

This is a continuation of the series entitled *An Extraordinary 4½ Years*, and this is *Part 3*.

Again, as what was stated in both parts 1 and 2, as we go through this it needs to be kept in mind that this article (which has the same title) first began to be posted on May the 30th of 2013. Now, the reason I keep mentioning that is because it's really hard for us sometimes to place our self in a specific moment in time and to remember what it was like at that time, what we knew at that moment in time, and what we didn't know at that moment in time and that was a rather difficult struggle, in essence, because we're talking about up to Pentecost of 2013. That's why we're going through this again to show the things that God has revealed to us.

So often when we go through something we don't understand what or why, but if we're faithful to God, God will reveal it to us, and in the process He will help us to understand more; He'll give us understanding of things that we have never known. He uses those opportunities, those periods of time as opportunities for us to grow, for us to learn.

I think of the Apostasy. I can't go through this without thinking of the Apostasy, of where we were. It was such a shock, such a shock to the mind when it actually happened, though it had been talked about for years and years and years that there would come a time when there would be a great falling away, an Apostasy, but we had no comprehension of the magnitude and of how it would come about in any fashion or form. So sometimes there are things that we just don't know until it's God's time to reveal it. That was one thing God was not going to give advance warning of except for sermons that we had in talking about the future, that at some time there would be a great falling away. But as we always thought, well, a great falling away? Candidly, we just didn't know how big that would be, what it meant. We just knew there would be a lot of people who would leave the Church at some point in time.

To think that it would start from the top down, that everything would be turned upside down, that every doctrine we'd ever believed in would be basically done away with, said that we could go back to everything that we had been called out of? Again, quite a shock to the system.

I remember our telephone bills at that time. A lot of other ministers and a lot of other people, but especially in the ministry, they were in the hundreds of dollars because back then you had to pay according to the usage and so forth and the long distance. It's a little different now days, but back then it was quite expensive. There was a lot going on because it was such a shock that this could even happen, but because of the way it happened and the timing that it happened as we continued to move forward God began to reveal incredible things to His Church, to His people, to those with whom He was going to work and continue on with.

So it is here. There are things we can only understand at a moment in time, to that moment in time. That's why I love the expression "the present truth," though in the verse that it's used in it doesn't mean fully, exactly, and in any fashion or form, really the same thing in detail, but it got us to a point where we started being able to see something of how God did work. It did begin to reveal something to us, to understand how God judges us and works with us as a Church, as His people. We can't be judged by what we don't know. We're judged by what we do know. We're judged by new things that God reveals to us when He reveals them. Then those are the things that so often, as this article brings out, puts us to the test as to where we really are.

So we're going to, again, continue on here. We're going to pick up today pretty close to where we left off under the subheading here, "Grasping Time and The Present Truth." I marvel at how God has given us greater understanding of these things, of how He works with us and that's what's exciting to me. We have learned through this process more fully, more clearly how God works with the Church, how God works with us individually, of things, candidly, before this we had an overview somewhat, but not a deep understanding in any fashion or form. God is sharing that more and more with us.

So we're going to pick it up here under the section about the star, the size of the star VY Canis Majoris. The size of the star VY Canis Majoris was mentioned and how it would take over 235,000 earths placed side by side to reach through its diameter. Someone gave me before services here, a larger star that they have found, so I'm going to look that up later on. And you think, we're just barely grasping what's out there. There is so much more that we have no knowledge of. We can't grasp how big this was anyway; 235,000 earths placed side by side? Amazing! Awesome!

Now, picking up in that paragraph, "Now just consider a factor of 'time.'"

Now just consider a factor of "time" that the human mind has absolutely no ability to truly grasp concerning the size of this universe that God Almighty created and sustains. Of the guesstimated number of stars in the universe, [the question was asked then] how long do you think it would take you to visit them all if you could do so at the rate of one million per second?

That's insane anyway, 1 million per second! But that's just to bring this into a focus to show us, hey, this is way out there. This is something we cannot even begin to grasp; you can barely put it together mathematically let alone in the mind. 1 million per second. That would be fast. Anyway, "It would take you over 8 trillion years!" Incredible! 8 trillion years. We have no concept of that. As I mentioned last time, it's hard for us to grasp three score and ten, seventy years; basically what we have in human life and when you're younger you think that'll never arrive. You live as though that's never going to arrive. Then as you get older you realize it has arrived. It's the cycle of life that God has given to humanity, to mankind. It's incredible and we learn so much from it if we know the truth, if we know God's way of life, and even if we don't.

The point of all this is that into eons of time God will still be revealing new truth — new knowledge and understanding to us.

That's hard for us to grasp, but God's going to be doing that. God is so incredibly great we can't begin to grasp Him. What He's revealed is so great, but it's such a small amount of who He is, what He is, and His great power. We can't comprehend Him, truly! Just to be thankful that He had a desire for all of His creation, a purpose for all of His creation, and we're the focus of it — especially in the Church even more so when He calls us and begins to work with us. Going on:

That process will never end. That is how great God is! As it was stated earlier in this article, “God has been revealing truth to mankind for 6,000 years in a progressive manner AS His plan is unfolding.” But this is already what God has been doing from the beginning from eons ago — revealing new truth and new knowledge, ever since He first created angelic beings in a spirit world. He has now been revealing truth for millions of years [maybe trillions, maybe trillions upon trillions; we can't comprehend, we don't know] - as He first began doing in the spirit realm.

This has much to do with how and why God tries and tests those whom He calls by progressively revealing His plan and purpose in the manner that He does. Through this process God can transform the natural way we think (the carnal way) if we faithfully and continually yield to that process of Him molding His “revelatory thought” (logos - His word), His mind, [His being, His thinking, His way], and His character within us.

It was millions of years ago when a being named Lucifer recoiled at a truth God came to reveal to the angelic realm as part of His continual progressive revelation to them. That truth was about His plan and purpose that was being worked out at that time concerning why He was going to create the earth in the unique manner that He was.

Now, we don't know the exact timing of this. It may have been way past that then that He began to reveal to them we're going to create life here. We're going to work to create life and you're a part of it. The angelic realm was involved in God's creation. They had work to do. We don't know what that is yet. God will reveal it at some time. They had power. They had work. They didn't just sit around and watch God do all this, the angelic realm, millions and millions of angelic beings. They had work to do. God created them for that purpose, to share in something great and mighty for a great and mighty purpose. Astounding! It's awesome to understand such things.

At this specific moment in time, God revealed His plan to create a spiritual family above that of the angels — the Family of God — Elohim.

So again, exactly at what juncture, we really don't know. Was there life already here? There very well may have been, but at some point God did reveal there was a greater purpose of why this orb is here, why it was made to be able to have life on it, to sustain life, physical life. When God

revealed that something began to change in this being. "Lucifer rejected this 'new truth.'" So this is where we left off last week so we're going to continue on now.

This rejection of truth by Lucifer was just like what happened to a few in the early Church who rejected the truth that the gospel should go to the gentiles.

This has gone on and on and on through time when at different times God has revealed things to His Church. That tests and tries people because up to a moment in time you have a belief in your mind about God, about what God is doing. Then all of a sudden a change comes forward. Sometimes to so many it can seem as though someone is saying something that contradicts what they had believed before, and sometimes it does, because with new truth God is showing things where there is error (if there is error involved) like with Pentecost that we've talked about in the past and on and on it goes. But the mind then, it tries it, it tests it: Where are you in your thinking? Where are you in your conversion? Where are you in your conviction about what God has given you to this moment in time?

I have seen this ever since I've been in God's Church. It's existed since the Church began, ever since the Church first began. So like it's talking about here about the gentiles and the truth beginning to go out to them, it was difficult. It was difficult for many, this change, this transition, and their attitude toward gentiles. The apostle, Peter, was corrected for his attitude toward the gentiles and how he reacted around them. It wasn't easy for him, but he fought the fight, he fought the battle. He understood that Paul was being worked with in a very powerful and unique way.

So when you read (I think it's Act 10) when finally Peter had this vision that he had of this cloth descending three different times with everything that was unclean and so forth and there are those in the world that try to say, "Well, see, God was showing him that everything is clean to eat." You think, "You moron! Just read a little bit farther. It doesn't say that at all. It tells you exactly what it was all about." But they don't want to read farther. They don't want to read the rest. It was about the gentiles - incredible - not about clean and unclean foods.

They already have an attitude. You know, sometimes people just have an attitude about what they believe and what they think and certain things they don't agree with anyway and so they use something like that as an "opportunity," if you want to call it that, for them to twist and distort something into something that isn't there. Going on:

These few simply did not agree and chose to believe instead that "their" God would not require such a thing, and thereby concluded that this must not be of God.

All I can do is shake my head at that through time. So quickly they forgot how they learned the truth in the first place, through whom they learned it, different ones who had battles here within the Church. Going on:

This is also like some in the Church after 2009 who rejected the truth of God's removal of the "curse" from women that has existed since the beginning, or not believing that a woman should ever be ordained into the ministry.

That tried and tested people. It was progressive revelation that God was giving, and had no intention of revealing this or giving any indication of this until the very end of an age before His Son was going to return. Incredible to understand the timing that God chose to reveal certain things as He has. So it puts people to the test. It reveals attitudes. It reveals thinking that's hidden deep down inside of us sometimes. God uses trials and tests to bring things to the surface, like the gold or the silver that's heated up and the dross rises to the surface. It does in our minds so often when God reveals something, and it will reveal things that aren't in agreement with God. That's the dross. That's what has to be removed because it's not in agreement with God!

So people have to make choices at that time, what do they agree with? Because, see, they don't think it's from God. That's the mind. They have to judge and discern themselves, of what they're going to choose to believe, and if they've been grounded in basic certain truths it won't be a hardship. If not, it will be a hardship.

Again, that was quite a thing that God began to reveal, especially about ordination. It's one thing to reveal this and talk about this in the manner that it was, but all of a sudden to have women that are ordained in God's Church? Whew! That put a lot of people to the test! "I can kind of understand the other and the curse, but this thing about ordinations? It just doesn't seem right. It doesn't seem that God would do that."

So again, having to do with the gentiles, I want to repeat this: "These few simply did not agree and chose to believe instead that 'their' God..." "Their" God... Well, why was He their God? How did He become their God? How did they learn the truth that they did in the first place? Did God just somehow open it up to their minds and give them truth without anything else? All of a sudden they were out here by themselves and all of a sudden they understood the plan of God, the purpose of God, that we're to become Elohim, the holy days and when they're to be observed, and the Sabbath, and tithing. Well, is that how it happened to people? Is that how God has worked with people?

Well, He has a few. I think of two people that He started working with in that way - Loma and Herbert W. Armstrong because they were unique because there wasn't much truth around anymore, but that also reveals a purpose of God, that God is doing something unique through them, with them. So again:

This is also like some in the Church after 2009 who rejected the truth of God's removal of the "curse" from women that has existed since the beginning, or not believing that a woman should ever be ordained into the ministry. Such individuals concluded that this is not of God because "their" God would not do such a thing.

Progressive revelation of new truth, that then becomes our “present truth,” is sometimes rejected by God’s own people whom He has called.

Again, I've seen this from the very beginning of coming into the Church, of different things that God would reveal. The first great encounter that I had is when Mr. Armstrong wrote the book, *The Incredible Human Potential*. Anyway, he talked about a spirit essence in man, that we have a spirit essence that God gives to us that we have at birth that works with the brain, yet it's spirit that can't be detected, that can't be seen, but it's given by God in human life that gives us the ability to think, to reason, to plan, and so forth - to think - where animals don't have the ability to do that, to retain knowledge in that manner, in that grand of scale. They have a very limited ability, very, extremely limited. So God created human beings with a vastly superior mind and when he did that, when Mr. Armstrong spoke of that, there were people, there were ministers (some, some few) who said that he's beginning to teach the immortality of the soul.

I didn't hear that. The people I knew, that I was around at that particular time at Ambassador College, they didn't think that way. They didn't believe that's what was happening. They heard the same sermons. They read the same material and they saw perfectly clear what he was saying and thought this was awesome; this is great what God has revealed to us. But some who had a different agenda, who had different ideas, used this as their opportunity to stand up and to try to bring others with them, to say, "Look, he's gone off base here. He's left the truth. He's teaching that we have an immortal soul, and we know we don't have an immortal soul." Amazing what human beings will do and how they'll twist and distort things, because they have some other agenda anyway that has developed over time. These things don't happen overnight. They never, never, never, never, never happen overnight. They happen over a longer period of time. God lets that happen for many reasons. Going on:

There have been a few who rejected what God gave as His prophetic day “for the Church,” from Pentecost of 2012 to Pentecost of 2013. These few believed they were right and that this could not then have been from God. Often times...

We were tested by so many things, tried by so many things over a period of time here it just boggles my mind because all through Philadelphia it was a long time in between truths. It was, I guess, two years before the next one came out about Pentecost. And then a long, long time before the Church was tried again. And candidly, in many ways, it really wasn't except for some of the ministers who were going astray, some who were trying to get a following after themselves, including Mr. Armstrong's own son. So the Church, as a whole, never really experienced – has never experienced, candidly – what we have, which is awesome, if you understand it. Going on:

These few believed they were right and that this could not then have been from God. Often times such carnal thinking just simply rejects what it does not like and/or does not understand. Therefore, individuals must then go about to justify **their** thinking by twisting scripture to fit

their disapproval or they seek to find some “perceived” fault in the new truth or in the one teaching it.

That's the way; again, it's always been that way.

They are impatient and not willing to wait for God to clarify all that He is revealing to His Church.

That followed the Apostasy in a very big way. If people would have just waited, continued to obey God, continued to do what you had always been taught, what you had learned from the beginning of your calling, and continued to do that, God will show you what's happened and why. Going on:

This happened often throughout Herbert W. Armstrong's ministry that spanned more than half a century.

Rejection of the “present truth” is not new, but began eons ago with one of the three most majestic of created angelic beings — Lucifer. Trials, testing, and transformation (molding) of the human mind are essential and absolute necessities of life (requirements) for any to enter Elohim. God will not allow a mind that does not fully agree with Him, as with what happened with Lucifer, to remain in His family in the Church, as such cannot be allowed to become Elohim.

That's simple, so basic to understand. That's one of the primary lessons of life to learn, to understand. That's the very reason we're made the way we are as physical, carnal human beings; from the moment of birth with a carnal mind that begins to work within us that selfishness exists. We were made to be selfish beings by the very fact that we were made physical! Incredible to understand that! And the very reason we're made this way is so we can come to learn through time, through human experience, to reject that kind of thinking, to learn to loathe selfishness.

As God opens up our mind to see what is true we can begin to think and understand. To the world, if they heard you say that, they'd think, "Man, you are nuttier than a fruitcake." They already know that, but "you are really nuts! Nuttier than a fruitcake to believe, to think in any fashion or form that all human beings are selfish by nature. That's just sick!" I mean, that's what they'd think as a whole. "You're saying I'm selfish?" No, I'm not going to say that. That's why I don't say it to the world. If they want to listen in like this they're going to find that out. You better believe you are! We all are! That's the way we're made. We're selfish. We think we're right - above everyone else. Our way is best.

That's why you see so much bickering and fighting today. I am amazed at what we're seeing in the news, in TV, of what God is manifesting to this country and to the world - that we cannot govern ourselves - all the lying and cheating and deceit that exists and people purposefully twisting and distorting things. Sometimes so much so that they really think that they're right! I mean, the mind is so screwed up in so many cases that they really think that what they're saying and what they're

seeing is really true! They don't see what they're twisting and distorting. This is happening on all sides because it's about the human mind. It's about human selfishness, and we, none of us, can effectively, properly govern ourselves in this world. No people ever have been able to do that. 6,000 years of human testimony: We can't govern ourselves successfully.

Every government that's ever risen has fallen, every government throughout time! God wants us to grasp that. There's only one way that works, and it's God's. Only His government works. Only His way works and we choose to yield to that and love it and embrace it because we see that and we know that, the way of total unselfishness, the way of love, the way of sacrifice to love others.

You've got to sacrifice in human life to love others the way God says we're to love. You truly do. You have to learn to say no to self and so often human beings aren't willing to say no to self because we want our way. We want things to work out our way and if they don't work out our way we're just going to be unhappy, you know, and we're going to do things that make other people's lives unhappy because "I'm" not happy. I mean, we're sick! Human nature is sick. It really is. The human mind is desperately wicked and who can know it? God knows it and He'll help us to see the way we think. He'll help us to learn about our selfishness and what it's like and how we treat others in life.

So we come into God's Church, we receive the holy spirit, and we begin to fight and we begin to fight against that nature. It's a constant war to the end and it never ends, but we in the Church right now are at a place and on a plane where this needs to be running very, very well and we're grasping more in that respect what it means that we'd better be doing this because God is cleansing the temple because we're not like other ages so we've got to be responding and living what we need to be living with all of our heart, with all of our being, with every fiber of our being to desire this, and fighting against our selfish, carnal, human nature that stinks. It truly does! Our selfishness stinks!

So such a basic thing of why Lucifer was created the way he was as a spirit being above all the angelic beings. Scriptures make it pretty clear even amongst the three archangels he was the height of God's creation to that point in time, of his majesty, of his beauty, of the things that God created in him and gave to him. And in time, a long, long, long time something began to change up here. See, all this did not happen by accident. God didn't make him do that. But because of the very nature of the way things were, showing that through time, whether it takes a thousand years, a millions years or a trillion years, in time it will happen. When Elohim is revealed it's going to happen. One can become so full of themselves and what they're doing that it goes to the head, and something else that comes along that's greater, so often because of God's favor, whatever God does, people react, or spirit beings can react.

Going on: "Formulating Righteous Judgment." Righteous judgment, we don't do that as human beings. We don't do that as human beings. You think you have righteous judgment of and by yourself, but you don't. You think! The only way you can have righteous judgment is if everything

you think, if whatever decisions you make, that they are definitely based on the law and the way of God and you don't always think that way though most people, even in God's Church, think they do. No, you don't! Not a one of us can think that way perfectly in any fashion or form. Think about that because sometimes we can have a high estimation of ourselves and how we think—we think—and our ideas. Be careful. Be careful.

I've had people contradict things that I teach, I've taught, right in front of my face and I let it go. I let it go. They say something to someone else, of what they think is right, and I think, "You don't get it. Hopefully in time you're going to and if you continue fighting the fight in time you will." Formulating righteous judgment, it doesn't just happen. It's not a matter of the length of time we've been in God's Church. See, sometimes people will use that against others. I've known of husbands to use that against wives. "Well, I've been in God's Church. I've seen 'this' and I've seen 'that' in God's Church, therefore, I have a pretty good hold on this." You want me to tell you how those marriages end up? They do not last. As a whole, they don't last unless the person repents and changes and by that time sometimes it's just too late, too much damage has been done. Sad.

I'm not talking about a few times. I'm talking about this has happened a lot in God's Church. I'm not just talking about marriage. I'm talking about different kinds of situations in life where because someone's been in longer than someone else they think because of that that somehow they have a better grasp on pretty much most everything that we teach. It's not necessarily true by any measure at all. You've got to be careful how you think and how you judge matters. Be on guard to your own thinking. Truly. That's a matter of wisdom that comes from God.

Formulating Righteous Judgment

The following statement was made earlier in this article: "Righteous decisions come from basing our judgment of every matter in life by God's revealed truth to that moment in time."

I want to add there, as a whole, unless something has changed or clarified with greater clarity, everything that has ever been taught in this era of PKG, that's true. If I've stated certain things from up here, written certain things, that is where we are, that is where we are at that moment in time unless God clarifies something and if our judgments aren't based on those things, what are we doing? How is God working with us? How has God molded and fashioned us? How has God called us? That's why I marvel sometimes that those during Philadelphia would ever speak in the way they did. It's because of the place that God gave to him. About Mr. Armstrong, see. He had weaknesses. I have weaknesses. We all have weaknesses as human beings. But there is a way that God works

That's why I marvel sometimes and have made comments about so many of those ministers who made comments later on, who were jealous of Mr. Armstrong and his name being used and someone refers something back to a point in time and says, "Well, I learned a lot of good things from him. He was a good teacher." I'm sorry, but right now my blood pressure is going up. Seriously, I feel it, because whenever I think of that I become riled up. I'd like to line every one of

those ministers up and if I was allowed to just hit them and say, "You fool! Everything you know came from/through that man! Everything! To the moment of the Apostasy everything you've even known that's true and right came through him. Who on earth do you think you are? No wonder you're being rejected! No wonder you've all been rejected." Incredible, such attitudes, such thinking. That's why they're not going to be in the Millennium. That's why certain things have been written as strong as they have because it's disgustingly sick!

So do we all know that, about how God works in our lives, how we were called? Because it's just a reality. It's not to be lifted up by; it's just a reality. That's all it is. It's just a function of the way God works and if that's the way God works then we're going to be more careful about how we judge things and what we do if we're in disagreement with certain things. Because so often you're going to find yourself in disagreement with God. That's just the reality of it. See?

So again here:

The following statement was made earlier in this article: "Righteous decisions [because we really need to get this] come from basing our judgment of every matter in life by God's revealed truth to that moment in time." This statement was made concerning how the early Church was confronted with a great change in regards to the fact that God was now working directly with gentiles. This example was compared to the present in how some have responded to women being freed from the "curse" and even of how God was now going to begin working through women as part of His ministry.

Changes God reveals as part of His plan and purpose (as part of progressive revelation) can and do put people to the test... [Never has failed. It's always been this way.] — to see **how** one thinks and makes judgments in life.

So when something comes, when that moment in time comes for us, then it brings things to the surface where even if we haven't addressed them there's a way we think, and that moment will reveal our thinking. That moment will force us to make a decision up here as to how we're thinking. It reveals it to God, where we are. Now, God knows very well where we are, as a whole, in our lives, but there are some things that because we're free moral agents, as Mr. Armstrong used to comment about, that He's chosen not to know and not to judge us by. God is very merciful and very patient and gives us opportunity, but those moments will try us. So sometimes we haven't thought something through and we don't even know until that moment in time, and then all of a sudden, "How do I think about this?" And how you base your choice and decision is so important and it'll come out. It'll reveal a lot of things how we think anyway. If we can learn from that then we're blessed by that - if we can learn from it.

...can and do put people to the test — to see **how** one thinks and makes judgments in life. A person will either be in agreement with God in doctrine, truth, and prophecy He has revealed to them through His apostles and prophets, or they will not. This is simple and plain knowledge

that one should grasp from the beginning of their calling. All righteous judgment that a person can make is based on what they are able to receive of God's very word (His revelatory thought) and then their application of it to life and other revealed truths, rather than relying on their own reasoning to form judgments.

Because, candidly, that's what we do most of the time. We rely on our own thinking. We rely on our own ability to judge matters. Going on:

During Philadelphia, there was only one way to come into the Church of God and to receive spiritual knowledge of the 21 Truths that the Church was built upon during that period of time.

That's incredible! Good to remember: There was only one way.

That one way was through what God revealed and restored to His Church through a single human being — God's apostle at the time — Herbert W. Armstrong. There was NO other way for one to enter God's Church or to have a relationship with God.

You know, people couldn't just read the *Plain Truth* and then all of a sudden go off out here and all of a sudden they have the truth, and maybe share it and talk about it with others because first of all people have to grasp and comprehend that God is the one who draws us. And what does He draw us to and bring us to? The Church so we can be fed. We can make a choice and decision about this way of life, if we want it, if God offers that to us. Our minds are opened up to see it and then we're tried and tested as to whether we're going to begin to put God first with tithes and offerings and the Sabbath, how we keep and whether we keep the Sabbath, and on and on it goes. So we're judged by those decisions in the very beginning and it's a continuing process.

But here, again, there was only one Church, the Worldwide Church of God. There wasn't any place else to go. There wasn't any place else to learn the truth. It had to come through the Church one way or another - through printed material, mostly, the *Plain Truth*, the *Good News*, and other things that people could write in and ask a question about and maybe in about six weeks, some cases eight weeks, somewhere in there you'd receive a booklet to answer your question. That's how a lot of things were answered. When I first came along back in 1969 if I had a question I'd send it out there and four, five, six weeks later I'd get a booklet in the mail, you know, and I could read it and understand then my question, the answer to the question, because this was how God was working. Incredible.

So again, there was no other way.

Once people came into God's true Church, they entered into judgment and were then being judged by their own judgments — whether such were righteous and based upon God's word or not. God has given us **one** gigantic example to drive this very point home. This **example** was designed by God to mold — to transform — His Church as part of His ongoing creation within the Church at that time. That example was also designed by God to teach us **now** in this time.

I marvel at this. This goes back so long and yet God has brought it full circle to have meaning and purpose up to this present time. Going on:

It is the example in the change and correction to the actual date for the observance of Pentecost during the era of Philadelphia.

We talk about this a lot, but it needs to be deeply engrained in our minds, in our thinking.

We have addressed this before, but as Herbert W. Armstrong often went back to teaching upon the foundational knowledge of the “two trees,” there is much more to grasp and more to be built upon in this incredible teaching **example** that God has given His Church concerning a change that took place in the observance of Pentecost.

So as it was back in 2013, God was building upon it, He's building upon it more even now. He continues to build. There's more that we're able to receive. You can't just go through this article, or you didn't back in 2013 and get it all, and say, "Ah, that's pretty clear. That's all the way through; this is really, really clear. I've got it good. I've got it down pat." No, you don't. And as you perhaps have read this before, or even these sermon series, "Think I've got a good hold on this now, better than I did back in 2013." No, it's still building, still going to be things coming out in the sermon series that helps drive the point home more and more and more in our thinking. God is constantly building.

Just like the two trees and Mr. Armstrong talking about that. I've known of so many people, did know of so many people back in that time who simply turned off their minds as soon as they heard him start speaking and he mentioned the two trees. Some would comment, did comment, "You know, he's talking about the two trees again. He keeps going over the same thing." It's like he's old and senile. That's the attitude. "He's old and senile! He's losing it." Amazing.

After this change had taken place in God's Church, people did not truly grasp what they had experienced or the true ramifications of what it all meant.

Because, candidly, most of it was for our time now anyway. It is more for us than it was for them. It helped clean up the Church at that time in a big way, but it's really more for us than it was for them.

For nearly four decades, God's Church observed Pentecost on the wrong day. When counting for Pentecost, the belief at that time was that it should always be observed on a Monday. In 1973, this subject matter came to Mr. Armstrong's attention. It was such a serious and important matter that he had the subject thoroughly studied and discussed. It took nearly a year for him to be led to the spiritual conclusion (given by God) that the Church had been wrong and that Pentecost would always fall on a Sunday (the first day of the week). So by Pentecost of 1974, a change was made as God had revealed a new and “present truth” concerning the correct day of the week upon which is would always be observed.

It was a great test and trial for God's people during this moment in God's Church in the era of Philadelphia, when a year of study and discussion into this took place amongst the leadership. Nothing of this magnitude had yet been confronted during Philadelphia. Mr. Armstrong wanted to be most certain of God's guidance in this matter and he knew the final decision on this would have to come through him and he did not take this responsibility lightly before God. [He spoke about this often during this process, during this whole year.] Much can be learned from what happened through this period of time.

This is really incredible, what God brought to the surface, because this is what brought a lot of dross to the surface at that time. It brought, at that moment in time, through that period of time especially toward the end, it revealed things about each individual in God's Church, about how they thought, what their thinking was like concerning God, concerning how God was working with them, and so forth. It was powerful, truly was.

Before this change, the "present truth" was that Pentecost was to always be observed on a Monday. But where did understanding of Pentecost originate for the Church during Philadelphia? It began when God revealed and restored the truth to Herbert W. Armstrong that the annual holy days (annual Sabbaths) should be observed just as the command to observe and keep the weekly Sabbath. Once the truth concerning the observance of the annual Sabbaths were given by (through) God's apostle to the Church, then those in the Church at that time had to **change** their thinking in how to properly worship and obey God. Those in the Church were judged by God on each individual's acceptance of this "present truth" and their judgment to then change in accordance to it or not.

And candidly, it was like one of those moments that we generally have even when we're first being drawn and we see the Sabbath and we recognize Sunday and it's like, "That's so clear!" and you try to share it with others. Sometimes you go to your relatives. Sometimes you go to others and this is exciting. They just kind of have this look at you like, "What happened to you?" And after a while we learn, well, we can't share those things with others because don't get it. They can't see what you see that God's given to you. Incredible what takes place, the process we go through, and so is a moment like this because that's the way it was for most of the Church at that time. It was like, "Man, this is clear!" A year ago I could have sat down and taken you to different scriptures and told you why it's on a Monday and now it's like how could we ever have believed it was on a Monday? It's so clear! It's supposed to be a Sunday.

But it's like God just has a switch, just like He did when you first were called and all of a sudden you see the Sabbath, you see the holy days. And how? Because God gives it to you. You didn't do it. It's not because of your intellect. It's not because you're smart. It's not because you're so good in your judgments. It's because the Great God of the universe put it in your mind.

That's one of the major places most people in God's Church have tripped up over time, over and over again with people's lives. They forgot! They forget how God works with us and that the truth

we have comes from Him directly as far as the mind is able to receive it. Nobody is smart enough to figure these things out! Nobody is clever enough to figure these things out! Nobody thought these things up on their own! They received it through God's Church, the way God works. That's the only way! Then all of a sudden it's like a light bulb goes off and it's so clear: "Why can't everybody see this?" Well, because God calls us because God has to give us His holy spirit, or draw us by His holy spirit to give us the ability, to flick that switch inside there. It's there.

It has nothing to do with intellect. Actually, on the contrary, intellect will just get in the way. That's why not many mighty, not many great, in that respect, are called in God's Church because they're already great up here. "I'm great! This is beneath me." God has to give it to us. Incredible what takes place.

A few decades after God had originally restored the observance of His annual holy days, He then revealed that one of those annual Sabbaths had been observed on the wrong day. It threw many brethren (but overall a small percentage) and several ministers (including evangelists) into a tailspin that eventually led to their leaving the organization of the Worldwide Church of God.

Good, good, good, good. I've loved it whenever God's come through and has cleaned the Church. Although it was hard I loved it when we were up in Toledo and God came through, basically in one day, one night, and cleaned up the Church up there, in the Toledo and Detroit area. One day! All became manifest; they're not all of us. We're not on the same page, not by any measure and things came out. People revealed where they were. They revealed their thinking. They revealed their attitudes. It all came to light. Incredible, how things happen. And though it's hard, because you walked to God's house side by side with different ones, when you see that spirit and that attitude the reality is you think, thank God, because if they stick around, if they are to continue on, they're going to do nothing but cause hurt to other of God's people, especially to the little ones. They will do nothing but cause hurt.

That's the way it's always been in God's Church. You leave a minister out here in a Church area who's caused division and problems in times past and you transfer him to another one. I learned a long time ago you don't do that. In that case they should have been fired on the spot, but they were transferred in some cases to other areas, because of some who were managing some of these things. It wasn't Mr. Armstrong doing it. He didn't know everything that was going on in the Church. So someone will get transferred.

I think of an individual that followed us into Erie and Franklin. He had been to Ambassador, he was sent to Germany, screwed up people over there with his stupid ways and his stupid mouth and his disgusting mouth. He was in Australia, too. And basically, this is right as the Apostasy is getting ready to erupt. So he's sent into an area that prepared me for the Apostasy because of all we went through! Sometimes it's been tough. It's been hard. It's been hard on us. It's been hard on

family, but we've been blessed because of what we've gone through and what God has revealed and has prepared us for many things.

But I think of that individual that was such a foul mouth that some families were talking about, "I didn't know we had to have sermons x-rated before services so we'd know whether or not we were going to bring our children to it." Because he was such so disgusting! Amazing! Do you think that can exist in God's Church? He should have been fired on the spot. On and on such things have gone through time, of different ones transferred from one place to another when really they should have been gotten rid of because you can't minister in a certain way that's wrong and has wrong results and continue on as a minister. You disqualified yourself a long time ago.

So whenever these things have happened in God's Church, though it be hard to watch some people make the kinds of choices and decisions they make, when it's all said and done I rejoice inside, not that they made the wrong choice - that's on them, but that God's Church is protected and that wrong examples aren't allowed to continue on because that's just hurtful and painful and it causes much disruption. It always has in God's Church. I've seen it over and over and over and over again throughout God's Church.

God has called us to be different. God has called us to live a very high standard and yet I knew of ministers who would change things in the Pastor General's report and read it to a congregation. One shared something with me one time and I thought, "You're going to change what you're saying, what it says here? You're not going to read it for what it says?" Because he wanted to get a special message across so he added some things that supposedly Mr. Armstrong had to say. He didn't last long. He went by the wayside not too long after that.

Incredible, the things we go through to teach us and train us, brethren. God does desire and expects us to live by a very high standard in our lives. More so now for the Church than any other time, because we're either on board and behind this thing in a way that the Church never grasped before, more than ever before or it will be cleansed, cleansed out of the Church. And those who continue on, a continual process of measuring the temple in the sense of being fit into place. I love that expression there of what it means because it has a duality to it. Not just a matter of cleansing the temple, but also a matter of measuring something. When you have something to be fit into place there are measurements you have to take, especially if it's a stone, or whatever, and it's to have certain things cut out of it so that when you take it there it fits perfectly into place. Perfect! Perfect! Perfect into place! God does that in our lives. If we yield to that process, that's what He's doing to fit us perfectly into a place. Awesome!

So in the measuring of the temple, if we yield to that process, God is molding and fashioning things within us to fit perfectly into a place - whether it be a part of the 144,000 (which we still have some things to learn about that), or whether it be for those who continue on into the Millennial period being molded and fashioned for specific things. Awesome!

... So what happened? To understand, it is important to know and understand that God could have given Herbert W. Armstrong the correct timing of Pentecost when He first revealed to him that the annual Sabbaths were a required observance for His Church. It was **always** in God's control to reveal what He did concerning these commanded observances and it was **only** in His control to hold back the knowledge — the truth — of the correct day of the week for observing Pentecost.

If you can remember these things, brethren, and know these things, and know how God has worked with the Church through time, we have the evidence of things that happened through Philadelphia. We have the evidence because this process here is speeded up mightily. We have gone through more now than ever.

I think of an individual who wrote today and said this was their 10th anniversary today being in God's Church. I wrote back to them and made comment about it, but also made comment, "You have seen more that has taken place in God's Church in ten years than most everyone who ever lived during the period of Philadelphia saw in their entire lifetime." That's awesome to understand because it's true. There's a reason for that and it's because of the uniqueness of where we are in time. It's the uniqueness of what God is molding in us because, you see, every period of time God has molded something different within people. That period was for a major part of construction for a major part of the Temple, and we don't all fit into the same place. So God works with us in different ways at different times, and so it is with this time, that we are unique from every other era. They were unique for what they were going through because of what they were being prepared for and molded and fashioned into. But this is exceedingly unique and that's why this article is, to me, so incredible.

Why would God do such a thing? God desires to mold, create, and transform our mind into a new one — a new heart that is spiritually motivated in nature rather than carnally (selfishly) motivated by itself. God works with those whom He has called who will humbly yield themselves to such a process because they want that kind of change in their life. If at some stage of development a person veers off due to pride then it must be made manifest (revealed) who they are.

I want to read what we'd covered last week. I'm just going to turn over there right quick. I'm not even going to turn there; I have it in my notes, but you can just jot it down again. It's **1 Corinthians 3:13**, because it needs to be repeated here because of what it states that goes along so well with what we're covering. **Every man's work**, or every person's work, because there's work, no matter what we do in life, people work, and whatever that is in their life, whatever is reflected in their life it goes on to say, **Every person's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it**. It's going to reveal what sort it is in every way, what it's made up of, what it is in every detail, in that respect, **because it shall be revealed by fire**. That's how God works with us. It comes out. Things come out. We can learn at those moments in time.

That's why I think of, well, let's say the last ten years, 2007, and you come forward through time. You think; it's incredible how many things have happened over and over and over again. It's incredible how many truths God has revealed. I think of the one before that that was incredible, that 2005, obviously. But continuing on, one after another, over and over and over again, that God has given to us.

Every man's work/Every person's work shall be made manifest. It's not going to remain hidden. That's why especially at this time nothing's going to remain hidden because this is a time that it has to be brought out. Now, all through time that's been true. In the past 2,000 years that's been true. Some are not going to be made manifest or clear to others until the resurrection, the Hundred-year trial period. Then it's going to be made manifest where they really were. But so often through time that's been made manifest in God's Church anyway when people go off on a different tangent or have some other idea and belief and they go off on a different tangent, or when their disfellowshipped from the Church. Then it's made manifest, obviously, but nothing in this time is going to remain hidden. One way or another it comes out. As I said before, even if it's just a matter of death God'll take care of it.

...for the day shall declare it. In other words, what is that day? There's going to come a time, whatever that time is, whatever it is. Something will come along, primarily for God's Church, that really tries and tests people - the things having to do with truth and things that God reveals to us and whether we're in unity and oneness with it. If not then that really puts people to the test to bring things to the surface.

...because it shall be revealed by fire. It wasn't meant to be easy. It's meant to be hard. It's meant to be difficult. This isn't a cake walk. It wasn't ever meant to be easy for God's people and in the end-time here for us even less so, or more so, depending on how you view this and what you're comparing it to. For us, more has to take place, more fire. Do you know why? It's a factor of time. It's a factor of time. We don't have a lot of time. That's the way it's been for quite a while. It's not like during Philadelphia when someone is called in and they're going to be in the Church for 30, 40, 50 years, molded and fashioned by God through what they experience. Ours is unique. Ours is different. It's accelerated for a purpose. It's intensified for a purpose because we're being molded and fashioned for something different anyway, in a different place, a different spot, for whatever purpose. For whatever reason that God is doing that the evidence is there, the witness is there. All we have to do is look at our history and you can know. That's how you learn from so many things that God does in our lives. You look in the past that brought us to that point in time; what is it that we went through and why. Incredible!

It shall be revealed by fire and the fire shall try, put to the test, every person's work, of what sort it is, good or bad, right or wrong, it'll come out. It'll come out.

So again, that last sentence before we went to the scripture there:

If at some stage of development a person veers off due to pride then it must be made manifest (revealed) who they are. In this manner, the Body of Christ can be sobered and stirred to greater spiritual watchfulness.

So often those things have happened for that purpose, to realize you've got to be on guard, you've got to be watchful. We have to be on top of things. We have to be fighting this fight. We can't ever get to a point where we're just kind of leveling off, lukewarm. That's what happens. When anybody levels off and they're not putting themselves into it and fighting the fight day in and day out, as it were, then things will happen that are not good.

In this manner, the Body of Christ can be sobered and stirred to greater spiritual watchfulness. God knows the heart and mind of everyone as to whether they are of a spirit, at any moment in time, to continue **in** His ways or not. Rather than just removing such a person by some quick means, God's righteous judgment in such a matter is that if a person (for whatever reason) moves away from Him and will not change (repent) then this **choice** must be made manifest as a true witness to others.

So God gives time in there, too, sometimes. There are times God will give a lot of time for a person to be brought to a repentance, but there's also a period of time when individuals go too far that God will bring things to the surface in people's lives to be able to see what they did and why it happened the way it did. It's always a learning process.

It is also to make it clear to the individual that this was **their own** decision to sever their relationship.

Though, as a whole, people always justify themselves that they're doing the right thing. It doesn't matter what it is. As a whole I've never seen people who left for the wrong reason; they left because they were right. They're right. Their decision. Their choice is right. They're justified. They'll tell you what it is they're justified in and what it is that was wrong with the doctrine, the truth, whatever, or the one who taught it, or whatever it might be, or with others, or whatever.

When I would hear this one I'd just burn, do a slow burn inside. "God's Church just doesn't have the kind of love that I knew it used to have. People just don't have that same kind of love that they used to have. Something's happened to the Church. So the Church must be somewhere else because I just don't see it here. It just doesn't have that love that it used to have." Then I think of them and think, "And how often did you show that love to others? How often did you go up and talk to them? How often did you have them into your home? How often do you invite them out? How often do you do 'this' and how often do you do 'that'? When did you show love to your brother? When did you go out of your way to love your brother?" You see, because that's generally the problem there. Anyway, incredible.

Trials and tests designed by God are part of His molding — transforming — process that is likened to heating precious metal to a point that the dross (impurities) are brought to the surface so that they can be clearly seen for what they are.

They themselves to be able to see it, and sometimes for others to see it. "Look! Man, I didn't know they had that thinking. I didn't know that they were like that." Sometimes people are shocked. Sometimes people are so shocked its like, and I'm going way back in time, not just recent time, "If I could just go and talk to them. If I could just spend some time with them I know... because I know them." It's like, you didn't know them like you thought you knew them. You thought you knew them, but you really didn't know. You didn't even know what they thought about you. Then it comes out. Incredible, sometimes, what happens when people are holding up certain things inside for a long, long time and resentments and jealousies and bitterness. And you know what?

Well, look what happened to that one angelic being. After a while it'll get you. You hold those things up inside and they'll get you. God wants us to see that. How many people have you known? Some of you are not that old in God's Church but you've had enough experience to see this, to see what they're like and all of a sudden, "I didn't know they were like that." Then you see certain things. Well, yeah, and after a while it starts coming out, you know, you start seeing certain things you couldn't see before. Incredible how that sometimes works.

God does this in each individual's life, and as it happens, that person must then address the impurities and repent (change their thinking, which changes life's actions)...

Isn't that amazing to understand? It's what's in the mind that determines how we respond, how we act, how we live. You can see things; by how you're living you can understand what's going on up here.

...so that the impurities can be removed. If a person will not face such impurities honestly and faithfully with the spiritual desire to repent and have them removed, then God will use trials and tests to bring any and all who remain impure to the surface so they can be seen and removed from the Body.

I think of one that just came to mind here in an area we visited here just recently and mentioning about an individual and they had a certain tenacity at times, but some of that got to them as well. You know, sometimes we have strengths. Sometimes our greatest strengths can be our greatest weaknesses. We have to be careful. I think of this individual that finally got to a point where they were generally willing to speak up, speak out about what they believed. And when the Apostasy occurred they would show hypocrisy where it was, where they saw it and so forth, but there came a moment in time within the Body that someone was disfellowshipped and they were told, in essence, what we're told: when someone is disfellowshipped we don't have fellowship with them anymore. And basically they had strong feelings towards them so they made

the comment, "No one is going to tell me who I can fellowship with and who I can't fellowship with." Well, God does. But isn't that amazing how the human mind can justify certain things and say, "I can do that"? "I can do what God says I shouldn't do," and not understand why God says such things in the first place because we don't understand it and we're not in agreement with it. How many other things were they not in agreement with? Well, there were a lot. But anyway, those things come out in time. That's why we have to be of the same mind.

That's why I've told people your strength and your power is in the word of God, the truth of God that He's given you in your mind. That's in 57 Truths, 57 Truths and those things we have the ability to see and know, and we're either in agreement with every one of them without exception and we're excited by what God gives to us and we're learning to love them or not. And if we don't, God will bring that out. He'll manifest it in His time. Going on:

God states some of this very process in Deuteronomy: "All the commandments which I command you this day..."

Which are what? The logos, the word, the mind of God. It's how God thinks. Then that process is magnified and revealed in a greater way through the truths He gives to us. That's why I love #3. #1 attributed to Mr. Armstrong as one of the most important, in that respect, government. If we understand indeed that God calls us and we have a response then we make to the Church, we recognize we bear God's name, it is the Church of God, and then tithing, to do God's work, and then the Sabbath because that's how God teaches us a molds and fashions us, but then one of the most important things that follows that that we have to learn then from all that teaching that God gives to us, it's about government. Everything that is true and right of the mind of God comes from God and it's a matter of government. It's a matter of how life is governed, how our minds think. Incredible how that works!

So many who've thought they understood that in times past didn't have the slightest understanding at all. So again:

...states in Deuteronomy: "All the commandments which I command you this day (all truth that God gives of His ways to any moment in time — the present truth) shall you observe to do (to live by and make judgments accordingly [by what God has stated]), that you may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Eternal promised unto your fathers..."

It's not just to live life, but it's how you live life; it's the quality of life that God gives us because of His laws and His truth. That's what this is about. It's not a matter of just living, going into a place and living; it's the kind of life that's reflected there. It's the kind of life you can experience then.

... "so that one can continue to increase spiritually in life and be blessed to receive all that God has called them to receive). You shall remember all the way (to not forget any truths of God's

ways that He has revealed to them from the beginning and forward from that time) which the Eternal your God led you these forty years in the wilderness...”

And we're never to forget. I mean, you want to draw an analogy of something that is very powerful? That's why we go back through things of history, because it reveals how God works with us. That's why we go back and talk about the importance of remembering how God opened up your mind and the process you went through and all the experiences you've had in God's Church, that you're never to forget how God works with you.

“...which the Eternal your God led you these forty years in the wilderness (in whatever time we have been blessed to be led by God as He continues to lead us in a progressive manner — ever revealing more truth of His ways to us), to humble you (through test and trials)...”

That's how God humbles us, through trials and tests. We'll either be humbled or what happens? Pride rises to the surface. The pride that is there. See, we'll either respond to God in a humble manner or we'll come out with self, that self knows better. "...to humble you, to prove you," to prove you. Those are the things that prove us.

Just like the analogy there or the parable that talks about getting the oxen and going out and trying them, proving them in the field to see. Somebody that buys them, that wants them, if that was your agrarian society at that time and you had two oxen and you didn't have them before and you were doing it some other way, you know, a hoe in hand or whatever and planting and now you have oxen to pull something and do so much more land so much more quickly, so much more easily? And you're excited! If you've ever done farming you know what that means, if you go out and try a new tractor that has much more power, a new combine that has much more power, much more ability, much more that it can cut and do a better job of and leave less on the ground. You're excited by that and you want to go out and prove it, of what kind of a machine it really is.

As we grow God proves us. Where are we? Where are we? What are we producing in our lives? Incredible! To humble you and prove you, again, “through tests and trials, to know...” That's how God knows, and not only that He reveals us to us so that we know in ourselves and of one another. "... to know what was in your heart."

Sometimes you think you know what's in your heart until you go through a certain kind of trial and test, and then all of a sudden wham! Things are brought to the surface that you hadn't addressed yet and hadn't even made a decision about because you never thought about it yet in that light. God has a means and a manner whereby He brings things to the surface, and then all of a sudden we see something. We have to make a choice and a decision what we're going to do with what God has given us to see and what we generally see isn't so good.

“...to know (for all to know) what was in your heart, whether you will keep My commandments (laws, truths, ways), or not” (Deut. 8:1-2).

It's always been that way. It's always been that way in God's Church. So things happen; it tries us. Pentecost, 1974, it tried the Church in a powerful way. Most of the Church it just made them stronger. "Ah, this is so clear! We see how God works." He took a year. He didn't take this lightly. He took a year! He understood the seriousness of this. He had other evangelists and others study into this and report back to him about what they could see and what they were learning. Things were done a little differently (incredible), before he would make a change. So we learn from this. Incredible!

Important Lesson

So what can be learned from this example of Pentecost having been observed for so long on the wrong day of the week? By bringing this test upon everyone in His Church, God had prepared a means to further advance the process of a continuing creation through the necessary transformation of the mind.

Those who received it, there was that which was working up here that was good and they were made stronger because of that experience. When we saw that and we acknowledged that and we rejoiced in what God had given to him it made us stronger. It did! It made us stronger. For others it revealed weaknesses that were there. They had other motives, other things they had wanted to accomplish and do that weren't in unity and harmony with what God was doing in their lives or desiring or offering to give to them I should say.

...God had prepared a means to further advance the process of a continuing creation through the necessary transformation of the mind. This process is always ongoing and the **work** to produce this change is accomplished by God's spirit — by His and His Son's direct participation...

You know, you need to be in awe of that. When we have these things happen in the Church God is involved in your life. He's there to see how you're going to respond. He's there to work with you as you seek, as you desire to respond in a right way, to receive what He has, to want to understand it, and you cry out to God.

I remember 2005 and some who were praying up to the very last day that they couldn't see it! They couldn't see it until Melchizedek was given on the Last Great Day. Couldn't see it! Worried! Concerned! What are we going to do? Because the Church has believed that Jesus Christ has eternally existed and this changes everything! So they were praying for help: "If this is true, help me to see it," because they didn't know. So they were tried all the way up to the end. What are you going to do? What are you going to do? Then God gave it. Finally, they were given relief because they kept fighting all the way through the Feast - not in disunity, not spreading things around, not going around to others and trying to stir up dissention because so often that's what happens when something new is coming along and people try to say something. You know, it's amazing what happens sometimes when people will say something. Something is thrown out in such a way that it can be taken two different ways. It's like a hook in fishing and if somebody

takes a hook and they respond with that bit of a negative attitude then they put out something else. After a while they're over in a corner discussing things, going off base.

That happens over and over again - has happened in God's Church like that through time. But if a person really desires then that's doing something in them. Look what that does to the mind: "I don't know if it's true." That's just being honest to God. "I don't see it. If it's true, help me to see it. Help me to understand because I don't know." But they have a certain confidence that's built in them and brought them to that point in time and they believe how they've been worked with, they've seen so many things that have been revealed to this point in time so they continue with it to fight the fight and they don't give up. They continue to wait on God. Then on the last day their minds were opened up. Awesome!

So these things try us and it can make us so much stronger, convict us far more. We grow in character as a result of the things we go through. This is how God works to transform your thinking, your mind, and He does it individually with you, with each person in the Body. Jesus Christ and God the Father work individually with each person in the Body if we'll humble ourselves and yield ourselves to the process. It's not just the original calling where God intervenes and draws us and brings us to Christ and gives us to him. On the contrary, that process is transforming that He continues to do, Him and His Son throughout your time within the Body. That's awesome. The Great God, a relationship, a fellowship? Awesome!

This process is always ongoing and the **work** to produce this change is accomplished by God's spirit — by His and His Son's direct participation, and there is NO other way. As part of the spiritual transformation in "this phase" of development (creation) of Elohim, each person must experience trials and tests...

That's how God works with us. He's worked with His people through time in that manner, trials and tests. What are we going to do?

...along with all the other means God has made available for spiritual development and growth.
Direct trials and tests from God...

They're from God! Just like that matter of Pentecost. He could have given it to Mr. Armstrong from the beginning but He reserved it for 1974, to bring about a change at that time, at that specific moment in time for the Church. God used it very powerfully so to help others to grow and to get rid of those who refused, to those who continued to fight against Him. Awesome!

"Direct trials and tests from God help speed up," speed up in the short time we have and for what God is doing in our lives. I don't know if you can receive this. There has never been a time in God's Church where this process of transforming the mind, of the way that God is creating those things within the mind, has been as fast and as quick and as great as they have been during this period, if you will, since about 2005. It's just speeded up more and more as time has gone on.

Direct trials and tests from God help speed up and more deeply strengthen spiritual change that produces far greater faith and Godly character in those who faithfully yield and respond to this process.

That's why God could have told us about the Apostasy very clearly at any moment in time. He could have told us how it was going to occur. He could have revealed it to the Church, but He didn't; He just let it happen. Then He didn't show us right away what we'd experienced and why, but He could have. Why? It's the same answers. It tries you. It tests you. It reveals where you are. It brings things to the surface that you have to deal with. Are you going to continue to fight? Are you going to continue to hold on to the things that were given to you? Because a lot of people didn't, brethren. They didn't continue to hold on to the Sabbath and the holy days. They didn't continue to hold on to Passover.

When different ones wanted to build these certain bridges and so forth and they put doubts in people's minds about, "Well, maybe there is some of it I'm supposed to observe on the 15th as well?" You know, don't bother about going back and getting any of Mr. Armstrong's old booklets and stuff and being reassured of what you knew a long time ago, just listen to some fool come along and tell you, "Well, let's have the kind of fellowship we used to have and let's meet together on the Sabbath and we can have different ones. We'll just choose different ones to speak from different ones of us and we'll get up there and we'll kind of believe what we want to believe." Well, they didn't say it that way, but that's what they were doing. "We'll just believe what we want to believe. God's working with us now." I'm sorry. Some of this stuff makes me so sick when I go back and think about it, what happened.

So how faithful are we to hold on to what we know? To hold on what God gives to us? To understand how God gave it to us in the first place? To understand how we got to a certain point, or any point, or this point in this present time and be so deeply convicted of it? Because, you see, if you are, it doesn't matter how much time goes on. If you truly believe those things nothing matters except God's way of life. What else is there? The truth. It's the truth. If you know the truth and you believe the truth, you hold on to it and God will reveal to you whatever you need when you need it. And do we wait on God? How deeply convicted are we of what He has given to us to any moment in time?

Because I'll just tell you right now not everything is going to pan out the way you thought. There are going to be some surprises in the end. Okay? That's why everything has changed of what we knew and believed to a certain moment in time, because of how God judges and works with us as a Church and how He's working with the world. He's working with the world totally different. He's revealing to the earth, whether they believe it or not, but they're going to have that opportunity to be told that "I gave you so much mercy. I gave you so much grace. I gave you so much more time and what have you done? Have you listened? Will you listen? Have you ever listened?"

So there are going to be some things that are revealed later on - like the two witnesses and what takes place - they're going to blow your mind! Because there is a witness that's taken place that was for a period of time up to 2012, and what happens later on is not at all what you've ever known or believed. It's not been spoken of and it won't be. Okay? It's just going to happen. It's not going to be at all like you think. There are going to be so many other things that aren't going to be like you think. You just wait on God and you keep living this way of life and you keep pushing forward in what you do and how you do it no matter what happens nor to whom it happens. Just keep going forward and God will plug everything into place in ways that will inspire you, excite you, move you. You're going to go through things that are going to so move you when you come to see them and understand them that you can't put them into words and there's never been a time like it because it's unique to us.

Who gets to experience this time but us? Those in Philadelphia don't, except a few who have gone on from that period of time who are here today. Those in Sardis? Thyatira? All the others? No one. Awesome what you get to see and what you get to experience just because of the timing of when you live. That's why I have so often said if I had to look at any time in all of time, this is the time I'd want to be in. See, because I couldn't make that choice anyway because I happen to live now and I know what happened in the past and I know what, as a sense, is going to happen in the future, and this is it. This is it.

This is the time that God has worked for, possibly, for trillions upon trillions of years, of things we can't comprehend and the excitement He has for what's about to come to a head and to be accomplished and fulfilled. We can't even begin to grasp that kind of excitement, that kind of a mind and what we're going to get to experience and share with Him as time goes on.

You think you've seen a lot of things now? You haven't seen anything! You haven't seen anything! You think the parting of the Red Sea was great? It was. It was. You think the lapping up of the offering, Elijah and that offering, and they filled it with water and, "No, that's not enough. Bring some more water! Wet this wood down!" Here these others are out there trying to get theirs to go up, and you know, they're cutting themselves like they did and jumping around and acting stupid. He's making fun of them. He said, "Well, maybe he's out taking a leak out somewhere and he doesn't want to be seen." That's basically what he told them. "Maybe he's off relieving himself. He's busy right now. He'll be here after a while. Just keep cutting yourself and jumping around and maybe..." He just mocked the tar out of them. Then he said, "Bring more water. Bring more water." Then all of a sudden it's all gone. Amazing!

Daniel and the lion's den? He's spared and then others who are tossed in there aren't. The lions liked them. They ate them down to the bone, okay? Incredible things that have happened in time. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Awesome story! Incredible! Heated up seven times more. I can't comprehend how that even happened, what happened. You couldn't even get close to that area it was so hot, and they walked in there, and they saw figures, and they walked back out. We are in awe of that and we should be! But you have seen nothing yet.

To think that God can't bring us through? To think God doesn't have the power to intervene in our lives no matter what state, no matter what is happening in our lives in the end here, of things that are going to be happening in the world around us? And that's kind of minor compared to what you're going to see.

Let's just stop there. What God has prepared for us, what's in front of us is awesomely exciting and we just have to keep fighting until our fight is over, whatever that is. When this gives out or whatever it is. Because at some point it happens to us in life. Some are just going to die before this all happens. That's just the way life is, and God has the power to resurrect, doesn't He?

Anyway, with that we'll go on to *Part 4* next week.