

The Christian And The World (Part 2)

Don't Love the World

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I think that there is no doubt in our minds that the Worldwide Church of God as a corporate body has gone back to what most of us were converted from—this world's Christianity. Many individual members, including deacons and deaconesses, have gone back to worldly churches. I know one lady, a deaconess, who went back to the Baptist Church, and another one went to a very large Protestant church in her area. I know of at least one local church elder who is now preaching, I believe, for the Methodist church after leaving the fellowship of the Worldwide Church of God. I know of one entire congregation that dropped its affiliation with the Worldwide Church of God and joined with The Disciples of Christ.

I think that this raises a question that is important for us at this time, and that is: “Do these people see something that we do not see?” Are we missing out on something? Are those people in the Protestant and Catholic churches just as much a son of God as we are? Are those churches therefore truly Christian, so that fellowshiping with them would be approved by God? Are we being too hard and critical in our judgment of them by calling them deceived, sincere but unconverted, pagan, or false?

That there are some very fine people in those churches is beyond question. Their character may even put ours to shame in some cases. In many cases they are moral and law-abiding and religious. They openly and unashamedly testify or witness for Jesus Christ. They give themselves sacrificially in service to the community in working in behalf of various charities, and again in many cases they are wonderful neighbors to be in your community. In short, many of them are people to be admired, and in light of what has happened in the past ten years, this may make one think that they are on the right track, especially when it might be viewed in light of the fact that there are so many of them, compared to us—those of us who consider that we are part of the true church.

There are so many of them that it might be overwhelming, and if the majority is right, then we are truly, clearly wrong. So we are going to examine this issue again, and we are going to be refreshed in our understanding of principles that must be considered, or we might very well emotionally be carried away by the surface opinions that are readily available. In order to keep this narrow, I am only going to touch on one broad principle, and then two narrower applications that pertain to this issue. We are going to begin in a familiar scripture back in I John 2:15 where it says:

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I John 2:15-17 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof; but he that does the will of God abides forever.

Back in verse 15, that phrase, “Love not the world,” should more accurately read “Stop loving the world.” This is an admonition, actually a commandment, against an action that was already in progress. It was ongoing when John was writing this back in the first century, and “love,” here, is being used in the sense of “love for a thing,” not a person. It is taking delight in something like an automobile, or clothing, or jewelry, or a house. Here, it is, “Love not the world.” “Stop loving this thing.” This word does not carry the sense of affection that one would show with, let us say a kiss, like the word *philea*. It indicates *more* the use of the will.

Now in II Peter we are going to review this, and I am going to be reading some verses out of a modern translation. In this case it is going to be the *Phillips' Translation*, in II Peter 2:20. All of this is going to be in reference to the world and in reference to I John 2:15-17. I want you to think of these verses in reference to that, and in reference to the direction that the Worldwide Church of God has gone.

In many cases people we knew and fellowshiped with in the past have gone back to this, and we are going to be seeing here that the Bible takes a different view altogether than the Worldwide Church of God is taking. So picking this up in II Peter and reading from the *Phillips' Translation*:

II Peter 2:20-22 (Phillips) If men have escaped [Notice this wording. Does that not sound as though somebody was being held captive within, like they were in a concentration camp or something, and they escaped it?] from the world's contaminations through knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and then have become entangled [Interesting word usage there. It sounds like these people are being caught in a spider's web.] and defeated all over again [It sounds like a war.] their last position is far worse than their first. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of goodness at all, rather than after knowing it, turn their backs on the sacred commandments given to them. Alas for them! The old proverb has come true about the dog returning to his vomit, and the sow that has been washed, going back to wallow in the muck.

People in the first century were loving the world and going back to the world. We have seen that this word “love” indicates a use of the will, and it was not merely weakness. There was a conscious setting of the mind to do what they were doing. Now they were backsliding, so I think that we can say that “there is nothing new under the sun.” I do not believe that those people who left the Worldwide Church of God (most especially that whole congregation that left and went with The Disciples of Christ)... I do not think that there was any doubt that there was a setting of the will. They knew what they were doing, and they chose to do that—to get themselves tangled up, to be defeated once again, and to become a slave, as it were.

In the last sermon we saw that Demas, a close associate of Paul, had abandoned Christ in favor of the world. That ought to instruct us that association with strong people does not necessarily hold a person from choosing to go back to the world—using their will, using their brain, using their mind, and choosing deliberately to go back to the world.

I read these verses—and we are going to continue on this theme for a little while—because I want us to see that God Himself makes a very clear distinction between Himself, His children, His church, His way, His commandments, His law, His spirit, and His Kingdom, and what He calls in His word “the world.”

In I John 2:15-17, where we just were, and again in Romans 7:6-9, God commands us to make a choice, and it is implied to “choose life.” I am telling you this because I want us to see that there is a very clear *them* and *us* approach in the Bible so that in the minds of God's children the distinction between the two is not blurred, but we get a very clear picture—it is either the world or God. It is one or the other.

Now in James the 4th chapter... Again I am going to read this from the *Phillips Translation* and just verse 4.

James 4:4 (Phillips) You are like unfaithful wives, flirting with the glamour of this world, and never realizing that to be the world's lover means becoming the enemy of God.

Is that a clear distinction? “You are like unfaithful wives, flirting with the glamour of this world, and never realizing that to be the world's lover means to become the enemy of God.” Anyone who deliberately chooses to be the world's friend is thereby making himself God's enemy. I think I will go a little bit further.

James 4:5-6 (Phillips) Do you think that what the scriptures have to say

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about this is a mere formality? Or do you imagine that this spirit of passionate jealousy [of God] is the spirit He has caused to live in us? No. He gives us grace potent enough to meet this, and every other evil spirit, and if we are humble enough to receive it . . .

I think I will stop there, because then he goes on to a little bit more.

Let us look at another scripture on this to see that there is a very clear distinction, and this time we are going back to Romans 12:1-2.

Romans 12:1-2 (Phillips) With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give Him your bodies as a living sacrifice consecrated to Him and acceptable by Him. Don't let this world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within so that you may prove and practice that the plan of God for you is good and meets all of His demands and moves toward the goal of true maturity.

Now one more from the Philips Translation. This time in the book of Ephesians, chapter 2.

Ephesians 2:1-3 (Phillips) To you, who were spiritually dead all the time that you drifted along with the stream of this world's ideas of living and obeyed its unseen ruler who is still operating in those who do not respond to the truth of God, to you Christ has given life. We all lived like that in the past and followed the impulses and imaginations of our evil nature, being in fact under the wrath of God by nature like everyone else.

Ephesians 2:11-13 (Phillips) Do not lose sight of the fact that you were born Gentiles, known by those whose bodies were circumcised as the uncircumcised. You were utter strangers to God's chosen community Israel, and you had no knowledge of or right to the promised agreements. You had nothing to look forward to, and no God to whom you could turn. But now, through the blood of Christ, you who were once outside the pale are with us inside the circle of God's love and purpose.

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There is a very clear *them* and *us* in the mind of God regarding which way is the true and which is not. There are, brethren, in the physical sense, spiritual Gentiles and spiritual Jews. Satan is the adversary. He, too, has children (John 8:44) just like God is a Spirit and He has children. Satan is a spirit, and he has children.

That word “children” is used in the sense of showing the characteristics of. And just as assuredly as our children show the characteristics of their mother and father, so in the Bible the word “children” is used of someone who is showing the characteristic of something. So we have “sons of Belial.” That means these are men who show the characteristics of Belial. So Satan has children as well, and we were his children, as Ephesians 2:1-3 shows very clearly. We were operating by that spirit. He held us captive, but we have escaped from that as a result of the work of Jesus Christ.

These people, these children of Satan, are far and away the larger in number. We are going to see that two of those characteristics seen in the children of Satan are clearly evident in *his* churches. These people to whom Paul was writing in the book of Ephesians had been both literal physical and spiritual Gentiles. But, there are many who are literal Israelites who are at the same time spiritual Gentiles; and just like the literal Gentiles, they show the characteristics of their spiritual father, Satan, even though they may call themselves Christian.

Now I brought this point up because we live in part in the land of Israel where this world's Christianity is quite strong; and we have to be very careful, because the spirit of the world keeps trying to draw us back and to get us to deliberately make the choice to go back to the captivity we escaped from through the work of Jesus Christ. But the important element here in these verses is that before conversion they were without Christ. They were aliens from Israel, and in this case the Israel of God and the covenants, and the world still is in that condition.

Those of you who have been in the church for a while might remember how Mr. Armstrong used to emphasize from time to time that the false church stole the name of Jesus Christ. They appropriated Him to their religion; the “hero” you see, of the competitor, they appropriated Him and the concept of grace, and then proceeded to reject the law of God.

I want you to flip back in your mind to I John 2:15-17, and listen to this comment from *The Hastings Dictionary of the Bible* regarding the way the word “world” is used in I John 2:15-17. It is kind of revealing. It is not a long comment, but it makes it very clear, because in the context of I John 2, *world* takes on very dark and foreboding shadows because we are warned of it in the strongest of terms. Not only were these people going

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back to the world, but of course this was written for those people in the future who would be tempted to go back, and so the wording there is very strong.

I John 2:15-17 quoted from *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible*, page 978:

Here the world is not simply the worldly spirit, but the great mass of mankind in deadly hostility to Christ and His teaching. In contrast stand His disciples, His own, which were in the world, chosen out of the world, but not of it, and therefore hated, as He was hated.

We discover why in the same book of I John, in chapter 5 and verse 19. We find why this hatred is there.

I John 5:19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the wicked one.

And “the whole world,” according to Paul in Ephesians 2, is motivated by, driven by, the captive of, that spirit being, the adversary who hates Jesus Christ with a passion that we cannot even begin to imagine. Because he hates Him and because we are part of His body, he hates us. But he tries to sell himself to us—himself and his way—as though it was really attractive, glamorous, beneficial, good, fulfilling, and rewarding.

In Genesis 3, from the very beginning, we find evidence of opposition to God. By following Satan's misdirection, Adam and Eve found themselves in opposition to God, and they attempted to hide from Him. However, a critical choice had been made. According to Romans 5, the same choice has been made by every one of us to join in opposition to God rather than submitting to Him.

I want to pick up this thought in Titus 1 before we go back to Genesis 3. Paul's instruction to Titus was this:

Titus 1:14-16 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, [Notice this last phrase.] that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving [Take note of that.] is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God...

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A very important statement. These people who profess that they know God are yet also unbelieving, and they have turned from the truth, and the thing that reveals them, according to Paul, is:

Titus 1:16 ...but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Well, that is quite a condemnation. Now reflect back on Genesis 3. What in the world did Satan do there? Satan promoted disbelief of God, and this lies at the root of the difference between us and them. Paul characterizes them as turning from the truth.

Can a person be a Christian without believing? Can a person be a Christian, picking and choosing what to believe and what not to believe? Satan has deceived the whole world, and he deceives by subtly promoting disbelief of God's word. It is so simple. And there it is. It is contained right at the very beginning of the Book, and I know that many of us groaned maybe every time that Herbert Armstrong turned back to Genesis 3. But he was trying to get back to this very simple beginning to help us understand a principle that can be a foundation for great understanding and insight.

Let us go back there, because God clearly shows what delineates His people from the world. What Adam and Eve did was laid the foundation of the world, and so the world as we now see it, with all its cultures, all of its political, educational, economic, business and religious system, grew or was built following the same general pattern of disbelief in what God said. The same general pattern of good and evil. Some from God, some from Satan. Let us follow the pattern.

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman. "Yes, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

Do you see what he is doing? He is subtly getting her to question the simple truth that God told.

Genesis 3:2-4 And the woman said unto the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" And the serpent said unto the woman, "You shall not surely die."

A bald-faced lie by this time. First he raises doubt, and then he tells a very clear lie. At least it is clear to us.

Genesis 3:5 For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Partly true and partly false. So we see a pattern developing here. God gave clear instruction. Simple instruction to Adam and Eve. Satan entered the scene, and he deceived them into disbelieving, distrusting God's simple clear directions.

Genesis 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Disobedience followed right on the heels.

Genesis 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. [A different perspective enters.] And they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

This is kind of interesting, because immediately after sin, and the knowledge of what they had done begins to enter, they immediately begin to “make do.” Adapt things. This is illustrated by them making clothing for themselves. Remember that quality of clothing is later used in the Bible as a symbol of the quality of righteousness; and “making do” is showing you and me that going in the direction...they were creating their own standards of righteousness. And then, to add insult to injury, they hid from God when they knew He was about.

Genesis 3:8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

Remember that Jesus later said, “I am truth.” They hid themselves from truth, and all the while they were making do. What we are looking at here are the world's major spiritual,

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moral, and ethical characteristics.

Now turn with me back to John 8:41:

John 8:41 “You do the deeds of your father.” Then said they to him, “We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.”

They professed that they know Him. But Jesus just told them that they did the deeds of their father. Now we know what verse 44 says, but let us drop down to verse 54.

John 8:54-55 Jesus answered, “If I honor myself, my honor is nothing; it is my Father that honors me; of whom you say, that he is your God: Yet you have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, ‘I know him not,’ I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep His sayings.”

That is what separated Jesus from them. He truly did show the characteristics of God, and He did it by keeping God's sayings. He did not turn away from truth. He did not hide Himself. He was right up front. The Pharisees did everything that Adam and Eve did in the garden, and all the while they were proclaiming to the world that they were sons of God. And so we can see very clearly where Paul got that teaching there in Titus 1:14-16. They professed that they know Him—and he was even speaking of the Jews right in the context there—but in works they deny Him, being abominable.

Do you see that the difference between the world and the church is beginning to show very clearly? The body of Christ will do what Christ did. They will follow the sayings, the truth of the Father. So the conduct of people reveals whether or not they are really Christian, despite what they claim with their mouth. If one knows what to look for, then you can pretty well tell whether or not those churches are Christian.

There are two characteristics of this major principle. The major principle, the one that I said was very broad is: They simply do not believe God. I do not know how I can make it any plainer. They simply do not believe Him.

From this we are going to branch off into two characteristics, two applications of that. The first one we have already gone into it a bit: In works they will deny Him. Because they do not believe Him, they will be disobedient. The second of those two is shown to us in Genesis 11. Before we even get out of the first eleven chapters where God is laying foundations, we find the second characteristic that grows out of the major one,

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and that major one is that they simply do not believe.

Genesis 11:1-4 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, "Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

Genesis 11:9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LOORD did there confound the language of all the earth; and from thence did the LOORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Here is a microcosm of how the world, as it was established by men in opposition to God, came to be the way it is. This chapter is inserted so that we will understand clearly that the world is in confusion. Not only is it disobedient, but to add calamity to things, it is also in confusion. When disbelief enters, disobedience and confusion are the fruits.

The world is in disbelief of God, and therefore it is in confusion. Here are two characteristics by which we can judge the questions posed at the beginning of this sermon. Let us briefly apply these two principles to those churches claiming to be Christian, but which we understand as being churches of this world: (1) Do they obey God? (2) Are they in confusion?

Again, I have to lay a little bit of groundwork here. Let us go to John again, this time in chapter 14 and verse 15. I am going to read some very familiar scriptures, but they are important to seeing these principles.

John 14:15 If you love me, keep my commandments.

Now are we going to see whether these people really love Christ? "If you love Me, keep My commandments." This is the way He wants our love for Him expressed. Now remember, the world, in works, denies Him. They are disobedient. But if they really loved Christ, they would keep the commandments.

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Let us go back to I John 2:4-6. Let us read verse 3 too. That is a good one.

I John 2:3-4 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that says, "I know him," and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

I want you to reflect back to John 8 and the dialogue that took place between Christ and these Jews. This is what Christ kept coming back with. He called these people "sons of Satan." He (Satan) was a liar from the beginning, was the father of liars, and was the father of murderers. And they were showing his characteristics.

And when He told them, "Why do you try to kill Me?" they denied that they were trying to kill Him. But before that conversation was over, they picked up rocks to throw at Him.

I John 2:5-6 But whoso keeps his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that says he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

John 8:55 says, "I keep My Father's sayings."

I John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

These are basic scriptures, but they lay a foundation for revealing how far these people fall short of living up to what they say they are.

Well, let us add to this John 7:17, where we pick up a principle that I think we all know, so that we keep the thought going in the right direction.

John 7:17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

See, that would clarify. That would remove the confusion. If a person does the will of God, confusion begins to dissipate, because obedience promotes understanding. Disobedience promotes confusion.

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I do not care which commandment you choose to explore as to the world's Christian submission to God, but you are going to find them failing, and in many cases they are going to be failing miserably in living up to them.

Now turn with me to Romans 8:5-6. We will go through another thought in here.

Romans 8:5-6 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh. [Those who are in the world, they mind the things of the world.] But they that are after the Spirit [they mind] the things of the spirit. ['Them and us' once again.] For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Them and us. Two distinct and clear ways. The word *mind* means "sides with." The practical application of what we see in Romans 8:5-6 is that a person's conduct will reveal his orientation; that is, his conduct will reveal what he sides with, and it will be one or the other.

It will either be God, or it will be the world. Whatever it is the person submits to will be revealed by that which he tries to please. Jesus added in Matthew 6:24 that no man can serve two masters. That is a universal principle, and the fruit of that principle cannot be hidden forever. It will come out. Our conduct will reveal which master it is that we are serving.

Just for the sake of exercise, we are going to apply these principles to the Sixth Commandment. God has given a clear and simple instruction—a command. "You shall not kill." For the purist, "You shall do no murder."

Now, do the world's churches involve themselves in the wars of their home nation? What is war? War is murder on a mass scale. It is murder ordered by somebody else, supposedly in the national interest. We may not like it, but a person who goes to war becomes a professional hit man. They become accessories to the fact. They are supporting it.

Does it make any difference whether we break the commandment because some man orders us to do it in the national interest, and we follow through? Does it not say, in Acts 5:29, that we ought to obey God rather than men? You see, the instruction is clear. To those who love God, He says, "You shall do no murder, and you are to obey Me, not some man."

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The way a person goes is going to show, is going to reveal, his orientation regarding this. Is the orientation going to be toward the world in obedience to it, in submission to it? Or is a person going to resist following somebody else's instruction and obey God rather than men?

Does not each army that goes to war have chaplains who lead the soldiers in prayer before they go into battle? Does not the other side, the enemy, do the same thing? Would you not say that is confusion added to murder?

In World War II, we had German Catholics and German Lutherans having their priests and ministers praying before they went into battle against the American Lutherans and American Catholics, the English Catholics and the English Lutherans, and the French Catholics and the Canadian Catholics.

Is that not only murder, but also confusion, where brother is killing supposed brother? I mean spiritual brothers. Are they keeping that commandment, brethren? That is most certainly not only disobedience, but rank confusion. But the orientation—what the person sides with—is very clearly revealed, and the people who do that are carnal. They mind the things of the flesh. And so we have men breaking God's clear command, and does that not very strongly tend to show where they believe and owe their highest loyalty?

Let us go to John 18. Remember, brethren, those people who fellowshipped with you in the Worldwide Church of God are going back to this—to this confusion and this orientation toward the world, which is founded upon disobedience to the commandments of God. A little bit of good here and a lot of evil there.

John 18:35-37 Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you unto me: what have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." Pilate therefore said unto him, "Are you a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth hears my voice."

Christ gave two very clear distinctions about Himself in these verses in relation to what we are talking about here. (1) He said that He was not really of the Jewish nation and, further, that He is not really of this world. (2) He said that if His kingdom was of this

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world, His servants would fight for Him.

The clear inference is that because they are not of this world, they do not go to war, because His kingdom is not now here. So, again, we have another very clear example of us and them. And the basis of this is that a Christian's loyalty is elsewhere. A Christian sides with the spirit. The professing Christian sides with the world, claiming that they know God, that they worship God, but denying Him by their works.

God gave us a clear command, and then He clarifies it with examples such as this. In another place, in Philippians 3, He said that our citizenship is in heaven, and anybody familiar with the Bible ought to understand the legal ramifications of that. Not only that, we understand that His Kingdom is here in embryo. It is not fully established as part of the earthly systems. The implication is that when it is fully established, if it is challenged, we would go to war on its behalf, because our loyalties—our orientation; that which the true Christian sides with—is always God's Kingdom. It is always the things of the spirit.

Psalm 111 is a parallel to John 7:17. In Psalm 111:10, it says, “A good understanding have all they that **do** His commandments.”

Why do the people in the churches not understand something that is so simple to us? The answer is that they are not called, and they are not keeping the commandments in the first place because they do not fear God, and He is not really a part of their everyday life. They mention God. They go to church on Sunday. They talk about God, but they do not really know Him the way you and I do.

Now remember James 2 about the difference between a professing faith and a faith that trusts God. A faith that trusts God will work. That they have *professing* faith, I think is beyond question, but they do not **trust**, because trust would carry into areas of spiritual obedience, spiritual understanding, and spiritual wisdom...and it is lacking.

Now while we are in John, let us go to John 14:16-18:

John 14:16-18 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but you know him; for it dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come unto you.

The world does not have that spirit.

Romans 18:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

God gives His Spirit to those that He calls and leads to repentance, and they become His children. They become partakers of the divine nature. They are led into truth for the purposes of spiritual obedience—good works and preparation for His kingdom—and they begin showing His characteristics.

The world's churches' Christians do not do this in relation to God. They do some of this in relation to this world, and that is why they give themselves over to this world's causes, whether it be communities, whether it be wars, or whether it be charities. They feel an affinity to this world that you and I do not, but they do not have a corresponding affinity to the Kingdom of God, and that is because they lack the Spirit of God, which is what attaches us to God.

This world's Christianity's works are in behalf of this world—making the world a better place to live, that sort of thing. It is interesting, in doing research for this sermon, I found in Protestant commentaries they see this. Intellectually they see it. They see that there is nothing in the Bible that tells the Christian that he has to change the world; that he has to make the world a better place to live. There is nothing in the Bible about that.

All the emphasis in the Bible is on changing yourself! I think you understand the principle. If you change yourself, and if everybody changes themselves, the world changes. But that is not in God's purpose right now. Right now that is being worked out in the lives of those who are part of the church. And so the world can claim to be Christian, but their affinity—that which they lean toward, that which they side with—is invariably going to fall on the side of the world.

Good works to them is witnessing, or testifying for God in order that they might bring about the conversion of others and the changing of the community. But changing and overcoming are not higher priorities, because they consider that working for salvation. They are confused. Our priorities, in behalf of God, are entirely different.

To us, good works have to do primarily with changing the self, yielding to God, so that we might be in the image of God. This includes things of course like prayer, Bible study, and repentance—things that this world calls personal or private devotions; but they are always done with the purpose in mind of finding a practical application so that we might change some area of our life to be in harmony with God, whether it be in marriage, in child-training, on the job, or other personal relations.

They are done in order that we might glorify God by our example, by the way that we do things, and the attitude in which they are done, so that we might be prepared for God's kingdom. And then, if there is any time left over, we might be able to do something in the community. But that is not our orientation.

Now let us go back to Exodus 31. We will see an application here and another commandment. This one is so clear.

Exodus 31:16-17 Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

The Sabbath is a perpetual sign of identification. It is something that anybody familiar with the way you live your life can observe you doing. God did that on purpose. I mean He made the Sabbath the sign so that anybody can see it. Anybody who is familiar with you can see that you keep the Sabbath.

Now let us flip that over. The world seems to keep every day except the one that God assigned. God made a period of constantly recurring time holy so that anybody who was familiar with His children—those who were showing His characteristics—would be able to observe their example and be witnessed to, without a word being said.

The Sabbath commandment contains the Holy Days within its scope, and if we respect, if we fear, if we love God, we will believe what God says, and submit to it. Now what does the world do in regard to this commandment? The world's churches argue against keeping it, and resolve not to. They denigrate it as being of no value except as being ceremonial and easily replaceable. They apply the commandment as merely keeping one day in seven, and then do not even keep that one day. Could anything be plainer—the difference between them and us?

But, they profess Christianity, just like the Jews did. They professed that their spiritual father was God, and Jesus called them liars. The world does this despite the fact of the clear witness that God left in His word that Jesus, by His own words, said He did not come to destroy the law. He obviously kept the Sabbath Himself and the apostles that He instructed for three and one-half years continued to keep it as an example to the church. There is no command anywhere in the Bible doing away with it or any other of

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the Ten Commandments.

In I Corinthians 2 it is clearly stated why the difference between us and them.

I Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

Notice "hidden wisdom."

I Corinthians 2:8-15 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him. But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 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 the Spirit of God [which we have]. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 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. But he that is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is discerned of no man.

Brethren, they just do not get it. There is where the difficulty lies. God has enabled us to understand, and that in no way makes us better, only more responsible because of the advantage that He has given us. It is like being afforded a college or university education: that of and by itself in no way makes one a better person, but it does put a person in a better position to serve the community, and therefore they are more responsible.

Instead, by the vast majority, this college education is looked upon only as a means to make more money for the self. And to us, the major portions of the mystery of God has been revealed so that we can perceive, yield to God in obedience and service, thus making a witness and preparing for His kingdom as well. And because they have not been blessed with this revelation, the mystery is still a mystery, they are in confusion spiritually.

They understand the things of a man, and it means that man has an innate grasp of secular things, but not the simple truths of God that we may even take for granted, and so they are in confusion. That is the way the carnality is being revealed to you and me. They are confused, and they are blinded too. So Sunday, Christmas, and Easter are perceived by them as being just as good for worshipping God as the Sabbath, Unleavened Bread, or the Feast of Tabernacles. To them, going to heaven is perfectly logical, and so is being raptured away to heaven just before the Tribulation, or going to an ever-burning hell or purgatory after death.

You see, God's Spirit comes to us from another sphere outside of this world, and it conveys knowledge of God, of creation, of redemption, of sin, of guilt, of forgiveness, of regeneration, resurrection... They may talk about these things, but they cannot put the puzzle together correctly so that it ever forms into a true picture; and, brethren, they do not grasp that God is reproducing Himself.

They do not know where creation is headed, and if you do not know where you are going, you are liable to end up somewhere else. And they do not. That is the crux of the matter. As Helmut said, "God's Reproduction Gospel." That is what it is. We are being saved from what we are, by the process the Bible calls salvation, and thus they are confused about the whys of doctrine and the purpose of works, seeing only that we cannot be saved by them, and thus in their confusion they lay exceedingly great stress on grace and what they call faith in Jesus.

These indeed are main parts of salvation, but their denigration of works denies them growth opportunities and being in the image of God. It gives them a totally unbalanced picture of salvation. And thus there is no peace. There is only confusion. They do not see how the doctrines fit.

What this has produced in Protestantism is hundreds of different denominations. They are endlessly dividing because the confusion, combined with human nature, is driving them to do so. In reality, it is confusion upon confusion. Division is the fruit of confusion, and what happened there at the tower of Babel when they could not understand one another? They divided.

When that group took over in the wake of Mr. Armstrong's death, confusion was introduced into the church in the form of false doctrines. You see, we could not understand. We divided. It produced the same thing that was produced at Babel. Peace dissolved. We could not walk together, we began dividing, and we are *still* dividing because the confusion has not been lifted yet from peoples' minds entirely.

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I think that I will stop there for today. The sermon is not done yet, and God willing we will get back to it the next time that I speak.