

**Mr. Richard Pinelli**

**Sermon Transcript**

**April 17, 1999**

# **Time and the Eternity of God**

My subject today is a four-letter word. Rather than say it, I thought I'd give you some clues so that hopefully by the time we finish the introduction, you'll know where I'm going to go. This particular topic is the name of a national news magazine. We're also told that "a stitch in it saves nine." Nine of what, I don't know. I've also been told it heals all wounds. I've also been told that it wounds all heels as well! Dickens wrote his novels in the best of them and the worst of them. Yet it had its honored traditions. My subject has some distinctive properties. You can get it on your hands. Kids always seem to have it on their hands. Adults never have enough of it. It must be round because we're commanded to let the good ones roll! It flies, it goes by, it has zones and it has a father - only on pagan holidays of course. Don't tell its secrets because it will tell. You should get to church in it and you should be in your seat on it. Basketball players call it out and the refs call it in. In every game you have it at half and in tie games you go over it. You can spend it wisely or you can waste it. Criminals do it. Flirts make it. Most stories are told once upon it and some people say frankly that it is money you know. It comes in different varieties, there's daylight saving, eastern standard, Greenwich Mean. There's winter, spring, summer, but curiously no fall. You can have it war, you can have it peace, you can have it play and pardon me, you can also have it Howdy Doody! Don't get behind it or people will laugh at you. Teens think parents spend all their lives behind it. Occasionally you will have a whale of it and at most parties, a good one is had by all. In the workplace it comes in full, part or flex. In music it comes in march, three-quarters and cut. Most days are made up of breakfast, lunch, dinner and Miller. You can have it rag, record, double or if you own a computer, real. It marches on and you have to prove that you can stand the test of it. Race car drivers have trials of it, politicians want it equal, seminars tell you how to manage it, most of us just run out of it and if you come to my house and don't have a good one, don't leave and give me a hard one.

If you haven't figured out what my subject is about, it's a four-letter word called time. I'd like to speak to you on that topic today because I think it's very, very important. Time, according to dictionaries is described this way: *It is the measured or measurable period during which an action, process or condition exists or continues.* Now that doesn't make very much sense, but that's what the dictionary says. It's also: *an appointed, fixed or customary moment or hour for something to happen, begin or end.* And after the theory of relativity had begun to find more and more understanding, it is also described in the

dictionary as: *finite duration as distinguished from infinity*. Earthly duration as opposed to eternity.

In the Church years ago, we used to say that time was described as the passage of physical bodies through space. Time really, for all of us in the Church of God, needs to be understood because it is a spiritual subject. The bible has much to say about it, God views time differently than we do. Our approach to life, I believe, will change as we grasp and understand time. The introduction to the sermon today, the use of the words that concern time, show how many different proverbs, phrases, idiomatic expressions are found in our English language. The word time and it's derivatives is ingrained in our speech and at the forefront of our consciousness, as you well know.

So what I would like to do today is I would like to show you what the bible says about God and His relationship with time and I want to take you through four basic steps in this seminar style sermon that I will give today. I want to show you the value of time as God looks at time and then what the value of time is to man. I want to show you how God actually views time so that you will understand it in your particular life. I want to show you the natural properties of time and then I want to show you how God uses them. I hope that it will be helpful as we begin to perhaps see a little different look at the concept of time. I'd like you to turn with me to the book of **Romans 1:20** because when we look at this particular scripture in Romans 1:20, we will begin to see something that we need to grasp as we look at the creation that God has placed out there for our understanding.

**Rom. 1:20** - *For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen...so we are beginning to recognize then that God is giving us the record somehow of what God is like and God's relationship with us in the area of time because He tells us...the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made...and we want to look at that today in understanding time...even His eternal power and God-head, so that they are without excuse.*

If we look at the creation of God perhaps we can better understand how God looks at time. Perhaps we can understand these things as a testimony to His eternity, because you note what it says here in the middle part of the verse: *even His eternal power and God-head*. So I would like to begin by looking at something physical to understand time in relationship to God. I would like to examine one such creation first of all in the sermon and that is the creation of the Grand Canyon. I would like you to examine with me for a moment because many of you have seen pictures of the Grand Canyon, some of you have visited it and I think it is probably what I would consider one of the seven wonders of the world. One cannot visit the Grand Canyon without being absolutely overwhelmed by it's grandeur, it's majesty, it's sheer size. As you stand there, you are dwarfed by standing there looking over this big ditch as I describe it sometimes. It is an awesome thing to look at. It's one mile deep, you can see ten to twelve miles across, man is really literally dwarfed into insignificance as he stands on the rim of the Grand Canyon looking down. The Canyon is a multi-colored spectacle, it's hues and it's moods change with the angling

of the sun or the passing of a cloud. It is interesting to go there in the early part of the day and come back a half hour later and see the changes and the shadows that begin to occur as you watch the movement of the sun and as you watch the movement sometimes of clouds.

What you see brethren is a work of art, a beautiful work of art. It was not created by the Noachian flood, it could not have done that. It was not created by the Satanic rebellion because it is teeming with life, some of which was designed to live there. But it is a work of art from the mind of the great Creator God in beauty, variety, color and inspiration. You see the Canyon is a testimony to the age or the eternity of God. Let's ask the question, how was the Canyon formed? I think we simply can say the Grand Canyon is the result of a number of massive geological factors that were set loose over a period of time. Now I know some people believe that when God created everything, everything was created in fiat and in a sense created just like that (snap of the finger). But what you will find is that within that creation of those things that were created by fiat, at the snap of a finger, when God said, Let there be light and there was light, there were other aspects of that creation that over a period of time, you see them develop through the handiwork of God and the Canyon, we believe is simply that type of thing.

Now the Canyon has mile high plateaus and buttes that are way up at the top, then you have sheer drops of hundreds of feet going straight down into the Canyon, then it levels off down on a plane about three quarters of a mile down. Then there was another thousand foot sheer drop into the Colorado River below. When you begin to look at it you begin to see, it's a beautifully handi-crafted large piece of the creation of God. There is almost no scientific question and I don't think we in the Church of God disagree with this, that it took millions of years to form. The process by which it was done seems to be that volcanic upheaval occurred on the plateau area and then part of the areas were dropped down or they ended up dropping down and ancient seas covered the Canyon and it eroded away the shoreline over a period of time. The fossils of marine life found at various shore line levels seem to indicate that very factor. The waters gradually finding their way all the way down, out of this particular beautiful Canyon, forming the Colorado River. We see the water even down at the bottom today eroding the chasm walls that we see and it's a beautiful sight if you have a chance to go down from the top to the bottom to see this very thing occurring.

What is the point? God created a work of art, it wasn't created with paint and a paint brush, with an easel or with a chisel and a hammer. What God did was He sculpted this magnificent monument using a tool that only He has mastered and that is time and He's used this time to do that. Nothing that man produces can equal the beauty, the majesty of God's creation. Man can't duplicate it because he doesn't have the time. God only has the time. We will see in a moment that's how we can come to understand His eternal Godhead as a Creator and as a Ruler of this entire universe. Man can't duplicate what is seen, he doesn't have the time. God has all time, God owns all time and in one sense of the word, time is meaningless to God because He has it all. It's not the same as you and me, it just isn't. Understanding God doesn't care how long it takes to create. Let's draw an

analogy for you to understand this thing of the Grand Canyon. Let's talk about the possibility of how we as human beings can understand it. Let me draw an analogy for you between the Grand Canyon and time and an insect. It's a poor analogy, but let me try to show you how to basically understand what has happened.

Now imagine for just a moment an insect living near a field. The insect only has a life span of three days. It is given a sense of intelligence so that it can reason, but remember it will be born, it will mature, it will marry, it will have children and it will grow old and die in three days. It will have an entire life experience in three days. Now it lives near this field out there, there's a great big field that we see, a grassy field, a flat field out there and therefore we must recognize that something is about to happen in this particular grassy field. We're going to build or have built a shopping center and so the plans have all gone in and so the insect that is there next to this open field begins to live with a process that is going to occur in the building of this particular shopping center.

Now this shopping center will take approximately nine months to build and we will go through the process as the insects live and die and as the progress of this particular shopping center occurs. Now this insect lives near this field where the shopping center is being constructed. The first thing that the insect sees is an open field, that's the first thing he sees, then you see a few stakes that are pounded into the ground by men as they begin to set out in their blueprint what they want to do with the shopping center. Then you begin to see that the grass is stripped away by the tractors that will begin to remove the grass and begin to develop the need to put a foundation in. The fourth thing you see is mounds of dirt as holes are being dug for this particular foundation. Last of all you see some foundation laid, and on and on it goes through the generations of these insects until the shopping center is finished. Now what has happened? In nine months or 270 days you have gone through approximately ninety generations of insects because if they lived for three days and then you figure out what has happened in 270 days you realize that ninety generations of these insects have been born, they've lived and they've died and they've gone on to wherever they've gone on to and all you have left now is another insect coming on for three days and what does he do? The first one sees an open field and then gradually you see them coming to see a few stakes in the ground and then grass removed, mounds of dirt being piled up and finally some foundation that is built. On and on through these generations until the shopping center has been finished.

Now how did these insects view the creation of the shopping center? First of all, not one generation could possibly know the end result from the beginning because they only live for three days. Secondly, it happened so slowly that no generation could even really see and really understand the changes. They might see a small portion of it in their three days, but they saw very little of it. Thirdly the present generation would not understand the past forces that brought what they see presently going on. They wouldn't have seen the grassy field if they lived at the time when the foundation had been laid. But the point was that they didn't see it all and fourthly, the last generation, seeing the completed center would marvel how it got there, or maybe they would not even think of it until someone came along and explained to them like I'm trying to do today in a very basic way, the Eternal

God-head and time. The length of their lifetimes is limited to what they could conceive and build, the insects could only build structures that took less than three days and when they saw the magnificent structure of the shopping center that took generations to build, they were awestruck.

Well, same thing with our God, God built the mountains that we see, He built the Grand Canyon, the sun, the moon, the stars, some things by instant fiat, others by time, but it all attests brethren to the very Eternal God-head and to the eternity of this particular God that we worship and we serve. You see the analogy simply tells us that you and I are like the insects in God's master plan. We simply buzz in and we buzz out and we don't get to see the whole plan. That's just the way it is, we don't get to see the whole thing, we cannot envision all of this because of time, but we're trying to get our minds wrapped around the concept just a little bit today. Now let's go over to **II Peter 3** for another scripture to again, my purpose of my sermon today is to just kind of stretch your minds a little bit in understanding this thing about time. Let's notice how God looks at time.

**II Pet. 3:8** - *But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day with God is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as one day.* Now he doesn't say, I live one day and therefore a thousand years have passed, he's simply trying to give us an analogy of how time does not affect Him and where He is not controlled by time. It simply tells us that one day is a thousand years and a thousand years is one day.

**Verse 9** - *And the Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness...*

We use another word, impatience, in human beings and this is true. It says about the saints when they're under the altar, it says that the souls of the saints are there and they're saying, *How long O Lord, faithful and true will you not avenge our blood upon those that have done this to us?* And this is true, you and I as human beings are impatient, we want things now, we've lived in an instant society. We started years ago with instant coffee then we went to instant potatoes and instant onions and instant everything, it's amazing what we have done and you know it doesn't take any time now, things that took hours take minutes, things that take minutes take seconds today. But that's the way we are and therefore God said *He...is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness.*

You notice how God views time, to God millions of years of the Grand Canyon are like watching a shopping center being built, He understands the process, He controls the process, our whole lifetime is spent in only a few hours of the life of the Grand Canyon, it's changes are imperceptible to us. I saw the Grand Canyon in 1959, I went to the Feast of Tabernacles and came home. My wife and I saw the Grand Canyon two years ago and you know what? The only thing that I saw that was different was the fact that there were more stores and more restaurants and more things that I could perceive in that way. But you know, I don't know how much deeper the Colorado River has dropped since 1959, but the point was that you see it's not conceivable to me as to what those changes were

because it's only been a period of somewhere about 8 or 9 years and you can't appreciate the forces that have been playing upon the Grand Canyon at this particular time in our lives because you don't see the move or the changes as great as the Eternal God who has created it. Let's go over to **Isaiah 57**. There's an interesting scripture here that I would like to zero in on for just a moment because it's a very difficult scripture to understand. I'm not asking everyone to understand everything that I'm going to say because I don't even understand some of the things I'm saying! How does that sound for an admission? But it's true.

**Isa. 57:15** - *For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place with him that is of a contrite and a humble spirit."*

But notice what he said in the early part of the verse: *For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity*. God not only has eternal life, but He inhabits eternity. To God, eternity is a dwelling place. Now let's stop for just a moment here and evaluate something. Man basically inhabits a three dimension way of life. If you look at the three dimensions employing the vectors of length and width and depth, you realize that by definition all physical things are basically three dimensional. God does not live in the same dimension that we live in, God lives in the dimension of spirit. Now He uses the vector of time because that is a part of what He is doing to develop His overall plan, but time does not affect God in the same way that it affects us. To a spirit being time is really of no consequence, time has no intrinsic value in that sense of the word because it doesn't change God's eternity. But does time change us? Oh yes! Look in the mirror.

About four or five years ago I went racing into the bathroom for something and I wheeled around the corner and I came face to face with my face and I looked in the mirror and I said, Oh no! And my wife is hollering, What's the matter? I said, I just saw my father! And then the worst thing of all is here in Ohio they take that lousy picture that makes you look so bad that I am sure it must be at your ugliest best or your best ugliest, I don't know, but I took one look at it and I handed it to my wife and said, "My dad." And I saw it all over again. But the realization from the time that you're a very young person as you begin to see things change you realize how time has an affect upon the human body, but to a spirit being it does not because a spirit is immersed in eternity and he has it all, he's surrounded by it. He is all that there is to have in that sense of the word, living in eternity and therefore we live in a totally different dimension, we live in time and space, we live in width and depth and breadth, that type of thing, that's where we are as human beings.

Now if you'll go with me to **Exodus 3:14**, I'd like to show you a word that is used for God here that again, describes a little bit of what we're talking about, about God dwelling in eternity. Again, the word is found in the King James in it's basic definition, but I think there's even a greater definition as the Hebrew scholars bring out of this particular statement in verse 14.

**Ex. 3:14** - *And God said unto Moses, "I AM THAT I AM. Thus shall you say unto the children of Israel, I AM has sent me unto you."*

Now when you go over to chapter 6:3-4 you see that the name that comes out of that is YHVH or JHVH, but when you look at this particular verse and you read what the commentary says, it says that it is described this way: *I am or I will be what I will be*. This is what the words literally signify. *I will be what I will be and I shall be* (in the future) *He who I am now*. You and I can't say that. What we're going to realize is that one of these days we're going to shed this particular dimension that we live in and what we see happening in this particular dimension that we live in is decay as a result of the second law of thermodynamics. Now I'm not going to get into that because it's technical and I don't even know what I'm talking about! So I want you to understand, I'm explaining to you the basic principles as I understand them and that's where I want to stay, trying to make it as simple as I can. So He's called the Eternal or the self-existent one. This can only be said because He dwells in eternity, because it is a condition or a place where time has no effect upon Him. That's why Jesus Christ is described as Melchizedek, being without father, without mother, without descendant. That's why when you see in the book of Daniel names of God called The Ancient of days and the Everlasting One. Because He doesn't dwell in the same dimension that you and I live in. The dimension that you and I live in decays as a result of the fact that we are this physical creation.

So what we recognize is that this God that we serve as the one who has seen all days that have ever been, He has never been young, He will never grow old, He will never age even though He is looked upon as the one who is the wise man as Daniel 7 points out, as the Ancient of days. Everlasting has another meaning, it means out of sight, it means out of mind. The human mind only measured by the finite, everlasting and eternal are words that are infinite as we would say. It's like this building - look at this wall over here to your right, look at the wall to your left. You and I live in this particular building right now, we see things in this building, we understand things in this particular building. If I take you outside and ask you to look to the east, you probably can see two, maybe three and if you're on a high enough plateau, maybe four or five miles that way. If you walk out to the west and you look out this way, you can see that way for maybe four or five miles, but the point is that standing and looking toward the west or toward the east, you are incapable of getting beyond that as a finite human being. You and I are incapable of doing that, of measuring beyond the finite, we can only see a small distance. That's why when we think of words like being twenty years, fifty years, maybe a hundred years, maybe a thousand years, we can still grasp that, but when you start saying that God created billions of years ago, you say you don't understand that. He doesn't want you to need to understand billions of years, you and I will all understand that when He gets the movie projector out and starts showing us the whole show, later on when we're all made part of the kingdom or family of God.

But the point is that age for you and I is the product of the three dimensions of man, length, breadth and depth, plus the forces of energy, matter and motion. And of course the

unseen laws and time which play upon the physical earth and the extensions to the universe and therefore what we see is, we describe it simply as energy, matter and motion in movement. Energy, matter and motion in movement equals time. And this is what we must understand. Time moves on and we simply, through this particular law that is at work in the universe in the physical dimensions that we live in play upon our human bodies. Now God being spirit is not affected by that. I want to show you a scripture that I never saw before until about three or four years ago, I think it's the most inspiring scripture about God's eternity. I want you to turn with me to **Job 38**. I hope I can show it to you the way it seems to come across in the writings of the book of Job. I find this most inspiring because it shows the past eternity of God and the finiteness of men.

Now if you remember very simply, here was Job and he had done all of these things and Job was touting his righteousness in many many ways, the right way, because Job was a man that lived an upright life and that no one could find anything wrong with him and even God challenged Satan to try and find something wrong with him and Satan couldn't find it. Now when you come down to the realization between what God is and what man is, this is when He began to deal with Job in chapter 38, it is a priceless example of the God that we serve who inhabits eternity explaining to us how He does and what He has done and then He began to show Job that Job, you're nothing but this piece of flesh that is degenerating and you haven't been around long enough to know what I know, you haven't been around long enough to do what I have done, you haven't been around long enough to see what I have seen. Now Job, you tell Me here in verse 31:

**Job 38:31** - *"Can you bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?"*

Now He goes out and He says, Look in the universe Job for just a moment and take a look at Pleiades. Now what you begin to realize is that Pleiades in time, as we understand time, is moving together or is being bound together. He says that there is a movement going on Job where Pleiades is moving together, where it is being fastened together in this particular constellation. He is saying to him, Can you do that Job? See I've been around all this time when Pleiades was out here and now it's moving together to be fastened and I've watched that Job, it's gone on for a long time, where have you been fellow during this time? See this is what God is saying to him. Then He says...or loose the bands of Orion?

Now the bands of Orion literally mean that there is a chain apparently, that is seemingly holding this particular constellation together and over a period of time, speaking humanly, it is being broken apart and the chains are broken and it is moving apart from what it was before. So He's saying to Job, O.K., Job, I was there when this particular constellation had this particular chain around it and it was bound and now it is breaking loose, can you do that, can you loose the bands? How long have you been around fellow, I've been around a whole lot longer than you and I've watched this going on. You know it doesn't say here how many years God might have said this to Job. But notice what He says:

**Verse 32** - *Can you bring forth Mazzaroth in his season?*



Now that's the constellation which is called the Twelve Signs and what it means is that there is some kind of movement over thousands and millions and billions of years of time in which you see that there are seasons of this particular constellation as it moves and turns. Now Job, how many of these have you seen? And Job would say, One. And He would say, Which one? Job - The present one, that's all I've seen. Now this is what God is saying and then He says:

**Verse 32** - *Can you guide Arcturus with his cubs?*

God sees Arcturus moving among his cubs, this is what you see going on. And this two verses, it tells you that there is a movement in the universe and the God who set up the forces that hold the very constellations together, the forces that move the stars, He has watched them move and you human beings, you Job, haven't been around long enough. So what in the world are you trying to tell me anything? You see when you look into the heavens, you are looking into the eternity of God, you are witnessing the Ancient of days. Let's understand for a moment. Light travels at one hundred eighty six thousand miles per second. It would take eight minutes to know if the sun turned blue. It would take eight minutes for you and I to know that. The nearest star as you and I know is Alpha Centauri, it is four light years away. We cannot measure miles, we have to figure it in light years. It's impossible because you just could not calculate that, so therefore we say, Alpha Centauri is four light years away.

Reader's Digest had an interesting article some time ago. I want to read to you from it, just a couple of paragraphs, it's profound. He said: *The universe is a very simple time machine. It doesn't involve any strange or complicated machinery, only in immense distances. When we gaze into the depths of space we are looking into the endless depths of time. Even traveling at a 186,000 miles per second, starlight takes years to reach earth.* This is profound, this is the one that I think you'll enjoy. *Astronomers are cosmic archeologists, digging through the ruins of a previous universe. We see the star Alpha Centauri just as it was over four years ago, we see the Andromeda Galaxy as it was more than two million years ago, by the time it reaches us, it takes two millions years to get to us. Our days reside in the midst of a billion yesterdays.* Can you understand it? I can't. I hear what he's saying, but it doesn't register. Now maybe it's because I'm Italian, I don't know! But the point is that it just doesn't register. I can figure a certain amount of things, I can figure how long it takes me to get from here to there but when you start getting 186,000 miles per second I begin to realize, I'm outta here. I just can't figure it all out.

Space and distance becoming meaningless when you inhabit eternity with time. You see this is what we're faced with, this is what we need to understand about the God that we serve. Now what in the world is the value of time then? To a spirit being in this sense, it's the value, because they have it all. To a human being it is incredibly valuable, it is incredibly precious. About a dozen or two of you, with me, would like it to stop for awhile because I don't like what it's doing to me and some of you probably say the same thing because when you're a teenager it seems to go so slow and the older you get it goes faster and faster and faster and when you reach a certain age you say, Slow down, you go

too fast, I got to make the morning last. Remember the old song? It's true isn't it? So to a human being time is a very valuable commodity, we have so little. Men search for the fountain of youth, we only have a finite amount. Notice **Psalm 90**, let's go there for just a moment. I believe this is a prayer of Moses in this particular case, the only psalm in the entirety of the Psalms that is a psalm of Moses, the man of God, as it says.

**Psa. 90:1** - *Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations...because God has been eternal, because God can be everywhere in all of their generations...before the mountains were brought forth, or even you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*

That is a mouthful! It has to do with what I just talked about, God has existed for eternity, He is eternal.

**Verse 3** - *You turn man to dust and You say, "Return you children of men." For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past and as a watch in the night.*

**Verse 10** - *The days of our years are three score years and ten and if by reason of strength they be four score, yet is there strength, labor and sorrow for it is soon cut off and we fly away.*

God has dwelt in all generations because He's the Ancient of days. He started the process of great works of art. The great enemy of man is death. You know what death is? It simply means you're out of time, that's it, no more time, that's exactly what it means. When you begin to look at the statement made in Hebrews, it says, *it is appointed unto men to die once*. We recognized that God learned from Lucifer's experience, never again could God allow eternal misery to occur in the universe. So what He did to man is He gave him so much time, because it is appointed unto man to die once and on top of that, the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. So we begin to realize that the wages of sin is simply death. It is appointed unto men to run out of time, whether you're a sinner or not, you're appointed to run out of time because God has left you in this particular dimension for a great overall purpose. Time is the friend of the spirit being, it is the enemy of a physical being. I Corinthians tells us this, that the last enemy to be destroyed is death. The gift of God is time, God is promising to give you all of time, that's what it means when you look at the gift of God which is eternal life. He promises to give you all of time.

What is it that God asks of you and me? What will give you the opportunity to be a part of the kingdom of God? Time. One of the biggest stumbling blocks for people is keeping God's Sabbath and His holy days. God says that in this seventy year period, give Me ten years and I will give you life. Give me ten years out of the seventy and I will give you eternity in return. It's a difficult task for man to acknowledge that God has the power to hallow time, that God can make certain time holy. Recently a lot of people played with this, they thought that was really funny that God could somehow hallow time. How can

you hallow time? Well read what the bible says dummy! That's what I said to a few people! Either you believe what the bible says or you don't. God said that He hallowed time. Giving God time is the first and the most difficult step in conversion. Romans 8:7 says: The carnal mind is hostile toward God and His law and it can't be subject to His law, neither indeed can he be. Once man surrenders time to God, God can open man's mind to His plan.

Take a look at the autobiography. What did the man say? He kept the days first then God revealed His plan - right? So in order to understand time as God does, we first of all have to understand the fundamental property of time. Chemicals have certain properties, so does time. In the physical realm, time is destructive, that is the ultimate property, it ages, it decays, it breaks down and ultimately destroys. God made a physical universe and all matter is in a constant state of decay. I want you to turn with me to **Psalm 102:25** for a moment, we're not too far away. Here we see the second law of thermodynamics. Now it's my understanding in my basic study of it that it is called the law of entropy increase. Given enough time, the universe would die. Now is that true? Well let's go look at it, verses 25-27.

**Psa. 102:25-27** - *Of old You have laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hand. They shall perish but You shall endure.* What does it say? The universe that God has created is under the law of entropy increase, that is, given enough time the universe will decay because it is in that particular dimension that you and I understand as the physical dimension. But God is spirit, God is eternal and therefore it says of Him...*You shall endure. Yes, all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture you shall change them and they shall be changed but You are the same and Your years have no end.* Because time has no effect upon this great being.

You and I were subject to vanity, it means we live in this particular dimension of something that is not lasting, it means decay and corruption. Now why is it important to live in that? Because we recognize eternity is God's gift. Apparently no physical, three-dimensional things can have or will have eternity according to what we perceive by what the bible says in the Old and the New Testament.

In the physical realm, time has some positive properties however as well. For instance, it is a curative, wine and leather are made better by time. We find that certain things increase in value, things that last a long time in value such as antiques and coins seem to pick up a certain sense of human value in them. Time is therefore a creative ingredient. Some things simply cannot be made without time apparently. Good wine, good cheese, the Grand Canyon, diamonds, certain hand-crafted goods. I think we all recognize that things stamped out cheaply and quickly rarely have lasting value, I think most of us would agree with that.

But there's one thing that cannot be built without time. Godly character. As Mr. Armstrong said over and over again, God could not create character by divine fiat. Why? He hasn't told us, we don't completely understand. We can speculate a little bit but it

seems to be that God could not create character by divine fiat. Therefore before God gives all time, He demands the proof of faith over a little time. That's basically what He is saying to us. All the positive traits of Godly character; faith, spiritual maturity, wisdom, love, patience, endurance, are developed and cured and set by time. I think we all recognize that. The ordination of elders, it says you should never ordain an elder who is a novice because pride and vanity will become his number one enemy.

In the Work over the years we found that there were many flashes in the pan, flash in the pan Christians as we called them. Obedience for awhile, then they were offended and they left. The great lies of Christianity are - just accept Jesus Christ, just say the name of the Lord and you're saved. God is only impressed with Christian maturity over time. It says in the Book...*he that endures unto the end...* it says that *we all are in a race* and we must run and *we must run until we reach the finish line*, as the apostle Paul said in I Corinthians 9. Count the cost, to see whether or not you're going to finish the race. Once we grasp this, we will realize that God did not create the Grand Canyon without time and God cannot build your holy character without time. And all things that occur in your lifetime according to the book of Romans, *all things work together for good*. When you go back and look at that scripture it doesn't mean they worked together for good, it means they worked together for a good end, that is the meaning of the scripture, they worked together for a good end.

God is testing through time to see if you will patiently endure trial and graciously handle the blessings that He has given. I'd like to conclude with a scripture found in **Ecclesiastes 3**. I find this particular section profound because he boils it all down to, in this particular case, what is found here. He tells us:

**Ecc. 3:1** - *To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven*. Or to put it another way, life is composed of just so much time. Then he begins to talk about to be born and to die, to kill and to heal, he goes through all the divergence of what time does as you go through. Then in verse 10, this section is profound because I think it tells us what God has been doing.

**Verse 10** - *I have seen the travail which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised in it*. In what? In time.

The travail - life is composed of a certain amount of travail, it is just simply the way that it is. It says that in this life we will have trials, in this life we will have human set-backs, we have human difficulties, it's just simply that way, that's the way God made it.

**Verse 11** - *He has made everything beautiful in his time*. Now another translation of that is found this way: *He has made everything appropriate in its time. He also has set eternity in their heart...* now that's actually the translation from the Hebrew.

You and I have a sense of craving, human beings have a sense of craving, of wanting to know beyond the realm that we're living in. We want to know what's going to happen out

there. We like to know what is the reason for this and you begin to want to reach beyond the realm where we are only allowed to work, we're in this box and you bang against the top and the sides and you can't get out of it. But there is a craving within man to understand eternity because he cannot see beyond the physical and God said:

**Verse 11** - *...He has set eternity in their heart, but no man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end.*

Why? Because we're like the insect, we've only got three days that we're alive and we're born, we live, we grow up, we get married, we have children and then we die. And one generation comes and one generation goes. And he goes on to say:

**Verse 12** - *But I know that there is no good in them but for a man to rejoice and to do good in his life.* And going on he tells us that what we should do is learn to enjoy this physical life and use it in the way that God has intended.

What we begin to realize brethren is that God looks at time in a very special way, He uses it in the physical creation of you and me. I hope that you will begin to look at time as God sees it. I hope you will be inspired by this particular set of concepts that I tried to deliver in their most basic way. I can't get beyond very much above what I just said to you today, but I tried to give you a little bit of understanding within that box that we have to dwell in and I hope you will be filled with hope because of what the Word of God does say about God's eternity and our realization that we are out of time humanly speaking when we die and we're going to go beyond that particular realm. I hope it will mature you, I hope that through it you will gain a maturity and that you will be made valuable by the understanding of this time. And speaking of time...I think I'm out of it!