

Fundamentals of Belief #21B: How and Why Pentecost Was Changed

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Jon W. Brisby; 5-10-2003

This afternoon, brethren, we're going to continue in this next fundamental of belief in the Fundamentals of Belief of Church of God, The Eternal. We're covering fundamental number twenty-one now, which has been a long process because I've gone now well over probably three years in giving sermons on the first twenty fundamentals. And as we began last time with the first sermon on fundamental number twenty-one, we want to pick up where we left off. This is a fundamental concerning Monday Pentecost, and I picked this time of year because it is very appropriate for meat in due season for us to go into detail—the why's and the wherefore's—concerning why the Church originally began to keep a Monday Pentecost. If you remember, last time I went through and gave you a number of quotes from very old material and put those pieces together. When did Mr. Armstrong first begin to keep the Holy Days? When did he first understand a Monday Pentecost through revelation? All the way back from 1937, the Church was keeping Pentecost on Monday and did so all the way until 1974—almost 40 years.

You'll remember from last time, we saw that Mr. Armstrong claimed divine authority for the things that he taught as doctrine—the very same way that the Apostle Paul absolutely claimed that he was taught in the wilderness by God for three years, and that the things that he was proclaiming to the churches were not his words at all, but the words of God. He was only a messenger, and he was proclaiming that which he was given, which of course is exactly the same way that Jesus Christ proclaimed the Truth when He walked in the flesh 2,000 years ago. He didn't come with His own message. What did He say repeatedly? "I have spoken only that which the Father hath given me." Christ didn't even speak His own words. He was a messenger—an ambassador representing God the Father—and He spoke those things that God gave through the Holy Spirit.

We recognize and accept that the Apostle Paul did exactly the same thing. He spoke not his own words; he spoke that which God delivered to him by divine revelation.

And so, last week we went through the fact that if Herbert Armstrong were a legitimate servant of God, which we absolutely believe is true, it is because he, likewise, was merely an instrument speaking through the Holy Spirit that which Jesus Christ—the Revelator—gave to the Church in the last days. If that's not true, then Herbert Armstrong was no different than any of these other men that are out there preaching their own brand of doctrine and seeking to gain a following among human beings. We don't believe that's true, because we're not following the man, brethren. The reason that we're all here is because we believe it was God and Jesus Christ who did that work to bring up this Church of the last days. It began back in the early part of the 20th century and has continued today, even through a faithful remnant of those who really do believe those things that were taught from the beginning.

So, in spite of the fact that we're covering the why's and the wherefore's of a Monday Pentecost, as I told you last time, it is impossible for me to appropriately cover this subject without emphasizing divine revelation. We're going to see that again when I get to fundamental number twenty-four, but you're going to get a dose of divine revelation in this discussion on Pentecost. The evidences of a Monday Pentecost are many, including the technical, and we're going to go through the technical count. We're going to go through Leviticus 23, and we're going to go through Deuteronomy 16 . We're going to look at all kinds of technical examples about how to count in Hebrew and what the Hebrew words mean because good scholarship absolutely supports the original teaching that we received from Mr. Armstrong. But I'm here to tell you, brethren, that our confidence is not in those technicalities. Our confidence is based on the fact that this was the work of God, and God does not lie. Therefore, if we were the true Church from the beginning, we had the Truth because it wasn't that which Mr. Armstrong figured out through his own personal study. Yes, he studied the Bible. Yes, he prayed before God, but God used his study and his submission to Him in order to teach him the same way He taught the Apostle Paul. We will see more as we go through and pick this up today, but as we always do, let's again quote fundamental of belief number twenty-one:

We believe that Pentecost always falls on a Monday—following a complete fifty-day count from the Sabbath occurring within the Days of Unleavened Bread. That this day pictures the receipt of God's Holy Spirit and the beginning of the New Testament Church.

That's what we believe, and that is what we have been teaching, keeping and proclaiming now for more than twenty-eight years as a remnant body since the time that our parent organization began to depart from that very revelation and do something different.

So, last time we saw how Mr. Armstrong came to keep a Monday Pentecost, that he absolutely claimed that those things that he first taught us were God's inspiration and revelation, and not of his own making. He claimed apostolic revelation for the original teachings of the Radio Church of God, and that's exactly how we accepted them.

Now, coming forward to 1974, what then was the official reason for the change to Sunday? For almost forty years, Mr. Armstrong had vehemently proclaimed that Monday was the revealed day, and that God would never have started His New Testament Church on Satan's pagan day of worship, which was Sunday. Mr. Armstrong was adamant about that. He claimed apostolic authority, revelation—the same way Paul did—for that teaching. And yet in 1974, the Worldwide Church of God changed to a Sunday Pentecost for the first time. How did that come to be? What was behind it?

Well, just a little historical information, brethren. There was a movement that started way back, even years before that time. Certain men who came out of Ambassador College were certainly more scholarly oriented. They were mesmerized by the wisdom of the world, the degrees of human universities and the Biblical scholars of the world. They even seemed to have an inferiority complex because of depending upon Mr. Armstrong, and God's use of Mr. Armstrong, as the basis for their confidence in the Bible and the Truth. And so, they sought instead to go out and get their degrees and advanced degrees from other universities in order to give themselves more credibility. It wasn't enough to have a degree from Ambassador College, which was unaccredited and certainly not respected in the world. They wanted their degrees from human universities. Well, these same men with the same orientation were the ones who began to challenge

many of the original Church teachings in the 1960s, culminating in the early 1970s. It gained prominence, unfortunately, among many high-ranking evangelists, especially the number two evangelist under Mr. Armstrong—his own son.

And so, they set about a task to form a doctrinal committee to go back and "re-prove," as they called it, all of the original doctrines from the past forty years of the Church. I'm going to give you a number of quotes, including from Mr. Raymond Cole, to put together some of the pieces of the history of what was really happening during this time. This idea of re-proving the Truth—going back and wiping out everything that we had learned from Mr. Armstrong and recertifying every doctrine one at a time—was on the basis of what? The gift of God by divine revelation as the means by which Jesus Christ put Truth in His Church? No, they were going to re-prove on the basis of technical, human scholarship from the world's religionists and those that they thought had the degrees and the credentials to be respected. That's where they were going to look for their proof. That's what we call human scholarship.

It was a move, brethren, from rejecting God as the giver of Truth, to accepting human beings as the provers of Truth. It came in subtly. Most people in the Church at the time didn't even notice the change—the movement, the transition of thinking—and before you knew it, you began to hear comments and ideologies coming from the pulpit like, "If we proved it once, we can prove it again"; "Grow in grace and knowledge," which was perverted and twisted to mean something that God did not intend whatsoever. And also, there was this idea that "the proof of God's Church is that we're willing to change when we're wrong." That wasn't something that was said or emphasized back in the early years, back when we believed and knew that it was God who raised up the Church.

Do you see any example in the New Testament with the work of the Apostle Paul or the other apostles that the proof of God's Church in the 1st century was that they were willing to change when they were wrong? Or, did Paul proclaim vehemently—and I'm going to give you some of those quotes in a little bit—that the things that he taught were strictly that which had been revealed to him by Jesus Christ? You see, he was very dogmatic about his doctrine. He wasn't proclaiming some wishy-washy idea that "God kind of allowed me to make it up on my own, and I got some things right and I got some other things wrong. And then, over the course of the next years, growth means that we kind of ferret out what was wrong

and what needs to be fixed; and we keep the good, and throw out the bad and replace it with new good."

No, brethren, that was an idea that began to creep in for the first time during the late 1960s and the early 1970s. It was a rejection of the idea that this was God's Church, that Jesus Christ was the cornerstone who put Truth in the Church—Truth that we could count on and stand on with confidence and surety. Instead, we were slowly turned to accept the idea that we needed to look for better human scholarship and Bible experts outside of the Church. These were deceived men who didn't understand anything about the plan of salvation. They were not keeping the Sabbath or the Holy Days. They didn't understand what God is doing on this earth to save mankind. They didn't keep any of these things, and yet these were the men that these leaders in the Church turned to for their source of wisdom.

Well, that sets the stage for what we saw occur in 1974—the culmination of the work of this doctrinal committee. What did they do? They picked on Pentecost first. Why? Because it was most debated anyway. It was a technical issue that was hard to understand. Many people were confused about it. And actually, because they intended to set the precedent for change, Pentecost was a very easy mark. It was an easy target to start with.

A 79-page piece called the *Pentecost Study Material* was the result of this doctrinal committee. The *Pentecost Study Material*, 79 pages long, was written in April of 1974 and given primarily to the ministers. In this, Mr. Armstrong gave the reason for changing Pentecost to Sunday. What did he say? He wrote: "It is the fact that one of the translators of the RSV [the *Revised Standard Version*], who is Chairman of the Revision Committee now revising the RSV, said not only that [meaning that the Hebrew term *mi* or *min*] . . . should NEVER be translated into the English 'from,' [speaking of Leviticus 23:15] but 'beginning on.'" So, what he's saying is the fact that one of the translators of the RSV "who is Chairman of the Revision Committee now revising the RSV" said not only that this Hebrew *mi* or *min* should never be translated "from," but "beginning on," ". . . but that he will strongly recommend the revision will so translate it, that caused me to CHANGE the Pentecost from Monday to Sunday." This is from a piece called *A Simplified Note From Herbert W. Armstrong*, paragraph 4, from the *Pentecost Study Material*.

Now, what does this tell us? All of a sudden, we had an about-face in orientation to doctrine that happened in 1974, which was published to the entire Church. Whereas before, we had absolutely been admonished that it was God who had inspired true doctrine in the Church by revelation through a chosen servant. Now we were being told that Pentecost was being changed from a Monday to a Sunday based upon a technicality concerning the understanding of an ancient Hebrew word in Leviticus 23:15. They had better understanding based upon going to these who were part of this project in this *RSV* publication and who were going to change the translation. I don't think it actually happened in that *RSV* that came out later. I don't know for sure. The word "from" was going to be changed to "beginning on." Mr. Armstrong was now saying, "Well, see, I based my understanding of the Pentecost count on the fact that "from" meant "from," but now I've been convinced that "from" should have been something else. Therefore, based on that, I've authorized the change from Monday to Sunday." What does that tell you? It tells you that the basis for determining doctrine was no longer going to be divine revelation from God; it was going to be the use of human wisdom and scholarship and debating about Greek and Hebrew terms. That's exactly what we have seen within the Church—the apostate body of the Church—for the last thirty years. That was the change in orientation that took place and was manifested right there in writing.

So the basis of change was a technical reinterpretation of a Hebrew word. That was the justification in 1974. What happened to divine revelation? What happened to the fact that God is the one who started the Church, and Christ is the cornerstone of that Church? He's the one who inspired Mr. Armstrong, even as He inspired Moses and gave Moses the Truth to deliver to the people—the same way that God the Father gave Jesus Christ the Truth, and nothing but the Truth, to deliver in His own ministry when He walked upon the earth. That same Jesus Christ delivered the Truth, and nothing but the Truth, through the Holy Spirit to His chosen apostles to deliver to the Church. What happened to the idea that an apostle of the last days who is legitimately speaking in God's name will also be proclaiming only the Truth? Not by his own wisdom or his expertise, but by that which God has given to him by a miraculous intervention. All of that went out the window in 1974. And from then on, we were taught that in order to have or to know the Truth, we had to be able to make use of every technical, human, Biblical scholarship tool that we could get in order to certify what the Bible really said.

From then on, brethren, we saw that move to basically challenge and change almost every single doctrine of the Church. You have seen it happen before your very eyes in the last thirty years. Many of you were there and were in the Church back in the 1950s and 60s. At least one sitting right before me was there in the 1930s, so we have a number who were witnesses to what the Church originally taught and what the basis of our understanding was.

Pentecost was the first one that was picked on. It was justified in 1974 based upon human scholarship and interpretation. But notice 2 Timothy 1:13. You see, we accept, do we not, that God gave Moses the Truth, and then told him to go and take that to the people? We accept that Moses told the Israelites precisely what God told him. Do we not accept that? We don't worry that perhaps the Ten Commandments were not really written by God—that maybe eight or nine of them were, but that maybe Moses used his own mistaken wisdom to put one of those commandments in there, and maybe that one wasn't from God, and maybe we need to go back and re-prove to see if that really makes sense. No, we accept the fact that Moses was an instrument, a conduit for the Truth as revealed by God, do we not? God works exactly the same way. He hasn't changed one bit. And yet, how do we get all the way down to the last-day Church, and think that now all of a sudden we're left to our own whims of human wisdom to figure it out? The admonition to God's people from the beginning has always been to hold on to what we were given from the beginning.

2 Timothy 1:13: "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith . . ." It means, brethren, that we have confidence in our foundation and what was revealed from the beginning. We're not going to challenge it. We're not going to become unconfident and seek to re-prove it by inferior human wisdom. "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Here, the Apostle Paul is writing this epistle to Timothy for the benefit of the Church in the 1st century, and he's having to contend with the very same spirit of apostasy which we saw manifested in this age. People began to challenge Paul and to second-guess: "Well, maybe all of those things that the Apostle Paul taught us were not all accurate after all. Maybe we need to go back and re-prove them."

All you have to do is read the epistles, and you find that Paul and the other apostles were continually having to fight to reestablish their authority and their

authenticity as spokesmen for Jesus Christ, and they were being challenged at every turn. We don't have time to go through it and it's not my topic, but go back and look at all the examples where Paul is having to reassert his authority as one who received divine revelation—taught in the wilderness for three years. He didn't get what he was teaching from man. That's what I read to you last time from Galatians 1. So, here is the very same spirit that human beings are always wont to adopt because they can never hold fast to what God gives as a priceless gift at the beginning. It is exactly what ancient Israel did. God gave them the Truth. They had it—a pearl of great price—and all they had to do was hold on and be faithful. And they couldn't do it. They could not help themselves but to change, alter and modify to try and make it easier—to make it fit in more with what the other nations around them were doing. They could not hold fast, and, brethren, neither could spiritual Israel. Spiritual Israel couldn't hold on any better than ancient Israel did, and that's exactly what Paul is dealing with here.

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy [Spirit] which dwelleth in us.

He's admonishing Timothy—the young evangelist who was ordained by Paul to serve and minister to those churches. He's saying, as a teacher and an elder, "You hold on to that Truth, and you don't let anybody talk you into making a change under any pretense, by any justification, by any scholarship—by nothing." He says, "You hold on to precisely what I taught you because that came from God, and it is true. You can depend upon it. It will never change." That's what he's saying. That's the way we accepted the Truth of the last days as well, brethren, because we believed that this truly was God's work and not man's.

Let me give you a quote now from February 11, 1974. This was the first public announcement of the Pentecost change to the Church, from a personal letter from Mr. Armstrong announcing the change to Sunday. This is what we read: "We did not have at the time access to all of the scholarly research that we have today. According to the facts available to me and that small parent church at that time back in 1927–1933, Pentecost was put on Monday. But now, consider, why did God use me in founding Ambassador College? Simply to provide an educated ministry for His Church? Ambassador College has indeed provided an educated ministry. It has developed a scholarly research team. Today, at the Pasadena

headquarters, it has provided me and the Church with many facilities I did not have in 1927. And the team of scholarly researchers delving into every possible phase of this subject in depth has now indeed brought me new facts—new evidence."

Unfortunately, brethren, we saw a change happen there whereby—for whatever reason, however it came to be—Mr. Armstrong actually became ashamed, if I can use that term accurately, of the way he came to understand the Truth from the beginning. It allowed these other men to turn his head to begin to focus on and to revere instead human scholastic knowledge as opposed to a miracle of God's revelation. He reinterpreted the value of the ministry that came out of Ambassador College so that it was less—as it was originally stated, even in the *Autobiography*—a means to train other men to help him in that work. Unfortunately, at the same time, what actually was produced was a crop of certain men who became very confident in their own scholastic abilities and sought to use those to challenge Mr. Armstrong's original conclusions of doctrine. They sought these degrees out of the world, brought them in and attempted to make Mr. Armstrong feel as if his wisdom was not to match theirs—an inferiority complex.

Well, brethren, we understand, and we still have great respect for Mr. Armstrong because we know he is the man that God used to raise up the Church. We also believe that before he died in 1986, there is a very strong likelihood that he personally repented for allowing those changes. Come to understand that Herbert Armstrong was not the architect of any of these changes. He was the one that defended Pentecost up until the bitter end in the wake of his son and these other ministers that were lobbying for a number of years to try and get this changed. But, remember, by 1974 he was already very elderly. His wife of over 50 years had died in 1967. She had been an incredible anchor to him, and now she wasn't there. There were very few who had any real integrity—a love for the original Truth. Instead, he was surrounded by these men—and probably most importantly his very own son for whom he had a great love and a weakness—who attempted to browbeat him into second-guessing the basis of God's revelation to him and to adopt instead an orientation of scholarship, of human wisdom, in order to define the doctrine of the Church. Basically, what you saw happen, brethren, was that they wore him down. He was not the architect of those changes. But, yes, he signed off on them, and these changes were made under his name.

Brethren, we're not going to pass judgment. And in fact, all of these years, even though Mr. Raymond Cole had to separate in order to continue to keep the Truth appropriately—Pentecost and all of the other doctrines as he had originally been taught—you never heard him say one disrespectful thing concerning Mr. Herbert Armstrong, and neither will I. We know that he was that servant—that apostle—whom God raised up. We are here now only because of the work that God did through Mr. Herbert Armstrong. So even when I give you some of these quotes about the history of the changes that took place, please, brethren, take them with those things in mind.

And so here, even under Mr. Armstrong's signature, was a reinterpretation of everything that happened—a downplaying of the fact that God revealed Truth, and instead elevating the idea that Ambassador College produced these wise, educated scholars who gave the Church so many more assets that they didn't have back in the early years. And now, for the first time, we had an opportunity to really find the Truth, which had eluded Mr. Armstrong back in the 1930s. That's what the mental transition was that took place at this time and what you saw manifested in the changes that took place in the 1970s. But was that true? As I showed you, Mr. Armstrong's quote for the justification for the change was based upon new knowledge—new understanding of the technical Hebrew that we never had before. But is that true? Was this really something new in the 1970s that had never come up before?

Now I want to read for you a quote from Mr. Raymond Cole, from our article entitled, "Church of God, The Eternal, Who We Are." We also refer to this as Raymond Cole's open letter, and I'm very glad that we convinced Mr. Cole to write this. I believe it was in late 1999 when we actually got him to sit down and put this on paper, and tell that history of his early association as a boy with Mr. Armstrong and moving all the way through the history of what happened in the Church, leading to those changes in the 70s and the basis for our forming in 1975. We had no idea that two years later Mr. Cole was going to be dead, and so it's absolutely priceless to us that he recorded those facts and those things in his own words.

Here's a quote from that article by Mr. Raymond Cole: "Although the subject of Pentecost had become sensitive and divisive even in the 1940s the intensity of the subject was growing in the latter '40s and was also geographically

spreading." Mr. Cole is confirming that all the way back, even before Ambassador College started in 1947, there were those who had come into the Church through the ministry of Mr. Armstrong, who were contending over Pentecost. They were not willing to accept Monday as revelation and wanted to argue for something different, and it had escalated by the late 40s.

Continuing the quote: "Unrest had developed in as diverse areas as San Antonio, Texas; Wichita, Kansas; Portland, Oregon; Seattle, Washington; as well as Eugene, Oregon." Right here, brethren, where we are today. It's amazing to me how prominent Eugene, Oregon, and the Church in Eugene over the years, has stood in the face of many events that have taken place. I don't know why God selected this area, but He did and it was very significant from the very beginning of Mr. Armstrong's work. It was also the source of one of the greatest challenges way back in the 1940s, and ultimately, almost half of the Church in Eugene back at that time was swept away by another man. What was one of his big contentions? It was on Pentecost. And yet, Mr. Armstrong held fast and absolutely, with determination, defended a Monday Pentecost in the wake of that departure. He was absolutely confident back then. He knew it, and he wasn't going to change it for anything.

Continuing the quote: "Satan was intensely at work. He hated the real truth about Pentecost. An alarming effort was made to destroy the fledgling church before trained and loyal ministers could be sent to the growing number of areas across the United States where the Truth was taking root." Remember that, in the late 40s, Mr. Armstrong was trying to start Ambassador College as a way to groom faithful ministers who could be counted on to go out and keep those churches solid—to teach them and to keep these other men from creeping in and spreading heresies, merchandising the people and pulling them off to start their own churches.

Mr. Armstrong's ministry had been very effective at calling a number of people who came in to different Oregon congregations, and he'd leave a man in charge of it; and invariably, once Mr. Armstrong was out of the area, that man would rise up and cultivate the people to have personal loyalty to him, and pull them off and start taking their tithes and offerings to do his own work. This happened over and over and over again, which is why Ambassador College was started. Mr. Armstrong wanted to train those men who would be faithful to the Truth and who would not add their own orientation of mind in teaching the people.

That's why it was started—to put down these very same kind of heresies that Satan was trying to introduce back then.

Back to the quote: "For a number of reasons, I [Raymond Cole] was chosen by Mr. Armstrong, even before ordination, to go out to these troubled areas and quell the unrest about Pentecost." So, brethren, if you or anybody else thinks that the first time Pentecost was challenged on a major basis in our parent organization was in the 60s or early 1970s, think again. Debating Pentecost went on for decades. Mr. Raymond Cole was the one that Mr. Armstrong sent out to take care of those problems and to substantiate the faith once delivered. That's why he was very personally affected by all that was going on in 1974 when these same arguments were coming up again, which you're going to see as I continue the quote.

"These defensive measures took me to Portland, Oregon for a year—prior to graduation." Mr. Armstrong even pulled him out after his junior year in order to go up and shepherd these congregations in Oregon—to settle them down and get their feet grounded in the doctrine. Then, Mr. Cole went back and finished his senior year at Ambassador College and graduated a year behind the other three students who had started in that first class in 1947. As you're aware, Mr. Raymond Cole was of the first seven evangelists who were ordained—the very first men that Mr. Armstrong ordained in 1952 and to whom he gave that commission to go out as his helpers in that work. And yet, even before ordination, Raymond Cole was the one that Herbert Armstrong sent out early to take care of these problems that were surfacing in the Northwest churches.

He says, continuing the quote, "My matriculation from college was postponed for one year. These assignments necessitated my understanding the arguments being advanced as well as the premise of divine revelation and the proofs for a Monday Pentecost the church had taught over the years. To this array of weapons I had added a couple of technical arguments which to me were very potent." This becomes very important because what Mr. Cole is saying is that he was more of a scholar in mind by nature. God had given Mr. Raymond Cole the gift of scholastic ability in mind, and it was certainly reflected in his language and vocabulary for all of you who knew him. He had a vocabulary that was about five times greater than mine and most of yours, and he also had a mind that worked on that level—very unusual in that regard. He understood technical, difficult things, and he liked them. He was one that grew up wanting to see proof, technically,

down to the nitty-gritty for everything he did. He saw a lot of proof from the Bible of the things that Mr. Herbert Armstrong was teaching, which was what attracted him as a boy in those early congregations. But there were certain things that Mr. Armstrong began to teach, and at the time, God had not revealed to him the full technical reasons to substantiate them in the Bible. That was a real trouble for Mr. Cole. In other parts of this article, he goes through and explains that.

I highly recommend that if you don't have a copy, you get it and read it. It also includes Passover—is Passover on the beginning on the 14th of Nisan or on the beginning of the 15th, the Night to be Much Observed? Mr. Cole's family had kept Passover on the 15th, and he was very ingrained with this idea that Passover was on the 15th. And here was Mr. Herbert Armstrong claiming that Passover should be kept on the beginning of the 14th. Even as a student at Ambassador College in 1947 to 1948, Mr. Cole was resisting Passover on the 14th, and he insisted that Mr. Armstrong show him the technical proof. Of course, Mr. Armstrong could show him certain things in the Bible, but he did not have all the pieces together that we have now, which were later published in the *Ambassador College Correspondence Course* and all of the other material that substantiates a 14th Passover. At the time, he only knew because he was absolutely convinced that God had revealed it to him, and he said, "Raymond, you're going to have to accept it as divine revelation." And Raymond Cole didn't want to do that, because he was technically minded. He wanted the proof. He wanted to see everything.

Yes, Mr. Armstrong said repeatedly on the broadcasts, "Don't believe me, believe your Bibles." Oh, and you hear that quoted now by many of these splinter groups as their justification not to accept anything. But remember, Mr. Armstrong was speaking to whom? He was speaking to the unconverted masses, and he was speaking about some of these very easily-proven doctrines from the Bible. He was speaking to the world on a radio broadcast and in *The Plain Truth* magazine about the false concepts that all of these other so-called Christians were accepting without even challenging, like keeping Sunday instead of the weekly Sabbath, Easter instead of Passover, Christ's resurrection on Saturday evening versus Sunday morning, and all of those things that he could point to with absolute Biblical authority and say, "Don't believe me, believe your Bible. It tells you right there"—including the idea that man doesn't go to heaven, which is very plain in the Bible. So those were the things that Mr. Armstrong was talking about.

Now, concerning the Church and more details of the doctrines, for those who came to believe that it was the Truth and that this was the true Church, did Mr. Armstrong have absolute, ironclad, technical evidence for every single thing that he proclaimed? No, he did not. Many of them started with a proclamation by revelation, and then only later the technical substantiation was found. And guess what? Passover on the 14th versus the 15th was one of them. And at the time, way back in the late 40s, Mr. Armstrong could not convince Mr. Raymond Cole, technically, on the Passover issue, but he did say, "Raymond, you're going to have to accept this as divine revelation. I know it." And that was the challenge that he had.

Mr. Cole knew that something was going to have to change because they were on a collision course. If Mr. Cole continued in the way he was thinking, he was going to be at odds with Mr. Armstrong, and there was no way they could have continued together. Ultimately, Raymond Cole, through the Holy Spirit, came to recognize that he had no other recourse than to admit that this man, Herbert Armstrong, was a powerful servant in the hands of God; and he had seen many, many evidences of that in all the things that Mr. Armstrong taught which could be proven by the Bible. He knew he was dealing with a true, legitimate tree. As Christ said, "Make the tree good or make the tree evil. A good tree does not produce bad fruit and an evil tree cannot produce good fruit." So Raymond Cole had to come to decide, was Herbert Armstrong a good tree bearing good fruit, or was he an evil tree bearing bad fruit? He had to be one or the other, and all of the things that Mr. Cole had been able to document technically on what Mr. Armstrong was teaching from the Bible, proved that he was teaching the Truth.

Now, what about these items that Mr. Armstrong couldn't absolutely prove in an ironclad fashion at the time? What was Raymond Cole going to do with them? Ultimately, he decided that he was going to accept them as divine revelation, as Mr. Armstrong absolutely demanded that he must do. But as you've heard the story repeated—it's on tape because Mr. Cole quoted this in many sermons over the last 25 years—he finally came to Mr. Armstrong and said, "I've decided to accept it" (Passover on the 14th, as well as a number of other doctrines that were in contention at the time). But then he said to Mr. Armstrong, "If I accept this on the basis of the divine revelation, then that means it can never change," and Mr. Armstrong said, "That's exactly right."

Now do you understand why, almost 25 years later, when Mr. Armstrong signed off on this change of Pentecost on the basis of a technicality by the interpretation of human scholars outside the Church, Raymond Cole was the one who raised his hand and said, "Wait a minute. What about back in the 1940s when you made me accept all of these other doctrines on the basis of divine revelation and not scholarship?" You see, he had never forgotten that. The other men didn't have that experience with Mr. Armstrong the way Mr. Cole did. But let me get back to the quote: "These assignments necessitated my understanding the arguments being advanced as well as the premise of divine revelation and the proofs for a Monday Pentecost the church had taught over the years. To this array of weapons I had added a couple of technical arguments which to me were very potent."

Stopping again to pick my train of thought; Mr. Cole understood more of the technicalities of the Hebrew through his study than Mr. Armstrong had spent the time with, which means that Mr. Cole had done more study on this term *mimahorat*—the term from Leviticus 23:15 and 16 translated as "from the morrow" and "unto the morrow." He understood the Hebrew enumeration rule and how to count properly in the Hebrew. He knew it was different and distinct from the English exclusive count that Mr. Armstrong was using. We're going to go into that; don't worry about it right now. We're going to get into those technicalities in a few weeks. Right now, I just want to keep to the overview.

Mr. Cole understood and was able, probably better than anyone else in the Church at the time, to fight fire with fire among these men who were rising up in these congregations around the Northwest—up here in Oregon and Washington—and in Texas and Oklahoma. He was able to go out to those congregations and meet these men and fight them on their own scholastic turf, and still technically substantiate a Monday Pentecost. It can be done. You're going to see it done too because we're going to go through it. Mr. Cole at that time even understood it probably better, from the Hebrew side of it, than Mr. Armstrong did. Mr. Armstrong simply knew by divine revelation that it was on Monday, and then read it in the English and counted it exclusively in the English. Do those rules hold up under close scrutiny from the Hebrew? No, they do not. But was it the right day that we kept for all of those years? Yes, it absolutely was. Raymond Cole was the one who was sent out because he was the most effective tool to put down these debates over Pentecost. He not only understood that this was God's Church and

that it came by divine revelation, but he also understood the technicalities of it and could prove it that way too. That's what he was doing back in the 1940s and early 50s—suppressing these debates over Pentecost.

"To this array of weapons I had added a couple of technical arguments which to me were very potent." Many of those things became a part of our articles, even today. "One was the nature of the Hebrew count (See our article, Why a Monday Pentecost?). . . . At the same time all this reshuffling was transpiring, serious questions had surfaced about a number of doctrines. These doctrines were being challenged by laymembers as well as ministers. A couple of prominent doctrines, among the many being questioned, were Pentecost and divorce and remarriage. This turmoil . . ." We're leaping forward now, speaking of what happened leading up to the early 1970s. "A couple of prominent doctrines, among the many being questioned, were Pentecost and divorce and remarriage. This turmoil had prompted Mr. Armstrong to rewrite completely the old booklet on the subject of divorce and remarriage. That new booklet published in 1973 confirmed and magnified the original revelation."

If you'll remember, brethren, because as we're going to mention in a little while, divorce and remarriage was absolutely tied up at the same time with this change of Pentecost in 1974. That was the real target they were after. Pentecost was really inconsequential, but it was used to set the precedent for changing the Church's doctrine on the basis of human scholarship so that they could get to the doctrines they really wanted to change. And so, here, even as late as 1973, Mr. Armstrong was adamant that he was not going to change that marriage doctrine; and he even wrote an entire booklet, published it in 1973 and distributed it to the Church, confirming—magnifying, as Mr. Cole says here—the original doctrine on marriage and divorce.

Continuing the quote: "That new booklet published in 1973 confirmed and magnified the original revelation. The publication of this booklet created further, and even more intense, opposition from many people—laymembers and ministers." By that time, brethren, we had a membership and a ministry who were looking for excuses to water down the doctrine. Many members in the Church were currently not free to marry. They were having to live alone because they had a husband or wife who was no longer living with them, and the Church said, "You're still bound to that individual, which means you must live alone and stay single until that person dies." And they were not willing to do it.

Even worse, brethren—and I understand it—were circumstances where people, before they were called into the Church, had been married, had divorced, had remarried and probably had small children, and then were called into the Church. They came into the Church for the first time and understood by the teaching that they were not eligible to be married to the person they were with. In order to be right before God, because God's marriage vows are eternal—there are no exceptions to what God has bound—they had to make the terrifying decision to separate because they were living in an adulterous relationship. There were a number of situations like that. In many cases, the Church allowed those with small children to live under the same roof for the sake of the children, but they could not live as husband and wife because it was adultery. At least one of them, maybe both, had a living spouse already that God had bound them to. That was the teaching on marriage for over 40 years. Yes, it's hard on human beings who have made vows and put themselves in that situation, but I'm telling you, brethren, God's laws are not amended or watered down for the sake of making it easier on human beings. That's what ancient Israel did. That's how they fell out of God's good graces time and time again, and God sent them into captivity because they wanted to make God's way easier for human beings according to their carnal natures.

So that was greatly at play during this time. Continuing Mr. Cole's quote: "That new booklet published in 1973 confirmed and magnified the original revelation. The publication of this booklet created further, and even more intense, opposition from many people—laymembers and ministers." So, he's saying, they were intent on watering it down so that they could get married. The ministry at the time, unfortunately, had a desire to allow them to get married—one, so that they'd be off the hook for being the bad guys enforcing the original marriage doctrine in the Church. And besides that, guess what? There were a lot of, what we call, spiritual widows receiving third tithe from the Church. Who were these? These were women who were divorced, whose husbands had left them and probably had remarried; and these women were not eligible to marry someone else. Maybe they didn't have the work skills or the ability to support themselves, which meant the Church was supporting them with third tithe. There were a lot of these spiritual widows receiving third tithe from the Church. And so, you had this movement within the ministry that said, "You know what? We could recoup a lot of money in the third tithe fund if all of these women were eligible to marry. If we could change the marriage doctrine and say that they're free, then they'll all go out and get married, and then they'll have husbands who can support them. Then the Church

won't have to do it, and we can spend that third tithe money on something else." What kind of things did they spend the third tithe money on? Jets, among many other things. That's where that multimillion-dollar jet fleet came from that Mr. Armstrong used to fly around the world in. It was paid for with the third tithe funds.

Anyway, back to the quote: "The publication of this booklet created further, and even more intense, opposition from many people—laymembers and ministers. The result was the creation of a new doctrinal committee . . ." So, in response to this furor among the people who aren't willing to accept the original revelation and Mr. Armstrong's reconfirmation of the marriage doctrine, they're going to put together a doctrinal committee to come up with a technical, Biblical explanation to water down the doctrine.

"The result was the creation of a new doctrinal committee—made up of evangelists, college instructors, and other better-known headquarters personnel. Overheard frequently were a couple of troubling concepts. They were: 1) "If you can prove anything once you can prove it again." and 2) "Every doctrine of the church was subject to a 'reproving'." These were very troubling concepts to me [still Mr. Raymond Cole speaking here]. I could only reflect back over the traumatic years of 1948 and 1949. Troubling though the orientation was, I settled myself confidently with the mental assurance Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong would not acquiesce to any pressure for change. After all, had he not insisted on divine revelation in 1948 and 1949? Since there were a considerable number of doctrines seriously questioned, where was the committee to begin? Heard quite frequently on campus was the sentiment, the deliberations should begin with Pentecost because it was the subject most frequently questioned and the fact that many members did not even at that time agree with the keeping of Monday—rather many were already either secretly observing a Sunday Pentecost or were very desirous of seeing a change made officially. It was settled. The first subject to be "reproved" was Pentecost—on which day, Monday or Sunday, was it to be observed? I (Raymond Cole), being in these meetings, heard nothing that could be considered technical proof for keeping a Sunday."

He was there, brethren. He was part of those initial doctrinal committee meetings.

"I (Raymond Cole), being in these meetings, heard nothing that could be considered technical proof for keeping a Sunday. Please recall for a moment, I was sent out earlier to deal with a number of argumentative people regarding Pentecost. I had heard several different arguments which members believed justified their attitude regarding the subject. Interestingly, in the committee meetings, I heard not one presumed fact which I had not heard in those contacts made earlier."

Do you get what he's saying there? All of a sudden now, in this doctrinal committee of all of these scholarly-minded ministers in the 1970s, they were claiming they had new proof, new evidence from the Hebrew, that they had never reviewed before or taken into consideration. Mr. Cole is sitting in those meetings and saying, "You're not saying anything new that I didn't deal with back in the 1940s with these people who came up in these churches and tried to destroy them by pulling the people off to a Sunday Pentecost." There was not one new technical argument that had not already been reviewed by Mr. Armstrong and absolutely rejected decades before. That's one of the critical things we need to recognize. The material that came out justifying a Sunday claimed that we had new truth. "For the first time, we've got new evidence!" And Mr. Armstrong even allowed them to coerce him under his name—to twist his arm into that orientation to accept this scholastic reinterpretation. They made it out as if they had new things that they were considering which they had totally missed before. "We never knew about this. This makes it different. For the first time now, we see it should really be Sunday, and not Monday." Not so. There was nothing new in 1974 that had not already been reviewed and rejected many years before.

Continuing Mr. Cole's quote: "Interestingly, in the committee meetings, I heard not one presumed fact which I had not heard in those contacts made earlier. Mr. Armstrong did not make the decision to change Pentecost on the basis of new technical information. There was none given. All information presented was that which some of the ministers, at least, had heard over the months. What surfaced was a question on the accuracy of the translation of Leviticus 23:15, "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete." The emphasis centered on the word "from." Was it to be a part of the count, or was it excluded? In the length and breadth of the meetings little, if any, emphasis was given to divine revelation. But, plenty of scorn was heaped upon Mr. Armstrong."

Mr. Cole is saying that you had all of these men who thought themselves to be big scholars with their worldly masters degrees and PhD's, and now they were sitting in this meeting and saying, "Poor Mr. Armstrong. Back in the 1930s, he did the best he could, but he wasn't a scholar. And so, obviously, we're not surprised that he got this wrong. He didn't understand what 'from' really means, and he didn't understand the Hebrew and how to count in Hebrew. Poor Mr. Armstrong." They didn't see Mr. Armstrong as a mouthpiece, as a conduit for the revelation of Jesus Christ. They treated it as if it was Herbert Armstrong himself—the man—with his brain and mental intellect that formed and put the doctrine in the Church. Well, were we in a man's church, brethren, or were we called into the Church of God? Who founded this Church? Where did we get our doctrine? Was it from human wisdom? Is that where Moses got his? Is that where Paul got his? If we think and if know that's how God puts Truth into the Church, why do we think He did it any differently in the last days than to reveal it through a chosen servant? He didn't.

Back to the quote: "In the length and breadth of the meetings little, if any, emphasis was given to divine revelation. But, plenty of scorn was heaped upon Mr. Armstrong." Can you imagine sitting through a meeting like that, where these self-proclaimed scholars are ridiculing Mr. Armstrong over his lack of technical understanding of the Bible? Continuing the quote: "He was not a student, they said. They felt his grasp of history and languages was at best, very limited. The orientation of the discussion was totally 'technical.' Revelation was relegated to the trash bin." That's how Mr. Cole summarized the events he went through regarding that doctrinal committee that ultimately came up with this change to Sunday, which Mr. Armstrong ultimately was coerced into signing off on. So, this supposed new truth, as I've already shown you, was not new at all. It was the same old rehash of the debate which had come up decades before.

Here's another quote from a Radio Church of God article written in 1953 by Herman Hoeh, entitled, "Was the New Testament Church Founded on Sunday?" I think I read this to you last week, but it's important enough that I want to read it again. "Yes, Jesus founded *His Church* on the day of Pentecost—not before then! . . . Was the true Church founded on a Sunday in A.D. 33 as the *Catholic and a few other churches claim*? REMEMBER, if any church which claims apostolic authority has erred in the traditional date of its founding, *how can we believe that its other traditions are true?*"

They're saying, if a church can't even get right when it was founded, which is what Pentecost was—the founding of the Church and the day to be kept—how can we have confidence that anything else it teaches is true? And you know what, brethren? That is the 64-dollar question. It's the very reason that I told you last time, if anybody can convince me that Pentecost is not on Monday, you will have convinced me not just to change to Sunday—I'll quit keeping Pentecost altogether. I'll quit keeping the Sabbath. I'll quit keeping the Holy Days. I'll throw out everything that I learned from Herbert Armstrong if you convince me that Sunday is right, because you will have just convinced me that God wasn't the one who put the Truth into the Church. If we got Pentecost wrong—our date for the founding of this Church in the last days—then we were never God's true Church, because God is the one who puts Truth into that Body, not man. I'm only here, and I only intend to continue keeping all of these things that we hold dear, brethren, because I believe that God raised up this Church and founded it, not a man—that Herbert Armstrong was only an instrument in His hand, even as all of those other men, the patriarchs in the Bible, were instruments, delivering a message that they were given to teach. And that includes Pentecost.

Hebrews 13, verse 8, says: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." He doesn't change, brethren. Whose work was this? That's the key to the whole Pentecost issue. Why am I focusing so much on this? I've given you almost two sermons full of background on the history of the Pentecost change, how it came to be, how the changes in 1974 took place, what was the orientation. Why am I spending so much time? Why am I driving this concept of divine revelation? Because, brethren, God did not call us, for the most part, as geniuses and high intellect scholars out of the world. He called the weak and the base. If you're telling me that in order to be confident in the Truth as a member of God's Church, you have to have a technical mind to be able to understand the Hebrew language, which is not your first language, and sift through all of the contradictory papers and assertions of all of these great, learned men, and the only way that you can be confident in the Truth is if you can understand all of those technicalities and put those pieces together, then that's not a very fair God to me.

No, God called the simple—the base and the weak to confound the mighty—and, brethren, in the final analysis, you and I do not have to be technical scholars in order to have absolute confidence in what God revealed to the Church. That's why I'm going to spend five times more talking about divine revelation and

how God puts Truth in the Church, than I am in the technicalities of Leviticus 23 and the Hebrew words. We're going to go through them. I keep promising—I'm telling you we're going to go through it. But it is secondary. If I convince somebody of a Monday Pentecost based on the technicalities, all I've done is convince them in one doctrine. And Mr. Cole did that over time. He was able to show certain people who were argumentative about the foundation of the Church and its teachings, a Monday Pentecost, technically, by the proper Hebrew count—not only by the *mimahorat* in verse 15, but also the second *mimahorat* in verse 16, which we're going to see. He was able to show them. But guess what? Even if somebody accepts one particular doctrine—Monday Pentecost—based on technicality, guess what? They still have a frame of mind of wanting to prove every other single doctrine on the basis of their human scholastic ability, and they're not going to get them all right. They're not going to do it.

Brethren, I have seen them over and over and over again—even some who believe and keep a Monday Pentecost, and yet they are far off base on many other critical doctrines because they are confident only in their own technical prowess to determine Truth. They will not accept the idea that God is the one who put those doctrines in the Church piece by piece through the ministry of Mr. Armstrong over a series of many years as He revealed it to him. The ones who are going to have their feet down in the Truth and who will be able to weather the storms of the future before the return of Jesus Christ, are those who first and foremost believe that Christ founded this Church. If you accept that—meaning that Christ, the definition of Truth, put those doctrines in the Church—then you have not only a basis for true confidence in Pentecost, as technical as it is, but also in every other original doctrine of the Church. If you reject divine revelation as the basis for Truth, even if you accept a Monday Pentecost, you are in big trouble. And there are those out there who are walking themselves around in circles, chasing their tails, never able to put it all together, because they will not come to understand how God works to reveal Truth. That's why it's so critical.

What about those who say, "Well, you know, Pentecost is so technical and so difficult to know one way or the other, and I'm not a scholar. I don't know, I read this stack of articles over here arguing for a Sunday or for Sivan 6, and here's Raymond Cole's articles over here arguing for a Monday Pentecost. How am I supposed to know?" And so they conclude, "Maybe God doesn't really care." There are some people who started keeping both days just to be sure. That's kind

of what the Jews do with all of their Holy Day-keeping; they aren't sure about the assignment of the new moon. So, to be certain, "I'll keep two days in a row. That way, I've got it covered." There were people who started doing that in 1974, and even before. "Well, I don't know for sure, so I'll just keep Sunday and Monday." Is God happy with that? Brethren, the just shall live by faith. Keeping two days for one of God's sacred Holy Days because you don't know which one is right, is not an act of faith.

Isaiah 1 and verse 11: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me . . ." This is a prophecy of the last days that God wrote through Isaiah, concerning someone of His people—Israel. Spiritual Israel is the Church. He is criticizing someone about how they're keeping Holy Days and Sabbaths, and He's not pleased with them.

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the [Eternal]: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts . . .

He's saying, "I'm up to here with what you are bringing to me and with what you think you're doing in honor and glorification of my name."

When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations . . .

Somebody was bringing a vain offering to the Holy Day service. And the way that they were keeping these Sabbaths and Holy Days, God was saying, "It's all vanity, and I'm up to here with it."

Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

Here are people, most of whom I assume are very well-intentioned and well-meaning, and they think they are obeying God's command to keep the annual Holy Days. They're coming to those assemblies, and they're sitting there in Church services. They're singing hymns; they're listening to special music; they're hearing the sermon; they're having fellowship, and they think God is there. And yet, there's

someone who is keeping Holy Days, and He's saying, "I hate what they're doing because it's a counterfeit and a lie." ". . . it is iniquity . . ." He's saying, not only is it not acceptable before Him as a proper keeping of the Holy Day, but He calls what they're doing sin. That's what iniquity is—the transgression of the law. It's sin.

We've had the question come up many times, "Well, would it be wrong for me to attend one of these other splinter groups that came out of Worldwide?" I've simply said, as Mr. Raymond Cole said, "We love them, and we believe they are God's people. But just as ancient Israel was God's people while they were in a state of apostasy, so are those of our brothers and sisters." We're praying for the time when they're going to come back to the faith once delivered, but right now, because they have perverted, twisted and modified God's Law to do it the way they think is right, God is not accepting those sacrifices. Brethren, it's not an attempt to be isolationist or exclusive. But I look at these scriptures that God writes here, and I would not set foot in one of those congregations, because there are some of these fellowships that God calls iniquity. They don't believe it. They think they're doing what's right. There are many that, in good conscience, think they are serving God. We're waiting for the time when God will show them, and they're going to see and put all of those pieces together and we'll accept them with open arms.

But God says, ". . . I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting"—probably referring to the Passover service. He calls their Passover service iniquity. "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth . . ." That's what God says about it. Somebody is keeping Holy Day services, and God says, "I hate their assemblies." Now, I don't know about you, but I do not want to set foot in an assembly of that which God says He hates. Where does that put me?

Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear . . .

There is somebody that God has absolutely turned His back on for a time because their practices are Baal worship rather than the service of the true God—the same way He turned His back on ancient Israel many times, but they did not cease to be His chosen people. Israel was always Israel, and He knows who

they are, but He had to allow them to pay prices through their own hard experiences. Then, finally, when their hearts and minds were softened enough to receive the Truth, He was able to teach them their error and bring them back to the foundation of their calling through the faith once delivered—the same way He is in the process of working with spiritual Israel right now.

. . . when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you:
yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of
blood.

Amos 5 and verse 21. God is speaking the same principle here through the prophet Amos, and He's speaking about Holy Day services which are an affront to Him. "I hate, I despise your feast days . . ." This is not talking about pagan peoples out there keeping Christmas and Easter and all of these other worldly holidays. No, these were Israelites, supposedly keeping the commanded Feasts, yet God is saying of them:

I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs . . .

Here, all of this wonderful hymn-singing and special music by very accomplished musicians, you can bet, was going on in these assemblies. And yet, what does God say? "Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols." He doesn't accept it. Why? Because, foundationally, they have turned away from God and they've turned to their own orientation about Truth, which is a rejection of Jesus Christ—the foundation of the Church. So, even though they continue to keep Sabbaths and Holy Days, God says, "I don't accept it because they're not doing it the way I told them to do it." Now think about that in terms of Pentecost. Do you think, therefore, that God is happy or will accept our keeping of Pentecost whenever we think we should or can or might because we're so confused—we don't know how to tell the right one from the wrong one? Or, do you think that maybe it is very simple and maybe God did give the Truth to the Church in such a way that He expects us to know and have confidence in that way? That's exactly the case.

There are a number of brethren who are new to our fellowship over the last few years who didn't understand all of these things, because they didn't even come into the Church until well after the middle 70s, the early 80s, or even the late 80s and beyond. It's amazing to me—that's the thing I still can't fully explain. How is it that God is able to still allow these individuals to come into a corrupted body—an assembly which has already rejected many of the doctrines, foundationally—and yet He's still calling them, and over time guiding them to a remnant that is truly holding on to the foundational Truth? It's amazing to me that so many in that situation have been responding. And I can't answer their questions, because many of them have asked me, "Why would God call me into a body that was already so far down the road of apostasy?" I don't have an answer for it, but it's an incredibly miraculous thing to me—the fact that even through that experience, these are ones who knew and responded enough to the pieces of the puzzle that were still there, like the plan of salvation. It was still something valuable. In their search, God has ultimately showed them, and is showing them, how to find a remnant that is truly holding on to all of those pieces in that marvelous tapestry.

Ezekiel 20 and verse 10:

Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my statutes . . .

Now, did God stutter when He spoke the Law—when He gave it to Moses—or was He very plain and straightforward so that the Church of the wilderness, who was ancient Israel, knew precisely what was expected of them?

And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths . . .

God gave ancient Israel, the Church in the wilderness, the Sabbaths—plural—the weekly Sabbath as well as the annual Sabbaths, and He made plain to them exactly when they were to be kept. ". . . I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them . . ." Here's a confirmation that it's not just the weekly Sabbath which is a sign between God and His true people; it's also the annual Sabbaths. Because you know, brethren, we've got a lot of groups out there—Seventh-day Adventist, Church of God (Seventh Day), and many others

who meet on Saturday. If the weekly Sabbath, or Saturday, is the only sign between God and His people, then we have to admit that all of these people—even those that believe in the Trinity and all of these other Protestant doctrines—are a part of God's faithful people just because they're keeping church on Saturday. No, the sign between God and His true people is not only the weekly Sabbath, but it also includes the annual Sabbaths; and keeping the annual Sabbaths on the right day is very important.

Pentecost is especially important because it does represent the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church. And what would have happened, brethren, if people were confused? Remember when Christ said to those disciples before He ascended, "I want you to tarry here in Jerusalem until Pentecost"? And then Acts chapter 2 tells us that when they were all assembled in one place—when Pentecost was fully come—then the Holy Spirit was given and those miraculous signs occurred. Do you think it was important that they knew the right day to be there for Pentecost? What would have happened if they had been there a day too early? Would they have received the Holy Spirit then? No. Was it important that they know the right day? You better believe it. Is it important that the last-day Church know the right day of Pentecost? Absolutely.

I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the [Eternal] that sanctify them.

The fact that God gave them those Sabbaths as a command and that they knew when to keep them, was a part of the sign between God and His people. But what did the house of Israel do with it?

But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted . . .

Was this a case where God had been vague about how and when to keep the Sabbaths, and so the Israelites were just doing the best they could; and the fact that they had it wrong was not their fault? Or, was God very clear, and the Israelites

had the Truth—they had the instructions, they had the rules, they knew precisely where they were supposed to be and when? That's what God says here. ". . . my sabbaths they greatly polluted . . ." How do you pollute something that wasn't pure to begin with? Have you ever tried that? Who polluted it—God or the Israelites? The Israelites polluted something that started off pure because God gave them Truth and told them to hold on. If they had held on, they would have been fine; but they said, "Oh, I think we can make this better. Oh, Monday, you know, I have to take an extra day off of work. I'd rather have it on the weekend—on a Sunday. Then I could save my vacation for the Feast." It's the same orientation of mind. It has always been. ". . . my sabbaths they greatly polluted . . ." It means they started off with something that was pure—that God gave—and then they changed it, modified it and used their own human wisdom to do something different.

. . . then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them. But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out. Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands.

For their inconsistency, their incontinence, their refusal to do it the way God said, He said, "They're not going to go into the Promised Land. They're not going to be there." It's the same thing, brethren, that's going to await those in the last days who are a part of spiritual Israel, who cannot get their feet down and come to recognize the fact that God gave that Truth and that they've got to hold on.

Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols.

Brethren, the Church of God in the last days is going pell-mell after their idols as well. The idol that they put in their minds is their own prowess, their own scholarship, their human wisdom, their education and their knowledge, which they think they have achieved so mightily. They're so proud of their technical, scholastic ability, and it is that which has absolutely separated them from their God. By rejecting a Monday Pentecost, they have absolutely rejected Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit, which is the very meaning of Pentecost.

How important and how critical was that departure in 1974? Brethren, it was more monumental than many of our former brethren even begin to realize. More of them are starting to figure it out. They have finally seen the very bad fruits on the paths that they've been on for so long, and they're finally saying, "There's something wrong here. The Spirit can't be leading and guiding here because it's just not right." They're looking for a foundation of someplace where they can be confident that God is truly working.

Brethren, we know it is that original revelation that gives us that foundation that is going to be our sustenance in the times that are ahead before the return of Jesus Christ. Next time, we're going to continue with more of the analysis from the historical basis—the fact that God's Church was prophesied to corrupt God's Truth through their human scholarship. I'm going to show you those scriptures. This was not accidental. This is not off-plan by God. Everything is happening just as God said it was going to. The fact that they changed Pentecost is absolutely certified. Those things were going to happen. Next time, we'll see it.