

Today is the continuation of *An Extraordinary 4½ Years*, with this being *Part 6*. In *Part 5* last week we just started covering the section under the subheading of "God's Preparation Complete," so we'll continue right there once again just to pick up the context.

God's Preparation Complete

Once God had fully re-established His Church by Pentecost of 1998, He began preparing it for the final witness He would establish for the "cause" or "controversy" of Zion.

I want to stop right there and just make a comment that I don't believe I made any comment about last Sabbath. When I started writing about this a long time ago here, several years ago when I was taking a sabbatical, "for the "cause" or the "controversy" of Zion," I knew I was supposed to write about it. I was excited by some of what I saw, but I knew I didn't understand it all. And to me this is awesome, what God reveals to us when He starts revealing things to us. We begin to see something a little bit, and we should know it's coming from Him, because there is a way that God works with us. There's a way that God works with the Church. We understand that. This series is talking about that. We may not see everything at first, and sometimes we may have a lot of questions as a result, and yet in time if you're patient it all begins to fit together.

I love that example Mr. Armstrong used to give about a puzzle. It's like you have a lot of pieces here, and just like a puzzle there are certain things you put in there, the picture starts. But even after you get along there in ways there are some pieces that they seem like they should go in a certain area and they don't. Eventually you get the pieces put in place and only God can help you do that. That's what's unique about this; only God can help you put everything together to see a clear picture. And candidly, it's always been that way, and will be that way until Christ returns, that there is a process that we have to go through and what we learn, and how we learn it. And to me, it's an exciting process.

But this matter of "the "cause" or the "controversy" of Zion," is really quite simple when it's all said and done because Zion is about God's people, it's about God's family, it's about those who are being created, brought into that molding and fashioning, that transformation that takes place to bring them into Elohim. That's God's objective, God's goal, God's desire. It has been from the beginning before anything was ever created. It's awesome to understand that. Yet this "cause" or this "controversy," that's what's happened for 6,000 years. Even before that there's been a controversy, or if you will, this cause that God has, a purpose that God has.

But when you talk about controversy it has to do with that which sometimes just doesn't agree with it, isn't in unity with it. That's what happened in the angelic realm. It's still astounding to me to think that a third of the angelic realm listened to one being, one archangel, and indeed,

because of this very thing, controversy over Zion. They did not want what God was showing them. They did not want the creation of human beings who had the potential for what God intended.

At what point they learned all this and are able to see these things, we don't know, but there came a time when God began to reveal more. He has done that in the angelic realm, progressive revelation, and He's done that for 6,000 years with mankind. Just to understand that, to me, is an awesome thing. That gives great understanding. The more we can learn about God, the more we see about God, the more in awe we become. All the truths that we've been given, as we talked about last week and we'll talk about more here, all the truths that God has given to us, it's astounding, it's dumbfounding when you understand it and don't take it for granted. A lot of us, or not a lot, but a few of us who came through the Apostasy that experienced the 18 Truths that were built upon the three that God gave to Mr. Armstrong as Mr. Armstrong was called out of the period of Sardis, or during that period of time to raise up Philadelphia, you go back through those and it's astounding what God gave to us that people had lost, that the Church didn't have any more. Perhaps for a few hundred years some of those things had been lost.

And to think what the Church became toward the end of Philadelphia, rich and increased with goods. It began to be lifted up by 21 Truths. That's what happened. It's like we have no more to learn; we have everything we need. We have it. We have the understanding, all the understanding, and looking down upon the world in some cases as sometimes people did, or even on one another if they didn't grasp those things to the same depth, because it's a matter of human nature that people still have to fight.

Then I think what God has given since that time and I was struck by something that happened, I guess it was a couple weeks ago. I just put it in my pocket here just to make sure, just in case I did think about it today. Duncan gave this to me a couple weeks ago, or whenever it was, but came up and told me about a star that is larger than VY Canis Majorus, and it's amazing what they continue to find. It was out there, I guess, for some time, the knowledge of it, but I didn't even realize that because what I'd looked at in times past, the other one was one of the greatest, and here's one that's even larger!

But the reason I'm mentioning this is because I think of progressive revelation that God has given of understanding through time, on a spiritual plane, if you will, for those whom He's called, but even on a physical one! I was thinking this morning, God Almighty, the fact, understanding that word "almighty" means more today than it did when I was in Philadelphia. It means more today than when I was in Laodicea, to understand the Almighty God, because He gives to us more and more and more and it glorifies Him more and more. And things of this nature in a physical universe, isn't it astounding what the Church has been given at the end? And the world has as well. They don't know it yet. The matters of technology, the ability to see and do some of the things that they do that will help mankind to more fully grasp the magnificence of God - because we have to start on a physical plane to begin seeing things and the more you can see in a physical universe, and in technology, and all the things that are out there, how minute and small some

things are to how great some things are, and to understand that the Great God created it all, made it all? We're so small and it helps us to understand God that much more, how great He really is!

So I think of David when he looked up into the heavens and maybe, if he tried, could maybe count a couple thousand stars, which I'm sure he didn't take the time to try to do. I mean, you just look at it and it's great. But today? To think what we're able to see and understand, and for what he said, "What is man that You're mindful of him (as you look at this small little orb)"? Awesome!

That other star is UY Scuti. That other one that is so large has a radius of 1,400 times that of the sun, and this one here has a radius of 1,700 times the sun. So it's quite a bit larger.

Dumbfounding! If you look at the diameter of it, it's eight times the distance of the earth to the sun. How can we comprehend such a thing? I believe, if my memory serves me correctly, it takes about eight minutes for the light at the speed of light to come from the sun to the earth, to hit the earth. That's so far! To even try to grasp that distance? But to think there's a star that's eight times that diameter out there? It glorifies God. It magnifies the Great God who created it and sustains it all. Amazing!

So it is with truth that God continues to give to us. We have lived through periods of time. God has lived through a long period of time, and His desire for His family, all that He has worked for, and the excitement that God has now and the amount He's giving us to see and grasp in understanding now is really more than what we can receive. It really is. I've thought about some of these things and some of these things are going to be taught and magnified upon during the Millennium. They are because we can't grasp everything that's been put in front of us. We really can't. I think of that one matter of judgment and the 280 days, and so forth, within the 1260 and how God uses it, that there is a period of time that's set for a manifestation of something, another part that's given for a time for God's judgment. Those are things that God has just given us a little bit to see, a little bit to grasp and understand, but awesomely important. Yet God's going to teach us much more about it in the future as to its importance and things that have happened.

So sometimes we get to a point where we maybe feel like we see it all or we grasp it all, and we don't. It's like the universe - we don't come close! I think of what man is looking at out there right now through the Hubble, one little spot. What about all the rest all around? We can't fathom that. It's just basically going in a particular way and a direction, or whatever, and trying to see what's out there in front, but what about everything else? We can't grasp it. Going on:

Most of the truth that God began to give the Church had to do with the Apostasy and the first three Seals of Revelation that had been opened.

I'm going to pause there as well because all that we understood through Philadelphia was that the first four Seals had to do with destruction on the earth. We had no idea it was about what was

going to happen to the Church. It talks about a third of this going to be destroyed and a third of that's going to be destroyed, and another plague comes along and this is going to be destroyed. It's like by the time you get to the Trumpets so much has been destroyed how can you have that percentage of destruction remaining? We didn't grasp that because God didn't show it to us. It wasn't time.

Most of the truth that God began to give the Church had to do with the Apostasy and the first three Seals of Revelation that had been opened. These truths were new to the Church, as they had to do with prophecy that had just been fulfilled in this end-time. However, the first great truth that was "restored" since being given many centuries earlier is one that was lost shortly after it had been revealed to the apostle, John. There was no scattered group who understood or taught this truth, and although there is one that has since attempted to address it, it is still far away from grasping it. This truth that was "restored" is the 14th Truth (35th overall).

This truth states, "We understand that Jesus Christ is 'continually coming' in the flesh of those who are in the Church of God..."

It dumbfounds me how simple that is and how clear it is. But what's dangerous in some of this is that if you're new and you see this from the beginning and you've always known this, it is so hard and you really can't grasp it fully because you haven't lived it, you haven't experienced it so you have it by knowledge. That's a difficult thing to deal with, but there's a danger there because we can begin to take certain things for granted. The reality is that had been lost, if you will, for nearly 1,900 years. That is incredible to understand! Then God chooses to restore it, that it's about Jesus Christ coming into our lives and the power of the holy spirit, not as we took it during Philadelphia and Laodicea that it had to do with a future return, literally, or that he did come the first time because that's how it was taken depending on what it said in John 14 and 2 John, and so forth, 1 John.

This of course has to do with John 14 and other similar verses in 1 John 4 and 2 John that the scattered Churches misapply to a past or future **literal** coming of Jesus Christ to this earth. This is the first great truth that was restored in the Church of God - PKG that powerfully separated it from all others. To this point in time, it was the most important truth revealed to PKG that testified and identified where God was working and through whom.

That's just God's choosing and the way God works in our lives and we either see those things or we don't. The only way we can see them is by God's holy spirit, the way it is with every truth He gives to us.

So continuing on from where we left off:

We have already covered what God revealed seven truths later in the 21st Truth (42nd overall), which was the greatest proof of all of the true identity of His Church. This was later

followed by another truth, the 50th Truth, which tried and tested God's Church in a very great way as to each person's faithfulness to follow where God leads.

That is awesome, what we experienced during that period of time, what was revealed. The impact of that is really hard to grasp in its fullest content without having experienced everything else that happened through the times of Mr. Armstrong, the battles that have gone on on into the end here.

It was this truth that launched God's Church into the time of God's final 3½ years of witness to this world...

And if you learn nothing else from this today than this, this was all about a matter of judgment, all a matter of final judgment. That's what a final witness was about. Testimony and a witness have to do with things that are connected to judgment and why and how God judges us as human beings, whether it be the Church or the world. That's what happened during that period of time. So again:

It was this truth that launched God's Church into the time of God's final 3½ years of witness to this world, about the world. This was also preparing the Church for the year (God's prophetic day for the Church) that would follow that 3½ years of God's own witness that He would establish in the righteous avenging of His Church over the "cause" of Zion.

I hope we get the thrust of this as we continue to go on because it has so much to do with a being out there who is being brought to an end. It isn't just about the Church. We are the primary focus of what God is molding and fashioning within His people for those who are going to be a part of the 144,000 and those who continue to live on then into the Millennium, but it's also about bringing an end to another reign, mankind's reign on this earth and Satan's. These all come together at the end. That's what's been taking place.

Again, that's been God's purpose all along and sometimes that's difficult. I think I'll stop there and read something because sometimes these things can seem to be really difficult when we go through them and sometimes they really are. I think of 2012 and that year. There were certain things that were given that I did not understand, didn't grasp, but believed just as anything else through time that God had given it, so that's what I have to give. So, anyway, they're difficult. 2013, that was a difficult year. Pentecost of 2012 to 2013, it was a difficult year, in more ways than one, and the Church went through a lot because of it, and looking back, it was very good. If you can understand that, it was very, very good. Sometimes what we go through and what molds and fashions us, that can't be molded and fashioned in any other way, is beautiful.

That's something that Satan has never understood that you can go through trials like Job, have your whole family destroyed, and have all your wealth destroyed just like that, and those things are difficult because Satan relishes being able to go after those with whom God puts in front of him, and especially the Church and those whom He's calling and working with; but he's never

understood how God uses those moments in time to change those with whom He works. Now, we have choices to make along the way, but God uses those moments, those times. So though it was hard for Job, what he learned afterward, of what he learned through the process, what value can you place on it? What value can you place on all the tears and sorrow and suffering and fighting and battling you might go through in this life to become a part of God's family? How valuable is it to be in Elohim for all time? This three-score and ten, this seventy years, as a whole, that man has been given is but the blink of an eye in time. It's hard for us to grasp that and yet that's what it is. But to us when we're living it, it doesn't seem like the blink of an eye. Yet after you've gone through it, it does. I look back on that three years and I have to conscientiously stop and think about what I did, what happened to me during that period of time, because it's like it's gone, like it never even happened. But what was learned from that for myself and for the Church, what we experienced and everything else that went with it, what value do you place on those things? Satan doesn't grasp that.

So this period of time that we're talking about here is exceedingly valuable. They were good. We can tend to think, "This is bad. I don't like this. I don't want to go through this. This battle that just goes on and on and on, when does it end?" Oh, it'll end. Either we die or it's over, in the sense of a new era begins. Somewhere along the line everybody fits into those categories. It's just the way it's always been.

I want to read this. It's from an elder overseas. They send in monthly reports, but I want to read this one here. They're going to know who it is down there immediately, but I want to do this for a couple reasons, going through some more parts of what he had to write, because there's a part I want to clarify a little bit. Anyway, I thought it was interesting. He was visiting in Hawaii for a period of time and while he was there he had some conferences there. But he said, "It was chilling to hear the nuclear warning siren get tested in Hawaii for the first time in many years." Isn't that amazing? They're testing it over there because of things that are going on. Incredible, the world we live in and how that's at the doorstep once again and the world is beginning to see it, not just talking about a third world war but a nuclear war. People talk about it. The world is tense. It's just a matter of time. It's coming. And more and more people, people are facing the reality of it. It's going to happen.

Jumping on down he says, "Ron made the comment, 'He's not calling the educated, those who teach in universities and so forth into the Church.' I often wondered what that means for me." So that's why I'm wanting to read this, because, as he says here, "as one who has a PhD and does teach in universities." So I just had to read this. "But I can see the problem with inflated egos that can be created by thinking one's self to be wise." I want to read some more here in a moment, but when I was talking about that I was basically talking about and thinking about certain leaders in time and different ones. I think of Paul and the education he had and so forth. But I think of a professor that I knew back in Kansas who taught in a university, and she was over the English department. As a matter of fact she was a professor, PhD, over the whole department of English

there at the college, at the university. So there are different ones that God does call who have accomplished a great deal in this world. But anyway, it doesn't hurt to be reminded of those things anyway as far as ourselves as human beings and to address them in a way that we recognize there are battles.

Anyway, he went on to say, "I am just thankful that I can see through the so-called wisdom of man and realize that all the education in the world does not give one any insight into the truths of God. In fact, it's quite amazing that I work with very educated atheists, Hindus, Muslims, and traditional Christians, and despite all the schooling these people are still clueless about the true meaning of life and God." Well put. "But," it goes on, and I want to get closer here to some of the things that have to do with what we have gone through and what this 4½ years is all about. He says, "It's a big responsibility on us when we understand that the return of Jesus Christ in 2019 could be delayed by the Church. If there are people that are not even doing the basics of tithing right, treating their spouses and brethren right, living differently to the world, then it will cause all sorts of problems for new people coming into the Church. And as Ron said, doing those things right is not enough when we have been trusted with so much. I think it would be very hard for the Church if time goes on again. Each time this happens it gets more convoluted and more stumbling blocks are created. But I know God can make any timeline fit into prophecy." It's beautiful, well written, because that's the reality.

That's the message, a message I've been trying to give for a long time here now. There is so much in this book that sometimes we think we grasp and understand, just like I mentioned earlier, the first three Seals, and we didn't have a clue yet because it wasn't time for God to reveal those things. It had to do with the Apostasy and God wasn't going to reveal that. He just holds certain things back from us to see how we're going to respond and react to the things when He does give it because that tries us and tests us to where we really are, as to what kind of agreement we are with God, and to how God works in our life and has been working since the time we were called. Awesome to understand how these things have happened in the Church.

So again, "I just hope with every ounce of my being that the Church can reach the standard that God demands of us soon and we do not get whittled down to a substantially smaller number." We are getting whittled down already. And the whittling down, I'm telling the Church, is not over with. Okay? God is not playing games with us now. We live in a different time. It's just like those two elders I drug into a meeting and said, "It's on you right now to make your choice and your decision as to what you're going to do, whether you're going to stand up for what you've been taught that Mr. Armstrong gave or what's being taught to you now, that you can do away with the Sabbath and the holy days and eating of clean and unclean meats. You can just eat anything you want." On and on it goes. Incredible, what took place.

The same thing is true for God's Church in a similar manner except we have a little more time than just one day, but it's upon us now to make those kinds of choices in our life. Are we going to fight for this all the way? Are we determined to fight for this way of life? Are we indeed 100%

involved in and understanding and desiring to see and be in agreement with 57 Truths that God has given His Church? Because that's what it comes down to. And if we're not, I'm just telling you from God Almighty you'll not be there; you'll not be there in the Millennium.

We are different from all other peoples who have lived in other times before us because they didn't have a choice in matters, what happened to them later on, whether they would be in a part of the 144,000. The only other category, basically, was the Great White Throne and that sorted out with time. We're different. Time has now come upon us.

Going on he said, "In the past I have had battles with the concept that God has deliberately allowed (facilitated?) the Church to believe things that are incorrect, like that Christ was returning soon when he wasn't. As this becomes apparent it makes one wonder what is still left to be corrected." This is being very open, very truthful. Sometimes that's a very good thing for us to be very open and very truthful with where we are and what we think and what we're battling with because if we don't know what we're dealing with and battling with in our minds how can we pray about it? How can we conquer it? How can we overcome it? That's what this is all about here. That's why I'm reading through this, sometimes things that are perhaps similar in matters that you have to address in your mind, in your life when certain trials come up or certain change or whatever it might be, you have to address them. You have to address what's in your mind, in your thinking and what's taking place in your mind.

"Certainly the fact that I thought the apocalypse was imminent was the thing that got me to get baptized. Without that I would almost certainly not be here." Ah-ha. There are things that happen that move us. There is a means. I marvel sometimes when I look at the Church and what's happened. I think of Laodicea and people who are drawn during a period of time there and the numbers. It got to the point where it wasn't the same. It was very clear that people weren't being called out there like they had during Philadelphia in the same manner and coming in with the same convictions. The early part of Laodicea was one thing, but the latter part there was a great difference. And at a time when we were very busy visiting all kinds of perspective members and so forth, it came to a point where it wasn't happening. Then after the Apostasy it became even clearer there weren't new people being called into the different groups that were forming. It was just a matter of people who are scattered. Although there was a message going out there, whether it be on TV or in the printed press, or whatever, and God wasn't drawing new people. And if we grasp why, if we understand why God would not call people during such a period of time then we will grow in wisdom indeed because that means you would be a babe. That was not a good time for babes in God's Church because those who were being even awakened were having to deal with some pretty big things in their lives, in their minds. So God has a way to deal with these things to draw us.

Then I think of all that period of time, all the way up to, as it were, about 2007. There weren't very many people being called during that period of time, a handful of people into the remnant Church.

Then all of a sudden we began to be so bombarded with emails and things that were happening because of what we were doing on the Internet. I couldn't handle it. I got Wayne involved and he started doing some things for the site and doing some things of how to answer certain things and began to have different people around the country and different parts of the world trained to be able to handle the load of what was coming in. Through that we had more people than that came through it all that God brought all the way into the Church. Awesome how God works! Then 2010, 2011, 2012 - how many new people have you seen come along? See, God's in charge and God calls whom He will when He chooses to. It's all in God's control. Always! It's not in ours, whose minds are opened and when they're opened. You learn a lot from that process.

Anyway, he says, "Certainly, the fact that I thought the apocalypse was imminent was the thing that got me baptized. Without that I would almost certainly not be here." That's the way it is with a whole bunch of others. If 2012 hadn't been the focus, if individuals hadn't believed those things about 2008 and what God was doing, as even all that wasn't even clear yet with the book that came out, but just the realization of where the world was and thinking about some of those things, and then as we got into those periods of time how people responded to that that were being drawn. It's because of those things that sometimes we get stirred up because we're physical by nature, and sometimes it just takes physical things to jar us into reality, to begin to ask questions. I'd say that's just the way it works in the beginning no matter what. You have to have certain things happen to you on a physical plane to bring you to a spiritual one, to sharpen up this, the listening.

"I have wondered if I will live to see the physical manifestation of prophecy take place, or will it be the same for my generation as all those who have gone before?" So again, open about questions that can come into your mind and then you deal with that and you work through that and you come to different conclusions. I think of David when he went through various things and things were bombarding him and he would wrestle them and then all of a sudden he would come down to the conclusion, to the answers. God would give that to him. Beautiful.

Going on, "Given the 6,000 years that must nearly be up (based on the biblical chronology), surely it cannot go on much longer. But I could see how it could go on for a couple of decades yet." Is that possible? Sure. But I'll mention here too, you can't be intellectual about this, okay? It's a matter of God's spirit because only God's spirit can work with us. We indeed must always have that sense of urgency because if you think in those terms you will not be living what you need to live. So we have to work through things like this, these kinds of questions that can pop into the mind and how we might react to a specific thing.

Again, it's a matter of understanding things out there could pop overnight. We live at a time like no other. You could wake up one morning and your world has changed. That's where we are! One of these days that's the way it's going to be. You may be asleep. It may be early in the morning. It may be mid-afternoon. It may be just before you go to bed, but at some point in time something of such incredible magnitude is going to begin this whole process, that it's going to scare you to

the core of your being. You believe these things are going to come to pass, but when it actually happens you're going to have fear as you have never known it. That's just reality. It's better to deal with reality though sometimes these things aren't pleasant to look at.

I think of a conversation my wife and I had here this past week about young people in times past who grew up in the Church, and of things we believed about what would take place with Germany conquering different areas of the world and so forth, and some of the kinds of things that some ministers got into, *Foxe's Book of Martyr's*, and the horrifying things that would take place, they believed, in that respect and how that affected children.

That's hard, but it's not an excuse to leave the truth of God, which some use that as an excuse to justify: "I'm not going to have my children raised like that." Well, that's a choice. You want to lie to them, teach them something different? That's your business. But to deal with reality and to prepare for reality? No, it's not a pretty sight, but it's going to happen. And candidly, it's not going to be that long up the road. What do you do? How do you deal with it? Just like the apostasy, what's coming is going to be so much worse than what we comprehend. That's why you place your life in God's hands and your family's life in God's hands and for protection because God alone is the one who can bring you through these things, and He will.

God is all powerful! How deeply do we believe that, that God will bring you through whatever is coming? Whatever it's going to take, He'll take care of you. I think of all the examples in the Bible of different times when God intervened to bless people, to help them, to give them life, to give them food, you know, whatever it might be, whatever they needed. God will do what it takes and so much more in this end-time.

Going on. So he said, "Surely it cannot go on much longer," but that thought about it could be, well, anything can happen. 2018 could come and go. I don't want that. I dread that. I know what it would do to the Church because that would be a horrible battle to keep going forward now. But if so, so be it, so be it, because I'm not in here for 2019 or 2012 or 2013 and 1975. I never was. It's about the truth. It's about how you live your life to your fellow man, especially in the Church of God.

And the reality of the history of the Church is, as a whole, to the degree that we have God's spirit living and dwelling within us, that hasn't been lived that well and we learn from that. I remember the first time, after about nearly six months of being in the Church, I was invited over to some people's home with some others to have a dinner, and the husband and wife got into a battle. I was shocked! I truly believed that God's people were perfect. Now, I needed a shaking to realize, oh no, we have human nature and it's still there and we still have the battles, but I was taken aback. I was jarred by that and I shouldn't have been, but I had to learn. No, we still have battles in life we have to fight. Should that have been taking place? Absolutely not. I don't know if they ever got it taken care of. I don't know what happened later on.

But, you know, those kinds of things sometimes happen and sometimes we see it. We see what happens when people don't get along, when people get in arguments and petty, petty, petty little arguments over the petty little things in life. I do not have any patience for those in one respect, and yet I have a lot of patience with it. It just blows my mind that we could be at this stage of our calling with all that God has given to us and people can't keep their mouths shut and their selfishness intact. That they will strike out at another brother or another sister in God's Church and say some of the most cutting, selfish, ugly things sometimes. It should never happen. We should be at a level and a point by this time in God's Church. We're far beyond what God gave to Philadelphia! We are so much farther than what Laodicea had it's not even funny! What we've gone through during this period of 4½ years, even more so because of that, that we should be so focused on God's love. This is what it's about because as it says in 1 Corinthians 13, what does all the understanding in the world - I don't care if you know everything, if you were able to know everything about God and what God has done, if you were able to understand every prophecy that's in the book and know exactly what's going to happen and when it's going to happen and all the other stuff that's there - it doesn't mean anything if we can't control this, if we can't control what comes out of our mouths and how we talk to others, or whether we talk about someone else in God's Church.

Just like someone recently here made some comments about my wife and something she had said about being a prophet, and it's like, "Well, she didn't know that. He-he-he," like she's a fortune-teller or something, you know. That individual has to repent of the stupidity of what he did. He's listening today - by God's grace - because he came very close to just being suspended from God's Church. I was going to send him a letter on that and have it said to him, but I'm not going to because he's hearing it today. And I think, "Don't you fear talking about God's leadership in that manner?" I would fear, you know, and some of the things that were passed along: "Well, I didn't do it. I heard it from somebody else." Yeah, but you repeated it! Doesn't that scare us?

I grew up listening to people criticize Mr. Armstrong and I didn't have the guts to stand up to that at that time. I didn't know I was supposed to, you know. If I had it to do all over again it'd be pretty unpleasant in some of those environments. I'd let them have it because of where I am now. But I wasn't there yet and I didn't want to hurt people. Whatever it is sometimes we think, "I don't know if that's my place." Oh, yes, I learned it's my place. We stand up for God's way of life.

Brethren, I know you know what I'm talking about. It's about how you live your life. I'm not in it for 1975. Yes, I wish it could have happened back then, but most of you wouldn't have been there. You wouldn't have the opportunities you're going to have. 2012? 2013? 2019? So we keep moving forward. I'll tell you here right now God has given us every one of those dates for a purpose and by design. And quite candidly, they all fit into something in a greater way than what we can comprehend. I hope we get some of that out of this series as we go through it because it is dumbfounding. There are some things here in timing that God will reveal more to us as we go

along, but it is astounding, truly astounding what we have gone through, what we have experienced. We'll continue with that as we go along.

I want to continue and read some more of this, but I think it's very good, you know, to open up like this, to show some of these things and some of the things we go through in our thinking sometimes. Anyway, "Being completely candid, I have sometimes felt uncomfortable when Ron has said that he believes with all of his being that 2019 is it." Now, that's being honest. And I do. I did for 2012. I do for 2019, because I believe that is what God has given us as a focus. I don't care if it's just a matter of a marker. It's kind of like when you're running and especially if it's a long distance. There are certain things you set in front of you - you're going to that object - or whatever it is. That's your goal. It's not the whole thing, as a whole. Yes, you want to finish it all, but how many of you who run have set some of those markers as you run along the way and you see something in front of you and you're just looking to get to that. Then you see something beyond that and you just go from one marker to another. That's the way this way of life is, as a whole. You run a race. That's what God gave to us to grasp and comprehend and you keep moving from one marker to another and you have to have those markers and they have to be something you can see in a short distance, not a long distance. Because if it's a long distance, you aren't going to think right! You aren't going to be focused as you need to be focused. You really aren't.

I remember the first time I ran ten miles...and the last time. I was a short distance runner in college. At Ambassador I ran 400 meters. That's it and I trained for it! I could do the sprints, 100 meters, 200 meters, and 400 meters; that was my race. That was where I excelled. Anything past that it was going to be pretty tough. They say you can train for those things and you can do those things, and maybe I could, but I don't have the same kind of lungs, in some respects, I felt. I don't know. Maybe I do. Maybe I could do it. I don't want to do it! Some of you who like to do it, more power to you. I made a decision back then and if this one guy hadn't been beside me I wouldn't have made it. I wouldn't have made it five miles. That was about my limit, 5 miles. And I set markers in front of me: "You can do it. You can do it. Right down here to this corner. You just keep going. You just keep doing it." It's the only way I could make it. That's the only way you can make it in this race. You have to have markers in front of you. If your markers are too far away and you begin believing that you're in trouble... you're in trouble, truly.

Going on here, "...when he has also counselled us that time can go on, and because of the number of false starts the Church has had so far, 1975, 2011, 2012, 2013, this has caused me some battles in the mind." It has caused people battles in their mind. It's natural. There's nothing wrong with that, in opening up about that and being candid about that. These are some of the battles that happen, that sometimes we think as human beings. That's just natural, but that's your battle. Why we think that way, how should we see this, how should we comprehend this, how should we deal with this, it's very important. I wouldn't call them "false starts." My language, I put them as markers along the way; that which you aim for, that which you run toward.

He says, "This has caused me some battles in the mind as I struggle with the language that is used and the double meaning." Well, again, I wouldn't use that terminology either, "the double meaning," but sometimes we learn that something is a "type" of something else and so we learn that, that what we may see is not the full meaning of a thing, but it's a type of something that's to happen later on in a greater fulfillment. So we always have that coming at us from God indeed.

"I understand there are reasons God has chosen to work with His Church through an apostle in this way, and these reasons are being partly explained in the current sermon series. I know we have been given so much spiritual evidence and understanding, but no matter how much is there I deeply crave to see the physical and to move beyond the confusion of this age." That's the way we are as human beings. We want to see something physical. We want to see something happen so that we can be reassured or strengthened. But you know, that isn't how God works with us, as a whole. He works with us and reassures us on a spiritual plane. It's spiritual, that which we can see and understand about, if you will, 57 Truths, and how clearly we see those things. We see them. It's in us. That's God and that's God's purpose and that's God's mind being given to us to choose—Is this the course I choose? Is this the way I want? All those truths that are given all have purpose and great meaning. So we go through that process.

He said, "I want a burning bush." That's the way we are. Who doesn't want a burning bush? I would love to have had at any point in time since I've been given some of the tasks that I have, to just hear a voice. Now, see, I receive more than that because it's in the mind. It's spiritual. I understand that because I've gone through enough of this already to know when God's given me something, but there have been times when I have just asked: "Michael or Gabriel, please, just for 15 minutes? 5 minutes?" Wouldn't that be awesome? But that's not what it's about. And you know what? That diminishes faith. The kind of faith that God is letting us experience is a kind—please listen to this—that has never been experienced to this degree on this plane ever in God's Church save for one who exceeded that far more than what we can comprehend. That's Jesus Christ. God has brought through time, the Church, to a point in time where that experience is greater. That may be hard for you to believe, but it's true. Awesomely true!

Just like the example I gave earlier, that today we can see the universe and see things in technology, science, of things we have never comprehended before as mankind, to the same level and degree spiritually for God's Church of what has been given to us is along that same plane, if you will, in understanding.

"Knowing what I do about myself I don't think that will ever change. It will always be my battle." You are your own battle. We all are. It's all up here. This is where our main battle is. We have to fight self. That's what we do. We have to fight the carnal, natural human way of thinking. That's why I talked about judgment last week and the normal thing that comes in your mind first and foremost isn't God's judgment, it's yours. If we could all understand that. Most often what comes

into your mind and out of your mouth is your judgment and has nothing to do with God's. Truly! You need to really think about that because there's great wisdom in that that comes from God.

"It will always be my battle until we get there or I die. I always come back to the truths." That's what it's about. See, it's full circle. It reminds me of David's Psalms, you know, things that he had to say, things that were happening in the world around him and the confusion and the chaos and the evil and the enemies that are there and the battles that are there, and then all of a sudden it comes down to an understanding of what God's doing, a thankfulness for what God's doing. That's what we have to go through in our thinking oftentimes. "I always come back to the truths, the way I was called." That's why I talk about never forget it because if you remember how you were called, the uniqueness of that, God Almighty did it, that's awesome! He does not want you to ever, ever forget it, but sometimes people conveniently put it aside and ignore it and don't magnify it in their minds as they should.

He goes on to show other things here "...the three days and three nights," awesome, "the history of the Catholic Church and how it could never be the truth, that there is no hell, the sign of the Sabbath, and so on it goes. I can see the great power, wisdom, discernment that God puts into His senior ministry and the inspiration that is in the sermons." That's just a reality. It's not an individual. It's not Wayne. It's not Johnny. It's not me, whenever you hear something. God is the one who molds and fashions us and gives what needs to be given and what we need to focus upon. And if there be value, if there be that truth, then it's God's. It comes from God. That's awesome.

I think about what Paul said when he was basically talking about some of those things that what they hear, yeah, they speak in the power of God, they've heard those things in the power of God because they've had them preached to them and they've experienced that power of God because it's of God. It's not human reasoning or thinking; it's God. The fact that we see some certain things, you think, "Yeah. Man, I never saw that before," and all of a sudden it becomes clear to you.

"So even though we have not seen the physical effects of the Trumpets or a strong manifestation of the Thunders yet, I keep coming back to this being God's Church. I thought I might close with a couple of questions..." Well, I don't think I have time for that right here, but I was going to answer some of that.

I'll never get through this series if we don't keep going. I don't personally like giving long series. But you know, what I like doesn't really count too much because I know the importance of what we're experiencing and what we're going through here is exceedingly important to God's Church right now, that we be able to grasp far, far, far more than we did when you first read this back in 2013. So much has happened. So much, truly, on a spiritual plane.

Anyway, continuing on if I can find where I left off after all of that. Going on:

In addition to all the awesome truths God gave His people, He began to call large numbers into His Church through 2007 and 2008. More would be called, but by the time God's final witness would begin, the Church had been prepared for an awesomely unique experience...

And this, to me, is one of the most inspiring things to know and to understand.

...the Church had been prepared for an awesomely unique experience of God's creative power to bring "transformation" to its greatest pinnacle yet.

And if we can grasp progressive revelation and the fact that God just gives more and more and more, to understand what we've come to by this time with 57 truths that God has given to us, to understand the trials we have gone through and why, is to understand what God has been doing in our lives and that the speed of this process whereby God can work with people to transform them, to bring them along to the point of Elohim, is at it's fastest in all human history! We should be tickled pink about that one! Do we not want that, to excel, and to have the opportunity for greater growth, greater opportunity, strength of mind and spirit? There has never been a time like this because there's never been a time that all this could be received by God's people like it is now. I hope we see that or growing in that at least.

God molded and fashioned events, as well as their timing, so that the Church would be made to stand...

Even then when I preached about those things, about this process and what God is working, to be made to stand, I didn't grasp it all because we hadn't gone through certain things yet, and only in retrospect and looking back in time can I see what God has done. That's the excitement of all this, is to go back sometimes and then to realize what God has been doing in your life and what God has been doing in the Church.

... made to stand through 4½ years of one of the most extraordinary periods ever experienced by God's people.

A lot is said there, a lot said. Powerful. Powerful. Powerful. Going on:

God's Work

After healing a man on the Sabbath day and being condemned by the Jews for doing it at that time, Jesus gave them a simple reply: "My Father has been working until now and I have been working" (Jn. 5:17). During that time, God and Christ were working to establish a "witness" of Jesus being the Passover and Messiah of all mankind.

Now, it doesn't mean that those things haven't been taught before and that those things haven't gone out before, but there's a method, a timing, a righteousness in how God judges and how God is bringing 6,000 years to a point of making final judgment. It's not that certain things haven't been prophesied that they will come to be this way, that certain things are going to happen, but

the administration of it is another matter. Those are the periods of time we've been living through, when a final witness, a testimony like in a court of law is used by God Almighty for a purpose of judgment. God sets that judgment, righteously so, at that point in time. We are living at the end of that time and so God has established not just a final witness, but was for the purpose of a final judgment. Some of it wasn't made known until this period of time that we've been going through, as we continue to go through this series. Awesome to understand this!

That witness was recorded in scripture for the sake of the Church that would follow, for God's great **work** is about the creation of Elohim.

God has been working. Jesus Christ said he has been working. This is their aim. This is their purpose. This is our purpose. This is our focus.

After 2,000 years and seven different eras of God's Church, the Church had now been prepared for another important time of witness.

They all witnessed. They were all witnesses in their age, in their generations, but we live in an end-time generation, the end of 6,000 years, and so God has chosen that as a means, as a process to establish final judgment. Awesome!

While I'm on it, I can't help but say it, thinking about this where God shows that He works. He has been working for so long for Elohim. Jesus Christ has been and we yield ourselves to that work. I just want to mention something about work. We had all, as a whole, who are capable and able, to be working physically in life in jobs and so forth, to be working. If we don't have one to be working to have those, whatever it takes, because I have told people in the past, some in the Church, "You're not working is not right and if you do not provide for yourself or your family you're worse than a non-believer."

God gave us six days to be able to do work and if we don't have a job in the midst of all that - it's one thing to work to do our own chores and other things we don't do on the Sabbath and to keep up in certain things, but we also, as a whole, if we're capable human beings and younger, as it were, not retired—I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about people who have the ability, capability to go out and work—this is the last time. Some of you who are not working and do not set your jobs, you're out. You're leaving God's Church. I have warned and given direct admonition, direct encouragement, and through different ministers in God's Church to some, and you have not listened. You are not a part. You're worse than a non-believer and you want a free ride? You want a padded ride? You want others to bum off of, to take things from to be able to use in God's Church or whatever it might be so that you can have what you want? That's coming to a screeching halt, okay? There is no excuse for that. That's not right. It's not God's way.

God works! Jesus Christ works! I work! We work! If we don't have that as a principle in our life and in our thinking something is wrong. Too much idle time, too much time not

working, in that respect, being focused upon certain things in our life does some bad things to the mind. It truly does. It is not healthy. It's not healthy on a physical plane and it most assuredly is not healthy on a spiritual plane. So as I go around to visit various areas, and even before I get there in some cases, some are going to be receiving some letters. You've been warned year after year. You were warned last year and you're being told again. What are you doing? Are you behind this thing? Are you doing the minimum, as it were, in supporting God's work in giving offerings to God's work? Can you offer more to God? Or are you just not able to do it, for whatever reasons? And I've heard all kinds of excuses under the sun of why some can't work. Oh, you can do something. You can do something. I've been there. I've done it. I know what it is to go out to find work, to make work, whatever it is. Okay?

So I hope we take that serious because that's going to be another wave of individuals that are going to be gone if you don't change right now, in the next couple of months here. God's just letting you know. It's not going to be a free ride in the Millennium if you're not living as you should be, if you're not living scripturally by what God says you should, that you're to be providing for yourself and your own family. If you don't you're worse than a non-believer. And if we have God's spirit, we've been blessed to be called and we have God's spirit living in us, what does that mean then? "I'm worse than a non-believer?" Absolutely! Because you're not living what God has given you to live.

I'm saving time in writing letters. You've been told again. This is the last time. You think this isn't serious about where we're going and where we're headed in God's Church and the cleansing that's going to continue to take place? Because everything that is not cleansed, it's going to be cleansed. That which is not in unity and harmony with God's way of life and working for God's way of life, it's going to change. We just live in that time. And you know what? That's right. It's what's right. It's what's just. It's what we should be living in life. It's about a way of life. We can't live it as we want to; we have to live it in the way we're instructed to live it scripturally by what God tells us it should be lived.

Going on:

God and Christ worked with a remnant of the Church following the Apostasy to prepare it for an important battle in time. Though we still do not understand the full meaning of the dates and timing of all that followed that period of 4½ years...

That's why I know that there's a lot more to be given. We don't have time to go into some things, and some things it'll have to wait until Jesus Christ returns because there are other important things that we have to focus upon.

God is continuing to reveal more to us, as He always has. God's Church seeks to judge by the present truth to any moment in time, and if all will do so righteously, they will then live accordingly — in faith, as this is how we are judged.

The Church had no real concept of the great falling away (Apostasy) that would come upon it before December of 1994. Once it did come, however, the Church (brethren and ministry) was to judge righteously what had happened. [The Church was to judge righteously what had happened.] There were basic issues at hand that had to be addressed. Where was God's Church?

Where was God's Church? You know, there are just basic things in life that sometimes when you go through it, it should be just natural to ask, that should be there, and we should be seeking an answer. Where is God's Church? Again, it's hard to receive this by knowledge, but you should strive to receive as much as you can though you didn't live through it, though you didn't experience it because it means something different to those who experienced it that's so deeply embedded in them.

If we were God's Church, then how could it be experiencing what it did after December 17, 1994? This led many to see more deeply than ever that the organization (WCG) was not the Church...

Mr. Armstrong said that over and over again. He made it clear that the organization is not the Church. Worldwide Church of God is not the Church. The Body of Christ, the Church of God is the Church. We bear a name that we identify with as far as an organization, but the organization, the physical organization of something is not the Church. Those who have the spirit of God dwelling in them and who are yielding to God and not being cut off by the flow of God's spirit, they are the Church. Mr. Armstrong made that so clear at different times it's like even though he said it, it's like it's not there yet. So we have to get jarred sometimes until it's there.

This led many to see more deeply than ever that the organization (WCG) was not the Church but that the Church was the spiritual Body of Christ. This had not fully sunk into everyone in the Church even though Herbert W. Armstrong made the point several times before he died in 1986.

So what had happened to the spiritual Body of Christ? The answer should have been clear, but it wasn't because of the "spiritual condition" of the Church being lukewarm and so spiritually weak. As God blessed some to be awakened from that spiritual sluggishness and sleep, answers began to be made manifest (revealed) and obvious. God's Church had been scattered; spiritual famine was growing and widespread. An apostasy had occurred; the identity of the man of sin who was the son of perdition for the end-time had been made manifest. However, most of the scattered Body could neither humble themselves enough to acknowledge the Apostasy nor admit their true spiritual state...

I mean, it's amazing. It's all about pride. The thing that was the worst that came through the Apostasy was pride because if you admit certain things you have to acknowledge your own condition and you're not as good as you thought you were. That was the problem, rich and increased with goods, lifted up by who we thought we were and where we thought we were on a spiritual plane. And we weren't. God says you're lukewarm, and because of that just get rid of it all, one fell swoop. Then He began to draw different ones back, began to shake them up, wake them up when they realize they've been cut off.

However, most of the scattered Body could neither humble themselves enough to acknowledge the Apostasy nor admit their true spiritual state for to do so would be to acknowledge that they were Laodiceans.

That's amazing because that's what began to come out. It began to become so clear. "We've been spewed out of God's mouth. That's why the Church is like it is. We were lukewarm! So we're not Philadelphian, we're in Laodicea." God says to Laodiceans to repent. Incredible! So if you can't acknowledge who you are you can't repent.

Such people would not judge "righteous judgment" concerning the identity of God's Church, the present truth, or the actual conditions and events that had occurred.

Still to this day, they can't; they can't acknowledge what happened. They are of the mindset that the Church, their group, their organization has to grow so large to exceed what was in Worldwide because you have to have at least 144,000 adults—Hello!—which means a whole lot more people and nobody is remotely growing in that way. No one is remotely having growth that gives that a window of a chance of ever coming true over the next hundred years. We can laugh at it a little bit, human nature and the way it is, but you think that should be so simple to see. But you can't see it. If you're asleep, you can't see things that are obvious.

Yet God taught people in His remnant Church **how** to judge such matters righteously so that they could have much more truth revealed to them.

Now is a time that this kind of judgment is required of God's people again...

I hope we got that. That kind of judgment, the ability to judge like that requires God's spirit, requires being close to God, requires being able to see what God is giving us and telling us and then saying, "Now I understand. It fits into place. It makes sense."

Now is a time that this kind of judgment is required of God's people again just as it was when God allowed and gave way for the Apostasy to be manifested in His own Church. We are to be judging through what God has given His Church to experience, through the present truth, and through the actual events and conditions that have already occurred. **If** we **know** this is God's Church, then we can continue in righteous judgment. If one does **not** know this and

is **not** deeply convicted of such truth, then they will judge from their “own beliefs” and views as “they see it” (just as how it happened after the Apostasy).

You don't ever want to be in that state. You want to make certain that it comes from God.

That is why basic understanding that should be gleaned from the 35th, 42nd, and 50th Truth are so important to the **identity** of God's true Church and with who it is through whom God is working in the continuing process of the creation of Elohim. It is also important to know that the 49th Truth (about the Seven Thunders being revealed) will yet drive that point home to God's Church that was scattered after the Apostasy.

I want to mention something else. We were given an ability to see certain things that parallel, that are a part of the Thunders, but are not yet really the Thunders, but they were those things that helped God's Church to go through what we went through, looking at various things in the world and what had happened. So God let things be stirred up to a point - 2007, 2008, 2009 - to help you. They are not the Thunders that are coming, but they were thunders. They were a prelude and a part, just like 9-11, of something that foreshadows something that's going to come in a massive way later. So we have experienced certain things to a point, but the primary purpose of those is something that happens later on and, well, that's yet to come. But they will all happen exactly as it's written in *2008 - God's Final Witness*, as far as what is stated there. Going on here:

God Establishes the Truth & Reveals Error

As it has previously been covered in this article, the Church was tried and tested in God's present truth throughout 2008. God was establishing those things that would be needed so that the Church could experience what He had been preparing it to fulfill through the 4½ years that ended May the 19th, 2013. Daniel's 1335 days being about the 144,000 becoming sealed was revealed.

We still didn't know it all. Think about that. Think about when that was given, a piece of the puzzle, a small piece, present truth. So how do you build upon it with the rest of the present truth? That's what we did. That's what I did; just did it incorrectly because there was more that God hadn't revealed yet. God knows what we're going to do and how we're going to do things if we follow Him faithfully. Okay?

"Daniel's 1335 days being about the 144,000," because the most important thing, even though God may allow certain things for us to go in a certain direction that's not right on course, as He did throughout Philadelphia, throughout all of Philadelphia, candidly, if we grasp it, is exactly how He works with us. He allows us to make choices and decisions along the way with present truth that we have knowing indeed how we are as human beings, that without the rest of the picture we're not going to be on target. We're going to be swaying to one side or the other, but He allows that! Do we grasp that that's for the purpose of molding and fashioning us? That that's the most important thing, that God knows how to mold and fashion, to transform us when we're in His

Church, and how we think and live with what we're given to any moment in time? It isn't that God can't give us everything at any moment in time, but that's not His purpose because the trying and the testing are far more important. Without it you can't become Elohim! You can't be transformed! This mind can't change! Because it's forced into making choices and decisions that define who we are. Nothing else does. It brings us to the point in time that we become defined.

And God chooses not to know, as Mr. Armstrong talked about, though He could know, and just like in the Church in the ministry, if people don't change certain things in a certain course I know exactly where it's headed, know exactly what's going to happen because it's happened hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of times before. It requires God's spirit and if we're not in unity and harmony there's a certain outcome that is absolute. It's just the way it is.

So within the ministry we learn some certain things and we hope that people will see and come to a point where they'll grasp certain things in their life and make the change and make the choice and be able to be brought through it, but if they refuse that's in their mind. You can't control anyone. You can teach. You can lead. You can direct. You can correct, but we have to make the choices, each one of us as human beings, and trials and tests are the things that bring those moments in time to a head, to where it isn't known yet in some cases exactly how we're going to respond. That reveals character. That reveals where we are spiritually. That reveals what more needs to be done in us, and maybe reveals what can no more be done in us.

Daniel's 1335 days being about the 144,000 becoming sealed was revealed. Christ returning on Pentecost rather than Trumpets was established. In the midst of all this, God had already revealed who His two end-time witnesses were and that 2008 would be the beginning of His final witness.

That's all I knew concerning a date, "This was the beginning of God's final witness." The present truth. How it all fit into everything? I had much to learn. We've had much to learn. God reveals it in His own timing and you know what? It makes it hard sometimes to describe how these things work, but it's like the things in John 14 and 2nd John and so forth, and 1 John 4. When it's there it's there and you see it. It's like the Sabbath day, when you first grasp it, the 7,000 year plan of God. You think, "That's awesome! Seven days - God's plan - 7,000 years. The Sabbath day. The Millennium. God's government established on the earth. Awesome!" When it's there in your mind, when you were called and there are certain things you saw and you knew and you understood, it's just there. There's no other way to describe that and that's how God works. That's how God worked with Mr. Armstrong. He brought him to a point in time where it was just there. He didn't have anyone to tell him. He didn't have anyone to teach him, but God just put it in his mind and gave him the insight, the sight, the ability to see. Then he gave it to the Church. That's how God works. Going on: "So we knew 2008 would be the beginning of His final witness."

We just didn't know what it all meant, but we did judge according to the present truth as God had molded and fashioned this within us.

This refinement in judgment and understanding of how we are judged in the present truth had not been given to Herbert W. Armstrong; however, God did use Mr. Armstrong's experience to establish that understanding and revelation for us in this end-time. Upon addressing the significance of 19-year time cycles in God's work and the commission God had given him and the Church, Mr. Armstrong addressed some very important points. He explained how he was not a prophet. He also explained some matters concerning the booklet entitled, *1975 in Prophecy*.

So we've lived through many things. Mr. Armstrong lived through many things. We have lived in a time when we have learned many things, but in a ramped up process. In time it's been ramped up mightily, built upon what was given in Philadelphia, built on the experiences of Laodicea, and thrust into the end, if you will.

The reality is that the Church did look to this date as a possible time for Christ's coming. Now, I came in in 1969, and knew the book was there. I'm sure I read the book once, and I don't believe I went back probably and read it again, from my recollection of things, that particular book. There was a thinking about 1972, but it wasn't real strong, but it was still there, 1975, a possibility, because Mr. Armstrong, as 1972 approached, was already forewarning the Church, if you will, about what was written there and to be prepared because things were not happening in the world. So the kind of emphasis on that was nothing like 2012. Night and day there. But it still was something that affected others before that period of time in 1969 by the time I came in, and so it wasn't a major thing, in that respect, but it was still there and still the thought in the back of your mind that God could ramp things up quickly.

It would be good at this juncture to quote some of what Mr. Armstrong wrote in his "Personal" in "Tomorrows World" magazine of February 1972 (the "Personal" is available on the Church site under Mr. Armstrong's publications). There are several excerpts that will be in quotes in this section of the post, and I will also make some added comments along the way.

So Mr. Armstrong wrote:

"Let me ask you this question. Do you know of any large, established, well-recognized professing Christian denomination which has publicly confessed it had been wrong in what it had been teaching, and which they corrected the error, and turned to the truth?"

So again, a basic question here to ask. You don't see that in the protestant world. They just don't do it. They just double down if a question comes to them about the Sabbath or Easter or whatever.

In Mr. Armstrong's day, this could only be asked of the difference between God's Church and all those in traditional Christianity. [What an awesome thing it's so different today.]

Today, however, it should be asked of all who were scattered after the Apostasy, but it is not.

Yet every truth revealed to the Church of God - PKG since the 21st Truth revealed through Mr. Armstrong has revealed error in the Church.

You know, when God reveals some truth, any truth, there's going to be error that's automatically going to be exposed because we didn't know it all, we didn't understand it all, we didn't grasp it to that moment in time. So the Church has had to deal with those things even through Philadelphia when God began to reveal certain things to Mr. Armstrong of how things should be done; it revealed where there was some fault, an error, whatever. So it was with things like Pentecost and so forth.

The 22nd Truth revealed that we did have an apostasy.

I marvel at these things. There was an apostasy. I think of the process we've gone through and all these things as God's revealed them, and I think of so many people who are scattered out there and how it should be so simply easy even on a physical basis to say that there was an apostasy. How could any group, just on a physical plane, not even talking about God's spirit, look at what's happened to the scattered Church and not acknowledge we had an apostasy. Look how puny everyone is. Look how small! I mean, we're small. We're laughable to the others because we are so much smaller than some of the others, like the one that I left. Then it split and they're still small and not growing. I think of some of the others that split and they're not growing, yet there is some growth in certain things of different ones, but there are just as many that go by the wayside as time goes along in some of that, and so lots of give and take. And what's up here? It's not the truth? It's not a calling like into Philadelphia or in the beginning of Laodicea and seeing the truth and knowing it.

It's like being "called" into the Seventh Day Adventist Church. That's what it's like. There are certain things that people can agree with. They hear it after a while, "Oh yeah, Christmas." People can learn that without God's spirit. There are people who believe that without God's spirit, but to see all that God has given the Church, that God gave to Philadelphia, that requires God's spirit. But to look at something like this physically for those who have been scattered? They physically should be able to acknowledge it, but pride won't let them.

To deny this was to deny God's Church. We were beginning to admit the error of failing to acknowledge what God had prophesied would happen **in** His Church in the end-time.

That's what happened, a failure to acknowledge what took place. How can you not look at, even physically, what it says in Laodicea or what it says in 2nd Thessalonians 2 and not grasp what happened? As large as the Church was, shattered to the core! To not say that something gigantic blew up? It boggles the mind!

You see, a lot of that does not require God's spirit to be able to acknowledge that truth. It's a reality of something that happened in life that can open the door to understanding if an individual will acknowledge it because then they have to begin to admit, "I was Laodicean. I was

spewed out of God's mouth. The stones of the temple have been scattered." All that has to come about, to take place.

We were beginning to admit the error of failing to acknowledge what God had prophesied would happen **in** His Church at the end-time. This then led to the acknowledgement of many other truths related to the Apostasy and God's Church that were to become manifest during the prophesied end-time. These all in turn revealed error we needed to correct.

So each step of the way God was showing us things to correct things we didn't grasp, things we didn't know to bring us into greater truth.

The 33rd Truth was the first that revealed error that had existed before the Apostasy. That truth was about the reality that there was no literal physical place of safety. We now accepted the clear truth of scripture that "Petra" was always about God being our place of safety, just as He is likened to our high tower, defense, shield, fortress, etc., as in Psalms 18. Indeed, God is our rock, our Petra.

Isn't that amazing? I think of some of these things now and I'm so thankful that God has freed up our minds to see something, to grasp something. We were so physically oriented, but yet we were for a purpose because we couldn't see beyond the physical. We thought there was a place over in the nation of Jordan. One individual who believed that so deeply, a minister of the past, went over there for a few times and was trying to work certain things out, and from what I understand got kicked out. But anyway, he still hopes to get back in there and so do the followers because they look to Petra. "We're going to Petra."

It's kind of like those who believe in a rapture. If you're flying on that day and they take the pilot it's going to be bad. Who is going to land the jet? Crazy thing! And the car in front of you, sometimes you see stickers and its like, "If I disappear and the rapture's happened..." You know? And they believe these things, but it's in ignorance. So it has been in the Church. We just didn't know and truly thought this. I heard some crazy things. I won't even tell you some of the crazy things I heard in times past when I first came in the Church, about how we were going to get to Petra.

I'll tell you one because people would tend to speculate. It didn't come from the ministry, but sometimes we just like to speculate about certain things prophetically and yet how often has anything ever happened like we speculate? The Atlantic Ocean, if you live on the east coast, is going to part. You're going to be able to drive over. You can say, "Where are you going to get the gas?" Well, you're going to take a lot with you or God's going to provide. I'm sorry, but insanity! Absolute insanity that God would do something like that. That's as crazy as the man in the plane, the pilot, and he's going to just disappear.

So there are things that are sound in what we believed, and there are things that sometimes can become unsound in how people think and how they react to certain things, but this place of

safety being in the mountains there in an area where part of Israel went, where Aaron went. Incredible history of things we don't fully understand yet as they wandered through that part of the world during forty years.

But toward the end of Philadelphia the Church was learning that it doesn't hold 144,000. So when there are motels being built up there because of tourism, it's like, "Ah, we're being prepared for having motels out there. So we're going to have that taken care of." Well, we did that foolishly, but we didn't know. I was very close to a person in the Houston area who was an engineer and he worked for a lot of petro-chemical companies and he had his own business where they actually built a lot of sewage facilities for petro-chemical companies. For a period of time he had it all designed of what it was going to take to be able to build one in Petra. He'd thought it through. Smart man. It was ingenious, some of the things he came up with, and he showed me some of the plans, but it's not going to happen. I think he's dead too. Yeah, he died.

But anyway, to understand what Petra is; it seems so clear to some of you now when you've been called. He is our rock. He is our fortress. He's our high tower. To think back that there was a time that God's Church, that we believed that we would be going to a physical place, that somehow God would take us to a physical place, to transport us if need be, whatever it took, and He would place us there to be protected for 3½ years? And maybe that was better, in some respects, because of how hard some things were taught at that time, like from the book *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. To have that as a kind of thing that a person could hold on to, to think that we're going to be able to escape. Well, the reality is wherever you are God has the power to protect you. We don't have to be in a physical place because the reality is even if you're there you still have to be protected. And candidly, that's one place that's not going to be so nice probably when it's all said and done. Going on:

After the era of Philadelphia and on into the end-time after the Apostasy, we did not focus or expound upon the "errors" when God revealed new truth to us. Instead, we simply focused on the revelation of truth as a matter of positive change and greater spiritual growth that God was giving.

You know, I'm so thankful of that. When God gave us certain things about Pentecost, when God gave us certain things about between the two evenings, as a whole there was no need to go in and delve deeply into why certain people believed certain things about Pentecost because I think of some different ministers and things they were teaching out here in the scattered group and to try to understand some of their thinking and why they were teaching some of the things they were was an absolute waste of time. Why try to understand them? Just understand what is true. Then when something false comes along you'll be able to see this isn't true. This doesn't even come close to what is true. So I'm thankful that God just worked with us in that fashion, just revealed, as a whole, what is true. We don't have to dissect false beliefs to understand them, why they think the way they do.

In reality, we were also actually acknowledging error. [We just didn't talk about it. We didn't have to.] We were addressing change and new truth in this manner largely due to a continuing growth in spiritual maturity within God's Church and of being led to **see** that God is in charge of what we are able to **see** at any moment in time. [That is awesome to know, and to have deeply embedded in the mind.] The revelation of truth is in His control just as it is of **when** He gives us more truth, and when He gives us more we indeed have less error because He is leading us more and more into the light and farther and farther from the darkness. **Seeing** truth is not a result of our own ability nor of intellect, but fully of God.

If only we could always keep that, but the reality is people can't. People who have left around 2012 and 2013 didn't hold on to this, couldn't grasp this because when you begin to leave, lose things on a spiritual plane, you just can't see anymore. It's spiritual.

Seeing truth is not a result of our own ability nor of intellect, but fully of God. Over the past year, God has helped to begin expressing this process as a matter of the "present truth" since He is the one who progressively reveals His truth to His people. We simply have to make the choice to accept and follow it or not.

Again, 2013, because, brethren, we've been given a lot more since then. See, it's on some of the things that were revealed here that the last book was written. It's on the beginning of some of the things that God began to show here through this article that God began to lead and bring us to a time, to me, to understand to be able to write a third book. I can't say I understood it. You write a chapter in 3½ days in the conditions that were there, it's not because I understood it...but growing in understanding.

Let's continue now with excerpts from that "Personal" of Mr. Armstrong: "But are they **all** perfect and correct in what they teach? If so why do not any two **agree** in all points of doctrine?"

It's just simple reasoning. Why don't the Baptists agree with the Catholics? Never going to happen!

"The **reason** is simply that they **do** teach errors which they are afraid to confess, for fear they would lose members."

I think of what happened in the scattered body. So many decisions were made about what was written and what wouldn't be written because of the fear of losing members. But it wasn't members they were concerned with, it was money, because with members go the tithes. That's what people were motivated by. It became very obvious in some of the meetings that were taking place. I remember the organization I was with for a time needed to address Passover and they wouldn't address it. You know why? Because it's guesstimated that half their ministry believed in a 14th/15th Passover. So how can you write a real strong article about Passover being on the 14th if maybe half your ministry believes in something different? And maybe because of what they are teaching that a lot of people have the same problems in what they believe or don't believe and so

forth. And what happens? Splits. That's what happened. Splits took place. Splits and splits and more splits and people got pretty good at doing the splits.

So again here, incredible things that are given here even in what Mr. Armstrong had to say and lessons we're to learn from it. That's the way it is with the scattered body. That's the point of all this. Mr. Armstrong wrote this about the world and churches in the world, "If any two agree..." There's only one. There's only one way. So it is in the scattered body but people can't think that way. They can't think clearly.

“Thus they have educated the people to suppose that if any leader, any church, and work of God can be found to have been in error in any point, they cannot be trusted. To confess and correct error is to be branded a false prophet!” [And especially if you are one.]

Today this kind of scrutiny is even greater upon God's Church because God has given me to declare that I am both His prophet and His apostle to His Church in the end-time. As a prophet, God has given me a great deal to declare about what will happen in the Thunders and the Trumpets of Revelation that lead up to the coming of Jesus Christ. As an apostle, I have worked with what God has revealed up to any moment in time and have taught His Church accordingly within those parameters and judgments.

At the beginning of the 1335 days, there was anticipation of great “physical” tribulation beginning that would come upon the world. Thunders increased...

You know, what I talked about earlier. There were things out here that were of the category of Thunders but not specifically to the magnitude and purpose of what the Thunders are all about. They were only a prelude and something to help God's people along; to be able to look at certain signposts along the way to help you, to encourage you. Isn't that awesome to understand because it wasn't time to unleash these things upon the world in the kind of magnitude they're going to be.

Thunders increased and the stage was fully set for the financial collapse of the United States and the world economy...

So even there, the Thunders that would have happened if things had taken place would have happened farther into that period of time, closer to 2012, but it wasn't for that period of time. But again, it was for the Church. God has given us understanding of that.

... but God's time for that has not yet come. The Church had been wrong about the basic period of 3½ years being about physical destruction. That (destruction) will still come, but within a different time frame than what we have previously believed.

All through Philadelphia, all through Laodicea we have deeply, firmly believed it would last for exactly 3½ years. That's important to understand because it had to do with our thinking, present

truth, where we were. To be able to be shown that it could possibly be different has prepared us for where we are now in a far more balanced and a far more sound way.

I think that'd be a good place to stop. I thought I'd get through this in a couple more sermons. We'll continue on with *Part 7* next week.