're in a congregation of 500 people, and you grew up in an area that had a 100 people in the whole region, you know. That was a little different.

That in itself was an incredible experience for me, since I had gone through high school in a town of about 100 people. It was there in Wichita that I was invited to join a unique speaking club that Herbert W. Armstrong had established for the men in the Church who wanted to improve themselves through such an opportunity.

I think back about that. I'll tell you what, I saw so many people who have gone through those clubs and they went back out with a greater confidence, a boldness, an ability. It was awesome! They received better jobs, promotions in jobs because of that experience of what they had

received just by going through this and what it helped to mold and fashion. That was an incredible thing that Mr. Armstrong was moved and motivated to do in the Church.

The club was fashioned after the manner of other speaking clubs, self-improvement clubs, and the Rotary Clubs, but was designed to the special needs of God's Church at that time. There were 12 speeches that one could give before being able to graduate from the club. There were also many other speaking opportunities, including discussion of topics related to world news events, family life, scripture, and doctrine.

This Spokesman Club was highly intimidating to a very pride-filled young man at that time, especially when faced with 29 other men (30 maximum to a club) from all walks of life whom I did not yet know, and some of which who would have the responsibility to critique my speaking. The first speech was called an "Ice Breaker" where you would stand up in front of a group for five to seven minutes and tell them about your life. When it was my turn to stand and give my speech I was so nervous, petrified, and scared by the experience that my mouth was so dry that at times my tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth.

I don't know if you've ever been in a situation like that. You're trying to speak before a group of people, talk to a group of people and your mouth is as dry as dry can be and literally your tongue sticks inside to parts of your mouth and your words don't sound right. They don't. You can't pronounce things the same way. "I did manage to make it through the speech; however..." Some people were so petrified by some of that sometimes for the first time they weren't able to make it through. Some would just totally zone out. I mean, those kinds of things happen. Can you imagine you grew up on a farm all your life and you've never been in a very large place and all of a sudden you have all these people and you're speaking? Who does that in those kinds of communities? Nobody.

I did manage to make it through the speech; however, one of the things that stuck out in my mind at the time was how I felt concerning what I could tell about myself. I didn't think there was anything interesting, outstanding, or important that I could share with them. Instead, I felt it would be rather ordinary and boring.

When I look back at that experience now, I think of how much more could have been said and the excitement with which it could have been told. As we live our life, it seems that most of that time we seem to think it is very ordinary and that there isn't anything outstanding one could share with others if we were in such an environment to do so. Yet, we often respond differently to hearing from others and have often been inspired by someone telling us about their **calling**.

How many times (I think of the Feast of Tabernacles especially), you're sitting around a table and someone is asked, "Well, how did you come into the Church?" and they start sharing the story with you. It's inspiring. It's always been awesome how God works differently with different ones at

different times. I've heard all kinds of stories that are absolutely mind-boggling at times; incredible how God worked with someone and how they first came in contact and what experiences they went through. Those are inspiring! Because why? Because you see God in it. You realize all the different experiences that people have and how God chooses to work with us to give us those, that uniqueness of opportunity. When I hear those stories I'm inspired by them. I'm moved by them because they're interesting. They're not blah and ordinary, but that's how oftentimes we think about ourselves and think about what we've gone through in our lives.

As we grow spiritually, we come to see more fully the **extra** ordinary lives God has blessed us to experience in His calling.

It's not ordinary! How many people on earth have ever had the opportunity to be called by God Almighty in 6,000 years? Not very many. Not very many through time. If you look at all the billions and billions and billions of people who have lived on this earth very few have had the opportunity to know God Almighty. Very few! Very, very few! Ordinary? Sometimes we just don't recognize what God is doing in our life, but yet we should be deeply moved by that indeed.

We come to grasp how rare such an experience has been over the past 6,000 years of all humanity. We become more excited about how blessed we have been to experience **how** God has brought us to where we are in the transformation of our mind since being called. We often marvel at all the wealth of knowledge about God and His plan He has given us, along with the understanding and wisdom we have been blessed to receive from it. We come to see more and more how deprived and in bondage this world is to ignorance and confusion about God.

Isn't that amazing? It's not hard to see once your mind is opened up and you see truth and you see what's going on in the world, and you feel for people. You want to see a new age. You want to see a new world.

I think one time of an individual from South America who was up, seems to me, maybe I'm wrong about this, but they had written to us, seemed like they had come to the United States, maybe in the New York area if my memory serves me right, and I can't remember exactly what country it was, Peru, perhaps, somewhere in South America. They wrote in talking about how that, in essence, they weren't going to be able to come along, and certain things they weren't going to be able to continue to do, as far as living the Sabbath and the holy days in their life, but they so hoped this was all true about a new world and about Jesus Christ going to reign on the earth and about the kind of lives that people would be able to finally be able to experience, because he shared with us some of his and you think of some of the places in the world. Some of those cities and how people live and children who grow up on the streets or, you know, in neighborhoods and they have nothing. They'll go out to big dumps and try to get whatever they can maybe to get some money out of it, plastic or whatever.

I saw this thing on TV here recently about (I wish I could remember the location now), seemed like it was somewhere in Asia - Jeremy had sent to us. But anyway, it was really sad. I mean, it's so sick how so many people live in this world, the rivers, and how polluted it was and all the garbage. You could see it in the river, the red and the violet colors of the chemicals coming out of these plants and kids are out there swimming in it because they have nothing else and in some of the places they're drinking from some of that and different ones were getting cancer and breaking out with all kinds of things. And you think, "What a sick world!" What a sick world. They went and talked to government officials to get this cleaned up and nothing happens. This world is so far gone only God can clean it up. And the way He's going to do it? Well, anyway.

The process of **how** we change and grow in faith, character, conviction, truth, greater love and caring for others, along with the understanding and wisdom we develop over time **is not** ordinary by any means, but involves the extraordinary experience of the very life of the One Eternal Self-Existing God and His Son dwelling in us. [That is awesome, truly, to grasp that!] Sometimes that can begin to be taken for granted and seen as ordinary, and that is a very dangerous mindset [to ever be of that kind of mindset, that kind of thinking, to begin to take something for granted]. Taking such a thing for granted can happen if a person begins to forget the awesomeness of their calling and how God has taught them His truth.

Because that's what God has done. Do we ever forget that, how we began to learn, how we began to see, how we began to grasp and understand, to understand how that can even happen in the human mind?

I've related all this to you because we do not yet grasp the magnitude of what God's Church experienced over that 4½ years.

And we are still learning it. We're still learning about it. We do not yet grasp that. Not even now.

But God is revealing just that to us. That time was difficult and a great struggle at times, especially in that last year. That 4½ years was not **designed** by God to be easy...

Isn't that amazing to understand that indeed it was designed by God, that period of time and what different ones would go through and why they would go through it because God had a purpose in it? Awesome!

That 4½ years was not **designed** by God to be easy especially over that short time, with the level of difficulty increasing the farther we moved into that period of time. Through a highly sped-up process crammed into a shortened period of time, God's Church has experienced a level of learning, testing, trying, molding, and change that has often taken a lifetime for others in the past to have experienced.

How deeply do you grasp that? Think about it. Pray about it. Ask God for help to grasp that, to understand that for most periods of time in God's Church and for how people were worked with, even from the time of the apostles, starting out in the very beginning, the apostles from the very beginning on and through all those Church eras, to come up to a time like this has been incredible and for great purpose of what God is doing and the fact that He crammed so much into such a short period of time - awesome - because of what it can develop inside of us that could happen in no other way. That's inspiring to me, because I see it. I see how it's affected people in their lives, the convictions, the strength that different ones have because of some of those things they've experienced, and that's very moving.

That which we experienced in God's Church once we are called will either **make** us or **break** us [on a spiritual plane, in this age] and that by our own choices...

You see, that's what this is all about. It's about choices and when God speeds up a process and there is more trying involved during that period of time, there is more testing during that period of time, we're forced into situations where we have to make choices on a regular basis, on a constant basis that we will either be molded by or we will lose it. We will go by the wayside. We will do something else. But we have to do something. We are forced into a moment in time that we have to make a choice based on what is inside here and sometimes you don't know what that is. You can't know until you get there. You can't know because that's what the test is about. That's what the trial is about. It's to bring out what is inside here, that you have to make a choice.

I think of the period of Laodicea that came up to the Apostasy. It's so ingrained in my mind, those two ministers, those two elders, that I invited into a meeting to tell them I was resigning and that there were going to be big problems in that congregation there in Toledo and in Findlay, and just because of that act alone that individuals were going to be looking to them to see what they were going to do. I explained to them, "I, as a pastor of this area for right now, I expect you to do a certain thing and that's to continue on with the things you learned in God's Church, in essence, through Mr. Armstrong. But I also know that there's a man out there, Mr. Tkach, who is going to expect you to support and back the changes that he has made. You're at a point in time where you have to make a decision. Are you going to stand firm and be an example to God's Church?"

And they got upset at me, that I was pressuring them, that I was pushing them. The reality was, "Time has come upon you. You don't have time. What's in you? Where do you stand? Are you a minister in God's Church? Are you an ordained elder in God's Church? Do you stand up for God's people? Do you stand up for God's way of life? Or what are you going to do?" Well, you know what they did. Amazing! Because they were forced into a situation it brought something out of them almost immediately, because the very next day it was going out the pressure that I'd put them under, and that basically I wasn't very nice to them. It wasn't a time to be nice. It was a time to stand up for God and God's way of life, "And if you're going to hurt God's people by following that swill and garbage that we just had belched out upon us from the man of sin (we didn't know it at that time), and the son of perdition, if you're going to do that what are you? You're definitely not

in God's Church! You definitely aren't of a right mind and a sound mind. I have no respect for you." That's what's in my mind toward them. "I have no respect for you whatsoever. Be gone! You're not a part." They couldn't stand.

They had an opportunity to stand up for God's people. They had an opportunity by a choice to make if they had indeed believed everything they'd been given in times past when they came into the Church from their initial calling, to hold on to the basic foundations - the Sabbath, the holy days, every truth that they'd been given. If their heart and desire was, yes, I believe this and no one's going to come along now and tell me I can go out and eat crawdad's, you know, or shrimp, or lobster, you know, let alone to start keeping Sunday as my Sabbath, or keep Easter and Christmas! What kind of garbage is that? But that's where they headed. Sad. A moment in time, a test, a trial, and you have no control over that moment when it hits you. People are tried and what we went through time and time again for 4½ years, and even before that, candidly, that's when it started. It started in the summer of 2008, candidly, for many. I marvel. A moment in time to make a choice, what do you really believe? What is deep down inside of you? You know what? God wants to know that. God wants to know what's inside of you because that's the only way He can mold and fashion things within us if we're yielding to Him, if we're of a humble spirit and we want to change and we want whatever He has for us. Then and only then can He work with us, those who are of a - as it says in Isaiah - of a contrite and humble spirit. God says that's what He'll work with because He can't work with a mind filled with pride or a mind that is wishy-washy and doesn't even know what it believes.

I mean, if you don't know you believe the Sabbath and the holy days, if you don't know and you don't have a deep conviction that you believe with all your being that Jesus Christ hasn't eternally existed and that only makes, magnifies God's plan to work through an individual who was born of a human being, you know, and that's where His life began, if we don't have deep conviction of those things then what do we have? You know, what do we base our life on? So we have to be tried in those things because God's going to know. God's going to know everything in your mind, what's hidden in there and though you haven't acted upon it He will put you in situations where you have to act one way or the other as to what truly you believe, of what's truly inside of you. Those are personal choices. Amazing how He works with us as human beings.

So what he did over a short period of time in molding and fashioning people and the methods He used and the way He did it is awesome, inspiring, exciting, not easy. To change, to be transformed was never meant to be easy and for most of the past 2,000 years and beyond, of those whom God has called, it's taken a lifetime, decades to mold and fashion certain things within them to be in His Family. He has highly speeded up the process whereby He could do that toward the end of an age and one day we're going to be able to look back and realize there's a lot more to learn from this than what we even know now because God has a plan and there's a way He works things out. Going on, let's read it again:

That which we experienced in God's Church once we are called will either **make** us or **break** us, and that is by our own choices that we must make in response to God's offer to make something, [in essence to] (create) something truly great within us.

There have been all kinds of intense trials and testing we have experienced throughout this period of time, but this is beautifully unique to God's Church at this very end-time.

There has NEVER been a time like this one for God's people. We are clearly told that all of God's people have had to go through great tribulation to enter into God's Kingdom. Yet that 4½ year period was designed to be a unique witness to God's great power to create Elohim.

That's why I say we don't yet know fully what all that means. I believe I know where God is taking us in some of this and what He's doing because of the sealing now that we understand of certain things that God has been able to do and does do and one day that'll become exceedingly exciting, more exciting than what it is right now, but that has to come through a matter of time of manifestation, in God's time. So again:

Yet that 4½ year period was designed to be a unique witness to God's great power to create Elohim. God has been doing this (creating Elohim) for 6,000 years with the 144,000, but this period is a "unique witness" of a progressive process through time, until now, of His creating power in His quest for Zion — in His **work** concerning the controversy of Zion.

And God has revealed so much more about that, what that all means when those things are given in scripture.

So, what were some of your experiences that raised some doubt, question, or angst over that 4½ years concerning **how** God had lead you, through His Church, and what were you taught — or what did you learn as a result? These are the very things that have either made individuals far more spiritually mature or have led to their own spiritual destruction — all as a matter of personal, individual choices.

And we've seen a lot of destruction by choices that people make.

God's Work

When we are first called, we simply do not grasp the magnitude and importance of a most unique calling God has given us.

I think it's good just to read through some of that, to be reminded of what God has to say in 1st Corinthians 1, which is not in your notes there because it's not in the article. So let's turn over there, 1st Corinthians 1. We used to sing this song in part of this that's quoted here.

1 Corinthians 1:23...but we preach Christ nailed to a pole, which is unto the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness. They didn't get it. They couldn't grasp and comprehend those things unless God was calling them and giving them understanding. It was a stumbling block

to the Jews because you'd think of all people they should have understood things about Passover and that which had to do with what it means and pertains to, the Lamb of God, and how sin can be forgiven, but they didn't get it, and it just reveals even more so that God has to give great understanding. He has to give His holy spirit with understanding in the human mind. He has to communicate certain things to people before they can grasp it. And of all people, the Jews, a stumbling block. Incredible.

But unto those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. We can't even begin to make such a comparison. I mean, to think along such lines? It shouldn't have to be spoken, but it has to be spoken because of what we are like as human beings.

For you see your calling... Either we do or we don't, and if we're in God's Church we see it. We know how God opened our minds. We remember the time when God began to work with us. We know the time when we began to see certain things that we couldn't see before, things that we began to be convicted of in the mind that you can't explain to anyone, you can't give it to anyone, you can't talk anyone else into seeing what you see. You can show them scriptures. People used to try to do that: "You should be able to understand about keeping of the Sabbath and the holy days, and it's so clear. Just read this, what God has to say." You read it and they can't get it. They can't! It's spiritual. God has to give His holy spirit to see it.

For you see your calling, brethren, and we're never to forget that. We're to hold on to that with all of our being, to grasp and understand how God began to draw us. **...how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, in essence, are called.** That's what it's about. God's not calling the real wealthy of the world. He's not calling the educated, those who teach in universities, and so forth, into the Church. Do you know primarily why, first and foremost? There's too much pride there. Individuals have to be humbled mightily before God can work with them. Truly! We have to go through some difficult things sometimes to be brought low in order to listen to God.

That's exactly why this world has to go through what it does before Jesus Christ returns. It has to go through a period of time where people's listening can be sharpened a little bit because right now they won't listen to a thing. They think you're nuts for what you believe, truly, on an intellectual, supposedly, basis, level. It's like "How could anyone believe such things? Are you like zombies or something? I mean, don't you have a brain?" I mean that's how people talk down because they just don't get it. They don't understand. They don't see what you see.

So God doesn't call those people. I haven't known people like this in the Church, presidents of corporations, unless God has a purpose for it. Candidly, I can think of two people in the Church of God that through time with whom God worked with who were highly educated. Paul was one. But look what had to happen to him before he'd start listening. He was a highly educated individual as

far as the world of Judaism was concerned, the highest, the greatest of teaching and instruction that was given to him. His schooling, his background, his lineage, everything that was mapped out for him, that was waiting for him. His ability and what he would have ability to do within the Jewish world at that time was exceedingly high. But God humbled him. He was used to go to the gentiles. Awesome!

I think of Mr. Armstrong. God worked with him, I believe with all my being, well before he was called, but to have certain kinds of success in the world, to learn certain things with success in the world, but even that wasn't of a magnitude that was that which we would oftentimes refer to in the world when we see people of, in corporations and the like, CEO's and the like, whatever it might be, far more wealthy, in that respect, in the world. They weren't called. So Paul has to be number one as far as one who was highly educated and trained first and foremost.

For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. Just candidly, no one is. Paul's the only one I could name through time that we know of who was trained in an extraordinary way, but look what had to happen to him for him to become who he was.

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world... Look at us! I graduated with 8 in my class. Whooooo! You know, "Whooooo! 8 people, huh? Kinda came from the sticks, didn't ya?" You bet. You bet! Awesome! Incredible what God can do. He calls us from different backgrounds. We're not looked up to in the world. As a whole, by so many in the world, we would be looked down upon. That's just the way it is when God has called us. So, "God has called the foolish things of the world," in other words, how the world sees it, but God doesn't see the same thing. When God draws someone and begins to call someone He sees a mind that He's going to work with, a mind that He can change and transform to become something exceedingly great in time, to be in His Family in time. God can fill in what we lack, truly. It's not about how much education. It's not about how much knowledge, how smart someone is, how great of experience they've had in the world of living the way of politics or corporate greed and on and on it goes. It's not about that, obviously.

So God works with us in a very unique way and He sees something unique within us and He gives us unique opportunity, but sometimes it's hard for us because our calling is not ordinary, see. It's extraordinary. It's hard for us to grasp that sometimes. It's because of God and what God is doing by the power of His holy spirit in our lives.

So it says very clearly here, "for the foolish things of the world He's done to confound the wise." Can you imagine in time, in times of resurrection and people, "Who are you?" You know, you think of different ones that God worked with at different times, "You were a sheep herder? What? Who?" They went before kings and whomever. For the kings of Judah, or the kings of Israel, different ones that God sent to say different things. "What's your background? What's your education?" Incredible! "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise,"

because they can't understand it. They can't grasp how God can change us from one thing to something else, especially for what we're to become.

...and God has chosen the weak things of the world, the way the world looks at us, or would look upon us. We're not the strong, not the highly influential, not by any measure. **But God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.** Why? Because God's showing, "Not by might nor by power, but by My spirit," God will create us, that which is being created within us. It's by God's great power. That's why the Church doesn't have to be big. That's why we can be very, very small, and yet have great impact in the world in time as far as God's concerned because of what He's going to do because that's the way God works. Because He doesn't want anyone, any group of people to take it to themselves, "Look what we did." "Look what I did." We can't do diddly-squat as far as God's way, as far as God's truth, as far as anything to do with God's work save that God lead it, guide it, direct it, inspire it and motivate it, give it what it needs to accomplish what He's going to do. So He does it!

I think of Mr. Armstrong talking about that. We have to do it like we're doing it ourselves, throwing ourselves into it, but always understanding everything that is accomplished that has meaning and purpose and fruit God's doing. Truly. So who are we? Don't ever let yourself be lifted up with pride in thinking you're important. Don't ever be lifted up in thinking, "I'm important. I have great understanding," or to look down upon anyone. We have no right. Who are we to do such things? But yet it's happened in God's Church and it's still happening to a much smaller scale, but it still happens, but all that's getting refined and gotten rid of.

...and base things of the world and the things which are despised, in other words, treated with contempt or looked down upon as far as the world is concerned, **has God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are.** I think of this end-time and what God is doing as a work, which He's been doing for so long, "bringing to nothing." He's going to lay this world bare, in that respect, as far as everything that human beings rely upon.

That's why I think of things like the stock market. When I see that I just cringe kind of inside. It just keeps going up and up and up, and some of the different things that are going on out there and the jubilation that some have in this, mainly in one party. The others aren't so happy that it's looking that good, but even they're profiting from it so on the sidelines they're kind of happy, but they could never admit it out publically. So on and on it goes, things that are happening in the world and you think, it's going to come crashing down around when in God's time. Just like what didn't happen in 2008, it's going to happen. It's coming, sooner or later and far more than that... far more than that.

Look at Asia. You think somebody's not trying to push? You think some pushing's going on here? You push certain people in a corner and what do they do? You call out people; you make fun of them: "Little Rocket Man." What do you think that does to somebody like that? And the Russians say, "Why don't you just say, why don't you just acknowledge it? You're trying to get him to do

something so you can do something back. That's what you're trying to do, aren't you?" See? Sometimes you can push a little bit too hard and not know what you're really bringing upon yourself, especially when two other great nations get involved.

Because, you see, that's what happens, Russia, China, the power that's there. Then sooner or later what happens with 10 nations that feel like they must come together and give their power and use all the arsenal they have at their fingertips under the auspices of what it is called, you know, something different right now as far as their alliance is concerned, but the nukes are there. This world, brethren, this world can change and will change quickly when it begins to happen.

So again, **...to bring to nothing the things that are.** See, a word goes out, "If you will listen, God will listen." So what are you going to do now these things begin to happen? **...that no flesh should glory in His presence.** To be lifted up with pride? Because I've seen so much of this in God's Church it just makes me sick. I think of what happened in times in Worldwide, individuals lifted up with pride. You can't hide it. It's there. Individuals that want to get up. Something as simple as giving an opening or closing prayer and they'll go on and on and on and preach and preach and preach because this is their moment in time because they're lifted up with such pride. You think, "Don't you get it? It's for the people. What you have to say is for them. What you have to say is for everyone to be able to say 'Amen' to God Almighty." Short and sweet and to the point, that's what it is.

Then some wanted to give sermonettes. Oh, no, not sermonettes, they wanted to give sermons. So you have a fifteen minute timeframe, as a whole, as a maximum you should have, and so individuals wanted to push that to twenty minutes, a half an hour, and they didn't realize, because they had so much to give, so much to give to the Church because what they see and what they understand is so important. You poor, poor human being, don't you know what you're doing? I've seen these things over and over. It's been around for a long, long time. People who begin to think they're so important. People in the ministry who think they're so important that they have to have a stage set up with china while others don't have the same kind of stuff, and you're able to look down upon them as they eat their meals out in the congregation. Sick! Sick! Lifted up with pride, of how you see yourself. Does God need that? Does God want that?

So we learn from those things we experience in life and we learn what is right and what to reject. So no flesh should glory in His presence, no flesh. People should really be afraid to do such a thing, scared, afraid. Fear to do certain things that aren't right, that should give us right motivation in life, see. That's why certain things that came along in time. Fear to go against God.

Verse 30—Yet from out of Him, out of God, you are in Christ Jesus, who of God is making unto/ within us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Those whom God has called and what He's molding in us—Awesome!—what He's offering us that the world hasn't been given yet because it's not His purpose yet. **...that, according as it is written, he who glories, let him glory in the Lord.** Powerful words! Would to God this could have been within all

of us ever since I've been in the Church since 1969, but it wasn't. It wasn't. It went by the wayside.

Some of this is better understood in Jeremiah 9. I love this, how it's stated, and what it really means, especially if you understand the Hebrew word that's better explained in this respect because this comes from some of this.

Jeremiah 9:23. Everything we have is because of God Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ. Everything we see, everything we grasp is because of God Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ. Where does the glory go? The changes we have in our lives, where did that come from? From God, from Jesus Christ. We didn't do any of it. We have to make choices along the way. And basically, that's all we have to do, make choices: to choose God, to choose to put God first all along the way. Then He can work with us with a humble spirit.

Verse 23—This is what the Eternal says, Let not the wise *man*/wise person glory. This is a unique word in Hebrew. It means "to be lifted up in praise." Don't lift yourself up in praise, you know, to receive praise, like the man of sin who wanted congregations to cheer: "You can do better than that! You can make this louder! You can sustain this longer, this applause! You can do better than that!" "Look at me!" Makes you sick. Mr. Armstrong, he was the exact opposite, getting upset and saying, "You should not do that! Stop! Sit down! I don't need that. I shouldn't have that." So two different mindsets - night and day. Night and day. Incredible!

Anyway, **Let not the wise glory**, in other words, **be lifted up in praise of his own wisdom**, because that's just human nature. People. People think their way is right. Who doesn't think their way is right? That's what God says. Who doesn't think that their way is better than, well, pretty much everybody? That's why we have so much unity in the world, in politics, and everything else in the world today, it's because people agree that their way is right (being sarcastic there). Anyway, incredible!

...neither let the mighty be lifted up in praise in his own might, and let not the rich be lifted up in praise in his own riches. "Oh, look what I have done! Look! See. Look what I have. Look what I have built up. You should be impressed. Don't you know who I am? How do you treat me? And if you don't treat me that way..." I'm not going to say it. Anyway. **...but let him who lifts up in praise be lifted up in praise in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I *am* the Eternal who exercises loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth. For in all these *things* I delight, says the Eternal.** Awesome! Beautiful! It's in God. Everything we have. Even just in the physical, everything we have God has made available to us to share in life and then when we're called that sharing is multiplied so many times over because of now what we see and know and what we have hope and what we look forward to. Incredible!

Anyway, again, going back to that first sentence under the subheading of **God's Work:**

When we are first called, we simply do not grasp the magnitude and importance of a most unique calling God has given us. As we develop spiritually, we begin to **see** the importance and greatness of being called by the Eternal God Himself. We can then begin to increasingly grow in gratitude and thankfulness the more we see how awesomely blessed we actually are. It is in this manner that we will come to grasp far more deeply what we experienced over that 4½ years of God's extraordinary work that He did **in** His Church during that time. Within this article only a glimpse into that great process will begin to be made, and as we continue to mature we will far more fully come to grasp just how great and awesomely unique that experience was.

This will multiply your gratitude and thankfulness, your insight, your spiritual insight into God, things about God.

This will happen precisely in the same manner as to how we are able to grow to more deeply grasp the magnitude and opportunity of our original calling.

So, how can we come to more deeply grasp that experience and its importance in God's plan just before His Son is set up as King of kings? God tells us! He is sharing with us what He has done, and we will increase in our ability to see how exciting an experience we have lived in a very meaningful phase of God's great controversy for Zion.

Do you grasp it? Do you know what that means, "God's great controversy for Zion?" It's about Elohim. It's about the Kingdom of God. It's about spiritual Jerusalem, spiritual Israel. It's about His Family and that which has gone on for 6,000 years as human beings have rejected Him over and over and over again through time, rejected what He has to say. Talk about a controversy? Are we controversial? Is what we believe controversial in the scattered Church? Absolutely! They don't even like to talk about it. You're so nuts that they're just kind of, "Who are you?" They have to get rid of that. I mean, they don't want to answer any of that stuff about Yahweh. Yahweh, who was He? "Oh, He was Jesus Christ." Oh, then what does this verse mean that totally contradicts what you just said? They can't answer that. They don't want to.

It's like the Protestant world that doesn't want to have to address certain things like when Jesus Christ said, "Don't call any man Father." "Don't call any man Papa," Pope. Don't call anybody that on a spiritual plane. Don't call anyone those things. On and on it goes. They don't want to address it. Why? Human nature. I tell you, the more you see it the more it's just sick.

Eight Months Previous

Before we begin to focus on that experience of so many in God's Church over that 4½ years and those things that God wants us to see more clearly concerning His work in the Church...

Let's stop there. Think about what I just said, what was just said. Do we believe it? "Before we begin to focus on that experience of so many in God's Church over that 4½ years and those things that God wants us to see more clearly concerning His work in the Church..." Powerful, because

that's what was taking place. That's why we're going through this now because there are things that God wants us to see more clearly. He wants us to understand this more deeply. Because, do you know why? It glorifies the power, the might, the awesomeness of God Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ, and what they're doing in our lives.

...to see more clearly concerning His work in the Church we are going to back up a little farther to the beginning of February of 2008.

Boy, have we been through it. But, you know, by going through that you learn. There are things that God wants to teach, and so we experience certain things that try us, that test us to see where we are, to see where everyone is at any moment in time, and to test individuals as to where they truly are because everybody has to give an answer then, whether they want to or not, what they're going to do, because their actions are going to explain, they're going to express what's inside. And God sees it. He won't let it just remain dormant. He won't let the Church be Laodicean, lukewarm. What did He do? He spewed it out. So He won't let it be that way. He will bring things upon it to reveal, truly, what we will choose to do because we have to make choices. We have to learn. Are we responsible for the choices we make? Do we grasp that? Do we understand the magnitude and the importance of that? God will bring those things out because it's going to be made manifest. That's God's righteous way of doing things. It's going to be manifest, of what's inside of us.

Going on: "So we are going back a little farther to the beginning of February of 2008." Do you remember that period of time, what it was about?

It was at this time that the stage began to be set for where God was leading us. At that time, there were important things God was revealing that we needed to learn, and He did not reveal everything all at once.

For purpose and design, just as He didn't reveal everything to Mr. Armstrong. But even more so this becomes even more important toward the end of this age, because God has been revealing so many things so rapidly since the Apostasy that it's very difficult to receive it all. See, I lived through a period of time, and some of you did, through Worldwide, through a period of time, for me from 1969 on up to Mr. Armstrong's death and then beyond, through a unique period of time of those things that we felt and believed we understood, that we felt and believed we grasped and comprehended. We had 18 Truths that were added, 18 Truths that were added to 3 that existed in the Church when Mr. Armstrong came along.

The Church felt pretty confident that it understood those things and it did not. It didn't understand the first one that came through Mr. Armstrong, the first one that's listed as a matter that I believed God inspired as an order as well because it could have been listed in different ways when it was given. Number one, do you know what it is? Government. God's going to know

where we are and what we grasp about that, and whether He truly is first in our lives through the entire process of how that happens in life.

That's going to come out even more as we go through this sermon, when we get to the thing about what God is doing with women and being made ministers and so forth because there is an order in which God works, and sometimes human beings can resist that, just as much as the Church resisted the gospel, the truth going to the gentiles. Gentiles? Peter, of all people, had a problem with that. It's written for us to grasp and understand. He was corrected by Paul, you know, because he had a problem, because it was so ingrained in his Jewish mind things about the gentiles and that God's way is not for them, to be given to them. Now, if they become a part of Judah, Judaism, through a process they have to go through, that's fine, but without that, not going to happen. So it's hard to make changes when something is so ingrained in you for so long in your being and here was a powerful one that happened to them.

But anyway, government. I have seen over and over again people talk about and think they understand it and they don't grasp it at all. They really don't grasp it at all. Minister after minister after minister I have known who did not grasp God's government and how it works. Do you know what? If they had grasped it and known it they would never have left what God revealed through Mr. Armstrong. They would never have left it if they had deeply grasped God's government. But they didn't. Awesome! So they just referred to him as, "Well, he was a great teacher and he taught me some great things." That one makes my blood boil when I hear that, when I think about it, because I think, "You fool! You don't know diddly-squat save for what He gave, God gave through him to you. That's how you received everything you know that is true and right! You didn't receive it in any other way! A 'great teacher' that you learned some good things from?! Give me a break! You learned everything that you know that is possibly true and right through Mr. Armstrong, God's apostle." Give me a break! Government? Didn't grasp it.

So God continues to teach us about those things because that's one that has to be so deeply ingrained into us that we're yielded to, submissive to, desirous of God's government to work in our life because that's how His spirit works. There's a way God's spirit works in life, and sometimes people don't grasp that. Anyway, this will come up over and over again as we go through some of this, in different ways, obviously.

It was at this time that the stage began to be set for where God was leading us. At that time, there were important things God was revealing that we needed to learn, and He did not reveal everything all at once. Why? God could have, but there is an important purpose to **why** He didn't. Such is designed to try and test our obedience and faithfulness to God in **the way** He leads us.

That's why it's there. Over and over again that's the way it's been through time. Is God first? Are we going to obey? Are we going to follow Him? Are you going to support the gospel going to the

gentiles? Are you going to be behind that and see indeed this is of God, and therefore, do it?
Going on:

As we approached February of 2008, the book *2008 — God's Final Witness* was just beginning to really grow in distribution. At this point in time, we believed Jesus Christ was going to return in the fall of 2011 at the time of the Feast of Trumpets, however, in some sermons before and after this...

That's why people get such a charge, those who hate what God has given through the Church. They hate the various things, like Jesus Christ not having eternally existed. They hate that. They truly do, the people who are scattered. So God gives these things to us at different times and what are we going to do with it when we receive it? So like it says here, "As we approached February of 2008, the book *2008 — God's Final Witness* was just beginning to grow in distribution. At that time, we believed Jesus Christ was going to return in the fall of 2011." So we've changed. As soon as God revealed to us something different we changed - without hesitation. But people will look at those changes and say, "See? Prophet? Give me a break! You're a false prophet. No, you're a profit; p-r-o-f-i-t. Ha, ha, ha, ha. That's what it's all about. Yeah." Anyway, anything to mock and make fun of and so forth. Sad.

At this point in time, we believed Jesus Christ was going to return in the fall of 2011 at the time of the Feast of Trumpets, however, in some sermons before and after this I stated that there was still a period....

I marvel at this, how God gives certain things at times, because He hasn't taken us to that point yet to reveal certain things and so He gives a little bit here and a little bit there to try us, to test us, to see what we're going to do with it. Again:

...that there was still a period of six to nine months that were not fully clear as of yet, concerning all this timing — there was still something missing. Although I was given to **know** this, I did not yet understand what it meant.

Starting on Pentecost of 2008, God began revealing more. The timing of everything was about to change as God began to reveal the importance of the timing of the wave loaves being of the same kind of importance as the timing of the Wave Sheaf that Jesus Christ fulfilled perfectly according to God's time.

That's where it happened, in that particular Feast, that day of Pentecost. In the sermon leading up to that and the giving of that, that's where God began to reveal more about the importance of these two being connected together and what it meant, the wave loaves with the Wave Sheaf, speaking of Jesus Christ and what that meant.

It was conveyed to me that the importance of this knowledge and the change it would have upon our understanding of timing should be covered in the sermon that would be given on

Trumpets of that year. This was exciting as it now **fit** into “timing sequences” that did fit into specific important times, whereas before it didn’t. This will be covered more when we begin to focus on the 1335 days of Daniel.

Again, I marvel at the process and how God began to reveal some of these things, and making it very clear, too, to me that this was supposed to be given on Trumpets of that year. Also revealing later on that because of some of the things of that which was coming and what was being stated, that things began to happen in the Church. And candidly, if it hadn't happened in the way that God did it I don't think there would have been a lot left because it was too great a trial, too great a test at that time upon God's Church. Amazing! Going on:

Therefore, well before we even entered the 3½ years of **witness** (Dec. 14, 2008 to May 27, 2012)...

There was a specific witness then. God has given a witness of things through time. There's not just one witness that's given. There is a specific witness concerning two witnesses - I should say a duality of that. I don't fully know what the second one is because it hasn't been made manifest because everything's different than what we were given to see and know that would have happened and what would have taken place before. So that part will become clear in time. But there was a witness, and a powerful one given, because of that book *2008 - God's Final Witness*. It was very much about the world and their response to it. They didn't care! It's always been that way. You know, all the *Plain Truths*, millions and millions that went out every month, nine million, and throughout all the world and all the languages that were there and all the truth that went out to the world - no one, and all the leaders that Mr. Armstrong visited with and talked to - nobody. Nobody was changed because of those things that were written there. That's a powerful witness. Only those whom God called because that's the way it's always been. God has to draw people by His holy spirit, but He's showing us what human beings are like in every age.

We don't want God in our life. We don't want it. We don't want Him. We don't want someone telling us what day to worship on. We don't want someone telling us what holy days we can or cannot observe. We don't want someone telling us that there are certain things out here that are wrong in your world and wrong in your beliefs. People don't want that. They want to continue on as things are and what they were taught when they were children. There's this big, fat guy that goes down through the chimney every year, and if you're nice you're going to get some nice presents under the tree, man...or kid, child, whatever. I'm sorry. Sick world. It won't give those things up. It's not going to have God saying anything about it. "Who is He? Who do you think you are? God? It's not our God. That's not the way we believe God is." Crazy!

Therefore, well before we ever entered the 3½ years of **witness** (Dec. 14, 2008 to May 27, 2012) to be fulfilled by two of God's prophets, this change in dates was causing a stir, questioning, and great doubt in the minds of too many in God's Church, so God gave us mercy and revealed important lessons that needed to be learned at that time, before entering

the age of the “final witness.” In His mercy, God conveyed to me the importance for the sermon that was designed for Trumpets to then be given late in June instead. That sermon was given early; along with correction God gave concerning such attitudes of doubt and resistance of **how** He was leading His Church.

That puts you to the test! You know, when something comes along and you don't know fully what it is because you don't know what is coming, but you know that things are going to change and you know that the time is going to change and something's coming that it's not going to be Trumpets anymore in 2011 when he returns, so what's happening? How could that change, because, I mean, wasn't that given through a prophet, and wasn't that the way it's supposed to be? If that changes then who are we and what are we? Just wait a little while. Let God explain to you what's taking place. Do you believe the truths you've been given? Do you believe that there's someplace else you can go? Do you believe in the simple truth that God gave that Jesus Christ doesn't eternally exist? How important is that to you? Do you know where that came from? Do you know the only way you could grasp and comprehend that? Are you convicted of that or not? Do you understand who the man of sin was? Do you understand about the stones of the temple? Do you understand that the Church was spewed out of God's mouth and an Apostasy did occur? On and on it goes!

Where are you going to go? Where is God? Where is the truth being taught? Are you not convicted of it yet? That's what God would say to us - did say to us. Are you not convicted of it yet? What are you convicted of? What do you believe? Do you see, these things bring it out. These things bring out what we believe. It brings out our conviction and how deep those convictions are.

I believe 57 Truths, every one of them with every fiber of my being, and if anyone doesn't, they've got a battle on their hands because at some point in time they're going to be tried. You can't fake it. You can't make it up. It's either there or it isn't because it has to come from God.

If that sermon had not been given early, God revealed that there would be many who would not have spiritually survived to Trumpets.

That's amazing! A trial, a test so great that it had to be given early because we couldn't wait a few months from Pentecost to Trumpets for it to be given and because of the doubt and the questioning of certain things and the disruption that was taking place in some people's lives, it was becoming very, very, very, very clear to me, primarily through some in the ministry, and then something else begins to happen and God reveals how this is going to affect others because if something is happening within the ministry it's happening greater within the body. Always! It has always, always, always been that way in God's Church. Always. It's going to have a rippling effect into other people's lives unless it's nipped in the bud quickly, powerfully, mightily. And that's what God did.

But God was preparing the Church for an important period of time that it was about to enter.

So in that sermon, “The 50th Truth” . . .

Isn't that amazing when it came along, the 50th Truth. It had to be given early. It couldn't wait until Trumpets because there'd be too many in the Church who still wouldn't be around and that wasn't God's purpose, to let it be decimated in that fashion or form because He had a desire to work with different ones, but also to correct different ones as well because of how they responded to this.

So in that sermon, “The 50th Truth,” God revealed that Christ was not going to return on a Feast of Trumpets, but on a Pentecost. This timing was critical to God's plan concerning the fulfillment of the wave loaves being offered up before God that pictured His acceptance of the 144,000. [Trumpets doesn't; Pentecost does.] This was of the same importance as the acceptance of the wave sheaf during the Days of Unleavened Bread that Jesus Christ fulfilled. We then changed the dates of our previous understanding of timing as soon as God revealed the truth of this matter of Christ returning on a Pentecost. As a result of this understanding, the beginning of the 3½ years of witness was pushed back by nearly 8 months to the end, rather than at the beginning, of 2008.

I marvel at all this, how it all came out, and the process we lived through and step by step God takes us where He's going to take us. I think of a very strong physical analogy of what God did when He took the children of Israel out of Egypt. It didn't take them the way in the highways or the ways that normally people would have travelled. He took them in a way that was never travelled, couldn't be travelled. He took them through the way of the Red Sea, and God did different things during that period of time and then changed from a short period of time of perhaps only one year to forty years. Forty years! All the ways that God led them in the wilderness, awesome! Awesome, the things that can be learned from that on a physical plane that are spiritual, and if we understand, that have to do with how we function in our lives.

As of February 2, 2008, we were at a point where we believed that the beginning of Daniel's 1335-day prophecy had just begun. As we continue on, some may get a little lost in all the dates that will be mentioned, but the dates are not so important compared to the “big picture” contained in this complete story and what we can and are to learn from it.

See, some people don't like numbers and dates. That's fine; you don't have to. You don't have to at all. To see where one starts and one ends, that's all you really have to have. If you're like me, I like math. I like, especially the way when you see in dates and how things work out. To me they're very inspiring and very moving, and especially in what's written now in the last book here. But anyway, let's go on:

Two Means by Which God Has Led His Church

As I continue to explain some of this recent history...

See, all this has such meaning in our lives. We lived through this and it was by design and purpose, and it's a part of how God has molded and fashioned us. That's why we're spending the time going through this word by word until we're finished because it is of that magnitude of importance that we need to see and grasp and learn more from what God has given to us. It's inspiring, moving.

As I continue to explain some of this recent history there is something of real importance I need to share with you because it is only in recent time that I have come to more deeply understand this process.

That was back in 2013 when I was on sabbatical. I'm amazed at what God gave during that period of time in that environment. It wasn't the best environment because there were reference books, things like that. A matter of fact there was one thing written at one point in time because the books were so old about certain things in the constellation that one of them was in error because they'd discovered other things since that time. That's how old some of the things were in the library so I didn't have much there. There definitely wasn't anything that I could look at like a Strong's Concordance and different things like that, and the meaning of words. God just had to give what He gave, which He did very powerfully so. Going on:

This involves two issues of **how** God has been working through me. The more you **see** how God has been working to reveal prophecy and how God has been teaching His Church, the more you will come to appreciate the way in which God has led us.

Now, this is important because God is revealing through this process there is a different way He has worked with His people through time. I think of the time after the era of Ephesus all the way up to the time that God called Mr. Armstrong in the beginning of Philadelphia. All that period of time, there were no apostles. They had evangelists, different ones that God worked with to go into and raise up different churches and so forth. Yet I think, awesome, God worked with them in a very specific way because He had a very specific purpose. God worked in the beginning in a certain way and He's working at the end in a certain way because of His purpose and why He's working things out in the way that He is. It's inspiring when we "see" those things. Anyway, going on:

As we were moving through the 3½ years of witness, things were not happening on a level of what we had anticipated for this period.

Do you know what we anticipated because of a Worldwide background because of our training and teaching? We truly believed, and it was so much a part of our being, as much as it was for Peter and the gospel, the truth going to the gentiles, this was embedded in us that we believed that there would be 3½ years of great tribulation starting with the First Seal. We had no idea that was about the Church until later on. God had to reveal that to us and that there would be certain destruction and that destruction would last for 3½ years.

So beginning in December there of 2008 there was no great destruction taking place. It was very evident that there were certain thing definitely not happening here in the United States. So what does this mean? So we lived through that period of time. A lot of that, candidly, was to prepare us for where we are now because we don't have the same expectations. We realize that it doesn't take too much too long with the kind of weapons that mankind has, over a very, very, very short length of time to bring this earth to its knees. Thankfully, it doesn't have to last for 3½ years. Who could survive? Who could survive the kind of nuclear winter that would surround this earth for that length of time? Who could survive? It's awesome to understand some of those things.

So God teaches us through what we experience and our thinking begins to be adjusted. We'd already adjusted things about the Seals. We'd already understood some of that.

As we were moving through the 3½ years of witness, things were not happening on the level of what we had anticipated for this period. There came a point during this time, due to this anticipation not materializing and our not yet having seen the events of the Second Trumpet come to pass [nor let alone the physical parts of the First] that I shared my personal conviction in the matter. There were many outsiders who were trying to find fault and error in what God's Church was teaching and they were ridiculing this matter of the events of the Trumpets not occurring. I then stated that **if** nothing were to come to pass in what was written in the book that I would acknowledge I was not a prophet and I would go before God and throw myself before His mercy seat in repentance and desire for guidance [because I know the kind of God whom we serve]. Yet I believed that what was written in the book was given by God. I did not consider the "if" a reality.

Some time after this, I came to an even deeper conviction regarding my relationship with God and Christ, and I shared this with the Church. It was that even if I were not a prophet, although I still fully believed that I was, I undoubtedly was an apostle.

You live through certain things, you experience certain things, and then you understand. That's what God does with an apostle.

The evidence was contained in all the truths God had given through me.

Now, this isn't about me, but it's about what God did through me. I had to acknowledge some of those things to learn from some of these things, and so did you.

God was strengthening me in my role and the commission He had given to me.

I think of Mr. Armstrong often about some of these things. Who told him how to do various things? What decisions and choices to make? Verbally, who could do that? There was no one there! But yet what came through him he verbally told to the Church. So there's a big difference in some of that, there truly is. So I have had times I wished I could have a burning bush talking to me, you know, or other things of that nature. "This is definitely of God." But you know what? I learned

through time this is where God is working, and I saw things, truths that God had given, so I knew how God was working with me. But what it all meant and so forth, like some of these things here, I didn't grasp and understand, but I learned them through time as God revealed them.

So going on: "The evidence was contained in all the truths God had given through me." Why? Because the Church was being built upon those truths! Every one of those truths are going to go in the Millennium. The Church hasn't understood those things. We didn't understand about an Apostasy. We knew a great falling away was going to occur but nothing to the magnitude of what took place until after it took place and then we could begin, as God's spirit worked with us, to say, "Now I understand. A third and a third and a third, and a remnant of a third. Awesome! Spewing out? Stones of the temple cast down?" On and on it goes. Incredible! We begin to understand. In the Millennium people are going to read about those things, "Oh, yeah," but they're going to be built upon all the truth that God has given through time, and this is a big part of it.

The very fact about women and what God is doing there in removing the curse, that is profound. You think a new age is going to be built upon that one? That's what it's all about! Absolutely! Families are going to be made right from the very beginning. They're going to be taught the right things from the very beginning. The past 6,000 years is being wiped clean, in that respect, as far as the ignorance of mankind and the foolishness of mankind that existed during that. See, God builds upon. That's what it says when it talks about what is built upon the apostles and prophets. That's what it means, truth that God gives and reveals. He's building a structure, and a new age is going to be built upon all that God has given for 6,000 years, and a lot of it in the last part of this period of time. It's just a reality.

"So God was strengthening me in my role and the commission He had given to me." I have to have that. There are things that I've been given at times, and I'll mention this as we go through this, that sometimes I know they weren't even, as a whole, for the Church. They were for me because I have a job to do and there are convictions I have to have and there are stages I have to go through and there are things that have to be molded and fashioned in me so I can do what must be done. That's just a reality.

God revealed to me and convicted me even more deeply that I was not only a prophet, but more importantly, I was an apostle to His end-time Church.

That's why I mentioned that scripture there in **Ephesians 2:20** where it says, **We are being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.** It's just a reality. It's just the way God works. Going on:

As a result of these events and God's convicting power, He has led me to more clearly understand how He has been working in and through me.

Because I want to know. There are things I have to be able to see and grasp and have great conviction of. God has given that to me through time when I needed it. You need it as well as a Church.

There is a different function and way that God works through a prophet and an apostle.

They are not the same and this is sometimes difficult for people, but it shouldn't be for the Church.

Their job and function is not the same. The only one I can compare this to is the apostle, John. John was an apostle first and foremost. Later in life God used him as a prophet through whom He gave the Book of Revelation. John clearly saw the distinction through what he experienced. He knew from the beginning that he had been chosen to be an apostle.

It was never a question. They were told. They were given certain jobs. Later on it was clear because of the Book of Revelation he was also a prophet God was using, but he didn't know that until it happened, until that took place when he was on the Isle of Patmos for that period of time that he was there. Incredible! But he knew. I didn't. It would have been some of the last things I would ever, ever, ever, ever conceived of; and candidly, fought and resisted because of the very things I mentioned earlier. You better fear what you take upon yourself as a human being and how you think toward God. You better be right, better be in unity and oneness with God and God's spirit. Otherwise, well, you don't want to go there. Many have.

This was not like my experience. There was never a time before all this that I would have remotely considered myself an apostle. That would be one of the furthest things from my mind, as I know I would have considered such a thing a horrible presumption. Even when the time came when writing the first book that God was revealing to me that I was to declare I was His prophet for the end-time, I resisted for quite some time and somewhat argued with God over it.

I did in prayer, okay, but I knew because of everything else God had given to me this was the same thing up here, over and over again. So I knew what I was supposed to do. So there are different ways even with prophets that God has worked. That's why even in that book I made comment that it was one, in essence, able to have inspired speaking to understand some of those things that God had given through time, but not through whom any prophesies were being given in any fashion or form in a prophetic manner. So there are different ways that God works with us as prophets. We have that within the Church today. One of one type and two of another type that I referred to in the book there. Okay?

Yet from the moment God had re-established His remnant Church on Pentecost of 1998, God was using me as His apostle to the Church.

I didn't know that. The first thing I saw, that God had me do, was that of a prophet. The apostle didn't even enter my mind. I believed and even taught Mr. Armstrong was God's last apostle to the Church. It's written. It's recorded in sermons.

However, He kept my eyes closed to that until the later portion of those 3½ years of **witness** (Dec. 14, 2008 to May 27, 2012). It was then that I announced it to the Church, as being clearly evidenced by all the truths that God had now given through me. So I began by seeing first that I was a prophet, when I was actually an apostle well before that time.

The purpose for mentioning all this is because I function differently depending on what role God has given me to do at any moment in time. The function and work of each is different. This is something that I am only now finally coming to clearly see and understand. [That was 2013.] It is something that God has to **give** in order to see it, and He is now doing so.

Although I wrote the book *2008 — God's Final Witness*, I have not understood all that is written. God inspired me to write about prophetic events, but as with so many of the prophets, I have not understood all that He has given. In God's time and according to His purpose that He is working out, He reveals more and more about the prophetic events He has inspired to be recorded.

It is because of this that I do not always know or understand what God has given me that is prophetic. Then as an apostle and a minister [which is what an apostle is], I have taught about those things God has revealed through me as a prophet.

That's a mouthful. But we need to understand the functions and how it works.

A prophet's job (function) is not like that of an apostle. A prophet simply writes or speaks what God has given him and he does not expound or elaborate on it...

There are certain things that just are, that "the witness begins in 2008" - that was given. That was prophetic. I didn't understand it all, and obviously some things changed there from February up to later on in December because of truth that God gave, but I knew that truth, that part of it. It's important to understand this step by step.

...he does not expound or elaborate on it, however, an apostle does teach and expound on "**present truth**," doctrine, and prophecy to the Church.

Herbert W. Armstrong expounded upon truth concerning prophecy about the modern day nations of Israel, as God had given him knowledge of who they were. God began to give him "some" understanding of the "Key of David" (Rev. 3:7), which included the identity of those nations and the identity of the monarchy that has descended from King David to this time and is still upheld as having some rule in Ephraim [speaking of the] (United Kingdom).

That story in itself is amazing. I love going through that about what took place when Jeremiah took the king's daughter and went into Ireland and all the history that's there in Ireland that they don't understand where it all came from. Incredible!

Many of the teachings during that era of Philadelphia about prophetic events for the end-time were centered upon knowledge of the identity of the modern day nations of Israel. Those teachings were based upon what was known to that point in time of the **“present truth”** Mr. Armstrong had been given by God.

God's apostle, Paul, knew of the prophecies and promise of Jesus Christ's return as the Messiah and he spoke in the context of that happening in his lifetime. Yet later, God revealed to him that it would be farther into the future.

Incredible! That's when he wrote 2nd Thessalonians 2 and the things he said about an Apostasy had to take first place before Jesus Christ would return.

So, again here, we aren't getting very far into this. This may take a while, but that's good news for me because I know I have several sermons here. I don't have to think about anything else, this is going to be it.

Anyway, awesome! Step by step. I think it's good that we don't have too much at a time anyway; we digest this a little bit as we go along, because it all fits together in a very powerful way and to me the most exciting thing is that God is showing us more and more how He works in our minds and how He works to transform us and why trials and tests that we go through are so important. They're absolutely necessary for us to be able to change and to be used later, whether it be in the Millennium and the next great resurrection that takes place, in that part of the Temple, or now in the Temple that's unique to this period of time of what God is molding and fashioning.

You know, everything is not the same when you have construction. When you build a building it's not all the same. You don't use the same materials. You don't use it in the same place. You have different things that have different interaction and supporting and whatever it might be. Some of it just has to be different, like for us, from a different period in time for a different function that God has. One day we're going to be in awe of that, when we are there, whether it be now for some or after the thousand years for others who go on into the Millennium and remain faithful and true to God during that period of time and are able to be resurrected in a great and powerful way, but your experiences are going to be so much different from so many others who come through the Millennium at different stages in time. Awesome!