

Fundamentals of Belief  
#21C: Results of the Pentecost Change

Edited Sermon Transcript  
Jon W. Brisby; 5-24-2003

Today, brethren, we're going to continue in this series on the Fundamentals of Belief of Church of God, The Eternal—specifically, fundamental number twenty-one. This is the third sermon on this topic of a Monday Pentecost. If you will recall in the past two sermons, I haven't yet touched on the specifics of how to count technically Monday, nor have I gotten into any of the tit for tat, the back and forth, concerning the confrontational methodologies that are now being used by so many to determine what day they are going to count and keep Pentecost. I haven't gotten into any of the technicalities at all, and brethren, I've done that for a very specific reason. I hope by the amount of emphasis that I am putting on the topics and the explanations that are non-technical, it will help emphasize the point of what it is we really need to understand if we want to have true confidence in that which God gave—and to know, without question, without any uncertainty in our minds, what the proper day for the keeping of Pentecost is.

God did provide a means for us to know, and we should be keeping Pentecost every single year without any hesitation, reservation or uncertainty in mind. We should know and know that we know. How are we going to do that? Is it because we have become Hebrew scholars and that we've read every single contradictory paper proliferated today by all of these men who claim to be scholars, and therefore, we've sorted out—we've tried all of them on a technical basis—and we've ferreted out the true and right way, and that's where our confidence is going to be in the day that we keep? Is that how we're going to do it? No. Yes, we are going to go through the technicalities. I'm going to show you how the true technical research and the technicalities of right counting do support the very revelation that we received, but I'm also telling you, brethren, that is not where your confidence should be—else, it's going to be manifested in weaknesses in many other areas when it comes to God's laws.

To get us started, let me quote again, word for word, our 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. In the last two sermons we have seen evidence of what the original teaching was in the Radio Church of God, that which was claimed by Mr. Herbert Armstrong as divine revelation, as coming from God as a special gift of understanding. What was it? It was Monday. I gave you the quotes to certify that. We also saw how it came to be—in what time frame. It was in the mid-1930s when that revelation came, after he was first given the knowledge that the Holy Days needed to be kept. As God began to open up more and more knowledge, He revealed to him the proper day for keeping Pentecost. Monday was the day that the Church kept Pentecost for all of those years—from 1937 up until 1974. Then, last time, we also saw how it came to be that the Worldwide Church of God changed to a Sunday Pentecost after almost forty years of keeping a Monday. We saw the February 1974 announcement that this doctrinal change was going to take place and the reason why they said it took place, and we began to see some of the real reasons why that actually occurred.

What I have tried to do, brethren, is provide a historical background of what really took place—both at the beginning and moving forward, and then what took place to bring about a change from that original teaching. If you understand the why's and wherefore's, then you are able to evaluate the fruits. If you understand why they really wanted to change it, you will come to understand where the emphasis should be, even if you don't understand a thing about the technicalities of the count because it's too confusing. There are a lot of people who say that it certainly is. "Well, I can see it both ways. I read this paper that says Monday and that makes sense, and I read this paper that says Sunday and that makes sense too. I can't reconcile the two." There are a number of people in that situation. So, if you're in that situation, brethren, ask yourself: why did it take place? Was this really a group of men who were earnestly seeking Truth, or were these individuals who were already predisposed, for political reason, to make a change in a doctrine that would substantiate scholarship as the foundation for determining Church

doctrine? A little bit later on today, we're going to see what that real reason was—one of the very strong reasons—for attacking Pentecost.

First, I want to back up and address one of the specific, cardinal statements in our fundamental of belief—the second half—and quickly go through it. It is the statement, "That this day pictures the receipt of God's Holy Spirit and the beginning of the New Testament Church." I want to ask the question, brethren, how important is it that we know the right day of Pentecost? We began to see a few scriptures on that last week, but I want to emphasize, as we begin right now, that we had better take Pentecost very seriously. Pentecost is a very key Holy Day in the overall plan of God's salvation, and without its meaning and without its purpose in your life, you have no opportunity for salvation in God's Kingdom. Pentecost is crucial. Notice what a pivotal observance it was in the plan of God.

Let's look at Romans 8 and verse 6. We understand that the Holy Spirit is absolutely required for any human being to have a relationship with God. There is no personal relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father without possessing the Holy Spirit. How critical is the Holy Spirit to your spiritual salvation? There is no replacement.

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God . . .

That's the mind that you and I were each born with, which is naturally opposed to everything that God stands for—which means that from birth, brethren, we are enemies of God by virtue of our natural nature and our makeup.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. [It's impossible for the natural mind of man to care for the things of God, to love them and to have any kind of regard for the true Sovereign of this universe. Verse 8:] So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. [That's just a material fact.] But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit . . .

Now, what is Paul saying? Is he trying to convince the members of the Roman Church that they are spirit beings—that they're not like all of the other people walking around on the streets in the city of Rome at the time? No. "But ye

are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." What is it that makes the difference—that begins to make a shifting, defining turning point to allow human beings to come into a close, personal relationship with the God Family? It's the Holy Spirit. ". . . if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"—another very specific, pointed, clear statement. That's just a fact. Without the Holy Spirit, there is no relationship with God—period.

. . . if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you [now, in contrast to that separation from God, which we all have by birth], the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

What is it that gives us the hope of salvation, and what is it that brings us into a close, personal relationship with our Maker? The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Without that Spirit, brethren, we have nothing.

How did man come to have the opportunity to receive the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit? John 7 and verse 37 gives us a clue. "In the last day, that great day of the feast . . ." So, here we are on the Last Great Day. Jesus Christ is standing up and giving meat in due season, you can bet, about the significance of this plan of salvation and what is required in order for human beings to have that relationship with God. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." So, first, you find out that a human being, although it first requires a call, has to respond—they have to be thirsty for that relationship. They have to value it and act upon it.

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. [What is this living water? What is He even talking about here? He explains in verse 39.] (But this [this living water] spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive [When were they going to receive it?]: for the Holy [Spirit] was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

We're talking about a transition that took place, made possible by the very sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Until He died as a perfect sacrifice, as that Lamb for us, for your sins and mine, and until He was resurrected three days later and had ascended on high to the throne of His Father and was accepted as a wavesheaf offering, there was no gift of the Holy Spirit to dwell within a human mind. There was no human being that lived before that had received the indwelling presence of the Spirit in this fashion. Yes, the Holy Spirit moved the servants of God in times past—the patriarchs, Moses, the judges and the prophets—and it was through that Spirit that those men wrote down the very words of God precisely as God gave them. That obviously was an operation of the Holy Spirit, but it was still different and distinct from that which God offered to human beings who became a part of the very Church, the very Body of Christ, after His resurrection and ascension. ". . . for the Holy [Spirit] was not yet given . . ." That's a direct statement. It had not been given in that fashion to the patriarchs. This was something unique and new that was going to happen for the first time in the entire history of humanity on the earth.

Luke 24 and verse 49. When were they going to receive it? After Jesus Christ ascended and was accepted of the Father as our High Priest, He returned and manifested Himself and taught His disciples for a number of days before His final ascension. What did He tell them?

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you [He's speaking of that gift of the Holy Spirit He had mentioned earlier.]: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Here was a specific instruction of what the faithful disciples of Jesus Christ were to do if they wanted to receive this special, monumental, one-time, never-before-given promise. They were going to have to be in a particular place at a particular time according to the very command of Jesus Christ. Now, tell me, how important is it that we know when the right day of Pentecost is?

You know, I've talked to a number of people over time—and you've heard them over the years—who are confused on the right day of Pentecost, and so they want to take the easy way out. "Well, maybe it doesn't matter. I'm not sure which way it is. It's so confusing and technical, but certainly, God just looks on the heart. I'll do the best I can, and I'll pick one. Or maybe I'll keep both Sunday and

Monday." If you're going to go that far, maybe you had better keep Sunday, Monday, Sivan 6, and about half a dozen other days for Pentecost that other groups are keeping, if you want to be absolutely sure. Do you think God is going to accept that example? Don't bet on it. Don't count on it a bit.

Jesus Christ gave the instruction to His disciples here, and you can bet, although it doesn't provide the details of it, that He told them precisely when to be there. They knew when Pentecost was going to be. They knew that was where they needed to be gathered together at that particular time because this monumental event was going to happen then, and then only. If you were there a day earlier, you would have missed it. If you were there a day late, you would have missed it. You had to be there at the right time to receive that miraculous intervention and the gift of that indwelling Holy Spirit.

Let's see it in Acts chapter 2 and verse 1. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come . . ." That means there wasn't any doubt about it. It wasn't early; it was on time. It was fully come—all the way. ". . . they were all with one accord in one place." Yes, they followed the command that Christ gave. They didn't use their own human wisdom to say, "Well, you know, that's a work day, and we would rather get this over with on the weekend." No, they were where Christ said to be according to the Law. They knew when Pentecost was.

And keep in mind, brethren, that there was a strong contention over the proper day for keeping Pentecost at this time. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that the Jews were totally united during the first century on when Pentecost was—or even at the time of Jesus Christ in 31 A.D. If you have that false idea, get rid of it. There are all kinds of material, like the writings of the rabbis in the Talmud, and Josephus and others, that show that there was a strong contention at this time about when Pentecost should be—even during the time that Jesus Christ walked upon the earth. This debate between the Pharisees and the Sadducees was long-running—the Sadducees arguing for Sunday and the Pharisees arguing for Sivan 6. But you can bet that Jesus Christ was teaching and keeping the correct Pentecost regardless of what these Jewish leaders had done with their rejection of the Truth centuries before.

Oh, yes, and there are those who will say, "There's no indication that Christ took exception with them on when they were keeping Pentecost, so obviously, the

Sadducees were doing it right because they were in charge of the temple." Says who? That's just another ploy to try and justify their own answer in the back of the book that they came up with before they assembled the arguments. It doesn't hold water. What we do know is that there was contention and there was debate about when Pentecost should be kept. The only ones who were going to receive the Holy Spirit were the true disciples who believed the real Jesus Christ and who were at the right place on the right day at the right time, obeying the very instruction of Christ.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy [Spirit] . . .

That's the first time it ever happened in the history of humankind. It was the most miraculous event, you might say, that took place for any human being; and I'm talking about compared to all that happened in the chronicles of the Old Testament stories—and there were some fabulous miracles, monumental things, that God did in dealing with His people. But what can compare, brethren, to the gift of the very mind of God, through the Holy Spirit, coming and dwelling within the mind of a human being, and giving that human being the opportunity, for the first time, to think in a different way, to fight against the carnal mind that opposes the ways of God—to begin to change, to be able to overcome, to be empowered to begin to live according to the righteousness of Jesus Christ? What can compare to that very gift? We're talking about the very means of walking in that way which leads to salvation, and it only comes through being begotten into the very Family of God. This was a spiritual begetting. That Holy Spirit was imparted into those human beings for the first time in almost 4,000 years of man's history at the time this occurred. It was a monumental event. They were begotten. They became begotten for the first time as new spiritual entities, and it happened on the day of Pentecost. If they had been somewhere else—if they had gotten it wrong—they wouldn't have received it.

1 Corinthians 12 and verse 12:

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

And so, we know that this new Church—that's what it was that was born on Pentecost in 31 A.D.—was the Church of God, spiritual Israel. This was now finally the spiritual counterpart for that which was represented for all of those millennia by the physical nation of Israel. Now, for the first time, you see the spiritual nation of Israel, made up of those that were begotten of the Holy Spirit and who became members of the very Body of Jesus Christ. That's what all of those things pictured in all of those centuries before, even from the time of Adam. Everything was leading up to this time—all of the promises to Abraham about the coming of that one seed through whom all nations of the earth would be blessed. It was all coming to pass and starting to be fulfilled on this day of Pentecost in 31 A.D. with the birth of that Church—those first ones who were begotten through the Holy Spirit. They became living, spiritual, begotten beings with the opportunity to grow to maturity, ultimately to be born as spirit beings into the very God Family. This is where it took place. Now, tell me, how critical do you think Pentecost is in the plan of God?

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit . . .

Not multiple spirits, not divisive spirits, not contemptuous spirits fighting against one another—arguing, debating. No:

. . . by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

We're talking about the singular Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, His power through which He does His work of all creation in this universe, of all sustenance of that which He has brought into being. We're talking about that power of the very God Family that was manifested in a begetting within the minds of human beings—those that were called, those that accepted that calling, those who acted on that calling and were willing to give themselves. They were willing to crucify the self, to embrace that Way of Life and walk in it. They were the ones who began to receive the Holy Spirit in this year that the Church was born, and it all started on Pentecost, which represents the very gift of the Holy Spirit for the firstfruits—that early harvest of those called out of this world, given that opportunity to be separate



and distinct from the world and to have this incredible knowledge and this opportunity to be born as an early harvest into the Family of God when Jesus Christ returns in power and glory.

Brethren, Pentecost is a phenomenally critical observance in the entire scheme of God's plan of salvation for humankind. Is there any wonder, when you understand that, why it was attacked and why Satan was intent on using every method possible in order to confuse and to thwart that very plan in the lives of those to whom God gave this opportunity? Pentecost has always been a point of contention and debate.

Given that history, brethren, and when you come to understand how absolutely critical it is, and that the Church was absolutely prophesied to corrupt God's Truth and that Pentecost was even indicated as a focal point, it helps us put those pieces together of the history of what we saw take place in the Church almost thirty years ago. Some have come to see it in just the last few years, having wandered for twenty years or more, doing the best they could with what they knew, but they had certain wrong concepts about Truth. They certainly weren't clued in on the topic of divine revelation. They were following the ministry in that parent organization because they trusted that they were being led by God; and ultimately, when the wheels came off that organization altogether, they finally had to start looking around and saying, "Now, what went wrong?" Those that have found the answer—because they've come to understand that no human being, not even an apostle, has the authority to change doctrine from that which God revealed—are the ones that have the light coming on. They are beginning to see it. They are getting excited about it, and are now responding to that which we call the faith once delivered. How incredibly marvelous it is because then, you see, the real meaning of Pentecost comes to light. The significance of Pentecost, as the crucial point in Church history, becomes monumental.

Oh, yes, there was something of a phenomenal nature that happened at the end of a nineteen-year time cycle, which was 1972, but it wasn't what everybody in the Church expected. Remember, we were all fascinated with trying to figure out what monumental thing was going to happen at the end of every nineteen-year time cycle. Well, 1972 was the end of one of them, and of course, all of the speculation was that this was when the Church was going to flee to a place of safety. That didn't happen. What did happen in 1972? Well, this was the time, brethren, when

all of this preconceived work to attack the doctrine, beginning with Pentecost, was already well underway. The architects of the change in doctrine were already working their nefarious work. They were just trying to bide their time and pick the right political moment to bring it to fruition through the apparent review of an objective doctrinal committee, and it ultimately was announced on February 11, 1974. It's my contention that the phenomenal thing that took place from 1972–1974, as a monumental point of demarcation for God's Church, was the apostasy from Truth within the very last-day Church.

It is far different from that which most recognize, because they're looking to 1994. They think it's at the time when Mr. Armstrong's successor finally said that we don't need to keep the Sabbath anymore and embraced the idea that God is a trinity. They're all focused on the idea: "Well, that was the great apostasy." Not so. As I have often said before, brethren, that was only the final death throes of a sick and dying organization that had continued to live, but was going downhill for the last twenty years. I compare it very much, brethren, to an individual who has a slow-growing cancer that is slowly devouring the body; and over a twenty-year period, this cancer grows and grows and makes the patient weaker and weaker, until finally one day, twenty years later, he falls down the stairs. And then everyone else looks around and says, "Poor guy. He fell and broke his neck. If he hadn't fallen down the stairs, he would have been just fine." They don't recognize that what killed him was the cancer, and it was growing for twenty years! Falling down the stairs and breaking his neck was only the final result of a process that was going on for decades before.

That's the thing that most out there that are members of these other groups still haven't come to see yet. God is going to let them know. He is going to force them to see it one day. He is going to bring about the circumstances for them to finally admit what really happened in God's Church and when that apostasy set in and started. Was it 1994? It was actually earlier than '74, but the major manifestation, which was undeniable, was the change in Pentecost in 1974. That was the point when it all changed. It was absolutely prophesied to happen. It was prophesied that it was going to come about by scholarship—by human men who would elevate their own knowledge above that of God.

Let's notice Malachi 2 and verse 1—probably one of the most significant texts, in my mind, that addresses this prophecy of what was going to happen in

God's last-day Church, because the book of Malachi is a prophetic book for the end time. And what did God foretell was going to occur to spiritual Israel in the last days? "And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you." So He's speaking to those who had responsibility for the spiritual service of the Body—those who were teachers, who were called and ordained to be representatives of Jesus Christ and to do Christ's bidding, to fulfill His will, to teach His Word through the inspiration of that Holy Spirit. This is who this prophecy is speaking to.

And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name . . .

What is He talking about? What had these priests done to change away from giving glory to the name of God to giving glory to someone else? How did that happen? Are we just talking about speaking words? Is it because in their services and in making their sacrifices for God, one day they were standing up and saying, "Glory to the God who created all that exists", and then the next day, they said, "We're not going to worship Him anymore. Glory to Satan", or, "Glory to Baal"? No, that's not what they did. They continued to use the name of God. They continued to offer their sacrifices, supposedly, in the name of that Creator. So, how was it, then, that they went away from giving glory to the name of God? We're going to see.

And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the [Eternal] of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. Behold, I will corrupt your seed . . .

What seed is that? It means the fruit of their efforts. It means their work—their spiritual efforts in serving God, in serving the Church—was going to become weak. It was going to become ineffective.

Behold, I will corrupt your seed [That means the fruit of what they were trying to produce was going to become of none effect.], and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts . . .

That's pretty strong language, isn't it? God inspired this very phrase to show you His personal opinion about the Feasts being celebrated by His people. Now, I don't think you or I would like to attend a worship service at the Feast of Tabernacles, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Trumpets, the Days of Unleavened Bread, the Passover service or the Day of Pentecost, in which God considers it dung. You don't want to do that, do you? I don't either.

Who is it that's out here? We're talking about Israelites here. In the last-day Church, we're talking about spiritual Israel. We're talking about Church members. We're talking about the ministry who is serving the Church, and sponsoring Feasts and Holy Day services, and God says those solemn meetings are nothing more than dung. Do you think we probably had better be very careful about where we pick to fellowship and to worship, or are you willing to take the chance of worshipping in a "solemn" festival of dung?

Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it.

What does that mean? ". . . one shall take you away with it." Well, what's the antecedent of this statement? One what? One solemn Feast. What is this prophecy telling us, brethren? In the last-day Church, before the return of Jesus Christ, there is a particular Holy Day that was going to become fundamental in the destruction of God's Church. There is one particular solemn Feast that was going to be corrupted, and by its corruption, it was going to take the Church into error and apostasy. And it was going to be their undoing.

. . . one shall take you away with it. [Skip down to verse 11.] Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel . . .

This is not speaking about churches of the world—the deceived ones that God is not even dealing with. He's talking about His own called and chosen people who have been corrupted from within. Remember, this is a condemnation of the priests of Israel who had that responsibility of doing the spiritual service for the nation. In the last days, that is the ministry—those ordained and called as teachers to speak in the name of Jesus Christ, except they failed to fulfill their responsibility.

Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the [Eternal] which he loved . . .

Oh, yes, He loved us. He nurtured us, called us in, placed us within the very Body of His Son, and gave us every advantage and opportunity. He prospered that Church from the time He used Herbert Armstrong as a powerful spokesman to proclaim the Truth through divine revelation, and He built that Church with an annual growth of thirty percent for over 35 years. Then, all of a sudden, something happened. A phenomenal change took place, and nothing was the same anymore.

. . . an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the [Eternal] which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. [How did the Church marry the daughter of a strange god?] The [Eternal] will cut off the man that doeth this . . .

Who, now, specifically are we talking about? By what means did they marry the daughter of a strange God? What's the spiritual intent? "The [Eternal] will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar . . ." What was their Achilles heel? What was it that tripped them up and caused them, whether or not they recognized it at the time, to actually reject God, the One who gave them that priceless Way of Life, and built them as a Body into a powerful Church? How was it that, instead, they ended up marrying the daughter of a strange God? It was by the acts of those who were scholars. Here it is right here before you, brethren, in a prophecy of the last days.

The [Eternal] will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the [Eternal] of hosts.

It's talking about those men who had the responsibility to act on behalf of the people as a conduit for the Holy Spirit for teaching the Truth from Jesus Christ. And what did they become? How did they turn to embrace a false God? They turned to human scholarship. They elevated the knowledge acquired through the world's religious leaders and through those men that they elevated as being Biblical scholars. Those were the men that they began to reverence, and they brought in

these men's interpretation of technical words within the Bible as the foundation for determining the doctrine of God's Church.

Do you begin to see how God viewed that? He, as a jealous God, said, "I'm giving you the Truth, miraculously, through my Holy Spirit. I'm giving you a Way of Life which is perfect and cannot be improved upon. It's your responsibility, as those that I have called and set apart in this Body—spiritual Israel, the Church—to hold on to what I give to you, and you don't let it go under any circumstances." And then, the very teachers themselves, who were there to support, to help, to strengthen, to encourage, to give the words of life through the inspiration of Jesus Christ, began to change and say, "We need to go back and re-prove what we've been keeping for the last 35 years. If we've proved it once, we can prove it again; and in order to prove it, we're going to go out to these Hebrew scholars over in Jerusalem and the far-flung parts of the world, who are so acknowledged for their ability to interpret Hebrew words, and now we're going to get real truth because Mr. Armstrong wasn't a scholar. He was very sincere, but he didn't really know that much about the technicalities of the Bible. He did the best he could back in the 1930s, and so we don't hold anything against him; but certainly, we need to do a better job of determining the doctrine of the Church."

Where was divine revelation? Where was God? God was cast out and replaced with a daughter of a strange god by the very work of scholars. Human wisdom trumped the revelation of God. That's what happened. That's what was manifested finally for all to see in 1974. Oh, the seeds of it were there for a number of years prior. Those men had just not yet gained the ascendancy to have the power to influence in order to make it come their way on the surface. On February 11, 1974, when Pentecost was changed from Monday to Sunday, it happened.

Romans 1, verse 21: "Because that, when they knew God . . ." What are we talking about? Are we talking about deceived people out there who didn't know the Truth? No, the Apostle Paul is prophetically speaking through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit about those who had been called and had received the Truth because God gave it to them. They didn't receive a mixture of truth and error. That's what human beings come up with on their own. If Herbert Armstrong was just making it up out of his own personal study, then, yes, he would have come up with a mixture of truth and error. Brethren, if you believe that's what we had in the Church, then you don't believe that God had anything to do with it. God doesn't inspire His

chosen servants and allow them to teach doctrinally a mixture of truth and error. That's not the way He works. That's not the way the God I serve works.

"Because that, when they knew God . . ."—meaning, after they had received the revelation, miraculously given the priceless Truth. ". . . they glorified him not as God . . ." They took it for granted. They didn't really appreciate it. ". . . neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations . . ." What did it mean? It means they began to think highly of themselves and their own mental capabilities. They began to decide that they were pretty smart. They had a few degrees; they had gained a doctorate in this or that in the world's colleges, and now they felt pretty good about their ability to interpret the Bible and figure things out. "Poor old Mr. Armstrong who wasn't a scholar—well, we'll help him out." Is there any better definition of becoming vain in their imaginations? That's exactly what happened.

They ". . . became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." How did their heart become darkened when you're talking about people who were called and placed in the Church? Remember, how did they get there? They received the down payment of the Holy Spirit through baptism and became a part of that very Body, which gave light to them as long as they held on to that way. How did they become darkened? They rejected Jesus Christ as the source of Truth through revelation, and turned instead to their own scholarship as the basis for Truth. When they did that, brethren, they pulled the plug on the rivers of living water that, before, had been flowing to them. They cut off the spigot of the Holy Spirit. The light went out. They no longer, then, had God's blessing, His guidance, His inspiration. And from 1974 onward, we saw that manifested in the fruits of that Body. They absolutely lost the ability to speak the Truth.

"Professing themselves to be wise . . ."—oh, yes, showing us their credentials from the world, convincing us of what great scholars they were. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." They became fools, brethren, just like all of humanity, even the greatest intellectuals, the geniuses in this world who are elevated in the thinking of man, the ones who are given great awards on the world stage—the Nobel Peace Prize and all of these other awards given for human endeavor and accomplishment. All of those things, God actually considers utter foolishness because they don't even begin to understand real Truth.

"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." How? "And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." How did they change the image of the uncorruptible God into the image of a corruptible man? They denied that God miraculously gave Truth to the Church, and they began to say that Mr. Armstrong just did the best he could out of his own human research, and that their human research was better than his, and so they needed to fix these things. They denied the entire foundation of how Truth comes to the Church in the first place. That's how they turned the uncorruptible God into an image of a corruptible man. They denied that God was even a part of the building of that Church through the doctrines that Mr. Armstrong taught. That's ultimately the choice that you and I have to make—and everyone under the hearing of my voice.

Whether or not you come to see what God is really doing in this age and what we have to do if we want to be in a position to be judged worthy of salvation, is dependant upon whether or not you come to recognize that God put doctrine in the Church and He did not lie. I don't care, brethren, whether your understanding of a Monday Pentecost comes from your technical understanding, or not. If the only reason you're keeping a Monday Pentecost is because you figured it out technically by the proper Hebrew counting rules, which are there—and we're going to talk about them next time—then you are in no better shape than the ones keeping Sunday. Does that shock you? Does that concern you that I would say that people who might be keeping Monday are in spiritual trouble? If they're doing it only because they're confident in technical counting—human scholarship—they are in no better shape than those that are keeping Sunday, Sivan 6 or any other multitude of days. The knowledge that God is the one who placed Truth in the Church through a chosen human instrument of the last days, is why we have confidence in what we are keeping today.

We didn't create it. I certainly didn't, and I know you didn't either. Raymond Cole didn't come up with it, or create it, either. He continued to hold fast to that which he had been taught from the beginning by the servant that God did raise up—Mr. Armstrong. And we're not worshiping Herbert Armstrong. If we were worshiping Herbert Armstrong, we would have gone along with him in 1974 when he changed to Sunday! So, anybody who wants to say that we're just following a man, think again. The very existence of this remnant body called Church of God, The Eternal, which was started in February of 1975, is a testament



to the fact that we are not following a man—any man. Period. We believe Truth comes by divine revelation, and not even an apostle of God, whom we admit Mr. Herbert Armstrong was, has the authority to change what God gave. We refused to replace God with the daughter of a strange god; and God helping us, brethren, through the power of that same Holy Spirit, we're going to hold on to that until the very end.

That is your basis for having confidence in a Monday Pentecost. It is the same way that a parent answers the child who wants to know, "Why?" by saying, "Because I said so." I'm sorry if the explanation of divine revelation is not technically oriented, and I say, "Because" when you ask, "Why a Monday Pentecost?" But that's really how simple it is, brethren. It's in faith—whether you believe Christ was the cornerstone and foundation of the Church, or whether you believe it was a man, according to human wisdom, who founded this Church. I choose to believe that Jesus Christ founded this Church, not Herbert Armstrong—that Jesus Christ authored the doctrine of the Church and that He made sure, even against the proclivity of weak human beings to get it wrong, that we had it right from the beginning. It was His operation, and He does not reveal error.

That's why we're doing what we're doing. And that's the real reason why we have confidence in a Monday. Now, all the scholars in these other daughter churches out there that came out of Worldwide, they look at us and think we're absolutely foolish. But that's okay too because the Truth of God is foolishness to men. They have all turned away from the Holy Spirit and have embraced their own mental concepts and scholarship of the world. That's where their confidence is, which means they're thinking in a totally different way than they used to, at least the ones that were around back in the 1950s and 60s. And so, we look foolish to them, even as we look foolish to the rest of the unconverted world. So be it. I can argue a Monday Pentecost on a technical basis with the best of them, so I believe—and again, next time, we're going to see the details of that technical count—but that's never going to be where my confidence stands. And I'm never confident when I have to debate with somebody over the technicalities of Monday based upon Leviticus 23, verses 15 and 16, and *mimahorat*. When I have to get down to that level, and that's where all the focus is, I'm not confident in that at all—because if that individual does not come to grasp the significance of divine revelation, they're still not going to get it. Even if I talk them, technically, into the

truth about Monday Pentecost, they won't really get it until they see it in the broad perspective of divine revelation. That's the key.

Isaiah 48 and verse 16: "Come ye near unto me, hear ye this . . ." God is getting ready to say something startling and very important through the prophet Isaiah. "Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning . . .", said God. ". . . I have not spoken in secret from the beginning . . ." In essence, He's saying, "You think I let Mr. Armstrong get it wrong with doctrine all the way back there?" It's like Christ is raising His hand, and saying, "Wait a minute, I didn't stutter. I'm the one that inspired him, and I told him what the Truth was. I told him what to teach, and I didn't let him get it wrong. According to his own mind, he would have gotten it wrong, but I didn't let him get it wrong."

". . . I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I . . ." This is the One who became Jesus Christ. Is that how we view Him, as the cornerstone of the Church of the last days? ". . . from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and his spirit . . ."—that same Spirit we're talking about that represents Pentecost—". . . hath sent me." So, now, Isaiah, through that inspiration, representing that same Being who became Jesus Christ, is speaking with that authority as one who brings Truth. "Thus saith the [Eternal], thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the [Eternal] thy God which teacheth thee to profit . . ." Did we have a teacher that taught us a mixture of truth and error, or did we have a teacher who taught us to profit?

". . . which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments!" He's saying, "Oh, if you had just done it the way I gave it at the beginning. If you had accepted it straight up in the simplicity in which I revealed it, if you had not challenged it, if you had not tried to improve upon it, if you had not become enamored with your own wisdom through the scholarship of human beings, if you had just simply believed in faith that I was the foundation of the Church, oh, how much better off you would have been!"

O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then [if that had occurred] had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me.

This didn't happen at the time that Isaiah originally spoke it to ancient Israel, and it didn't happen, either, in the time that this prophecy was truly fulfilled in the last-day Church, because they didn't hold on to the Truth. They didn't hold on to Jesus Christ as the cornerstone. They rejected Him. They cast Him away for a false god. And so, what was the result? If they had obeyed, they would not have been cut off. They were cut off because they rejected Christ.

Brethren, the light of the Holy Spirit went out in the Worldwide Church of God in 1974, and anyone who stayed in after that was in a dark assembly. The Holy Spirit wasn't there anymore because they kicked Jesus Christ out and said they didn't want Him. They said they didn't want what He gave and put into the Church all the way back in the 1930s. That wasn't good enough for them. They wanted something that matched more with what the scholars of the world were teaching. They kicked Jesus Christ out, and with Him went the Holy Spirit. And that Church went dark. Oh, they continued to go on for a number of years on the momentum of the previous blessings that God had given—the same way that physical Israel today still has momentum from all the birthright blessings that God gave through the promise of Abraham to the descendants of the ten tribes in Britain and the United States. They still have the momentum of those things now, but they're winding down. They're slowly being eroded over time.

It's the same thing that happened within spiritual Israel, the Church of the last days, when they rejected God. They still had the momentum of those blessings for awhile, but over twenty years from the time that this cancer began to set in—when they rejected Christ and He wasn't there anymore—it began to grow and grow, and that which had been a spiritual organism began to get weaker and weaker. Oh, finally, those that had any sense of love and respect for the original teachings of the Church couldn't help but see it. They couldn't help but see the liberalism that was setting in at every turn. And after Mr. Armstrong died in 1986, how long did it take for the successors to totally throw out even the fundamental teachings about the Sabbath, the Holy Days, the nature of God? They turned right back to the filth of Protestant falsehood. How long did it take? Not very long at all.

By 1994, it became very apparent. And, of course, that's when you saw all of these major splits take place. The problem is, they're made up of thousands of our former members—many of whom are extremely well-meaning, very sincere—but unfortunately, they didn't realize that they got caught by a shell game,

and they were focusing on a man and not Jesus Christ as the founder of the Church. And so, they accepted a boatload of false doctrine, beginning in 1974, and they didn't even know it. Oh, they saw the final result of it, and they ended up leaving. They couldn't stay in the organization called Worldwide Church of God, which became nothing more than another Protestant organization—from which most of them had tried to come out of. But now they're a part of all of these other splinter groups, several of them significantly larger than we are. They're holding on to the idea that Mr. Armstrong was the Apostle—and many of them claim that he was the Elijah—and yet they do not even recognize that they have rejected Jesus Christ. They're all out there keeping a Sunday Pentecost or Sivan 6 or whatever they're doing.

Well, brethren, I'm here to tell you that when God said that the Sabbath is the sign of His people, it's not just the weekly Sabbath; it's the annual Sabbaths as well. When we corrupt the annual Sabbaths, we separate ourselves from God. Is there any more significant Holy Day than the Day of Pentecost, which represents the lifeline to the Church with the gift of the Holy Spirit? By changing, and cutting off the lifeline of the Holy Spirit—by corrupting Pentecost and keeping it on a Sunday, of all things, Satan's pagan day of worship—that was an absolute rejection of Jesus Christ. The only thing that gives us confidence, brethren, and keeps us from being incredibly discouraged, is that God said all of this was going to happen. It was built into His plan. We knew it was going to occur. It had to occur to test us all because God is a jealous God, and He's not willing to share His glory with anyone. He wasn't willing to share His glory with Herbert Armstrong.

We have always been, and will continue to be, incredibly respectful of Mr. Herbert Armstrong because he was the servant that God raised up. He was the one by whom we heard the Truth of God in the last days. So, you're not going to hear us, like a lot of these other people that are out there, denigrating him. No way. I expect that there are going to be a lot of surprised people at the resurrection when he might very well be there. Obviously, I don't know, and you don't either. God is the righteous Judge, but I wouldn't be surprised if he repented of the things that he was coerced into doing in his older years because of the weakness he had for his son. I wouldn't be surprised if, before he died in early 1986, he personally repented and made it right with God, even though it was well beyond his ability, then, to turn that huge ship around and bring it back to the Truth.

So be very, very careful about denigrating. But at the same time, brethren, we are not worshipping a man. God is a jealous God, and He's not willing to share His glory with any man, including Herbert Armstrong. This was all prophesied to come about because God had to see: Were the people of God going to turn their allegiance to the human being who was the mouthpiece, or were they going to continue to recognize that he was merely a conduit for the inspiration of Jesus Christ? What's the best way to prove that than to allow the circumstances that would appeal to the weaknesses of the human instrument in his old age and cause him to sign off on those very changes? He was not the architect of those changes, brethren. He was not the architect; his arm was twisted into it by his son who was a rank liberal, and many other evangelists who got full of themselves and their own wisdom. They had their own agenda for wanting to change it.

Now, remember, the Pentecost doctrine was officially changed by announcement from Mr. Armstrong in February of 1974. Three months later, in May of 1974, the doctrine on marriage was changed. Was that a coincidence? No. As we came to understand it, brethren, the real thing they were after was divorce and remarriage all along. There were not only a number of ministers, but also a huge number in the laity who were bound to unconverted mates who weren't willing to live with them, and therefore, they were forced to live a celibate lifestyle. They didn't like that. They didn't want to do that anymore. They were clamoring for a change in the doctrine that would allow them to go out and get married. The ministry felt so beat up over having to enforce "Mr. Armstrong's" doctrine—his hard stance on marriage. And they were sick of counseling these people and having to tell them the bad news—that they had to live alone. A number of the ministers themselves wanted to be out and have the chance to divorce and remarry. According to human lust and liberalism, they wanted justification to start meddling and tinkering with the doctrine. So how did they do it? They picked on Pentecost first because it was a more technical doctrine anyway. Most of the people didn't understand the Pentecost count and couldn't explain it if they had to, to save their lives. They did it because it was part of the body of that which Mr. Armstrong taught from the beginning, so they accepted it at face value.

We kept Monday because that's when Mr. Armstrong told us to. It was part of that fabric that fit together, and we saw the fruits of it. It was positive and rewarding, and God blessed the Church, so we had confidence in it. They picked on it because it was an easy target, but once they set the precedent to change

doctrine on the basis of scholarship—"new truth," as they called it—they just primed the pump to be able to go right after the doctrine on marriage. It was already set up; they just delayed it by three months to give time to kind of put the political pieces in place for the announcement. They timed it for the dedication of the new Ambassador College Auditorium in Pasadena, which, I've probably mentioned to you, was the former sight of a big grassy field where I used to play kickball as a first-grader in Imperial Schools.

In 1974, they dedicated the Ambassador Auditorium. And in this dedication of the supposed House of God, which was full of the ministers that had come in for the ministerial conference, was the announcement of the change in the marriage doctrine. We're going to talk a lot about that when we get to fundamental number twenty-five. Here, in the dedication of the supposed House of God, is the announcement of the rejection of the marriage doctrine and the allowance of divorce and remarriage. I'm telling you, brethren, that auditorium never was the House of God. I refer to it, personally, as the House of Baal. By that time, that's exactly what it was. It started three months before with the change in Pentecost, and then divorce and remarriage, which is what they were really after. It was an absolute rejection of the Holy Spirit, and the light went out on that organization as a reflection of Jesus Christ. It just took twenty years for the wheels to come completely off, and as I said, for that sick and diseased patient to finally fall down the stairs and break his neck. But make no mistake about it, the disease set in twenty years before most people realize.

Here's a quote that came out under Mr. Armstrong's name in May of 1974, concerning an announcement of the D and R change. Here's his explanation concerning, as it's called, the "New light on marriage and divorce": "First, we all had to bear in mind that we COULD NOT accept mere arguments advanced by others outside the Church, resorting to unclear meanings of Greek or Hebrew words and using human reason to try to 'prove' what they wanted to prove." Isn't it ironic? The very thing they said they weren't willing to do, is precisely what they did with Pentecost. Here, they're explaining it in regard to divorce and remarriage—that they intentionally wanted to avoid going to people outside the Church for their evidence, and resorting to debated Hebrew and Greek words of the scholars, or using human reason to try and just put in place what they preconceived ahead of time that they wanted to do. And that's exactly what happened with Pentecost.

They went to the outside scholars. They made the change in 1974 on the basis of the debate over the Hebrew word *mimahorat* in Leviticus 23:15. All they ultimately did was make a change that they already had set in their minds long before. They had the answer before they had the evidence that they used to justify it. They knew what they wanted to achieve; they only went through the pretense of a doctrinal committee over a number of months and years in order to give it credibility, as if they really had objectively ferreted out all of these things to make the change. No, they were an answer in search of a question. They started with the end in mind and filled in the gaps to support what they wanted to do. It was an absolute fulfillment of every prophecy that God spoke concerning what was going to happen to His people, spiritual Israel, in the last days. Just keep in mind that Herbert Armstrong was not the architect of those changes. You can see in some of his writings soon before he died in 1985 that there was still a strong respect and a fear for God. In that final piece he wrote in June or July of 1985 in the *Worldwide News*, he greatly lamented, as he put it, "the destruction of the Church by the liberals in the 1970s." How true that was.

What was the ultimate result of this human wisdom in changing Pentecost? What happened anytime Israel walked away from God and turned to their own understanding and to the pagan customs of the nations around them? What happened? Hosea 4 and verse 6: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge . . ." Oh, they didn't think they lacked knowledge. You can bet that the ancient Israelites thought they were pretty smart. They thought they were pretty wise, that they had everything together, and that they were perfectly capable of making decisions for their own good concerning the future. They didn't consider themselves lacking anything. As God views it, though:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me . . .

That's exactly what happened no later than 1974. When Pentecost was changed, it was a rejection of Jesus Christ, the cornerstone of the Church; and in essence, that very Being said, "Okay, you're going to reject me—I'm going to reject you. You're not going to be my priest. You're not going to speak in My name anymore. Oh, you can make a pretense, as a counterfeit, that you're speaking in My name, but I'm not inspiring it and I'm not blessing it."

". . . I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God . . ." What happened to this idea of growing in grace and knowledge—re-proving the Truth and discovering new Truth, which gets rid of the "bad stuff" we had for the past forty years? "We're growing now. We've changed Pentecost because we've finally come to the knowledge, forty years later, that Sunday is the right day. We're just thankful for God's mercy that He didn't hold it against us for forty years, but now we have new Truth—new knowledge," so they said. And yet, God says, ". . . seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God . . ." God is not telling Israel that they were wrong because they didn't fix the right doctrines that needed manipulating. No, what does He criticize them for? Rejecting what God gave at the beginning—forgetting what was revealed divinely.

. . . seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. As they were increased, so they sinned against me . . .

What happened the more the Radio Church of God was blessed? In 1968, they changed the name of that organization to Worldwide Church of God, after having grown by leaps and bounds by an average of thirty percent for all of those years. They were rich, powerful, expanding and growing phenomenally above any other religious institution on the planet. What happened? "As they were increased [as we were], so they sinned against me . . ." The proclivity of human beings every single time is to turn to trust in riches and human wisdom when they get too big for their britches and forget the foundation of where they came from. That's exactly what happened to that organization when it got too top heavy by people who thought too much of their own abilities.

. . . therefore will I change their glory into shame. [Have we seen the glory of that organization called the Worldwide Church of God turned into shame? It's a laughingstock today.] They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity. And there shall be, like people, like priest . . .

Oh, yeah, it's saying, the people are in it right along with the priest. They're all guilty—the one for leading them into error, the others for going along with it. They're being led right down the Tully trail because they had their confidence in a man, not in the revelation of God.



And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings. For they shall eat, and not have enough . . .

How many of them who have departed from the original teachings are really satisfied? How many of them are truly at peace and content? You can't be, brethren, if you don't have the Holy Spirit. If you've rejected God and turned out the light, if you've turned off the spigot of those living waters flowing within you because you've rejected Jesus Christ, the cornerstone, there is no peace of mind; there is no more confidence; there is no more help.

"For they shall eat, and not have enough . . ." Oh, they're eating. They're going to their services; they're studying; they're praying; they're doing all of those things that many of them did for years, but they're not being satisfied—they're not being filled up. ". . . they shall commit whoredom," which is what they did when they turned to false doctrines, "and shall not increase . . ." Are any of these organizations really being blessed? Are they growing thirty percent a year like they desperately want to do to try and prove that they are the faithful remnant? Are they making a big splash on the world scene with their radio/television broadcasts and their print magazines? Are they changing people's minds? Are they getting the attention of the world? Does the world even know or care who they are? Not that I've seen. What a pathetic state. Oh, they're out there hustling like mad, though, thinking they're fulfilling God's will. How preposterous.

For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the [Eternal].

For the sake of wanting to go out and fulfill this end-time prophecy of doing a warning witness before the return of Jesus Christ, they went off and forgot the most important thing—which is to take Jesus Christ with them. "Let's go out and do God's work, but, Christ, you just stay at home. We don't need you. We don't need your Truth; we don't need your commandments. We'll figure it out on our own." Those are not the words they have used, but that's precisely the orientation of mind that they have adopted, and that's exactly what they have done. They went off and left Jesus Christ. They turned off the spigot. There's no more Holy Spirit. They're just out there doing the best they can with their human efforts, and the fruits

show it. It's pitiful. When God does the work, there's going to be no doubt about it. There was no doubt about it, brethren, when we saw the work that was done under the auspices of Mr. Herbert Armstrong. Now, that was phenomenal. That was something that a human being could not have accomplished, except for the help and the sponsorship of the Living God.

It just cracks me up to see the failed attempts of these other ones out there today. They try to copy everything about what Mr. Armstrong did. They get as close to the names as possible. There was *The Plain Truth* magazine; now we have *The Real Truth* magazine. Instead of the Worldwide Church of God, it's some other variation. They copy everything they can about the name, the style, the writing, the emphasis. They're doing everything they can to look like Mr. Armstrong. But what are their results? Nothing like Mr. Armstrong's. Why? Because God is not there. When God is there, brethren, we know it.

It's the Truth that counts. It's the Truth that God gave to the Church from the beginning—just like He gave it to ancient Israel from the beginning, on Mount Sinai, through a chosen prophet, Moses, who brought it down to the people, and said, "Here it is. It's perfect; you can't improve on it. Don't get out your chisel and add an eleventh commandment. Don't start messing with the ones that are already there. Accept it as it is, and hold fast."

The scholarship of human beings is so insufficient. Brethren, if we've learned our lessons from what occurred almost thirty years ago now, then we have the foundation for moving forward in the future and being able to see the difference between the counterfeits and the true inspiration of God's work. All of it hinges on understanding the basis for accepting a Monday Pentecost. If you understand the right reason to keep a Monday Pentecost, then it is going to help you avoid all of these other problems concerning other doctrines—the things that are going to come up between now and the time that Jesus Christ literally comes back. I have given you the foundation in three sermons, and if I've repeated myself over and over again—good. You need to hear it and you need to get it, even if you don't get anything else. It's going to be that anchor for you in times of trouble and difficulty.

When we are assembled together in the next service, I'm going to get into the very technicalities of understanding the Monday count.