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## **PEOPLE WHO REPLACE CORRECT TEACHINGS WITH FALSE TEACHINGS**

Mr. Herbert Armstrong died 30 years ago, in January of 1986. Since then the Church has splintered and fragmented into many divisions. And many people have left God's Church altogether. **We all know people** who used to keep the Sabbath and all of God's other laws with us back then, but who now no longer keep the Sabbath and the annual Feasts and Holy Days. They don't associate with any group of God's people. Some of them have gone so far as to turn their backs on religion altogether. They don't want any part of God's way of life.

But there are also many people who have stayed in one of the Church of God groups, and who still accept most of the things they used to believe during Mr. Armstrong's time. However, they have **rejected some** of the teachings they used to believe. And they have **accepted some** new teachings in their place, teachings that are different to what the Church taught during Mr. Armstrong's time.

**Now in some cases such changes represent a growth in knowledge and in understanding, in accordance with 2 Peter 3:18. We didn't have a correct understanding of everything during Mr. Armstrong's time, as far as biblical understanding is concerned; and today we still don't understand everything correctly. There must always be room for growth in knowledge and in understanding. The Apostle Paul's instructions "study to show yourself approved unto God" (2 Timothy 2:15) and "prove all things" (1 Thessalonians 5:21) are focused on growing in understanding. ("Study" involves examining facts and information, and "prove" involves evaluating those facts and reaching unambiguous conclusions.) The key in identifying those things that represent a growth in understanding is that such changes are in agreement with the teachings of the Bible, and can be proved to be so.**

**But in other cases the changes accepted by some people represent a departure from the true teachings of the Bible. The key in identifying those things that represent a departure from the correct teachings of the Bible is that they stand in conflict with the Scriptures. It can in fact be proved from the Bible that those changes are wrong. Such changes are invariably based on flawed explanations of the Scriptures.**

Now over the past 30 years many of the splinter groups that have come from the Worldwide Church of God have accepted a whole range of changed teachings. And without exception they all claim that the changes in teachings, beliefs and practices which they have introduced into their particular fellowships represent a growth in understanding. But the result is that **we now have a confusion of teachings** amongst groups who were all a part of God's Church in the days of Mr. Armstrong.

It is fairly common for people to say something like: "my friends in this other Church of God group now believe ... (something different from what we believe)". But in spite of such differences on some issues between various Church of God groups we still largely view all such groups as a part of the scattered Church of God, right? I mean, after all, they still have the Sabbath and the Holy Days, right? So they just have a few different ideas on some minor issues here or there. But they are still a part of us, the people of God, right? Is that what it is?

Without for the moment trying to focus too closely on which changes are biblically correct because our previous understanding had been deficient, and which changes represent a departure from the true

teachings of the Bible, we can confidently make the following statement:

**There are people amongst our various Church of God groups who have rejected some biblically correct teachings, and they have replaced the correct teachings with teachings that are false!**

So in the greater context of all those groups who came out of Worldwide we now have numerous false teachings and false ideas. This point (that there are false teachings amongst us) has to be true because in any set of conflicting views between two or more church organizations both sides cannot possibly be right. In any conflict of teachings and beliefs at least the one side or the other must be wrong.

Now frequently some people in such groups with false teachings are our good friends and in some cases even our relatives. They are fine people, but **they have rejected a teaching that is correct and replaced it with a teaching that is wrong**. And we can prove from the Bible that they have replaced a right teaching with a wrong teaching. Yet somehow someone or something persuaded them to believe that the new teaching they have accepted is correct.

What such people do not realize is that, even though they still acknowledge and observe the Sabbath and the annual observances, etc., they are in exactly the same dangerous position before God as are those people who have turned away completely from God's truth, those who no longer care and have hardened their hearts where the truth of God is concerned.

To be quite plain: people who have exchanged **one** true teaching for a wrong teaching are before God in exactly the same position as are those people who have completely turned away from God's way of life in its entirety. That's the principle of James 2:10.

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one [point], he is guilty of all. (James 2:10)

### **THREE DIFFERENT PROCESSES**

Consider three different processes that people may go through.

**Process #1: When people in the world change their religious views and practices, then they move from one error to a different error. Some people in the world may cycle through a number of the world's religions. In such cases they cycle from one error to another error to another error to another error, etc. Without a calling from God they never reach the truth of God (John 6:65). Such people have not become spiritually accountable in a major way for their religious wanderings through various religions, because none of their wanderings involved accepting or rejecting any of the true teachings of God. They have never understood God's truth and they have simply wandered through a bunch of false religions.**

**Process #2: When God called us by opening our minds to some aspects of His truth we were faced with the decision whether or not we would change our minds in some regards. So in the process of coming into God's Church we moved from error to truth. Whether or not our journey included more than one false religion before coming to God's truth is immaterial. What is important is that we have come to recognize the truth on one or more teachings of the Bible, and in the process of that recognition we consciously rejected a false teaching which we may or may not have previously accepted.**

For example, we may not have actively believed in the trinity teaching before we were exposed to God's truth because we simply hadn't been religious; but once we understood the truth about God, **at that**

**point** we consciously and firmly rejected the pagan trinity teaching. In that way we moved from error to truth. From there the process of learning God's truth continued until we had come to understand God's whole way of life, one teaching after another.

The process of coming to the truth of God involved accepting teachings that are true and rejecting teachings that are false. That process of accepting what is right and rejecting what is wrong has imposed on us an accountability before God. We became accountable for accepting the truth, and **we became equally accountable for rejecting error**. Rejecting what is wrong is just as important as is accepting what is right.

**Process #3: When people who were called by God and who have accepted teachings that are true then later reject some of those true teachings and replace them with teachings that are in error, then such people have moved from error to truth (i.e. when they first came into the Church) and back to error. It makes no difference whether the error they have accepted is something they previously believed before coming into the Church or whether it is for them personally a totally new error.**

The key is that **they have moved away from something that is true**, and in its place accepted something that is false. This makes such people accountable to God for **rejecting truth** which they had previously understood and accepted. They have turned their backs on some truth that they had previously understood. This process on steroids is what happened in WCG after Mr. Armstrong's death, and subsequently on a much smaller scale in many of the splinter groups that emerged. These people themselves generally don't see this: they believe that they have now rejected a teaching where the Church had been in error and that they now have come to understand the truth. They don't understand that they have turned away from an understanding or a teaching that is in fact true.

This is an extremely serious situation and **it involves thousands of people in our age**.

One danger here is the matter of being deceived by the appearance of still having most of the trappings of what God's Church stands for. For example:

People may still accept the Sabbath and the annual Feasts and Holy Days and tithing and the dietary laws. **But** they now no longer believe that Jesus Christ has always been God with God the Father; they instead view Jesus Christ as someone who was created by God the Father, effectively lowering Jesus Christ's status in their own eyes.

They have **rejected the understanding they used to have** when they first came into God's Church, when they had come to understand that Jesus Christ was the God who created Adam and Eve, and who dealt with Abraham and Moses and the prophets in the Old Testament, the One who had always been with God the Father for past eternity.

People in this situation commonly still do everything that everyone else in the Church does ... regularly attend all services, tithe faithfully, etc. By their outward actions and conduct they are indistinguishable from anyone else in God's Church.

**But something has changed in their minds!**

In **process #1** people change from one error to a different error. At no stage is God involved in the changes such people make. In **process #2** people have changed from error to truth. God is very much involved in the changes such people make, because it was God who opened our minds to understand the truths we accepted. So people who have undergone this process (i. e. we the people of God) have become accountable to God for the truths we accepted. This accountability remains with us till death. In

**process #3** people have changed from the truth back to error, by rejecting some truth they had previously understood. **Which specific truth they reject is immaterial.** What is important is that they have rejected some truth they were previously given to understand.

What should be abundantly clear is that God's spirit will never, under any circumstances, lead a person to reject any facet of God's true teachings in favor of something that is not true before God. So what this means is that anyone who had initially accepted the true teachings of God, but then later rejects any one of those true teachings and replaces the rejected true teaching with a false teaching, **such a person cannot have the spirit of God** in his or her mind. God's spirit will never choose error over truth.

To repeat: anyone who rejects a truth which they had previously understood cannot possibly have God's spirit. That is what their rejection of a previously understood truth tells us!

This one principle, that God's spirit will never lead anyone to reject a truth in favor of an error, tells us a great deal about all those in leadership positions in the Church after Mr. Armstrong's death, who have rejected one true teaching after another during the past 30 years.

Let's consider some Scriptures.

### **JUDE 1:5**

I will therefore put you in remembrance, **though you once knew this**, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. (Jude 1:5)

The people to whom Jude wrote this letter had been influenced by "ungodly men" (Jude 1:4) who were perverting the true teachings of God, replacing truth with error. In our age, after Mr. Armstrong's death God's people were likewise exposed to the ideas of "ungodly men". Jude's reference to "though you once knew this" refers to **all the true teachings these people had lost or rejected**, in addition to having lost the understanding regarding God's dealings with the people of Israel when God brought them out of Egypt.

Here is the point:

Jude was trying to reason with people who were still attending God's Church, but who had rejected certain true teachings and certain understanding. Jude was trying to motivate such people to "earnestly contend for **the faith which was once delivered** unto the saints" (Jude 1:3). **But those people no longer had God's spirit.**

What happened to the Church at the time Jude wrote his letter is exactly the same thing that has happened to the Church in our age since Mr. Armstrong's death. Back in Jude's day totally unconverted carnal men had crept into leadership positions in God's Church, and they had then introduced **one doctrinal change after another**, replacing truth with error, one teaching at a time. That is the process that Jude was addressing in his letter.

And that is exactly the same process that was set in motion within weeks, if not within days, of Mr. Armstrong's death. Jude might just as well have written his letter to the scattered congregations of God's Church in the year 2016, because collectively we today are riddled with false teachings that have been introduced by ungodly men in place of the correct understanding.

Oh yes, most Church of God groups still have all the major outward trimmings of God's Church: the weekly Sabbath, the dietary laws, the Feasts and Holy Days, the Passover and tithing. But within that framework of "the major outward trimmings":

- some have instituted a different format for observing the Passover,
- some keep the Passover at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> day,
- some count the seven Days of Unleavened Bread differently,
- some have instituted changes for the other annual observances,
- some reject that Jesus Christ has always existed with God the Father,
- etc.

All these changes represent **a rejection of things they "once knew"**. And this is not just a matter of changes per se that people have made. It is a matter of having made **changes which can be proved from the Bible to be wrong**. Changing by itself is not necessarily the problem. Changing to something that is biblically wrong is the real problem. And today we have an abundance of that throughout the scattered groups that have sprung up from the Worldwide Church of God.

Regarding the time for Jesus Christ's second coming, the Apostle Paul said the following:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], **except there come a falling away first**, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; (2 Thessalonians 2:3)

When 20 or more different groups which can all lead their origins back to WCG each have **at least one teaching** or one belief where they differ from the other groups, then we most assuredly have a major "falling away" from the truth that was once understood. **We are right now living in the days of the falling away that Paul predicted**, and we face the distinct likelihood that the falling away will only get worse in the times still ahead of us.

## **PAUL'S DEALINGS WITH THE HEBREWS**

In Paul's time the Hebrews in the Church were in the process of "leaving their first love" (see Revelation 2:4). They began to reject some of the things they had earlier come to understand, at the time when they had first come into God's Church. Paul could see that **these people were losing the things they had once known**. And so the Book of Hebrews is Paul's only letter in which he repeatedly warned people about the unpardonable sin, meaning sins that will never be forgiven.

Let's look at a section in chapter 5.

Of whom (i.e. regarding Jesus Christ) we have many things to say, and **hard to be uttered**, seeing **you are dull of hearing**. (Hebrews 5:11)

We need to understand something quite clearly. Whenever a person moves away from the truth and accepts an error in its place, then that person will automatically and inevitably become "dull of hearing"! You simply cannot reason with someone who is "dull of hearing". Such people will have **an inevitable mental block towards the truth from which they have moved away!**

With their moving away from a correct understanding they have lost something. They have in effect become incapable of understanding something they used to understand. So it is impossible to reason with someone like that. You have a greater chance of getting a brick wall to crumble to dust by singing to

it than getting someone in that position to acknowledge the evidence you are able to present against their position. You've tried to reason with some people like that, haven't you? And you didn't get anywhere with those people, right?

That is something we have all tried to do, isn't it? We see a friend or a relative who no longer accepts something that we can prove from the Bible to be true, and so we try to reason with them. We present biblical evidence that proves their new position to be wrong. But we get nowhere! Regarding the evidence that refutes their changed belief they are dull of hearing. And it is extremely "hard" (i.e. difficult) to explain anything to a person in that situation.

This is important to understand.

Someone in the world cannot understand the truth of God unless God opens that person's mind to the truth. The person whose mind God has opened to certain understanding becomes accountable for that understanding. Now if that person ever **rejects the truth** to which God has opened his or her mind, then God withdraws the understanding He had previously given to that person. The person is in effect reduced to **the state of a mind that is closed to the truth**, and from then onwards he or she simply **cannot understand the truth!** The true understanding has evaporated and their minds have reverted to the state they were in before God had opened those minds.

We need to understand this!

Consider two different situations:

In **situation #1** you are trying to reason with and to explain biblical truths to someone in the world, someone who is totally carnal, whose mind has not been opened by God, and who cannot follow the clear, plain logic in your presentation of some biblical teaching. It could be a relative or a co-worker or a business associate, but no matter how hard you try, they just don't understand what you are trying to explain. You might as well be speaking to them in some foreign language.

In **situation #2** you are trying to reason with and to explain a biblical truth to someone who used to believe that biblical truth until fairly recently, but who now has rejected that truth and accepted a false teaching in its place. The person is either still officially a member of the Church or else that person used to be a member of the Church. At any rate, none of the Scriptures you mention in your explanation of the truth are new to that person; and none of the Scriptures you mention to disprove the false teaching the person has now accepted are new to that person. In the past that person had read and understood all those Scriptures. Yet **now that person tries his best to disprove the very Scriptures he used to believe**. Nothing you explain to this person gets through to his mind. And no way do they acknowledge that your explanation clearly demolishes their position. Here also you might as well be speaking to them in some foreign language.

Where the person in situation #1 had no background in understanding the Scriptures, the person in situation #2 had previously had a reasonably good understanding of the Scriptures that are involved. So where we can recognize that it is hopeless to try to reason with the person in situation #1, we feel that there should be a good chance that the person in situation #2 will see the error of his new belief **if only we can explain it really clearly**.

But that is a mistake on our part!

The people in these two situations are in fact in exactly the same situation, as far as understanding is concerned. **Both are totally incapable of understanding our clear and logical reasoning.** The person who used to understand the truth in question has been reduced in understanding to the same

level as someone in the world who has never understood any part of God's truth.

**And no matter how hard we may try, the person who has actively rejected a truth he used to understand will never again get back to the understanding he used to have before he rejected that one truth! There is nothing we can do to help such people. In fact, there is nothing that God can do to help such people, because they have rejected something that God had previously given to them.**

This brings us to Paul's statement regarding something that is impossible. Paul is still speaking about the people who were "dull of hearing". Notice what Paul explained:

For [it is] **impossible** for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, **to renew them again** unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put [him] to an open shame. (Hebrews 6:4-6)

Paul is saying: "it is impossible to renew them again". The whole expression is "to renew them again **unto repentance**". To repent simply means "to change one's mind". So Paul is saying: **it is impossible to get such people to change their mind**. Not even God can do that, because we all have free independent minds.

Paul uses a number of different expressions to identify the people he is speaking about. Let's look at all those expressions.

**"Those who were once enlightened"** refers to people who used to understand some aspects of God's truth, but they afterwards **rejected** some of those truths.

**"Those who have tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the holy spirit"** is self-explanatory. It refers to people who had received the gift of God's spirit, and implied is that **they have lost it**.

**"Those who have tasted the good word of God"** refers to having experienced certain of God's **blessings**, and to having been given a certain degree of understanding of God's plan and God's purposes.

**"Those who have tasted the powers of the world to come"** refers to having experienced God's **direct interventions** in our lives, be it in the form of healing or of favor with people or of help in very difficult circumstances. In other words, they have experienced the way Christ will intervene for people in the world to come.

**"If they shall fall away"** refers to rejecting "the enlightenment" they had been given by God. This phrase "if they shall fall away" shows that Paul was speaking about **people who had rejected any part of the truth** they had been given by God, and they then replaced that truth with error. Initially they still accept everything else except for this one teaching that they have changed. Later, in most cases, they also reject certain other true teachings.

It is for such people that it is impossible to ever get back to a truth that they have consciously and deliberately rejected in favor of some false teaching. **People can never get back to something that their minds have actively rejected.**

Consider two different cases of people letting go of the Sabbath.

In the one case the person has in the past kept the Sabbath but without real convictions. It was convenient to keep it, or it was the pressure of growing up in the Church and Sabbath-keeping was simply expected. This has been true for many spouses of really committed Church members, that they simply went along with their very committed spouses. At some point outside pulls and attractions or the fear of losing a job, etc. motivated the person to stop keeping the Sabbath. There may even have been a tinge of feelings of guilt in no longer keeping the Sabbath. It is not a hostility towards the Sabbath or some kind of deliberate rejection of the Sabbath. It is more a case of drifting away from the Sabbath through neglect and a lack of any kind of commitment.

Such a person can repent, i.e. change their thinking, like the prodigal son changed his thinking (see Luke 15:11-21). And they can potentially come back to the teaching they had let slip out of their minds. The reason such a person can potentially come back to Sabbath-keeping is because at no point did they have a hostility towards the Sabbath; at no point did they deliberately set their minds to reject the Sabbath.

In the other case the person has also kept the Sabbath in the past. They had in fact made a firm commitment to keep the Sabbath because they had understood that God had created and established the Sabbath. Then at some point the Sabbath stands in their way for getting something they want to get, or for doing something they want to do. After a period of mental battling with their dilemma they reach the calculated decision to reject the Sabbath and to pursue their desire. So they deliberately and resolutely turn their back on the Sabbath.

They make a point of following Ahithophel's advice to Absalom. When Ahithophel advised: "go in unto your father's concubines ... and all Israel shall hear that you are abhorred of your father" (see 2 Samuel 16:21), Ahithophel was saying: **openly demonstrate that you have made an irreversible commitment to go against your father**; you must cross the Rubicon. In our case, there are those people who have rejected the Sabbath and who make an open show of their rejection of the Sabbath, like Absalom going in unto his father's concubines.

**Such a person can never come back to the Sabbath! The reason such a person can never come back to the Sabbath is because their rejection of the Sabbath was deliberate, calculated and made with disdain. This is a completely different mind from the person in the first case.**

The difference between the people in these two cases is not the teaching (i.e. in this example, the Sabbath) they let go. The real difference between these two people is something in their minds. While both have let go of the Sabbath, their minds work completely differently.

Now while the person in the first case has the potential to come back to Sabbath-keeping, that doesn't necessarily mean that they ever will come back to observing God's Sabbath, even as **most prodigal sons never really repent**. So the person in the first case may never keep the Sabbath again, but he does at least have the theoretical potential to come back to Sabbath-keeping. The person in the second case, on the other hand, doesn't have that potential; for that person it is impossible to ever get back to observing God's Sabbath. He has crossed his personal Rubicon.

Can you understand the difference in the minds of these two people? That is the point Paul was making in Hebrews 6:4-6. Very simply stated:

When someone rejects a truth they used to understand, and accepts a false teaching in place of the truth, then such a person can never be renewed to understand **the truth they have knowingly rejected**.



It doesn't matter what specific truth is involved. It is a matter of **knowingly rejecting** something that can be proved to be true; and where the supposed proof for the new belief is specious and deceptive, and frequently depends on trying to discredit clear biblical statements that contradict the false teaching that has been accepted.

When someone wilfully adopts that approach towards rejecting a truth they had understood, then God withdraws the understanding God had previously granted to that person. And then there is nothing whatsoever that we can say or do or explain to enable that person to somehow once again understand the things they used to understand.

**That is what we need to understand when we deal with people who used to be in the Church, but who rejected something they used to understand, and they left in order to follow some different teaching.**

### **A FREQUENT PROBLEM**

When people reject a truth they used to understand, then it frequently involves a truth about Jesus Christ. That's what the whole letter to the Hebrews is all about. The Hebrews had gotten into a bad attitude towards Jesus Christ. They had begun to reject certain things about Jesus Christ, thereby diminishing Jesus Christ's status in their own minds. And so Paul devoted the whole letter to explaining Jesus Christ's immensely high status in God's plan, in authority and power right under God the Father Himself, the Supreme Executive who carries out the will of God the Father.

It was the **people who had become critical of Jesus Christ** who were "dull of hearing". Paul had "many things" that he wanted to explain to them about Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 5:11 again). But they had an attitude problem towards Jesus Christ, and that attitude made it virtually impossible for them to understand the things Paul wanted to explain to them. Their minds had become incapable of understanding the things about Jesus Christ that Paul wanted to explain.

We today have a very similar situation.

When people today reject that Jesus Christ has always existed with God the Father; when they falsely assert that Jesus Christ was only created by God the Father, then it becomes "very hard" to explain to them where they are wrong, because they have become dull of hearing the truth about Jesus Christ's past co-existence with God the Father. They have in their own minds diminished Jesus Christ's status and position within God's great plan. It is Jesus Christ they are critical of. They have developed a wrong attitude towards Jesus Christ. And sadly, it has in fact become "impossible" to renew in them an understanding of Christ's true standing in God's plan. That's what Paul was pointing out.

This is something we usually don't realize when we deal with someone who used to be in the Church with us, and who used to understand everything that we understand, but who now has accepted some new teachings which we can in fact prove to be wrong.

**It is impossible for us to get through to such a person! They cannot understand the logic we present in refuting their new belief. Sometimes we may even feel that they are being dishonest in how they deal with the facts we present to them. We feel they are avoiding facing up to the evidence we have presented. But in actual fact their minds are no more capable of understanding our explanations than someone out in the world who has never been exposed to God's truth can understand our explanations without God opening their mind to spiritual understanding.**

For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so **the things of God knows no man**, but (by) the spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 2:11)

**This principle applies to every person who has stopped believing a truth they used to understand, and who has then accepted a false teaching in its place. It makes no difference whether they in the process left the Church of God, or whether they still attend one or other group that has come from WCG. The only thing that matters in this context is that they have rejected a truth they used to understand.**

And such people simply cannot understand what they have lost!

And there is no way that we are able to help them! There is no way we can reason them out of the false teaching they have accepted in place of the truth.

### **REJECTION IS A WILFUL SETTING OF THE MIND**

Consider what Jesus Christ said in Matthew 21:42.

Jesus said unto them, Did you never read in the scriptures, **The stone which the builders rejected**, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? (Matthew 21:42)

Rejection is not the same as ignorance; rejection is far more serious than ignorance. In our context rejection involves a refusal to face up to facts that we don't like. With rejection people knowingly set their minds to refuse to face up to facts that prove they are in the wrong. And rejection of Jesus Christ leads to the lake of fire.

This Scripture makes clear that some people reject Jesus Christ. That was true for some of the Pharisees and some of the scribes and some of the priests 2000 years ago; they rejected the evidence that proved that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. And there have always been some people who reject Jesus Christ, when they in fact knew better. Christ's admonition to the Ephesian era that they had "left their first love" (Revelation 2:4) is another way of saying that **they had rejected Jesus Christ**.

And that is also true today! There are people who used to be a part of God's Church during Mr. Armstrong's time, but who have since then rejected something about Jesus Christ. **The most pronounced form of a rejection of Jesus Christ** is expressed in the claim that Jesus Christ has not always existed for past eternity, but that He was supposedly at some point created by God the Father. That teaching represents a huge and very open rejection of Jesus Christ, one more fulfillment of Matthew 21:42.

Let's continue in Mark's gospel.

And He said unto them, **Full well you reject** the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition. (Mark 7:9)

This refers to a conscious and deliberate rejection of any of God's laws and commandments. This is addressed to people who actually knew God's laws, but who deliberately chose to reject specific instructions from God. There is no excuse for this kind of deliberate rejection, because this rejection reveals that those people lacked integrity in dealing with God's laws.

This is something that has happened thousands of times in our age. There are people who used to live by God's laws, but who have left God's Church, not because of negligence or a lack of understanding, but because **they knowingly rejected one or more of God's laws**. For example, some who have gone out from us have made a point of deliberately defiling God's Sabbath days and God's Feasts, almost like flaunting their disdain for the Sabbath. Once again, there is no excuse for that kind of deliberate rejection. And many people are in this situation right now.

Consider again this principle:

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and **yet offend in one [point]**, he is **guilty of all**. (James 2:10)

The point here is that people may still keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days, etc., but they reject one specific teaching or truth that they don't like ... and before God they are just as guilty as those people who break all of God's laws. The reason they are "guilty of all" is that **the mind** of someone rejecting one truth is equally hostile to God's laws as is the mind of someone else who rejects all of God's ways. In both cases the minds are hostile towards God, and that is the mindset of Satan.

Let's continue.

**He that rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. (John 12:48)**

This verse certainly applies to anyone who rejects a truth which they had previously been given to understand. Such a rejection is tantamount to rejecting Jesus Christ. The point here is that once someone "rejects Jesus Christ", then **there is no way to ever reverse that rejection**. Rejection is something that is final.

In Hebrews 6 Paul discussed the situation regarding the impossibility of renewing those who fall away. Let's continue there.

But that which bears thorns and briers **[is] rejected**, and [is] nigh unto cursing; whose end [is] to be burned. (Hebrews 6:8)

Those who reject any truth they were given to understand don't produce good fruits. They only produce thorns and briers. God rejects those who reject the truth God had given them to understand. And here Paul makes quite clear that such individuals will be burned up in the lake of fire ... that is what "whose end is to be burned" means.

This is not speaking about people in the world, people who have never understood any part of God's truth and God's plan. This is speaking about people who were a part of God's Church, but who produced only briers and thorns, people who have rejected things they used to understand.

This involves multiple thousands of people! One key for identifying such people is that they have lost understanding that they used to have. You can find any number of websites from people who claim to be a part of the scattered churches of God, but who openly reject one or more of the Church's teachings that can clearly be proved from the Bible to be true. They have replaced one or more correct teachings with teachings that are false. And all of these websites have a certain number of followers, some more and some less. And in Hebrews 6:8 the Apostle Paul is saying that such people will end up in the lake of fire. Paul didn't mince words.

And some of our friends have firmly rejected some teachings that are true and correct, and replaced them with teachings that are false. We need to understand how we can interact with these friends. One

major point we need to recognize is that **these friends will never again get back to the truths they once understood**. When they deliberately rejected those truths, then God took away from them the ability to understand those truths. And that is irreversible!

So we should not try to convince them of the truths they have rejected, because they are simply not capable of understanding the line of reasoning that we would present. They would only view our line of reasoning as "foolishness". As the Apostle Paul told the Corinthians:

**But the natural man receives not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him:** neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

Such people no longer have any spiritual discernment, and so their minds cannot comprehend the truths which their minds have rejected. It is in fact futile for us to try to convince people who have departed from the truth to change and to once again accept the things they used to believe.

### **BEWARE OF A SPIRIT OF FEAR**

At this point a word of caution is in order.

After reading through this article thus far some people may feel: woe is me, I know I had rejected this or that true teaching, and now he is telling me that it is impossible for me to change, and so I am doomed.

**That is not correct! Rather, that is a spirit of fear that Satan would want to instill in people who are insecure and inclined to easily fear.**

Listen! If you think that you had fully rejected a truth of God and accepted a false teaching in its place, and that you can now see that the teaching you accepted is in fact false ... then **this is assuredly not about you!**

To wonder about a teaching, or to not really understand a teaching fully, or to even go so far as contemplating the possibility of some false teaching perhaps being correct is not the same as "fully rejecting a true teaching of God"! To wonder, to not understand, to contemplate various possibilities ... these things are not the same as resolutely setting one's mind to reject a truth in favor of a false teaching.

Anyone who can understand that he or she may have been deceived into rejecting a true teaching and accepting a false teaching in its place has certainly not approached the place where it is impossible to change. Rather, someone like that would be in the place in our earlier example of the person who let go of the Sabbath but without any hostility towards God's laws, the person who has the potential to still change his mind (i.e. "repent").

The people for whom it is "impossible to be renewed" are identified by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 6:4-6. So if you are perhaps fearful because you looked into some teachings that are false and you were even impressed with the supposed proof for those false teachings, but you now recognize that those teachings are in fact false, then this is assuredly not about you.

The people who will never be able to come back to the true teachings they have deliberately rejected don't even recognize that they have rejected a true teaching of God. **They are the ones who will be "speechless"** when Jesus Christ confronts them, like the man in the parable without a "wedding garment" (see Matthew 22:11-13).

So if you perhaps fear that you might have "fully rejected" a true teaching of God and you now want to again embrace that true teaching, then you need not fear because **you are not in that situation**. If anything, you are in the situation of the prodigal son, with the clear opportunity to repent, to change your mind, and to accept what is true and to reject what is false.

So let's continue.

## **LEADING PEOPLE AWAY FROM THE TRUTH**

The Apostle Paul faced the situation where he had taught people the truth, and then some false teachers came in and led those people away from the truth into teachings that are false.

I marvel that **you are so soon removed** from him that called you into the grace of Christ **unto another gospel**: (Galatians 1:6)

Paul had taught those people the truth, and those people had understood and accepted what Paul had taught them about Jesus Christ. Then in Paul's absence false teachers came along and very deliberately twisted and distorted the things Paul had taught, confusing people and leading them away from the truth.

This process put all those people in danger of the lake of fire. So Paul was absolutely furious with those heretical teachers; he was livid with anger! In the next verse Paul explains the facts, that those people were teaching heresies.

Which is not another; but there be **some** that trouble you, and **would pervert the gospel of Christ**. (Galatians 1:7)

Any false teaching that is introduced to the people of God is a perversion of the gospel message. And there is only one penalty for deliberately perverting the truth of God ... death in the lake of fire. Because these false teachers were in effect leading people to the lake of fire, therefore now Paul expressed his intense anger at these false teachers.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, **let him be accursed**. As we said before, **so say I now again**, If any [man] preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, **let him be accursed**. (Galatians 1:8-9)

Paul was saying: those false teachers will die in the lake of fire; yes, they surely will die in the lake of fire! People who are accursed are consigned to the lake of fire. Paul was livid with anger at these false teachers, who were leading simple church members away from the truth of God.

Speaking for myself:

Many of my articles, including this present article, are aimed at **explaining things** that may be difficult for some people to understand. In such articles I take an explanatory approach. When writing such articles **I am emotionally neutral**. My goal is to make something clear that many of God's people may not understand correctly. And I am trying to think of ways to make those things clear to God's people.

But a few of my articles are directed at **exposing false teachings** that are being presented to some of God's people. In those articles **I am very much emotionally involved**, even as Paul was emotionally involved in writing his letter to the Galatians. In those articles I **attack** those who teach heresies to

God's people; yes, I will taunt and ridicule them and use sarcasm, because **they are taking eternal life away** from unsuspecting people in God's Church whom they are able to influence. In this matter I basically follow Elijah's example, who "**mocked**" the priests of Baal and then repeatedly taunted those pagan priests (see 1 Kings 18:27).

That approach (exposing false teachings) is the reason I started to write in the first place. The leadership of the Church after Mr. Armstrong's death had introduced the convoluted heretical "hypostasis" teaching, to pervert our understanding of the nature of God. When I first heard about that heretical teaching, I realized that I had to refute it in the strongest terms. I was angry at seeing heresies being presented to God's people. And when I am angry in this type of context, then I almost always use a confrontational approach, and then I am usually deliberately blunt, like the Apostle Paul was in dealing with the Galatians.

As Paul said:

And that because of **false brethren unawares brought in**, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: (Galatians 2:4)

These false brethren were teaching heresies to God's people. They were very deliberately trying to lead people away from the truth the people had accepted and understood. So here is how Paul responded:

To whom **we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour**; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. (Galatians 2:5)

That is the way to respond when false teachings are being presented to God's people: confront such false teachings immediately, openly and directly. And that is what I do when someone is trying to introduce a heretical teaching to God's people. So you might notice a completely different tone between my explanatory articles and my discussion of false teachings presented by certain people. People who are out to lead God's people away from the truth need to be exposed ... the Apostle Paul consigned them to the lake of fire.

There are two distinct types of people in that situation. First of all, there are those who seek to influence God's people to reject some true understanding, and to accept something false in its place. They are false teachers. And secondly, there are those who for one reason or another have been taken in by those false teachers. They have accepted the flawed reasoning presented by the false teachers, and they have let go of a teaching that is in fact true and correct. Once they have fully accepted the false teaching, they will never again come back to the true teaching they have rejected. They are simply not capable of coming back.

This is something we need to understand when we deal with friends and relatives who may be in this type of situation.

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