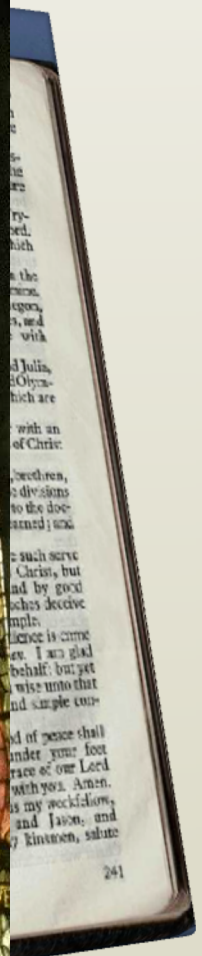
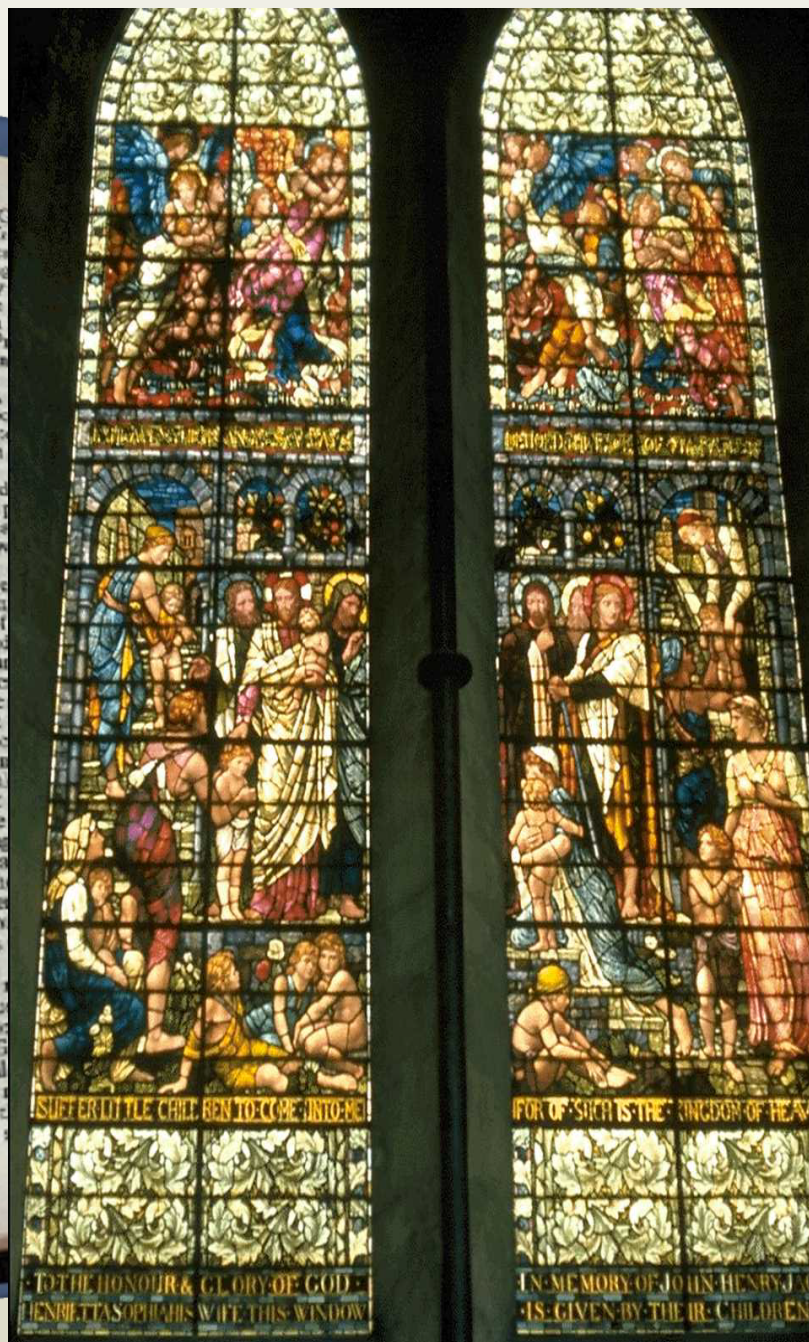
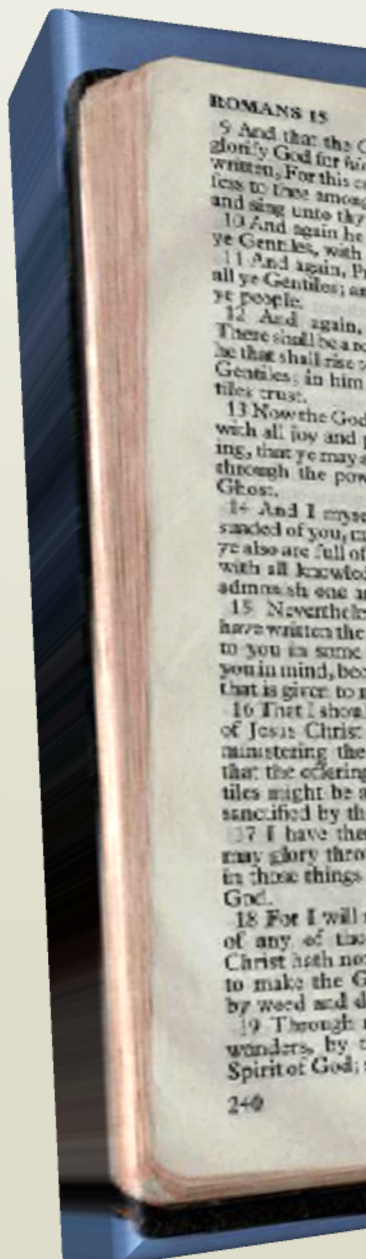


How to Identify a False Religion



My Religion

The little word MY is a precious one to most people. They lovingly speak of MY opinion, MY job, MY house, MY country, MY religion and MY God.

We RESENT being told that our opinion, OUR faith, or our religion is wrong. We like to continue to believe what we have been accustomed to accept as true. Everyone HATES to admit he has been wrong.

Yet, in all this maze of religious Babylon, SOMEBODY HAS to be wrong! Your Bible shows that this WHOLE WORLD has been completely DECEIVED in spiritual things. Remember that a deceived person DOESN'T KNOW he is deceived. He is sincere. But he is SINCERELY WRONG!

Because of false teachings and false concepts assumed since childhood, people are SPIRITUALLY DRUNK -- having a distorted outlook -- so that they are UNABLE TO SEE SPIRITUAL TRUTHS. Like a DRUNKEN PERSON, they are stupidly SATISFIED in the foggy, hazy, confused spiritual state in which they find themselves.

They THINK they are all right -- on the surface at least. But deep down inside is the haunting realization that SOMETHING IS MISSING -- their religion seems EMPTY -- God seems UNREAL somehow, and so very, very far away. Unknowingly, and in most cases sincerely, most of YOU have in the past been deceived by false preaching -- which originated and proceeded forth from Satan the Devil through his demon spirits, which inspire and influence the religious system and false ministers of our day! It is time to WAKE UP to this REALITY!

In these last days, before the second coming of Jesus Christ, you need to KNOW whether or not you are PREPARED TO MEET YOUR GOD! With an open mind, you should be willing to PROVE whether or not you have ever been REALLY CONVERTED.

MISPLACED CONFIDENCE in a FALSE CONVERSION is a GREAT and MORTAL DECEPTION which could very easily cause one to forfeit ETERNAL LIFE! It is such a DANGEROUS deception because one's own personal VANITY will, in many cases, prevent one from admitting that HE OR SHE HAS NEVER BEEN CONVERTED!

Are you willing to FACE this possibility? Are you willing to CHANGE if God shows you THROUGH HIS WORD that you have never really been converted before?

God's Word says: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). In plain language, you must have Christ's SPIRIT in you or you are not a Christian -- you have NEVER been converted!

Frankly, in the past, most of you didn't even know WHAT the Holy Spirit is, what it is supposed to do in your life, and WHAT IS to be the real result of being led by God's Holy Spirit.

As a matter of fact, most people attending the churches of this world and having been "baptized" by them, never really knew WHAT TO REPENT OF! They didn't know WHAT sin really is.

At the time of baptism in most churches, most people sincerely intend to "do better" or to "make their peace with God." But since they have not been taught the Bible definition of sin, they completely fail to realize how ROTTEN and SINFUL they have really been! They don't REALLY REPENT! They aren't broken up about the wretched state of their lives and their own human VANITY and SELFISHNESS, which expresses itself in all of us.

Genuine CONVERSION actually REVOLUTIONIZES a human being's life! It is A RENEWING of his MIND -- his ATTITUDE -- his CHARACTER!

He comes to really KNOW God -- to constantly STUDY and UNDERSTAND more and more of God's Word -- and he is able to PRAY and talk to God in a personal way. He receives constant

ANSWERS -- he is BLESSED -- he GROWS more like Christ every month and year of his life!

THE SAD TRUTH IS THAT MOST PROFESSING CHRISTIANS HAVEN'T EVEN BEGUN TO GET READY TO START TO BEGIN ON THE ROAD TO THIS KIND OF CHRISTIAN LIFE!

The greatest stumbling block that prevents most people from accepting the TRUTH and being TRULY CONVERTED is their own VANITY. Most people have grown up in and attended some church or another. And they hate to admit that they have NEVER BEEN CONVERTED! Human nature makes them want to maintain their OWN righteousness.

God has inspired an ENTIRE BOOK in His Word to deal with this common problem of human beings. It is the book of Job -- one of the least understood books in all the Bible. The primary lesson in this entire book is that God HATES our own human self-righteousness!

Notice Job's attitude throughout this book! "God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove MINE INTEGRITY from me: MY RIGHTEOUSNESS I hold fast, and will not let it go: MY HEART SHALL NOT REPROACH ME so long as I live" (Job 27:5-6).

Job again voices his real attitude in Job 3:6- "Let me be weighed in an even balance, THAT GOD MAY KNOW MINE INTEGRITY." Even Job's carnal friends could sense his own self-righteousness and vanity. "So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous IN HIS OWN EYES" (Job 32:1).

Finally, after dealing PERSONALLY with God and learning about his own INSIGNIFICANCE and utter WEAKNESS and WRETCHEDNESS, Job at last REPENTED. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but NOW MINE EYE SEETH THEE. Wherefore I ABHOR myself, AND REPENT in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6).

But the real question remains: Have you ever come to really ABHOR YOURSELF? Have you truly REPENTED as Job did? Have you TOTALLY

SURRENDERED yourself to God and given your very LIFE to Him to use AS HE SEES FIT?

God thunders: "For my thoughts are NOT your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9).

This means YOU and ME! DON'T apply this to someone else -- apply it to YOURSELF! Many of you reading this think you are already "saved" -- when the truth of the matter is that you NEVER have come to the place of TOTAL SURRENDER to God and His ABSOLUTE RULE over your lives!

If this includes you, then you have NEVER received of God's Holy Spirit and been begotten as His spiritual son. That is WHY you may not have been able to really understand Bible PROPHECY before! That is WHY you never really UNDERSTOOD the great PURPOSE being worked out here below. And that is why God always seemed so far away -- so UNREAL.

This lack of God's Spirit is the reason that you were not continually GROWING in grace and in knowledge -- and that you have lacked vital scriptural truths so many years of your life. It is time to AWAKEN and begin REAL CONVERSION!

You should apply these lessons to your own SELF. And you should strive NOT to get your feelings hurt by the correction and the exhortation which is here given!

IT'S HARD to believe, but it's true -- millions have BELIEVED on Jesus Christ and are NOT "saved." Millions actually worship Christ IN VAIN!

Origin of False Religion

TRUE RELIGION began in the Garden of Eden. Immediately after creating the first man, God began instructing Adam in the WAY of abundant living and eternal life.

FALSE RELIGION also started in Eden when Satan came along. He planted DOUBTS in Eve's mind. He PERVERTED all God had taught the first man and woman! Let's begin to understand.

1. Did God BEGIN Adam's education by teaching him what to eat? Gen. 2:16. Did this include the fruit of the "Tree of Life," which we know represented the Holy Spirit and eternal life? Verse 9. Was the instruction in verse 16 actually a COMMAND given by Almighty God?

2. Did God also WARN Adam that the fruit of one tree would be POISONOUS -- FATAL -- for him to eat? Verse 17. What was God REALLY teaching Adam in these verses?

COMMENT: By showing Adam what to eat, God began to teach him the WAY of life which results in great physical and spiritual blessings. And in showing him what not to eat, God began to point out ANOTHER WAY of life which PRODUCES misery, anguish and untold suffering -- the way which ultimately ends in EVERLASTING DEATH!

And so, God revealed TWO WAYS OF LIFE to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They were free to CHOOSE WHICH WAY they would LIVE.

3. Now let's momentarily jump ahead about fourteen centuries to be sure we understand. Did God place before ancient Israel TWO DIFFERENT WAYS of life? Deut. 30:19. Were they FREE TO "CHOOSE" which way they would go? Did God ADVISE, and in fact, COMMAND Israel (as He did Adam) to "choose LIFE" -- to choose the way of OBEDIENCE to God which results in great blessings?

COMMENT: Man has been a FREE MORAL AGENT from the beginning. Each of us is FREE TO CHOOSE whether to live God's way and reap tremendous blessings, or REJECT His way and experience a MISERABLE LIFE of curses ending in DEATH!

4. But what did Satan, the Serpent, LYINGLY instruct Eve concerning God's warning? Gen. 3:4. And what did gullible mankind -- Adam and Eve -- DO after listening to the Devil's very appealing

deception? Verse 6. Didn't this SEEM -- to their carnal human way of reasoning -- like the "pleasant" and proper course to follow, even though God warned that disobedience would result in DEATH? Same verse.

COMMENT: Satan offered the first humans a COUNTERFEIT WAY to abundant living and eternal life. It is the way of following the dictates of human nature which actually leads us AWAY from God and all we really desire.

THIS is the wretched and miserable way mankind has followed ever since -- the way which results in suffering and death! Influenced invisibly by Satan and his demons, and assured visibly by Satan's HUMAN AGENTS, man has readily yielded to his own downward pulls.

God wants us to learn from Adam and Eve's terrible example so we WON'T FOLLOW IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS!

5. Did Jesus call Satan the "father" or originator of all lies? John 8:44.

COMMENT: The Devil personally taught in the Garden of Eden -- and has continued to teach through supernatural thought implantation and through his human "ministers" -- that obedience to God is NOT NECESSARY for salvation!

These false teachers will tell you there is NO way by which you, PERSONALLY, can keep God's commandments. They teach that Christ kept God's Law FOR YOU, and that all you have to do to be "saved" is just believe that He did, and "accept" Him as your Savior.

NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH!

These men are merely CONTINUING Satan's false teachings by urging mankind to go ahead and disobey God, meanwhile assuring us with the Devil's LYING words, "YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE" (Gen.3:4). God MEANS what He says! Disobedience to Him results in DEATH!

Notice what Jesus taught concerning salvation: "If thou wilt enter into {eternal} life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS" (Mat. 19:17). That IS WHY God commands us to REPENT and begin OBEYING Him. He wants to GIVE US ETERNAL LIFE!

God does not command us to do the impossible. In Acts 2:38, He instructs us to "REPENT and be BAPTIZED ... and ye shall receive the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT." God PROMISES to give us His Spirit of LOVE and POWER by which we CAN KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS -- but ONLY if we first fulfill His conditions!

6. Could there have been a CHANGE in God's standards and requirements since Christ's death? Mat. 5:17-19 and Heb. 13:8. Therefore, has God's message always been one of OBEDIENCE to His Law?

COMMENT: We need to realize the Devil and his demons are literal, LIVE and ACTIVE spirit beings whom we must RESIST! They are able to conceive of all kinds of ways to appeal to the downward pulls of our evil human nature. Because of these downward pulls, Adam and Eve immediately followed Satan's false teachings. For the Devil's ways APPEAL to man's base nature!

Down through the centuries, carnal-minded man has continued to reject God's revealed way of life. So today we find ourselves living in a confused and deceived, chaotic civilization. Every phase of this Babylonish system we live in is established on principles diametrically CONTRARY to the laws of God!

7. WHY has mankind been so willing to "fall" for Satan's lies from the beginning? Rom. 8:7; 1:21-22, 28.

COMMENT: These ancient people, led by their INHERENTLY REBELLIOUS CARNAL MINDS, did NOT want to follow the way of life God revealed in the Garden of Eden. Therefore they REJECTED God and His true knowledge.

As the ancients groped in the dark, seeking to learn about "the unknown" without God to lead them, they SPECULATED their way into the pagan

philosophies that have come down to us today -- the teachings of Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Epictetus and Virgil -- which have formed the VERY BASIS OF MODERN EDUCATION!

And so even as the ancients "DID NOT LIKE TO RETAIN GOD IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE," modern education has no place for GOD or His divine revelation -- the Holy Bible!

This, then, is the origin of TODAY'S educational system! It begins by saying, "God is DEAD"! It launches man on the road of human search for "truth" and "understanding" WITHOUT God. It follows the way which "SEEMETH RIGHT" to the carnal mind -- the way which ends in UTTER OBLIVION! Prov. 16: 25.

God reveals that His inspired Word is the very BASIS or FOUNDATION of all true knowledge. But today carnal man continues to base his way of life upon the opinions of other GOD-REJECTING, CARNAL-MINDED MEN. And so our modern educational system is a CONFUSION of some truth mixed with MUCH ERROR!

We need to understand that spiritual conversion involves the process of UNLEARNING this wrong knowledge, as well as LEARNING God's true knowledge. But we can't begin this process until we first look into God's Word to see what He REALLY TEACHES -- to learn the basic knowledge God intends us to LIVE by and BUILD upon!

Warning Against False Teachers

1. Does Jesus warn us against FALSE ministers? Mat. 7:15. And did Paul warn that the DEVIL'S ministers would MASQUERADE as God's true ministers? II Cor. 11:13-15.

COMMENT: Jesus warns us to beware of those who SEEM to be God's ministers, but are in reality -- though unwittingly -- the "ministers" of the Devil!

2. Christ calls upon all people to REPENT (Mat. 4:17). But was the "mystery of INIQUITY" -- a religious system of LAWLESSNESS not calling for repentance and obedience to God -- already at work a very short time after Christ's death? II Thes. 2:7.

3. Did this movement have its ministers, some of whom even claimed the rank of "apostle"? II Cor. 11:12-13. And was Paul sorrowful because he knew they would try to deceive the Corinthians? II Cor. 11:3-4.

4. What did Paul warn concerning our TIME when this world would be in its death throes -- just as the end of this age looms imminent? II Tim. 4:3-4

COMMENT: Do you realize the full significance of this dangerous condition? It means the vast majority of professing Christians today believe in FALSE doctrines of salvation!

The churches of this world have a DEAD FAITH which is mere belief in Christ, WITHOUT OBEDIENCE TO GOD! They HAVE NOT REALLY REPENTED BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT KEEPING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS -- a CONDITION required for salvation. God says a dead "NO WORKS" faith produces only DEATH! James 2:14-26; Rom. 6:23.

Jesus taught: "IF thou wilt enter into {eternal} life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS" (Mat. 19:17). Then He enumerated enough of the Ten Commandments to show it was this particular law that must be obeyed AS A CONDITION to receiving eternal life.

You can't EARN eternal life. God GIVES it as a FREE GIFT -- but only to those who "keep the Commandments" -- God's Law. He will not give eternal life to those who CONTINUE LIVING IN SIN. And what is sin? "Sin is the TRANSGRESSION of the LAW" (I John 3:4).

5. Is the Law, which includes all of GOD'S COMMANDMENTS, immutable and eternal? Ps. 111:7-8.

COMMENT: For six thousand years the world has been going the WAY that "SEEMS" RIGHT TO MAN. NO WONDER it is in such chaos and confusion!

The WAY OF THIS WORLD has brought nothing but unhappiness, emptiness, discontent, poverty, sickness, disease, chaos and despair to all people! It has produced none of the GOOD THINGS God wants to bestow upon mankind! The sooner man begins to live by God's Law, the sooner he will profit -- both physically and spiritually! God says: "SEEK ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: LET THE WICKED FORSAKE HIS WAY, and the unrighteous man HIS THOUGHTS: and let him return unto the Eternal, and He will have mercy upon him: ... for He will abundantly pardon. For My THOUGHTS ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Eternal" (Isa. 55:6-8).

THIS is the WAY to salvation! THIS IS the way to FIND God! SEEK HIM by forsaking YOUR OWN WAYS AND THOUGHTS -- the WAYS YOU have thought to be right in your own eyes!

Since the BIBLE contains GOD'S WAY, we must turn solely to its teachings for guidance. It becomes OUR GUIDE FOR RIGHTEOUS AND SUCCESSFUL LIVING! That is why Jesus said man shall live by EVERY WORD OF GOD!

The Bible must be the SUPREME AUTHORITY over our lives. We must therefore, and henceforth, STUDY the Bible -- NOT just carelessly, but STUDY to LEARN GOD'S WAYS, and to LIVE by EVERY WORD OF GOD, instead of by human conscience!

What Repentance IS and Is NOT

1. Did Christ say that people can actually WORSHIP Him, acknowledging that He is Lord, and yet not enter His Kingdom? Mat. 7:21.

How else can they WORSHIP Him, and yet not be born of God at Christ's coming? Mat. 15:8-9. Then WHO WILL enter God's Kingdom? Mat. 7:21, last part.

COMMENT: It's difficult to believe, but it's true -- in TODAY'S religious confusion MILLIONS have supposed they had salvation spiritually -- they have BELIEVED ON Jesus Christ -- but are NOT SAVED because they REFUSE to obey God.

Listen to what else Jesus said about people who want to worship Him WITHOUT OBEDIENCE TO God's Commands: "Howbeit IN VAIN do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of MEN. For, LAYING ASIDE THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD, ye hold the tradition of MEN ... Full well ye REJECT the Commandment of God, that ye may keep your OWN tradition" (Mark 7:7-9).

Man would rather do almost anything else than surrender himself to God. His carnal nature REBELS at the thought of submitting to God's Law! Therefore men have substituted their own laws and customs for God's commandments, thinking they can still receive salvation by merely BELIEVING in Christ as their Savior.

2. Human nature wants to BE right, but it doesn't want to DO right! So people often say, "Well, here's the way I look at it" -- thus putting themselves in the place of the BIBLE. If it "looks right" to them, it becomes their law. In other words, they try to be SELF-RIGHTEOUS.

Just what does Isaiah 64:6 say about our "righteousness"? And what did Jesus say about those who "trusted in THEMSELVES that they were RIGHTEOUS"? Luke 18:9-14.

3. What is the end result of this world's kind of SORROW, or "repentance"? II Cor. 7:10, last part. But what kind of sorrow for sin does God accept, and where does it lead? Verse 9 and first part of verse 10.

COMMENT: It is commonly believed that a TEMPORARY REMORSEFUL FEELING over past mistakes and mere ACCEPTANCE of Christ is all

there is to being "saved." Are you like many thousands of others who have "made their decision for Christ" in this manner, and have "given yourself to Him" to be saved BY HIM, without any further effort on YOUR PART?

God says such "repentance" is totally unacceptable and will end in DEATH! True repentance -- "Godly sorrow" -- means to TURN AROUND AND BEGIN LIVING THE OPPOSITE WAY -- GOD'S WAY! THAT was Jesus' message! (Luke 13:3; Mat. 19:17) We cannot allow our carnal God-rejecting minds (Rom. 8:7) to continue ruling our bodies if we are going to be acceptable to God and born into His Kingdom!

4. If one has truly repented and received the Holy Spirit, will his whole mind be RENEWED SPIRITUALLY -- will his thinking and outlook become CHANGED from what it used to be? Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:22-24 and Col. 3:9-10.

COMMENT: A true Christian is a NEW SPIRITUAL CREATION being created into God's CHARACTER IMAGE. Although it is a spiritual matter, involving God's Holy Spirit, this CHANGE takes place in the MIND.

The FIRST step toward spiritual renewal of the mind is REPENTANCE. Repentance literally means "a change of MIND." The SECOND step which is ACCEPTANCE of, and FAITH in, Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, also takes place in the mind.

The THIRD step is baptism, after which God PLACES WITHIN our minds the gift of His Holy Spirit which RENEWS, or changes, the mind with God's spiritual knowledge and understanding.

5. Is a spirit-begotten Christian being created to PERFORM "good works"? Eph. 2:10 and 4:24. Notice the words "created in RIGHTEOUSNESS and true holiness" in Eph. 4:24. And what is "righteousness"? Ps. 119:172. Then isn't it plain that true repentance is accompanied by OBEDIENCE to God? Acts 5:32. OF COURSE IT IS!

6. Must true Christians also GROW in God's grace and knowledge? I Peter 3:18.

If the experience of repentance does not lead to our thinking and doing completely differently than we used to, it is NOT TRUE REPENTANCE!

Man is the highest mortal being God created on earth. And his MIND IS the highest part of man's faculty which, above all else, elevates him above dumb animals. God intends that our minds be developed, trained, and USED to His honor and glory!

Further Warning Against False Teachers

1. What did Jude exhort true Christians to do? Jude 3. Why? Verse 4.

COMMENT: Jude was urging Christians to earnestly strive to maintain the truth they had received from the apostles, for there were already in his day FALSE PREACHERS creeping into the church and PERVERTING the true way to salvation -- just as Paul had prophesied they would a few years earlier!

These false teachers were turning the GRACE, or forgiveness, of God into "lasciviousness" -- into LICENSE TO DISOBEY GOD! They were twisting the meaning of the Scriptures to excuse their own disobedience to God's Law. These false preachers were beginning to introduce the idea that God's Commandments were done away, or changed.

THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT WE ARE HEARING TODAY!

2. What does God say about these so-called "ministers" who say they KNOW Him, yet do NOT keep His Commandments? I John 2:4.

COMMENT: God says they are LIARS!! YOU can't trust a LIAR to teach you the true way to salvation!

How DIFFERENT the Word of God is from the teachings of men! God makes it very plain that to be a true Christian, one has to follow Jesus and obey GOD'S COMMANDMENTS!

You were born into a world that fills the minds of people with FALSE EDUCATION from early childhood. And because we like to be well thought of, to be "liked," and to be "accepted," people are trapped into conforming -- into following the false teachings of this world like BLIND sheep!

But through these lessons and His Word, God is now calling you out of the corrupt system of this world to learn and follow the truth -- BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE! You don't have to be like those of whom Christ said: "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their HEART is FAR FROM ME" (Mark 7:6).

Yes, through this Course and the Bible, you ARE GETTING back to the "faith once delivered"!

How to Recognize God's Church

1. Is the Bible to be the SOURCE of our doctrine? II Tim. 3:16. Does God's true Church KEEP His commandments? Rev. 12:17.

COMMENT: Jesus promised He would build HIS Church. He prayed that His Church would be ONE, not many divided and confused denominations. But He also WARNED there would arise MANY FALSE teachers and ministers who would found many DIFFERENT churches which would PROFESS TO BE THE CHURCHES OF GOD, and through these would deceive MANY.

The CHURCH JESUS PROMISED to build is COMPOSED OF THOSE WHO ARE FILLED WITH AND LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus has guided it into His truth THROUGH ALL AGES despite enemies from without who try to creep within, PROFESSING to teach the truth.

It is a Commandment-keeping Church, NOT a POLITICAL organization. This Church faithfully retains the "testimony of Jesus Christ" recorded in inspired scripture. This Church recognizes Christ

as its Living Head and it is subject to His government.

Do you realize the one BASIC DIFFERENCE between God's true Church and all others -- the difference between it and THE WORLD? That difference is the SOURCE of its religion. IT IS THE BIBLE!

But in order to appear "acceptable" in the eyes of others -- in order to avoid the uncomfortable feeling of INFERIORITY -- people BY NATURE would rather accept the beliefs and practices of the WORLD ABOUT THEM.

The CHURCHES OF THE WORLD PROFESS to believe in God. They even claim to believe and FOLLOW the Bible -- BUT by reading their OWN meaning into it. They seem to believe that God speaks to man through his CONSCIENCE, and then carelessly ASSUME this squares with the Bible.

But believe it or not, the actual source of the beliefs and practices of nearly all people is SOCIETY -- this world! And, realize it or not, this is the very essence of "WORLDLINESS"!

2. Does the Bible also say the Scriptures are for our reproof and correction? II Tim. 3:16.

COMMENT: Have you ever heard someone say to a friend: "I'm terribly upset -- I believe I have been wrong about my beliefs, and I think I made a mistake in forming most of my opinions." Have you? It's highly doubtful! The carnal mind doesn't like to be corrected and admit mistakes. But the repentant mind will take correction and ADMIT ERROR!

Notice this scripture says the Bible is profitable for reproof and correction. And for instruction in "righteousness" -- our obedience to God. The Bible, then, becomes our BASIC GUIDE for living, once we turn around and go the other way -- once we repent and begin OBEYING God!

Repentance Is Unconditional Surrender

One of the world's well-known preachers said he cannot imagine a loving Christ coming to this earth as a war-maker and conqueror. Most of professing Christianity is in for quite a SURPRISE -- for this is exactly how He IS coming! (Rev. 17:13-14; 19:11-16.)

Carnal-minded man is HOSTILE to -- at WAR with -- Christ and His Father's Law (Rom. 8:7). Christ would far rather shake this world until its inhabitants' teeth rattle, than let them go on in their rebellious, sinful ways until "there should no flesh be saved [alive]" (Mat. 24:22).

But -- RIGHT NOW -- before Christ comes to FORCE this world into surrendering to Him, He is calling upon men to VOLUNTARILY SURRENDER TO HIS AUTHORITY!

To "repent" simply means to SURRENDER ourselves to God's will UNCONDITIONALLY!

During World War II, when the Allied High Command called on Germany, Italy, and Japan to surrender, they demanded UNCONDITIONAL surrender, which meant the defeated Axis Powers gave themselves up completely -- without any strings attached -- to the victors.

This is what Christ demands of us today!

Allied armies then OCCUPIED the conquered territory, enforcing the will of the occupying powers. Similarly, once we completely surrender -- repent -- to Christ and are baptized, God's Spirit comes within us. It begins to influence OUR ways of thinking, acting, and living. No one thought it strange that the Americans, British or French should claim the right to tell the defeated Axis Powers what to do -- to interfere with and regulate the lives of the conquered. This is the right that God claims once we have completely surrendered to Him. Even so, the OCCUPYING Holy Spirit does not come within us for the purpose of taking away our free moral agency. It won't FORCE US to do anything!

It will only lead us in the right direction and give us added strength to FOLLOW ITS leading. We COULD REBEL again, and be at war again if we so choose. But if we continue to rebel, our FINAL defeat -- the Lake of Fire -- might well be compared to an all-out annihilating nuclear holocaust with NO CHANCE OF SURRENDER! Let's not choose THAT way! But rather follow God's Spirit as it helps, directs, and empowers us to practice our merciful Conqueror's WAY of life!

1. Did Jesus Christ say no one who put any other person or thing AHEAD of Him could be His disciple? Luke 14:26, 27. Does this extend to include the person's own LIFE also? Verse 26.

COMMENT: "Hate" in verse 26 means to love less by comparison.

2. Did He say that whoever would quit being his old sinful selfish self, and give up or "lose" his life to Christ, would live? Mat. 16:24, 25.

COMMENT: Jesus is actually talking about giving one's life in TOTAL OBEDIENCE AND SERVICE to God -- even DYING for Him, if He should require that of us -- in return for ETERNAL life!

3. Is surrendering to Christ something to be considered lightly? Or must we first "count the cost" -- realizing what surrendering to God really entails? Luke 14:28-33.

COMMENT: These lessons are showing you what GOD REQUIRES of those who would follow Him. The question is: what are you going to DO about it?

A Fuller and Richer Life

Does our UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER of self to God also mean He wants all our MATERIAL GOODS too? OF COURSE NOT! We have a MULTI-BILLIONAIRE HEAVENLY Father! The EARTH IS HIS, and the fullness thereof! He doesn't need anything FROM US, but we DESPERATELY

NEED EVERYTHING from Him! God WANTS us to keep EVERYTHING that is GOOD for us, according to His divinely revealed laws! He wants us to give up only those things which are BAD FOR US -- especially doing those things we DO which are motivated by our evil carnal nature.

1. Jesus came to call us OUT of this TROUBLED WORLD. But did He also come to make possible a fuller and richer life? John 10:10.

COMMENT: This means He came that we might have a happy, joyful, and productive life HERE AND NOW! A life just FILLED with interest, ZEAL, and USEFULNESS. HE DID NOT TELL US TO BEND OUR BACKS UNDER A MOUNTAIN OF HUMAN WOE AND SUFFERING! Or to do penance and live in poverty and misery!

Conversion does not mean you cast all material things aside. Instead, conversion makes possible for the first time our intelligent use of God's material creation ACCORDING TO HIS LAWS!

2. Did Christ say: "Throw material wealth and physical pleasures away and seek ONLY the Kingdom of God"? Mat. 6:33.

COMMENT: Notice again what He DID say: "Seek ye FIRST the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU."

So it is not the giving up of material things that God is interested in -- it is the ATTITUDE you have toward them! Seek FIRST the Kingdom of God, and THEN (secondarily in importance) shall these other things be ADDED to you. God wants to BLESS US with material things -- NOT TAKE THEM AWAY!

Let's be BALANCED in our thinking about these things. Let's understand the working of God's mind. We are here to learn how to use the material world, not ABUSE it. We are here to learn how to be happy and how to make others happy, too.

Now Is YOUR TIME to Repent

Man is now engaged in a momentous struggle, the RESULT of which could well prove to be the TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF HUMAN LIFE FROM THIS PLANET!

Yet almost no one understands the real CAUSE of this world's chaotic conditions, and of the wretched plight of millions of human beings.

The apostle Paul, in writing to Timothy, foretold these precise times. We have now entered the last days of this age when the unrestrained pulls of carnal nature are now bringing this world into a final convulsive climax -- the results of which Christ said would be the complete annihilation of man from this earth, were He not to intervene.

1. How did Paul describe mankind in general today? II Tim. 3:1-5. Notice especially verse 5.

COMMENT: Yes, people PROFESS Christianity -- they attend churches -- they have a "FORM of godliness," but that mere outward FORM and CEREMONY IS NOT enough!

God demands a COMPLETE REVERSAL in the natural evil inclinations of mankind. In other words, TOTAL REPENTANCE of following the ways that seem right to human conscience, and a complete TURNING AROUND to begin following the way of God as revealed in the Bible!

2. What else does God have to say concerning this present evil world we have all had a part in? I John 2:15-17 and Rom. 12:2.

COMMENT: Here is the very STARTING POINT on the way to salvation! God commands us to COME OUT OF THIS WORLD AND FORSAKE ITS WAYS! Not to be conformed to its ways, but to become like Christ by allowing the Holy Spirit to come within us and HELP CHANGE US! This world is now teetering on the brink of UTTER OBLIVION! Terrible suffering lies just ahead for those who are not under God's protection.

Are you NEGLECTING your opportunity for salvation and safety in these trying times, and in the absolutely hideous days just ahead? Are you THROWING AWAY your opportunity for ETERNAL LIFE in preference to the corrupt, TEMPORARY lusts of the flesh and the temptations of this world?

The apostle Paul was inspired to write: "How shall we escape, if we NEGLECT SO great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3). Yes, HOW SHALL WE?

The biggest question you now face is this: WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT? Now is YOUR TIME to repent and receive God's Spirit. IT'S LATER THAN YOU THINK!

Your Faith Is Necessary

Let's understand exactly what part your own PERSONAL FAITH or belief has in repentance, and in your receiving of God's Holy Spirit.

1. Does God state that Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins so He might deliver us from this present evil age and provide us access to the Father? Gal. 1:3, 4 and Eph. 2:18. Are we to BELIEVE this with all our being, having FAITH IN CHRIST'S SACRIFICE for our sins? Acts 20:21.

2. Must WE also BELIEVE -- have faith in -- Christ's gospel message concerning the imminent establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth? Mark 1:15. (This obviously INCLUDES belief in Christ as our Savior and coming King.) Must we also repent to ultimately enter that Kingdom? Same verse.

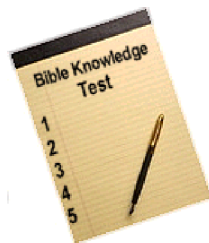
3. Must we repent and believe to receive the Holy Spirit? Acts 2:38. (Baptism is the outward expression of our inward believing.)

COMMENT: God requires TWO PRIOR CONDITIONS on YOUR part before you can receive the gift of His Holy Spirit.

First, you must REPENT of sin! Second, you must BELIEVE IN Christ as your Savior. But you cannot believe in Christ unless you also believe His message -- the Gospel of the Kingdom of God (Mark 16:15-16).

However, NEITHER your repentance, your obedience, NOR YOUR FAITH can result in salvation! They are merely PRIOR CONDITIONS. But when you supply these two conditions of repentance and personal faith, then GOD STANDS BOUND BY HIS PROMISE to give you His Holy Spirit which imparts Christ's RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HIS FAITH. THESE are the ingredients that "SAVE" and ultimately result in ETERNAL, LIFE!

Let's be sure we really understand what KIND of faith is required for salvation. Millions have been deceived into falsely believing they HAVE a "salvation" which they do NOT yet have at all! GOD HELP US TO REALLY UNDERSTAND!



TEST

This multiple choice test is designed to help you review the preceding lesson. It's an enjoyable way of putting to use some of the vital knowledge and understanding you have gained through this lesson.

Select one of the four choices given under each question or incomplete statement. The other three are incorrect--unless stated or indicated otherwise.

Take sufficient time to understand each question or statement, as well as the choices. Try to do as many as you can without referring to the lesson. If you have difficulty deciding on the correct answer, then review the part of the lesson in question.

1. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?

- A. Your Bible reveals that the whole world understands the true way to salvation.
- B. Millions who BELIEVE on Jesus Christ are now "saved."
- C. Millions today actually worship Christ in VAIN!
- D. True education has nothing to do with salvation.

2. Which ONE of these four statements is FALSE?

- A. The Bible was not written to change man's heart.
- B. "The (human) heart is DECEITFUL above all things, and DESPERATELY WICKED"!
- C. When the Bible speaks of the heart, it usually refers to man's NATURE -- his attitude, or spirit, or tendency of MIND.
- D. Christ's gospel message reveals how man's evil heart can be CHANGED.

3. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?

- A. God's true knowledge and commandments have always been taught and obeyed by the world.
- B. This world's educational institutions instill error in people's minds only after they have become adults.
- C. "Christian" churches today make a show of following the Bible, but reject its teachings.
- D. Today's education does not spurn true spiritual values.

4. Repentance

- A. is not important enough to spend your time thinking about.
- B. is just another sanctimonious idea that men have incorporated into religion.
- C. is the all-important first step on the way toward eternal life.
- D. will not turn the course of your entire life for the better.

5. Which ONE of these four statements is FALSE?

- A. God commands His true ministers to preach the truth about repentance.
- B. TRUE repentance is taught in the churches of this world.
- C. The world is full of deception regarding the true way to salvation.
- D. Man can find God only by FORSAKING his own ways and his own thoughts.

6. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?

- A. We should have implicit confidence in our carnal minds to determine what God would have us do.
- B. We must distrust our carnal minds completely when it comes to deciding what is God's will.
- C. Everyone should have a Bible, but only ministers are really qualified to use it in learning God's will.
- D. There is no particular advantage in your studying the Bible diligently to learn God's will for you.

7. Do the vast majority of people who believe themselves to be true Christians really have salvation?

- A. Yes, if they just WORSHIP Jesus.
- B. No! FALSE "conversion" is very common because the ministers of this world have NOT taught the true way to salvation.
- C. They do not have it yet, but they will if they just continue the present course they are following.
- D. If anyone is doing the best he knows how, and follows the ministers of this evil world, he will be saved.

8. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?

- A. Christ never commanded anyone to repent, nor did He even allude to repentance.
- B. True repentance is just feeling "sorry" about having done something the Bible says is sin, without making a determined effort to turn from ever doing it again.
- C. Man sets up his own standards of right and wrong, disregarding the plain teachings of God's Word.
- D. One who thinks he is righteous can be certain he will be saved.

9. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?

- A. When you were a child, you were aware of whether or not you were being fooled regarding the true way to salvation.
- B. It is very natural for a carnal, unconverted mind to follow the ways of this world.
- C. God approves of practicing the ways of this corrupt world -- as long as we can "justify" them by twisting the words of the Bible.
- D. Growing in grace and knowledge has nothing to do with being RE-EDUCATED to God's way of life.

10. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?

- A. God would never call this world's "Christian ministers" and whole congregations LIARS.
- B. The churches of this world often read their own desired meaning into the Scriptures.
- C. Everyone loves to be corrected and have his faults brought to his attention.
- D. Christ is not interested in having anyone repent at this time -- anytime later will be soon enough for everybody.

11. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?

- A. The difference between God's true church and all other churches of the world is that its SOURCE of religion is the Bible.
- B. An unrepentant carnal mind will gladly take correction from the Bible.
- C. God's true Church will not look for and accept reproof and correction from the Bible.
- D. Jesus came so that those in the body of Christ -- His true Church -- would have to do penance and live in poverty and misery.

12. Jesus Christ

- A. is not very interested in having each of us repent and become cleaned up by the Holy Spirit.
- B. will not return as a WAR-MAKER.
- C. is already at war with our carnal minds and demands our UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER!
- D. does not have the right to demand changes in our lives once we have surrendered to Him unconditionally.

13. The Holy Spirit

- A. cannot be compared to an occupation force which has come in to occupy a surrendered nation.
- B. will FORCE US to remain in submission to God.
- C. will LEAD and EMPOWER those who surrender to God and faithfully strive to obey Him.
- D. will not give us the supernatural power of God to resist Satan's attempts to reconquer us.

14. Christ teaches us

- A. to move to the hills and live the ascetic life of monks and hermits.
- B. to wait to seek the Kingdom of God until we are on our deathbed.
- C. to remain spiritually inactive once we receive the Holy Spirit.
- D. to expect many blessings from God if we seek FIRST the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

15. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?

- A. There is no particular advantage in repenting RIGHT NOW.
- B. Everyone must search his own heart and honestly admit whether he is neglecting his chance to receive eternal life in preference to satiating the inordinate lusts of the flesh.
- C. The question of repentance can safely be taken lightly.
- D. Repentance cannot possibly lead to a spiritually rejuvenated mind and an abundant life here and now.

16. Which ONE of these four statements is FALSE?

Circle correct letter on test card and return in enclosed envelope for next Bible study.

- A. Even though most churches teach it, your own personal faith, or belief, ALONE will not save you.
- B. Nevertheless, your faith is sufficient to save you.
- C. YOUR faith and repentance are the PRIOR CONDITIONS for receiving the Holy Spirit.
- D. Your faith, or belief, in Christ's sacrifice and His gospel message is necessary to receive the very faith OF CHRIST!

17. The faith that really saves and results in eternal life

- A. is a special GIFT from God imparted by His Holy Spirit.
- B. is a faith we can somehow work up ourselves.
- C. is the faith millions of professing Christians have today.
- D. is not the very same faith by which Jesus Christ obeyed His Father.

18. Which ONE of these four statements is FALSE?

- A. Only God can SAVE US.
- B. Yet we must comply with God's CONDITIONS before He will set His hand to save us.
- C. Our role is to REPENT and SURRENDER OUR WILL -- OUR WHOLE BEING -- to God and His Word, and then trust Him by the FAITH OF CHRIST to clean us up spiritually and ultimately give us eternal life.
- D. It is quite possible for us to save ourselves.



The word of God is adrift, free falling in a world filled with religious confusion. Who will pick it up and live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God?

Church of God -Rocky Mount

27 Brookledge Lane, Rocky Mount, VA 24151

Phone:1-888-898-7698 www.cogrm.com

