

# The Worldwide Church of God

## Review:

There are four things most cults have in common:

1. Centralized authority
2. Us versus them complex
3. Commitment for each member to proselytize the unconverted
4. Isolationism

They fail to have correct theology according to historic Christianity in the following areas:

1. The attributes of God
2. The person of Jesus Christ
3. The nature of man
4. The requirements of atonement
5. The source of revelation

## History of the Worldwide Church of God

Herbert Armstrong is the founder of the Worldwide Church of God. He was born in Des Moines, Iowa on July 31, 1892. Mr. Armstrong traces his ancestry all the way back to King Edward the I of England (which is key).

Armstrong's wife challenged him reference faith alone in Christ for salvation. He then said he studied the Bible and concluded that his wife was right, that salvation is not only faith in Christ but also keeping the law.

In other words, Jesus + = salvation. This is not something which is new, it is something that Paul battled in the New Testament

## Galatians 1:6-10

### Introduction:

Paul and Barnabas are in modern-day Turkey and preached the word and the people accepted Jesus as their savior and they started churches and they even had a little association going on with the churches.

Paul and Barnabas moved on in their missionary journey, and a messenger came to them told them that the Galatians were adding the law to their salvation. In other words, they were starting to teach Jesus plus for salvation.

They were adding religion to salvation: faith in Jesus plus works for salvation.

It should also be noted that men called the Judaizers would follow Paul and tell these young Christians that believing in Jesus was good, but you needed more to be saved.

You might say that is silly but we do the same thing when we add church membership, baptism, confirmation, and your last name to salvation. It is called Jesus Plus salvation. These things I mentioned are good but they have nothing to do with our salvation.

### Galatians 1:6

*I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—*

A couple of words we need to focus on:

Astonished- this word in the original language means “to marvel, wonder, to be stunned”. This word in the original language and the tense that Paul uses means “I’m continually stunned”. Stunned that these believers who knew the truth, their lives had been changed, they had seen God work in their lives were going back into the bondage of working for your salvation. Paul was stunned that they were in the process of deserting.

Deserting- this word means “to change sides”. It was used in the military and in politics to describe someone who had changed sides.

There is another word that fits what the Galatians were doing and that is apostasy. We commit apostasy when we embrace faith in Christ and what he has done on the cross then reject it.

When someone deserts their faith (apostasy) they leave **three** things:

1. Leave the **gospel**- Paul makes it very clear; **Jesus plus** is leaving the gospel.
2. Leave **grace**
3. Leave **God**- to desert is to leave God and follow after an idol of our own making.

#### **V 7**

*not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.*

Acts 15:1 explains what these false teachers were doing. They did not **deny** that you must believe in Jesus, but you must **finish** the job that Jesus started by obedience to all the **rules and regulations** of the Old Testament.

Mankind likes this because it appeals to our **pride**.

In this verse we see how apostasy starts:

1. **Doubt**- apostasy occurs when a disappointment, a tragedy comes into our lives that shakes us up.
2. False **teaching** comes along and **twists** the truth.

#### **V 8**

*But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.*

Tells us how to avoid apostasy---- **tenacity**, hold onto the gospel no matter what happens hold onto it. We must let scripture be our **final authority**, not the culture or how we feel but what does the Word say. **Trust the Lord**

**Accursed**- it means "to be cut off both physically but also spiritually in the lake of fire for eternity".

## V 10

*For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.*

The false teachers were saying that Paul was a people pleaser; that is why he preached grace. But the fact of the matter is people do not like to hear they cannot earn their way to heaven; it hurts their pride. In fact, this is the area that Paul was stoned and left for dead because he preached grace.

We must realize something, people do not like to hear that they are sinners and cannot work their way back to God. People think that God has to accept them because they are so good.

But the truth of the matter is we cannot achieve our own salvation. It comes through putting down our pride and accepting Christ as our savior.

## Teachings of the Worldwide Church of God

Armstrong also taught that Biblical truth had been lost since the first century until he rediscovered it. He taught that he was unique in the human race and he was Christ's new apostle. He also wrote about him being the Elijah who would preach before the second advent of Christ.

Armstrong also said that his organization alone was true Christianity.

Mr. Armstrong made many predictions reference end times here are some of them:

- The Catholic Church would be destroyed through Mussolini in 1936.
- Jesus would return at the end of the Second World War.
- Hitler was the antichrist and would fight Jesus at the battle of Armageddon.
- One-third of the world would be wiped out in 1972.
- The human race would be extinct by 1982.

The Worldwide Church of God taught that we need to keep the dietary laws of the Old Testament

Denied the Trinity: did not believe the Holy Spirit was a person but rather just the power of God.

Keeping the sabbath day which was Saturday in the Old Testament. This was the ultimate test of faith. The reason was that Armstrong believed Jesus was crucified on Wednesday and rose on Saturday, not the first day of the week.

- In fact, those people who continue to practice worshipping on Sunday during the Tribulation will receive the mark of the beast and then cast into the lake of fire.

### **Teaching on Jesus**

His teaching on Jesus is very tricky, but what he says is that Jesus gave up His divinity when He became flesh. This is incorrect. Jesus had two natures; that of eternal God and that of a man.

Neither nature was altered during the incarnation (John 1:1, 1:18, 5:18 ,20:28; Colossians 2:9).

### **Conclusion**

One more thing about Armstrongism, he taught British-Israelism. This is not something new but was written about decades before Armstrong. It was a belief that the lost tribes of Israel back in the Old Testament were in fact the English people and the Americans.

The promises given to Israel applied to the British and the Americans because they were the lost tribes of Israel.

Again, Armstrong said he could trace his ancestry not only to Edward the I but on his mother's side to King David.

Tell the good news.