

The Test of Genesis

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This afternoon, we are going to look into some rather interesting things out of the book of Genesis. Just like Mr. Armstrong, he always returned to that book; the Garden of Eden, the two trees. We are going to look at it from a little different aspect. I am going to be answering a couple of questions along the way.

Two questions that may have puzzled you are:

- 1.) Why did Satan go to Eve and not Adam when he got them to eat of the wrong tree, that's question number one.
- 2.) Why was he successful, and why was Adam not deceived?

In other words, what reason would there be for Adam not to be deceived by Satan?

We are going to answer those questions, plus we are going to look into the most important of all questions. That is "What is God doing here on this earth?"

What is the purpose for living here? That is the very heart and core that we need to understand as far as what God is doing and what He is accomplishing. Let's turn to Romans first. We will be going back to Genesis, so don't worry about that.

We will go to Romans, chapter 1. We are going to start reading in verse 16. Paul is writing to the Romans here. You would have to understand that the Roman Empire was very similar in a way to the situations that we find right here, with a decadent society, just as our society is decadent. He is going to make some very astute observations, because you need to understand that Rome was the head, the center of the world at that time; of culture, of understanding, of knowledge. I mean, Rome was it at this stage. It's like, in a sense, the United States is it for this world. All the countries, in a sense, kind of look to the United States, don't they? We are supposedly the leader of this world.

Just think about this. I want you to think deeply about what Paul says here, starting in verse 16. "**For I'm not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who**

believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For, in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith as it is written, the just shall live by faith." In other words, the followers of God are going to live by faith. He goes on, and he talks directly about that society, that Roman society. He says, "**For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.**" So what is he saying there? He said, "Look," he said "through unrighteousness the truth is suppressed."

The truth is understanding. When Christ went before Pontius Pilate, he asked Him, "What is truth?" Christ said "God's word is truth". That is where we find true understanding. But, you see, the unrighteous suppress the truth.

If we look at our society today, and we understand that the colleges, the universities, what did they do? If you think about it, they are the center of education. Yet, they teach that there is no God. Right? But, Paul is going to say something here, just exactly applying to that very thing. "**Because, what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.**"

In other words, what he is saying here is, "Look, God through His creation really has shown it to them." They ought to understand this creation, the way it works. Everything works in harmony; nothing lives or dies unto itself. The soil, if you think about it, has microbes that destroy; the dead vegetation, and produces nutrients for new vegetation to grow. Every plant grows not unto itself: it provides food for animals. The whole thing, **it really works!** It is like a well designed machine that functions for the service of man and animal.

This earth functions on it's own. It was designed to function that way. It is a matter of design, not a matter of happenstance. "**For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, even as the Eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.**"

What he is saying is, "Look, if they would just look at the creation, they would have to understand that there is a creator". That is what he is saying. He's telling them that regardless of how sophisticated their educational system is, "**Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were they thankful, but became futile in their own thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened, professing to be wise, they became fools.**"

So, the more that they educated themselves, the more they drifted away from the truth of God. So, we can understand this is what Paul is really saying about the people of this world, about the scholars of this world.

Let's turn to Malachi, chapter 2, verse 10-12. It says, "**Have we not all one Father?... Malachi speaking, "...Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously with one another...=?"** In other words, "Look", he said, (and this is what we have), "we have treachery."

Our whole society is based on treachery, is it not? You can't go into the city of Milwaukee, or for that matter wherever it is, and feel safe or comfortable. In fact, our whole world that we live in is based on protecting ourselves, isn't it? And, this is what he is pointing out. Continuing on, he says, "**...By profaning the covenant of the fathers**", Well what is the covenant that God made? He made that back in Exodus, didn't he? "**Judah,**" continuing on in verse 11, "**Judah has dealt treacherously, And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, For Judah has profaned The LORD'S holy institution which He loves: He has married the daughter of a foreign god.**

May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob The man who does this, being awake (KJV has 'scholar') and aware, (KJV has 'master') Yet who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts!' So in other words, what that words "scholar" and "master", used in the King James Version mean, is "to arouse" or "have insight". And, the word "scholar" means "the one who has the answers". So, in

other words, what Malachi is saying is, “Look, they have the job to arouse us, to bring us to action.” They also should have the answers.”. But, do they? That’s the question.

A while back, I don’t know if any of you had the opportunity to see on Channel 10, a series by Bill Moyer, on the book of Genesis. This is the public channel 10. It was a rather interesting thing. I stumbled on it. It was on after the news rather late in the evening. This Mr. Moyer is kind of famous for holding roundtable discussions with different groups on different subjects. In this particular case, he was talking about, of all things, the book of Genesis. He had some interesting things to say about the book of Genesis.

Let’s turn there right now. Turn to the book of Genesis. As I was watching the program and listening to what they said, I wanted to jump up and tell them “Look, you don’t understand what you are talking about. You people just don’t GET IT!” They don’t understand what the Bible says, what the purpose of the Bible is, and they couldn’t even figure out the story of Creation. They said, “Well, now there are two stories of Creation, the story in chapter 1, and the story in chapter 2. They said, “Now the God of the story in chapter 2 is the little god”. He was the little god, and they made some very interesting comments. These people were from Princeton University, Hebrew University, and Catholic University. They were educated, they were the scholars who should understand the word. That is what they spend their whole life doing, reading and studying about the Bible. Right? Here’s one, Walter Bergman, a professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary. Here’s another guy, Brian Barnes, the deputy managing editor of the Wall Street Journal. They had him on there, just for his comments. Then there was Diane Bergen, professor of the Old Testament studies from the Catholic Theology Union of Chicago, and Norman C. Colehan, professor of Midrash at Hebrew University College, Jewish Institute of Religion, in New York City. These are the kind of people that they had there commenting on this Book and not understanding what it is truly about.

One of the interesting comments they made was about Eve. They said “Well,

Eve was really something else. Look at this person, she really had a lot of ingenuity. She was inquisitive. She was willing to go out and try something new.”. You see, and another comment was, “I would never allow my daughter to read this part of the Bible, because the indication here is that the woman is subservient to the man, and above all, I wouldn’t want my daughter to understand something like that”. So, these were the comments that they made, and I am sitting there thinking, “Wow!, they don’t really understand what is going on here at all. They have no idea what is transpiring in Genesis 1”.

It really gave me a bad feeling when I got involved in this. As a result, I did a lot of close investigation into this book of Genesis, in the beginning. I came up with some really surprising information, something that you may have not thought about. It is based on something that Mr. Armstrong mentioned in a letter that he wrote. He said, in an article that he had written, *Never Before Understood Why Humanity Cannot Solve Its Evils....* He wrote an article about why we couldn’t solve our evils, and he did it in 1981. He makes this interesting statement here in the article. He says what actually happened in the Garden of Eden to later overwhelmingly effect your life. What took place right here in the beginning has affected every one of us greatly. You are going to see and understand why God talked, preached, to Adam and Eve. This was on what today would be called Friday evening and through the Sabbath. What I am going to do is to show you now, through reading this, exactly what did happen.

Can we prove by what we read right here, that God actually taught Adam and Eve? Did he teach them as Mr. Armstrong said?

In chapter 1, if we read verses 26-28, this is really the beginning. It says, “**And, God said, ‘Let us make man in our image...’**”. In **our** – make man in **our** image – “**...according to our likeness, let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the cattle and over all of the earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth’ So God created man in His own image, in the image of God, He created him, male and female, He created them. Then God blessed them and He said to**

them ‘be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”.

So, what we see here, really, is an overview, is it not?. This is an overview of the creation. He said, Look, this is what we are going to do, and it’s an overview of what transpired.

Now, if we want to understand, specifically what took place, I guess we have to go to what that “lesser God” was talking about. That we find in Genesis chapter 2.

Now, let’s start in verse 7 of chapter 2, and we will read that, “**And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.**”. So, what we have here is a picture of God, getting down and forming man with His own hand. Now if you think about this, this did not happen with the animals, did it? He created the animals by the word. He just said “Created”, and it was created; but in the case of man, He actually gets down in the ground, forms him with his own hands, and breathes His own breath into man; into Adam. He makes him a living soul, a living being. This reflects, really, God’s love for this being. This is a special creation that He is doing, and you can see that it refers back to what God said. He said “Look, Let **us**”, in other words more than one God here. He said, “**Let us make man in our image**”. Like us. Like God. See! That is an important understanding.

We will continue on in verse 8. “**Then the Lord God planted a garden Eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed.**”. Now, just think about this, what is this really saying to you. He said, first,... He makes the man, doesn’t he? Adam, Man, this man is alive now, right? And while this man is alive and standing there, God makes the Garden of Eden. What does He do? He makes it right in front of his very eyes. Adam sees the Garden of Eden being made, doesn’t he?

Let’s turn to Luke chapter 17, verse 6 and read something very interesting. “**So, the Lord said, ‘If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this**

mulberry tree be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea, and it would obey you.”

In effect, Christ was the one who was right there with Adam. He was the Creator. I don't want to go through the proof, but if you need to know this, if you look in John 1, it will tell you. John 1:1-2-3, you can understand that it was Christ who did the creation. You see, he did the creating. It was Christ who was right there, and here in Luke. He is telling us, in effect, how things were done.

So now, if you go back to Genesis, again, (and just always hold your place in Genesis, because we will always be going back there), you can understand something that is rather interesting. Here is Adam, and here is God, and He is planting a garden. He sees trees being moved from one place to another, doesn't he?... the Garden of Eden itself! The implication is, that the Garden was a walled garden. There was a wall around the garden. And so, he saw Christ make the wall. Well, how did Christ do it? He just spoke and the stuff moved into place. I mean,... this is better than Cecil B. DeMille, or any of the movies or whatever we see today. I mean,... Adam saw God making the garden,...a fantastic thing,... didn't he? He saw a fantastic thing.

“And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree to grow that was pleasant to the sight and good for food.” And so, you know these are mature trees. You have to understand that, because, guess what?... They came up and had fruit on them. ***“...good for food.”***

The Tree of Life was also in the midst of the Garden and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. We can skip the next couple of verses and we will drop down to verse 15. ***“And the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend it and to keep it.”*** Now that is a rather interesting set of words there, right? So, in other words, this is like Adam is going to be employed by God to take care of this garden, isn't he?

Now, when Adam was made, what was he like? Right! Think about this. He had an empty mind, didn't he? He didn't have a mind like you and I have where we

already have understanding about what is going on. He had to be taught, didn't he? He had to be taught and to understand what his job responsibilities were in this garden. Who was there to teach him? Who was the greatest teacher that we have ever known? Jesus Christ,... right? The Word!.... So, in order for him to tend and keep the garden, Christ would have had to teach him how to tend and keep the garden. He would've had to instruct him, wouldn't he? And, continuing on, ***“tend”*** and ***“keep”***, that word is to serve and protect. You see, to tend and keep is to serve and to protect.

Continuing on in verse 16, ***“and the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may eat freely, but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die.’”*** You can imagine, if that were you in this situation, you would say, ***“Die?”*** What do you mean ***“die”?***, right?

So what did God have to do in order for him to understand what dying was about? He would have to explain what death was all about. He would have to explain about life, wouldn't He? This kind of reminds me of my own son, when I would go out and work on my tractor, or something like this, and he was just a little guy, and he would go out there and he was there looking to see. ***“What are you doing, Dad?”*** You know, under the tractor, watching, he didn't really understand everything, but he was there looking, he was absorbing, like a sponge absorbing all this knowledge. This is exactly what Adam was, excepting he was a lot better than any of us, because his mind was directly from Creation.

His mind was perfect, not fouled up like our minds have been. So God would be able to teach him. That is what He had to do. He had to teach him about death for him to understand what life was about, that life could end,... and it could end in death!

Continuing on, in verse 17, ***“but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil, you shall not eat of it for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*** And so He tells him about the two trees.

Now, the Tree of Life, he could have eaten from. Adam could have eaten from

that tree any time he wanted to. Then God said, ***“It is not good that man should be alone, I will make him a helper comparable to him.”*** Well, what is He saying here about this helper thing? The two “Gods” are talking here, aren't they? God the Father, and Jesus Christ,... they are talking and saying, ***“Look, this poor chap needs somebody to help him, because by himself, he is not going to hack it, he's not going to make it.”*** That word, ***“to help”***, is number 5828 in Strong's, and it means ***“to come to the aid”***, ***“material and spiritual assistance”***, ***“help, support and assistance”***. Now, that is a pretty high calling, is it not? In other words, when does a person feel the best? When you have helped someone, right? When you help someone out, that is when you receive the greatest reward that you could ever receive, and so in effect, this is how God is looking at the creation

Continuing on in verse 19, notice how God is going to do this! He didn't just plunk Eve down and say ***“here she is, you've got her.”*** He did something else. In verse 19, he says, ***“And out of the, and ground, the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them, and whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.”***

Now, there is a possibility God may have created, right in front of Adam, some of the animals and some of the birds. That's just a possibility. It is not necessarily true, but it could mean in this particular statement that animals that He had created prior to this, He brought to Adam. This is the acceptable explanation of what is happening.

So the first thing He does is He brings the animals to him, and ***“to see what Adam would call them.”*** and Adam named all of the creatures. ***“So Adam gave names to all the cattle, the birds of the air, and every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a help mate comparable to him.”*** So, in other words, why He was going through this exercise, was for Adam's own good. So that Adam could see that all the animals that are created there isn't really any animal here that he could commune with, that he could talk with, that he could communicate to, was there? There wasn't

any, but He wanted Adam to understand this.

He didn't just do it, he wanted Adam to understand the situation so that when he got his helpmate, he would appreciate her. ***"And then the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam and he slept and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. Then, the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, He made into a woman, and he brought her to the man and Adam said, this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man."***

Now, when we think about this, Adam, a lot of people in the past said, "well man is short one rib", but he really isn't short a rib at all! He has the same number of ribs that a woman has. Well why is that? Because, genetically, if you lose a finger, your son or daughter who is born to you doesn't come out missing a finger. Otherwise there wouldn't be much left of us if that is the way it worked! Our full body compliment is always passed on, right? But Adam always carried that reminder in him, didn't he? He was actually short a rib. It just says, He took the rib and closed him up. It didn't say He replaced the rib,.. "He took a rib and replaced it."... No! Adam always knew that Eve came out of him, because he was short a rib.

You can see, this is a tremendous statement that is made here, that, ***"this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; 'she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man'. 'Therefore, man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife and they shall become one flesh', and they were both naked, the man and the wife, and were not ashamed."*** Now this statement is not being made by Adam. It is obvious he couldn't make this statement, because he, historically wouldn't understand what the situation was. The statement was being actually made by God.

So now, we have come to the point where we now have Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden, don't we?

So, if we look at things in a more direct way, now we can go back to chapter 1, and we will look at verse 29. We are

going to see in verse 29 that the whole emphasis on what is being said, all of a sudden, changes.

Genesis 1, verses 26, 27 & 28, were an overview that God gave of this creation. It was just an overview! Now we get to verse 29, and God gets very specific. So, once Adam and Eve have been created, He's now going to give them some instructions, and He says the following. ***"And God said, 'See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food..'"***

So, what is he telling them? He is saying "here is what you eat, Adam & Eve.". You know,... they were getting hungry, right? I mean,... they had to eat. So, He's telling them what they can eat. He said, "all of this stuff is good to eat. This is what you eat.". So, He is teaching them, directly! ***"And God said,"*** continuing on in verse 30, ***"Also, every beast of the earth, and every bird of the air, and every thing that creeps on the earth in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food and it was so."*** This is an important verse, it tells us that you didn't have lions and tigers eating other animals. It is real plain! This is the way it will be in the "World Tomorrow", this is the way it was at Creation. The animals fed on grass, seeds, and whatever. But, they didn't eat other animals. It is contrary to what God's Creation is about. It is contrary to what His character is about.

"Then God saw that every thing that he had made and indeed it was very good, so the evening and the morning were the 6th day." Guess what? Now we are at the end of Friday, the sixth day. You can see that a lot of information has been transmitted to Adam and Eve; a lot! He has told them what to eat, how to live. Adam has seen some tremendous things. And Eve was there and has received a certain amount of education, right?

Now, as we go on to chapter 2, we are going to understand something else about chapter 2. We start in verse 1. It says, ***"Thus the heavens and the earth and all the host of them were finished, and on the 7th day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested."***

O.K. Let's turn right now to Isaiah 40, and read verse 28. ***"Have you not known, have you not heard the Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary? There is no searching of His understanding."*** So, you know when you go back here, and you understand that God doesn't get tired, and here it is telling us,... It says ***"He rested."*** You know,... well that sounds like He rested. Because we are of a physical nature, when we work hard, we have to rest, right? We have to rest! In the same sense, was God tired? We just read here that he doesn't get tired, right?

So what does that word "rested" really mean? It means that He rested from achievement. In other words, He stopped working, and He looked at what He had made, you see. He stopped working and He looked at what He made, He rested from His achievement.

It is like when you build something or you make something, you paint the house or whatever it is, and then you stand back and you look at it and say "That looks pretty good!" "I like that!" "I like that new color." In effect, this is what it's about. And on the 7th day, from all His work which He had done., He rested. ***"Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."***

O.K. Let's look at that word blessed. It is number 1288 and what it means is to be endowed or invested with power for success. So, whenever you come across that word blessed, and when God blesses somebody, if He blesses you, what is He doing? He's endowing you with the power to succeed. That is why when He talks about blessing Isaac, and Jacob, and all these guys,... and what happened to them?. They succeeded in what they were doing, right? That's when God blesses you. He gives you the power to succeed and in effect, this is what He was talking about on the 7th day. He said, "This day will succeed. It is the day that I am sanctifying, and I am blessing."

O.K. now, the word "sanctified", what does that mean? What does it mean to sanctify a day? Well, let's turn to Eph. 5:25-26.

Here is what it says: ***“Husbands love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word.”*** So how does Christ sanctify something? It’s by words. It is by words. It is by explanation. That is how He sanctifies it. So, if He sanctified the Sabbath, what was it necessary that He do with Adam and Eve? He had to sit down and explain the Sabbath to them, didn’t He? He said, “Look, this is the day, I am setting the example, I am resting on this day, this is the day that commemorates this creation that you have seen here, this is why this day is sanctified. That is why it is set apart.” So in other words, what He did is He explained to Adam and Eve why this day was sanctified. That was what the word implies. It implies that He had to teach Adam and Eve about the Sabbath.

If He taught them about the Sabbath, He taught them about His other laws also, the other nine Commandments. They needed to know those commandments, didn’t they? So He spent the Sabbath teaching Adam and Eve, didn’t He?

Bringing out this word, “sanctified” (Strong’s number 6942 ‘qadash’ in the Hebrew),

“that sanctified”,
“to be hallowed”,
“holy”,
“sanctified”,
“to be consecrated”,
“to prepare to dedicate”.

They are not merely dedicated, but dedicated to what is good and kept from what is evil. So in effect, what was He doing? He was teaching them precisely what Mr. Armstrong said He was doing. He was teaching them about the law. He was preparing them for something, wasn’t He?

Now, let’s go to chapter 3, and we are going to look at what was the result of this situation. ***“Now, the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made, and he said to the woman, has God indeed said to you that you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”*** Genesis 3. ***“And the woman said to the serpent, you may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden.”***

Now, in this there are some important things here. Actually, when he is talking

about Satan, (and he is talking about a beast, you know), saying ***“the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field...”***. Those words really imply that this person, this being, this serpent was the highest created thing that God made, because the word “field” really means “high place”. So in other words, what he is saying is “In heaven and earth, there was nothing created”,... (and “beast”, it just means “living things”). In other words, it would be better stated if it said, “Of all the living things that God created including all of the angels, this being was the highest.”

So you are talking about Satan, and you can see that he was trying to lead Eve astray. Eve said, ***“but of the fruit of the tree which was in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat of it, nor touch it, lest you die’.”*** So, you can see the woman right away was really kind of flustered. The instruction wasn’t that they couldn’t touch it. , God just said “don’t eat of that tree.”. They could touch it if they wanted to. But, you know, she was really emphasizing that. And the serpent said to the woman, ***“You won’t die!”***, and then ***“God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing Good and Evil”***.. This is just like the salesman that comes to the door. You know the husband is gone, he comes to the door, and sells the wife some shiny gizmo. You know, she thinks “Oh WOW, is that the case?” She’s a very believing person. Well, what was she made to do? She was made as a supporter. She was there as a help-mate.

O.K. so all of this takes place and so ***“when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that was pleasant to the eyes, and was desirable to make one wise, she took of the fruit and ate it. She bought the story, and she also gave it to her husband to eat.”***

Now, let’s turn back to I Timothy 2:14. It says, ***“And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.”*** Now, remember what I said at the beginning. I said I was going to explain to you why Adam wasn’t deceived, and why Eve was deceived. And, the answer comes out very clearly when we understand what I went through. What did Adam see? He saw God planting a garden. He saw God doing

some tremendous miracles, didn’t he? God, by actually showing him what was going on, brought this knowledge into his mind. **He wasn’t fooled!** He knew where the power was. Didn’t he?

Eve was fooled! She didn’t see all of that did she? She only heard about it, kind of like second hand.

So, she didn’t get to see the Garden made. She didn’t get to see those trees planted, uprooted from one place and put in another place. She didn’t see all of that. So, it was much easier for Eve to be deceived than it was for Adam.

Now, I want you to think about something right here. You know we have talked about a lot of things here that happened. If you get the right picture, you see that Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day and on the seventh day and part of the sixth day God talked to them and taught them. On the seventh day He sat down and He talked to them again. And, on the eighth day, what happened? God wasn’t there, was He? He wasn’t there.

It’s kind of like a person when he makes a boat. He makes this little boat, and he takes it to a pond. He puts it in the pond, and he gives it a shove. It goes floating out on the water, and it’s like a test. He’s testing the boat to see if it is going to sink or if it is going to float. Is it going to work, or isn’t it going to work? What God had done, was to give Adam and Eve all of the knowledge, all of the understanding that they needed to be able to face Satan, to be able to pass a test. He didn’t prepare them haphazardly. He prepared them very thoroughly for the test they were about to go through. And, what happened? They failed the test. They failed the test!

What does this have to do with us today? It’s the same thing. Every one of us has a test. We are all tested; we are being tested. We are being tested to see whether or not we are going to follow God, whether or not we’re going to follow Jesus Christ, whether or not we are going to follow His laws, His statutes and His judgments. It’s part of what God is trying to do. This is at the heart and the core. This is what I said in the beginning, I said I would tell you what is the heart and the core.

What is this whole creation about? Why are we here? Why are we walking this earth? This is where we come to understand this. Because, this is the first part of it. You notice that God did not stand over Adam and Eve and say when Satan came along, "Wait a minute, hold it! Don't do that! That's wrong!". He didn't do that, did He? He sent that boat out on that little pond to see if it could float on it's own. He said "I have provided you with the instruction, I have provided you with the information, now it is up to you to make the right decision.". He didn't stand behind them, and he didn't force them to make the right decision.

So, what are we talking about? We are talking about the very first and most important principal that God goes by, and that is "**Free Moral Agency**"! Every one of us is free to make the decisions as we see fit, aren't we? Adam and Eve were free to make the decision. What happened as a result of the decision that they made? We are living in a society that is the result of the decision they made. They said, in effect, "Look, we don't need your laws, God, we don't need to follow those ways. We can go our own way.". And, that is what man has been doing. He has been going his own way ever since.

Now, what is it when we look at those laws that God was giving Adam & Eve. What is it that He was trying to do with those laws? Think about the law, just simple things, like not stealing. Right? If you knew that no one was going to steal from you, what a great society you would live in! I mean, it would be unbelievable. Then, if you added something like not lying, not bearing false witness! What kind of a society would we be looking at?

What kind of a person are we looking at? Who has this kind of character? Who doesn't lie? Who doesn't steal? Who doesn't cheat people? Who doesn't try to

take his neighbor's wife? All of these things!... What kind of a society would we have? We would have the kind of society that God wants for man. This is what it is about.

The first thing is **free moral agency**. God gives us the choice. We have to make the right choices in our lives. The second thing, (and this is the heart and core,... you see,... one without the other is of no value). is what God is trying to create within us, **righteous character**. That is what he is trying to do. And how is He doing it? He is doing it through free moral agency. That is how he does it.

I would like to read something that Mr. Armstrong wrote in the Seven Laws of Success. He says the following:

"Understand this, you are a free moral agent. God will never cram His religion down your throat. He will never force you to decide this way or to go His way. He not only allows you to choose the wrong way, He compels you to make your own decision, otherwise His purpose would be thwarted. The Living God has set two ways before us. 1) His way – the cause of all the good things you want here and now, plus eternal life in real success continuously forever. The other way, 2) of self-centeredness, vanity, greed, envy, the way mankind has gone in rebellion against God and His laws, the way that causes all unhappiness, suffering, evils, and ends in death; God compels you to choose."

In other words, God says here, "Make a choice, I'm telling you how it works.". He told Adam and Eve how it worked. He gave them the choice. They made the wrong choice. And yet, he commands you to choose the way that leads to real success.

Let's turn to Deuteronomy, chapter 30. And, we will start reading in verse 19. Here, we have Moses coming to the end of his life, and he talks to the people, and he is telling them, he's trying to encourage them, right? He is trying to give them direction, and he says, "**I call heaven and earth as witness today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, that both you and your descendants may live. That you may love the Lord your God, and that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life, and the length of your days, and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.**" In other words, what he is saying here again is, "Choose the right way. Look, I want you to go the right way. I want you to have all the blessings."

Man has not chosen the right way. This life that we live in here is a matter of choices, and we have to understand that when we make these choices, we need to make the right choices. Some of you have made a choice, when you came out of the Worldwide Church of God and you went into the PCG. You made a choice, which was a correct choice at the time. That was a correct choice because you were coming out of a church that was teaching falsely, and you were going into a church that was teaching the proper doctrines, weren't you? And now, you have made another choice. This is the choice that you've made,. You have made the choice not to follow a man, and to follow Jesus Christ. This is what we are talking about. This is what I spoke to you about earlier, about following Christ, that **no minister, or other man should get between you and your God**. This is a decision that you have made. It is a right decision. It is a situation that you will continue to face for as long as,... either you come to the end of your life, or Christ returns; when He will bring truly right government.