

Do Christians  
*Have* to Grow  
in Knowledge?



# Do Christians Have to Grow in Knowledge?

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**THIS BOOKLET IS NOT TO BE SOLD. The information provided is for the benefit of former members of the congregations of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), and of current and prospective members of God's Church.**

*Does there come a time when a Christian can say that he knows it all? Many say that God does not want them to know everything. However, God commands Christians to grow in knowledge. Could He have made that command if there comes a time when there is nothing left to learn for a Christian? What does your Bible have to say about it?*



## *Preamble*

**Please Note:** All comments in brackets [ ] or in parentheses ( ) as well as highlighted text (bolded and/or in blue) are from the author of this study. Bible quotations are in maroon.

I think it is essential to clarify the question of the “Holy Spirit” before we begin this study. If we say that who or what is the “Holy Spirit” is the question that needs to be answered, we are starting from the assumption that there exists such a being as the Holy Spirit and that it is a separate and distinct being from God and the Word. The question which should be asked is who are the beings the Bible tell us are holy, whose composition is spirit and who have existed eternally? Either the Bible plainly tells us who are the separate and distinct beings that existed from all eternity who created all things (spirit beings and the material universe) or we have no way of getting an answer to our question.

### **The Holy Spirits of the God Family**

The Bible tells us in Gen 1:1 that:

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The Hebrew word translated “God” is “Eloheem” which is the plural form of “Eloah which means “God”. The word “Eloheem” refers to “gods.” It is a uniplural noun like family, group, team, etc. In the beginning, there was therefore more than one God being in existence but how many were there?

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth there was God and there was another being with God who was also God, the Word. How can these two beings both be God; isn't that impossible?

The word God indicates the kind of existence of these 2 beings: their nature is to be God in the same way that all human beings have the same human nature. However, having the same nature does not mean that all human beings constitute a single being; indeed, they are all separate and distinct beings with their own personalities. God and the Word have in common the same nature or, level and type of existence, but they are separate and distinct beings just like all human beings who have the same human nature are separate and distinct beings.

### **God the Father**

We read in the Bible that God became a father when the Word became flesh (Php 2:5-8) by being born of woman after having been conceived in the virgin Mary by the holy spirit being called God (Luke 1:35). God from that point on became God the Father and the Word, who was born as the flesh-and-blood Jesus of Nazareth became God's Son or the Son of God. He was both fully God (his father was God and fully human (his mother was the virgin Mary).

Jesus was God the Father's only begotten son at the time when He was conceived in Mary's womb but He was not to be the only one begotten of the Father. God the Father is the holy spirit being in the Godhead that calls men to salvation.

Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Joh 18:9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou [God the Father] gavest me have I lost none.

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,



### God the Word and Spokesman

The Bible term for being called is to be spiritually begotten by God the Father (1Pe 1:3). When we are begotten, we become a spiritual embryo that can be born again as a glorified spirit being with eternal life. Those begotten of the holy spirit God the Father who follow their calling are then able to come to the holy spirit being called the Word and Spokesman (John 6:44; 65; 18:9) who then teaches them. The glorified Jesus-Christ as God the Father's Word and Spokesman is the holy spirit being that works in the minds of God the Father's called and chosen ones.

Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus had to first be glorified for it to be possible for Christians to have access to the holy spirit called the Word and Spokesman because the glorified Christ is the holy spirit being who works in the minds of God's saints (John 14:17) in the same way that Satan is the evil spirit that works in the minds of the children of disobedience (Eph2:2).

Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he [Christ] dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. [On the day of Pentecost, it would be in them and in all true Christians.]

Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, [Satan] the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The holy spirit God the Father calls men and those who follow their calling are then taught by the holy spirit called the Word and God the Father's Spokesman.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

## The Holy Ghost

The expression “Holy Ghost” used in the Bible is in error as there are no ghosts in the Godhead but rather 2 beings that are holy (John 17:11; Isa 6:3) and spirit (John 4:24).

Joh 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

Isa 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy**, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Joh 4:24 **God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.**

These 2 God beings who are holy and spirit are the holy spirit beings of the God family who existed in the beginning at the creation of all things.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And, the Word who was with God is before all things i.e., *nothing* existed before He created them whether made of spirit or matter.

Col 1:15 **[Christ]** Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

Col 1:16 For by him [the Word who became Jesus-Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

In the beginning before anything either physical or spiritual was created, there was God and the Word who existed before all things and no other being is mentioned as having existed with them. There is no bib-

lical evidence that there ever existed a third, separate and distinct personage in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit” who dwelt in eternity with God and the Word.

### God is a Family

Throughout the Bible we can find many verses which clearly indicates the existence of family relations between God and the Word and God’s called, chosen and faithful.

Mat 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Mat 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Joh 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but o to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

God is clearly a family in which many can be ultimately born again by a resurrection from the dead to eternal, glorified spirit life in God’s Kingdom.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [\[God’s Son\]](#) might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Col 1:18 And he [\[the glorified Christ\]](#) is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Christ was the first to be born again by a resurrection from the dead to be followed by many brethren.

### Bible Writing Convention

The practice in the Bible has been to simply use the expression “the Holy Spirit” without indicating which God personage in the Godhead the expression represents. Over time, because of this practice, just about everybody has come to believe that the Holy Spirit is a separate and distinct God being in the Godhead but, there is no single verse or group of verses in the Bible that prove the existence of such a third being in the Godhead. The words “holy” and “spirit” are adjectives that describe the nature of

God the Father and of God the Word i.e., they are holy beings made of spirit.

Whenever we encounter the expressions the “Holy Spirit” or simply the “Holy Spirit” in the Bible we must look at the context to determine of which holy spirit being of the Godhead the Bible is talking about: the holy spirit, God the Father or the holy spirit, the Word and Spokesman.

The Word is the holy spirit being in the Godhead who carries out the instructions and wishes of the holy spirit, God. He is the faithful son who seeks to do his father’s will in all things. He is the member of the God family that did the work of creating the heaven and the earth, who ruled over ancient Israel through Moses and his human successors, He is the one who became a man who suffered and died to be God the Father’s perfect sacrifice for sin and make the salvation of mankind possible, etc. and He came to reveal the Father to those who follow the Father’s calling.

### **Making Things Clearer**

In this study, when referring to God’s spirit who, depending on the circumstances can be the holy spirit personage called God the Father or the holy spirit personage called God the Word and Spokesman, I will not capitalize either of the adjectives “holy” and “spirit”. This is in order to not perpetuate the false impression in the minds of readers that there is a 3rd being in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit.” Instead, I will refer to either of the holy spirits in the God family as being God’s spirit without capitalizing the word “spirit” to make it plain that we are not referring to a third God being in the God family called the “Holy Spirit” but to one of the 2 God beings in the Godhead.

God’s family is presently made up of 2 holy spirit beings to which are to be added thousands and possibly millions of other holy spirit beings when God’s plan of salvation for mankind has reached its end. The saints that endure in the faith until the end of their natural human life, will be resurrected as individual holy spirit beings in God’s Kingdom when it is established.

There are two studies which you can read regarding what is the “Holy Spirit” and decide for yourself in light of the Bible-based evidence offered if such a being exists in the Godhead. These studies are: [What is the Holy Spirit? Cliff Notes Version](#) and [Who or What is the Holy Spirit?](#)

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**M**r. Armstrong (HWA) always said, even shouted out, that we are to check everything he taught the Church against the Bible to see if it was true; that we are not to rely on men but on the Bible which is the word of God. Does that sound like that all that Christians have to do is attend services, listen attentively to the sermon, go home or stop off at a restaurant with friends and have a good meal and that's it?

Or is it that are individual Christians are solely rely on what men teach them then turn out the light and go to sleep and; that individual Christians have no personal responsibility for studying the Bible to ensure that what is being taught them is true or not?

Do individual Christians have no duty or responsibility to study the Bible throughout their lives to prove what is being taught them is the truth and to keep growing in knowledge and understanding? Is that what God commands them to do?

The individual Christian is responsible for his own salvation; not HWA, not the ministry; no, you, the individual Christian. You cannot rely on men or even the ministry. You need to check out against the Bible everything that is taught you; even the foundational truth of the Church which God gave the first era church through Christ and which He restored through HWA to His Philadelphian Era Church. Men are notoriously unreliable and cannot be trusted to be always truthful; the Bible is the sure word of God which never changes.

This study will elaborate on the command given all true Christians by God in the book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, chapter 3 and verse 18.

2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

This is said in the context of Peter telling the faithful not to be concerned that it seems to be taking a long time for Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming to occur and that there will be many scoffers saying He is not coming back as He said He would. They are told not to pay any attention to them or to worry about when Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming will occur nor to be taken up with the cares of this material world which will be dissolved by fire and be replaced with a new universe in which dwells righteousness and for which true Christians long.

Basically, Peter is saying, don't let yourself be distracted by those things which he just mentioned and focus instead on growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus-Christ which should be our first goal as members of God's church.

But here is where many of God's people would find themselves saying: "But, isn't it the ministry's job to teach us and aren't we to rely on them for a correct understanding of what the Bible says on different subjects?"

And they would also say: "Isn't it dangerous for us to go off on personal Bible studies that may lead us into error and cause us to lose our salvation? Isn't it far better and wiser to simply listen to the ministry and learn from them?"

These are all very valid concerns that will be addressed in the course of this study.

Let's start at the beginning and examine the state of the newly-converted Christian.

### **Babes in Christ**

When first coming to the knowledge of the truth, one is certainly not able to do their own Bible studies and correctly extract the truth that is contained in the Bible. Someone needs to teach them as was the case of the eunuch at the court of Candice that was reading Isaiah and couldn't understand what he was reading. God sent the apostle Philip to him.

Act 8:26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

Act 8:27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

Act 8:28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

Act 8:29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

Act 8:30 And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

Act 8:31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

Act 8:32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

Act 8:33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

Act 8:34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

Act 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

The eunuch was being called and God sent someone to teach him because on his own he could not understand the Scriptures and that is the state of those who are undergoing the process of conversion when God calls them out of the world and begins to open their eyes to the truth. New converts are referred to as “babes” in several Scriptures; today we would say “infants.”

Mat 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. [newcomers to the truth; not actual flesh-and-blood babies.]

Mat 21:16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? [spiritually speaking, newcomers to the truth]

Luk 10:21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Rom 2:20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, [new converts to the truth] which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

1Co 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. [no spiritual growth had occurred in the Corinthians, were still like newcomers to the faith to whom the basics have to be taught]

1Pe 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

### Role of the Ministry

For the greatest part of the history of God's church there was no ministry to teach the converts and converts had but a very small knowledge of the truth. But they were God's church nonetheless. During the time of the Church under HWA, many made the error of thinking that the church always existed as a visible, well-organized corporation with all the various offices of responsibility being filled with regular business hours and meeting schedules. But church history reveals quite a different story. The church was persecuted for 1260 years (Dan 7:25) by the great, false church, lost most of the truth given it by the apostles and, had to flee into the wilderness to save their lives.

Dan 7:23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it



down, and break it in pieces.

Dan 7:24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom *are* ten kings *that* shall arise: and **another shall rise after them**; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. [3 kings or kingdoms, the Herulis, the Ostrogoths and the Vandals disappeared in history having been destroyed by the little horn that came up among the 10 horns of the 4<sup>th</sup> beast)

**Dan 7:25** And he [the 11<sup>th</sup> horn or king] shall speak *great* words against the most High, and **shall wear out the saints of the most High**, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand **until a time and times and the dividing of time**.

[3 ½ years which in prophetic fulfillment is 1260 years]

When HWA came among the exhausted remnant of the Sardis Era, they had but a little truth left which they taught in their worship services. The little horn, the great false church using the civil authorities had persecuted the true church for 1260 years and had worn it down causing it to lose much of the truth God had given it through the apostles. Some of these important truths were restored to God's Church by HWA.

Mr. Armstrong said that the Philadelphia Era of God's church was the first time since the Ephesus Era that all the offices (deacons, elders, pastors) in the church were filled. The church for most of its existence has not been a well-organized visible organization holding regular services in rented halls with an ordained ministry teaching the faithful.

Quite the opposite is true and the Philadelphia Era church for a time was the exception. Even during the Philadelphia Era church there were many that fell away; so much so, that a truly ordained ministry to a very large extent ceased to exist with most if not all, having gone off into one of the many false churches of God that came into existence after the death of HWA. They were followed by the vast majority of those who attended the services of the WCG while it was headed up by HWA.

The Philadelphia Era church now continues to exist in the way the true church has existed for most of its existence i.e., as the little flock. A small, unknown and invisible to the world, number of people who often don't know each other living in different parts of the world who have remained faithful to the foundational truths restored, in part, by HWA to the Philadelphia era church.

Now, to go back to the main point I was making about whether Christians should or not do their own Bible studies. When one is a novice in the faith, a newcomer to the truth, one is a babe-in-Christ and needs to be taught and this is done by the ministry when there is one in place.

The role of the ministry is as explained in the following verses:

Eph 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

Eph 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. [Not all are given the same measure of the gift of Christ i.e., the church collectively is one body but not all members are the same in the body of Christ (see verse 4:11).]

Eph 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Eph 4:9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

Eph 4:10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: [the reason why some are given a bigger measure of the gift of Christ is for the purpose of helping the saints to become perfect in their knowledge and understanding of the truth as well as for other purposes as indicated in the verse.]

Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Eph 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Members of God's church are to come to fully know and understand the truth God gave to His Church to no longer be children in the knowledge of the truth who can easily be made to believe anything and have their minds changed by every new, false teaching that comes to their attention. These new and changing doctrines which are not what the true church teaches will come from intelligent men who are skilled at deceiving people and Paul said that some of them would arise right from within the church but more on this later in this study.

The faithful remnant of God's Philadelphia Era Church has seen how those whose knowledge of the truth was incomplete were tossed and carried about by every wind of doctrines into the different false churches of God that arose after the death of HWA and the collapse of the corporate body of the Church.

### **Warning to the Church**

The Ephesus Era Church, after its foundation on the Day of Pentecost, quickly began to be persecuted. Opposition came from the established pagan religions of the time which included the Jewish religion which is not God's religion. And, there also arose opposition from within the church itself.

In the book of Acts we see Paul's warning to the members of the true church that from within the church, there would arise false teachers who would attempt to draw them away from Christ and get them to follow their false teaching instead.

Act 20:30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

In 1<sup>st</sup> John we read of John telling the faithful to be careful and make sure that those who were seeking to teach them were not false teachers teaching falsehoods.

1Jn 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

And, we also have John telling the members that there were some in the

church who wanted to have the preeminence i.e., lead the church and that they refused to receive him and his fellow teachers and that this individual also refused to have the true members of God's church come in among them and forbade those that would allow them to come in from doing so and threw them (those that wanted to let the true teachers come in among them) out of the church. Doesn't that sound like a perfect description of what occurred after HWA's death where different men in the church wanted the preeminence and sought to create their own group of followers and excluded everybody else who refused to follow them.

3Jn 1:9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

3Jn 1:10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church.

The church was under attack from within in addition to being persecuted from without. Peter is most eloquent and very clear in telling the church what was the goal of these false teachers who sought to take over the congregations of the first era church of God.

2Pe 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2Pe 2:2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

2Pe 2:3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

They would be preaching as means of making a living for themselves from the tithes and offerings of the members. And, there has been no lack of that occurring since the death of HWA. The Restored Church of God and the Philadelphia Church of God come to mind here but there are many, many others all pursuing the same goal of making merchandise out of those that follow them and living luxuriously off the back

of the sheep. These verses of 2nd Peter make it clear and is a grave warning to all of us that religion would always be used by men to enrich themselves; religion would always be “big business” and so it is to this day whether among the many religious groups in the world or the many so-called “churches of God.”

Paul instructs Titus who would carry on after Paul’s death to ordain elders (men who are holding fast the faithful word of God as he (Titus) had been taught) in the Cretian congregations of the church of God that they may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers (those preaching falsehoods to get a following from which they could make a living; preaching for gain, as a means of making money).

Tit 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

Tit 1:6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

Tit 1:7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

Tit 1:8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

Tit 1:9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Tit 1:10 **For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:** [the Jews]

Tit 1:11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, **teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.** [as a means of making money; a living]

In the book of Jude, the faithful are exhorted to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints as their congregations were under attack from within as false teachers had come in among them seeking to spread false doctrine among the congregations to get a following for themselves.

Jud 1:3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye **should earnestly contend for the faith [truth] which was once delivered unto the saints.**

Jud 1:4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, [*who have infiltrated their congregations*] who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, [*teaching salvation by grace without works*] and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. [*denying the Father and His son, Jesus Christ which is the spirit of anti-Christ*].

1Jn 2:22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? **He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.**

Jud 1:10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

Jud 1:11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

Jud 1:12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

Jud 1:13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

And finally, in the book of Revelation, God commends the faithful for having tested the teachings of those who were presenting themselves as apostles and had found them to be liars.

Rev 2:1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

Rev 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and **thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not,**

**and hast found them liars:**

Rev 2:3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

**What About Today?**

As we have seen, from the very beginning God's church came under attack from false teachers that surreptitiously made their way into the congregations of the true church and tried to turn the faithful from the truth they had been given to have them follow them instead of the truth and become the means for them to make a living.

We also saw that the true believers were cast out of the congregations of the true church as they came to be dominated by false teachers. **The true believers did not compromise their beliefs to remain with these congregations.** They simply left of their own accord or were expelled for not wanting to compromise.

We have also seen that false teachers arose from within the church itself in addition to those that came in pretending to agree with the truth but which once part of the congregation began to spread false teachings among the congregation.

Peter, Paul and John all gave out strong warnings to the congregations of the true church to be wary of false teachers and their efforts to draw them away from the truth.

Finally, in Jude the saints are told to contend for the truth they had been given as false teachers were coming into their congregations and were spreading false teachings among them.

Since the death of HWA and the destruction of the corporate body of the Church of God, the faithful remnant finds itself without a true ministry.

Some are assembling with others whom they judge to be holding on faithfully to the truth and listen to voice recordings from HWA and in some cases, from ministers who were part of the church in the days of HWA. It should be noted that of those ministers, almost none of them have remained with the faith so one should cast a wary eye on all their teachings and ensure that they are not being misled.

Howbeit, God says that Christians are to grow in knowledge and understanding and in order to have growth they must be hungering and thirsting for truth; an active process requiring action on their part.

There are many verses in the Bible where the elect are told to grow in knowledge and understanding of the truth of God given them by the prophets and the apostles and in the end-time, by HWA who restored, in part, the truths given the original apostles.

But, and here is the big “BUT,” even though some of the foundational truths have been restored to the Church, God’s command through Peter given to the faithful of all Church eras means there will always be room for growth in the grace and in knowledge or in the truth we have received. These truths can be used as a launch point from which we can come to discover other aspects of the truth which simply build on and do not in any way whatsoever undo, any of the truth given us if we are willing to put forth the effort and dedicate the time required for careful, attentive, detailed and in-depth studies of the Bible. Mr. Armstrong has laid the foundation.

1Co 3:9 For we [\[the apostles and evangelists of the first era church\]](#) are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, *ye are* God’s building.

1Co 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, **I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon.** But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

1Co 3:11 **For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid,** which is Jesus Christ.

1Co 3:12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

1Co 3:13 Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.

1Co 3:14 If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

1Co 3:15 If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

If a true Christian in an honest and sincere attempt to grow in knowledge and understanding as commanded by God is not carefully building on the foundation of truth then those things which he has built (new knowledge and understanding that do not fully integrate with the whole truth given the church) will be destroyed at the time of Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming as there



will then be a revealing of the full truth of God as contained in the Bible and this will destroy or burn up the new understanding and knowledge that had been developed by the individual but which were erroneous. The individual though suffering loss [the false truth he had erroneously devised will be destroyed by the truth of God i.e., it will be made clear that they were false) will be saved because he had not and was not willfully trying to destroy God's truth but was simply trying to grow in knowledge and understanding as commanded by God.

Of course, and it is worth mentioning over and repeatedly, one must first and foremost have acquired a full and complete mastery of ALL the truth God taught His Church through Mr. Armstrong; what Paul calls, the foundation. We must know and understand all the truth God gave His church; not simply think we know it but having studied over and over all of the literature **personally-authored** by HWA and listened over and over to all of his voice recordings until we are sure we have fully understood all he taught.

Sadly, many who say they have all of HWA's literature and voice recordings have not been doing the quality, in-depth personal studies they should have been doing all along and their minds are still filled with an incomplete knowledge of just what it was HWA taught and they are not making any real effort to change that situation. Their thinking remains confused on many key church doctrines and Bible passages.

HWA gave us the big picture by putting all the pieces of the puzzle in the right place. He could do so because God gave him to see the big picture so he could correctly figure out how the individual pieces fitted together. It's like when one is doing a puzzle and is provided with a picture of what the pieces will look like when correctly put together as a guide to putting the pieces in their right places. Basically, God, through a great miracle made it possible for HWA to see the whole picture from the start so he could put the pieces together in their right places as he began his study of the Bible after his calling.

Before anyone can launch into a study of the Scriptures, they need to have a comprehensive and detailed knowledge AND understanding of ALL the truth God restored to His end-time Church through HWA; the foundation. Until that occurs, setting off on an independent study of the Scriptures will often lead to the discovery of "new truth" which are basically erroneous understandings of the Scriptures which undo one or more of the foundational truth given the Church by HWA.

How we can make sure that we are not going off into error in our studies?

NONE OF OUR FINDINGS CONTRADICT ANY PART OF THE BIBLICALLY-PROVEN TRUTHS GIVEN THE CHURCH BY GOD THROUGH HWA.

Remember Mr. Armstrong told us repeatedly to always make sure all he taught was provable with our Bible. Over his long ministry, he has changed some of his earlier teachings as with greater spiritual maturity, he came to understand he had made a mistake.

Our findings should perfectly and completely complement and fit in with ALL of the fully Biblically provable truths taught by HWA.

Christians are individually responsible for their own salvation; not HWA, not the ministry but YOU, the individual member. YOU have to first master the truth given the church by God through HWA but then YOU have to keep growing if you are to be a live spiritual embryo continuing its growth in preparation for being born again at the time of Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming.

And so it is that many remain spoon-fed Christians like children sitting in their high chairs, not having grown to the point where they can feed themselves and where there can be any assurance that they would not be making themselves sick by eating the wrong food or even poisoning themselves. They still have their training wheels on their Bibles and are comfortable with the situation. They are happy to do the minimum and to watch time go by all the while eagerly watching for the beginning of end-time events. Many are long time members of God's church who should be mature enough in knowledge and understanding of the truth that they should be able to feed themselves but no, they can't and sadly, will never be able to do so unless and until there is a radical change in their attitude of simply doing the minimum and thinking that that is good enough.

In Hebrews we read:

Heb 5:11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. [not taking to heart or seriously what we are teaching you]

Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which ~~be~~ the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

Heb 5:13 For every one that useth milk ~~is~~ unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

Heb 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full

age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

After many, many years in the church do we still need to be taught the basics, the milk of the word. After having been in the church for such a long time and having had the truth of God taught to us over and over again; so much so, that by this time we should be able to be teachers are we still using milk and are thus unskilled in the word of righteousness as Paul says it.

Is this our spiritual condition as long time members of God's church?

### Knock Seek Hunger Thirst

Christians in the Bible are told in many different ways and in many different places to be seeking after knowledge, truth, wisdom and that if they will do that, God says that He will give it to them. Also, as shown in these Scriptures, knowledge acquisition is not a static process of one sitting there and being instructed; rather, true Christians are told to seek, knock, ask, find, get, study, etc. knowledge, wisdom. It is a dynamic, active, laborious process requiring sustained effort on YOUR part.

Hereafter are several Scriptures which bear this out.

Mat 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

Luk 11:9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Mat 5:6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Pro 3:13 Happy *is* the man *that* findeth wisdom, and the man *that* getteth understanding

Pro 3:14 For the merchandise of it *is* better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

Pro 4:5 Get wisdom, get understanding: forget *it* not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

Pro 4:7 Wisdom *is* the principal thing; *therefore* get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

Pro 16:16 How much better *is it* to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

Pro 19:8 He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good.

Pro 24:14 So *shall* the knowledge of wisdom *be* unto thy soul: when thou hast found *it*, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.

Ecc 2:13 Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.

Psa 19:10 More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Act 17:10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews.

Act 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

### **God and Christ will Manifest Themselves to Christians**

Joh 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Joh 14:22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

Joh 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, *If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

Now these are interesting Scriptures. God the Father and Christ say they will manifest themselves to us. How will that occur if God's word is true which it is? Will God appear to us in a vision or will He appear to us in a non-scary, non-glorified, flesh-and-blood body and have a coffee with us every now and then and give us a pep talk?

God is spirit and so is Christ and they dwell in us through the spir-

it in man which gives our animal brains mind power. His truth is given us by us studying the Scriptures using the latest dictionaries, commentaries, different Bible translations and electronic aids available today.

Right?

Wrong, very wrong; this is the scholastic approach that Mr. Armstrong explained was not the way God's truth can be known. Commentaries, dictionaries, lexicons, etc. are the work of intelligent but uninspired individuals. If God's truth could be uncovered in the Bible using these tools then God's spiritual truth would not be by revelation but through the works of carnal men.

God's truth is given us by revelation as it was given to all other Christians throughout the ages. Peter did not understand or know who Jesus was until it was revealed to him by God the Father.

Mat 16:13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, **Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?**

Mat 16:14 And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

Mat 16:15 He saith unto them, **But whom say ye that I am?**

Mat 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Mat 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, **Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.**

How will God manifest Himself to true Christians? Would it be by giving them more knowledge and understanding of the truth. Mr. Armstrong used to say that when he prayed he talked to God and when he studied the Bible God talked to him and gave him understanding of the truth contained in the Bible AND that he had come to love this wonderful conversation he was having with God.

Paul says that God now speaks to us through Christ in these last days in which we and they, the Hebrews, are living.

Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Heb 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son,  
whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he  
made the worlds;

The Bible is the Logos, the Spokesman, the Word or Christ in writing. God spoke to the apostles and to Paul, through Christ in person; but today, He speaks to us through Christ as the written Word which we have in the Bible.

If he is speaking to us, are we not learning anything from His talking with us? Are we involved in a conversation with Him?

A conversation is a two-way process which requires the participation of both the speaker and the listener. Can we be in conversation with Christ day after days turning into weeks and years and still we don't have any growth in knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures? And, do we continue to be satisfied with this situation thinking that everything is fine.

Paul instructs the brethren in his letter to the Philippians to do the following:

Php 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed,  
not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence,  
work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Paul was warning them that he would not always be there and that they would have to keep on being obedient to God if they are to be saved. What are the faithful to do in the absence of a true ministry to teach them as has been the case for the greatest part of the history of the one, true Church of God? Individual members are responsible for working out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

And some will say, the ministry is responsible for my salvation and making sure I don't drift off into error and this is true to a certain extent but the ultimate decision of what you do with the truth given you is up to you. The ministry is not there to ensure our salvation, it is there to help us with our salvation but it is not a substitute for our having to do our part which is the most important part. We are individually responsible for our salvation as we are the only one who can choose to follow or not the truth given us.

HWA very forcefully explained that God has made man a free moral agent and that there is no power on earth or in heaven that can force a man to choose something contrary to his will. God has decreed that there is no power on earth or in heaven that can force a man to believe something against his will.

Deu 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore **choose** life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

And so it is that the ministry when there is one has the following role:

2Co 1:24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

The ministry is there as helpers of our joy but they are not the guarantor or the means whereby we can obtain salvation. And, as we have seen, individual members are responsible for testing the spirits by ensuring they know the truth well enough to be able to tell the true from the false teachers and then, to have the strength and courage to walk away from them no matter how tempting it might be to stay with a congregation where we may have a lot of our friends, family and acquaintances.

The Scriptures do not teach blind reliance on the ministry.

### **When There is no Ministry**

What are true Christians to do when there is no true ministry of God to teach them? Are they then absolved from God's command to grow in knowledge and understanding of the truth and can just sit quietly watching world news to try to determine when end-time events will occur?

Does Paul say that in the absence of teachers like himself and others which would no longer be available to congregations that the faithful should sit idly by and wait for end time events to begin?

Php 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**

Php 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

Christians when there are no true teachers to teach them are to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. They are not to idly bide their time waiting for Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming to occur. As Peter also says to those who were worrying that Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming was taking a long time:

2Pe3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

And Paul to Titus:

2Ti 2:15 **Study** to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

We are to grow in knowledge.

Col 1:10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and **increasing in the knowledge of God;**

2Pe 1:8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

BUT, and this is a big, big **BUT**; an all-important one; we must be careful how we build on the truths given us by HWA. In 1<sup>st</sup> Cor'n's as we have seen previously, Paul gives out a warning to other teachers in the congregations of his days as well as to every man, then and now; today.

1Co 3:9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.

1Co 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, **I have laid the foundation**, and another buildeth thereon. **But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.**

1Co 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1Co 3:12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; [vastly different quality building material]

1Co 3:13 **Every man's** work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. [the foundation will not be harmed by the fire as is spiritual truth; the works of men built on the foundation will be destroyed or remain depending on whether they are a continuation of the spiritual truth forming the foundation and if not, they will be like stubble, hay or wood which will be consumed by the fire. The precious stones, the silver and the gold will endure.]



1Co 3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built there-upon, he shall receive a reward. [made the effort to grow in knowledge and is rewarded accordingly; we are rewarded according to our works i.e., a higher office of responsibility will be given those putting out greater effort than those who did not.]

1Co 3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

1<sup>st</sup> Cor'ns 3:15 makes it clear that God through Paul is talking not only about other teachers in the church having to be careful on how they build on the foundation of truth that He, God through Paul, gave the Church but also about the individual Christian (every man) having to be careful of how he builds on the foundation.

### Personal Bible Studies

This clearly means that true Christians are not prohibited from studying the Scriptures on their own and even that it is a requirement for them to do so as they are primarily responsible for their own salvation and for not being misled by false teachers, some of which will even arise right from within the Church. **They are not to remain babes or children in the truth** but are to become masters of the foundational truth given the end-time church by HWA so as to be able to personally study the Bible and get more knowledge and understanding from it all the while remaining on the sure foundation that was laid for them by the apostles and restored by HWA.

Church history reveals that the Church for much of its existence has not had a fully trained ministry available to teach the faithful and that it has typically existed in geographically scattered little groups most of the time not knowing each other, living away from the great population centers to avoid persecution.

This is the case for us today after the death of HWA and the destruction of the visible, organized, corporate body of the Church. We, who today are without ministry are to do as the first era and other era churches had to do and that is work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

### Building on the Foundation

So what is the answer to those who say if I study the Bible on my own I could go off into error? Yes, that is very true and the answer is that we need to recall that God looks on the heart or the attitude of the person. What is that individual trying to do as he studies the Bible. Is there a genuine desire to grow in knowledge and understanding of God's truth or

rather, are we trying to disprove one or more of the foundational truth given the Church by God through HWA?

God says in 1<sup>st</sup> Cor's 3:15 that someone who is studying to grow in knowledge and understanding of the foundational truth given the Church by God through HWA, even though he should unknowingly have come to erroneous conclusions as to the meaning of certain Scriptures while remaining on the foundation, he will not lose his salvation. But, as this verse also says, though he will not lose salvation he will suffer loss i.e., his erroneous understanding of certain Scriptures will be like stubble, straw or wood in the day when Christ returns. His false understanding of certain Scriptures will then perish in the fire of the whole truth which he will have when Christ returns and he, the faithful student of God's truth, becomes a glorified spirit being in the first resurrection. He will then have a full knowledge of the truth as a glorified spirit being; he will realize his errors and; he will cease to hold on to them and; therefore, suffer loss as stated in 1<sup>st</sup> Cor's 3:15.

God saw that he was making a genuine and sincere effort to grow in knowledge of the truth as he is commanded to do and that he was not trying through his studies to find the brick that could be pulled to bring down the whole wall of truth of God. Although he made mistakes in his studies of the Scriptures and came to some erroneous conclusions, he **remained on the foundation i.e., none of his erroneous understanding of certain Scriptures were undoing any of God's foundational truth given the Church through HWA. THAT IS THE KEY AND CRITICAL REQUIREMENT. AND he rejected all new understanding or knowledge he came to by his personal studies which undid any of the church's fully Biblically-proven foundational truth given the church by God through HWA.**

If through our individual Bible studies we come to new understanding and knowledge that undo one or more of the Church's foundational truth and we persist in believing that our new understanding is the right one and that one or more of the **fully Biblically-proven** foundational truth given the Church are wrong; then we are no longer building on the foundation.

Our "new" knowledge and understanding will, in time, drive us out of God's church which is first and foremost a spiritual organism to which one belong only if one remains on the foundation i.e., an unshakeable belief in the foundational truth which does not allow us to consider as true any understanding or knowledge we come to on our own as we study the Bible that is contrary to any of these foundational truth.

### A Word of Caution and Some Perspective

Mr. Armstrong all throughout his long ministry continually studied the Bible which was the means by which God revealed to him the truth which was the restoration of all things.

Mat 17:11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.**

However, as Mr. Armstrong himself told the Church that as he grew in knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures, he had to change some of the things he taught to the Church as doctrine. The most notable change was Pentecost which the Church used to celebrate on Saturday and which was changed to being celebrated on Sunday. Mr. Armstrong said that the true Church, contrary to the churches of this world, whenever it became clear as greater understanding was obtained of the Bible, that certain teachings or doctrines were in error, the Church would make the required changes.

HWA readily admitted that he at times made errors in understanding the teachings of the Bible. Yet, before these errors were discovered, they were considered to be part of the truths that God in the end-time restored through HWA. In the days of the apostles, the understanding the Jews had of the Scriptures was considered to be the whole truth of God which no one should or could ever question or attempt to change. But here came an outsider, Paul, a former devout believer of Jewish doctrines, preaching that what they, the Jews, believed needed to be changed because major new understanding of the Scriptures had been received from Christ about God's plan of salvation and it was necessary that the Jews, and the lost 10 tribes of Israel to which the other apostles were sent, learn this critically important new information.

The Jews saw Paul as an heretic preaching lies about God's truth and they sought to discourage him from doing so following him around and persecuting him to the best of their abilities. Yet, Paul's teachings could be indisputably fully proven from the very Scriptures which they said they held on to faithfully and believed. Yet, they would not listen for the most part and after a while Paul ceased trying to teach them and turned to the Gentiles.

Christ Himself as a man came to them with irrefutable proof that He knew the Scriptures better than they did but they would not listen to Him.

Joh 5:38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

Joh 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Joh 5:40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

Interestingly enough, the same process has been going on since the foundation of the First Century Church.

The apostles could not teach the Jews who thought they knew it all and that nothing could be added to their understanding of the Scriptures. The religious establishment of their time would have none of it. New truth, if any, can only come from them.

Paul eventually had to turn to an entirely different group of people who had no knowledge at all of the truth, the Gentiles.

Mr. Armstrong came to the Church of Sardis and like Paul, he was completely rejected and also had to turn to other people who knew nothing about God's truth. The Sardis Church was sure it knew it all and that no one, especially someone who was not one of their own, could add to their understanding of the Scriptures.

Since the death of Mr. Armstrong, Church members are fully like the Jews of Paul's days and the members of the Church of Sardis. They believe they have all of God's truth and that no one can ever add anything to it except possibly the ministers they are following; they have it all.

But the Bible clearly shows that even truly converted Christians, God's Church, have periodically needed to have their knowledge and understanding of the truth updated by God through inspired men as the time comes for different parts of His plan of salvation to be implemented. God sent them prophets and apostles that most of the time were ignored and fought against by the established civic and religious rulers of the time including God's own Church (Sardis).

Is there a lesson to be learned here about how God does things?

Major new points of understanding came from God through truly converted men. None of the books of the Bible were written by angels or other spirit beings. They were all written by men who often times were not in any way religious individuals whom God called straight out of the world. These writings — from formerly non-religious men who were not part of an existing religious establishment and which God called — form the basis of our faith.

Paul says that true believers are to build on the foundation of truth they have been given (1 Cor 3:10-12).

Building on the foundation means to add more truth to it; truth that is supported by the Bible.

It also means, that the expectation is that members who are studying their Bible will find new truth that is genuine and can be added to the foundation.

It also means that new, genuine truth can and will come through other truly converted Christians who will share them with other true Christians in Godly Christian spiritual fellowship. It will not be through spirit beings appearing to them or God in a vision giving it to them.

### **Fate of Faithful Student of the Scriptures**

What is the fate of a someone doing personal Bible studies after having mastered the Church's foundational truth and coming to some wrong conclusions about the meaning of certain Scriptures; new knowledge and understanding that do not undo any of the foundational truth of the Church?

Does God say he has lost his salvation?

No, God says that those parts of his works which are straw, stubble, wood will be lost in the fire in the day of Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming when it shall then become clear that some of his findings were erroneous and cannot stand now that the whole truth is known to him as a glorified spirit being .

God clearly says this individual is saved i.e., receives salvation but suffers loss i.e., of those things which he had erroneously concluded were true from his study of the Bible but which in the resurrection he now understands to have been mistakes.

**The critical point to notice and remember is that this individual did not hold on to any newly-discovered truth through personal Bible studies that undid any of the fully Biblically-provable foundational truth given the Church by God through HWA in our times and Paul, to the first era Church.**

### **Conclusion**

When there is a true ministry of God functioning, we still have to do personal Bible study and if we find ourselves coming to findings which seem to contradict or invalidate one or more doctrines of the Church, we can then go to the ministry to get things straightened out and then check out against the Bible the truth of their explanations. We are not to rely on any man.

Act 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

When there is no true ministry available, we are still required to study and to grow in knowledge and understanding and in order to do so, to study the Bible in light of all the truth we have been given (the foundation laid for us by HWA) to see what additional knowledge and understanding we may find. God commands us to grow in knowledge and understanding and not to rely on any man but to do so through proving all things with our Bibles (Acts 17:11).

God does not say that we are to be instructed solely by the ministry. Quite the opposite is true, we are to follow the ministry only so long as **we** can determine they are following God. Paul, an apostle, told the Corinthians that they should follow him only inasmuch he, Paul is following Christ placing the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the faithful to prove all things being taught them.

1Co 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

The ministry are not the standard of truth, the Bible is.

In times when there is no ministry, individual Christians are still required to study.

In doing so, God the Father and Christ will come to them and manifest themselves to them by giving them through the action of the holy spirit, the Word — the resurrected Christ who is God the Father's spokesman to His called and chosen ones — knowledge and understanding of things which were always there but which they had not before noticed. New knowledge and understanding that fit perfectly on the foundation of truth laid by God's end-time apostle and which is fully based on the Bible. Remember, that HWA always said: "Don't believe me, believe your Bible."

And, this is what we have supposedly been doing all along and not blindly relying on the ministry to teach us; a ministry which has massively defected from the truth after HWA's death.

When God and Christ manifest themselves to us by giving us more knowledge and understanding as we study as we are commanded to do; as we maintain a conversation with God and Christ through prayer (we talk to them) and study (they talk to us), it is a source of great joy and comfort for the Christian which then gets reassurance that despite their continuing to be sinners, God and His Son are still there strengthening, encouraging, reassuring and comforting those who are patiently enduring in the

conditions established for salvation while living in this present evil world subject to Satan's constant broadcasting in their minds and the weakness of their flesh .

Knowing this, what should you then be doing?

God leaves the decision entirely up to you and makes you, the individual Christian, wholly responsible for playing your part in the salvation process which requires you to continually grow in knowledge and understanding as a **living** spiritual embryo actively feeding on God's truth up to the time of its birth at Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming when the resurrection to glorified spirit beings of His saints will occur.

