

Men Who Hold the Truth in Unrighteousness

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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.

Paul in the Book of Romans talks about men who are holding the truth in unrighteousness. Who are these men? Was Paul talking to unconverted men or to people of God's Church?

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 (Phi 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 go 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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The verses of Romans 1:17-21 (cited below) have led many in God's church to come to the conclusion that unconverted mankind can come to know God simply by looking at the wonders of nature such as a beautiful sunset, the awesome majesty and fearsome power of the sea, the incredible diversity of animal and plant life, the miracle of conception and birth, etc. Closely connected to this belief is the one that God is somehow desperately trying to reveal Himself to mankind through the awe inspiring beauty of the physical creation and that sometimes, we can see that some of the highly educated men come very close to admitting the existence of God as they marvel about certain aspects of God's creation.

Rom 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Rom 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

Rom 1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

Rom 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that

they are without excuse:

Rom 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

For a long time, I also puzzled over the correct meaning of Rom 1: 17-21 and I kept thinking to myself that the above-mentioned commonly held beliefs in God's Church did not make much sense in light of what God had taught His Church through Mr. Armstrong (HWA). Mr. Armstrong on several occasions explained that God had cut mankind off from knowing spiritual truth since the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.

So, I decided to study into the matter to try to find out what it was that Paul was really saying to the Roman churches in Romans 1:17-21.

My findings are explained in the following pages of this document and show it is to grossly misunderstand these verses of Romans to believe that they are saying that unconverted mankind can come to know God simply by observation of God's material creation and get to know Him to such an extent that they are without excuse for not admitting His existence and obeying Him.

As it is always the case, understanding the truth of a matter will require linking the dots of several applicable Scriptures that explain what Paul is saying. As Mr. Armstrong so very often explained, the Bible interprets itself but patience, steadfastness and work are required to pull together the threads of the applicable Scriptures that will make the meaning clear. And, it goes without saying, one must already fully know and understand what God taught His Church through Mr. Armstrong in order to do so; unfortunately, many don't and even, won't spend the time required to become proficient in the truth God gave His church through him.

What about you?

Rom 1:20-21 are the verses focused on to support the belief that God has made Himself known to men since the beginning of creation and that they are without excuse for not obeying Him.

Rom 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Rom 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

Rom 1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

Rom 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Rom 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart [mind] was darkened.

A too fast reading of Rom 1:20-21 and of the preceding verses has led almost everybody to think that God's wrath (v. 18) is upon all mankind and this since the creation of the world (v. 20) because according to their understanding of these verses, God has revealed Himself in an unmistakable way to mankind by means of the incomparable glory of His physical creation (v. 20) which all can see. Therefore, according to this erroneous understanding of the Scriptures, mankind is without excuse (v. 20) for not obeying God and is under God's wrath (v. 18) for being unwilling to obey Him God having made Himself known to them by the great beauty of His creation (v. 20).

Nothing could be further from the truth.

How can we know with certainty what Paul is talking about in these verses?

Administration of God's Plan of Salvation

First we have to take a step back and consider what the Bible teaches about the world and God's judgment of it during this present time of God's administration of His great, master plan of salvation for mankind.

The Bible is clear that the whole world is deceived (Rev 12:9) and under the power of great delusion (2 Thess. 2:11) and that it is impossible for mankind or the world to obey God (Rom 8:7).

Rev 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world:

he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

2Th 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them **strong delusion**, that they should **believe a lie**:

Rom 8:7: Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, **neither indeed can be**

The world, the unconverted, is hostile to, and rejects the truth of God whenever in one way or another, it is exposed to it and, if one should persist in trying to show it to them, they become hostile.

It is impossible for mankind cut off from God since the banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden to know the existence of an all-powerful, creator God that created the heavens and the earth and who rules over it.

1Co 2:14 But the natural **[unconverted]** man receiveth not **[does not accept]** the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: **neither can he know them**, because they are spiritually discerned. **[are only knowable through the in-dwelling presence of the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman.]**

1Co 2:7 But **we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom**, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

Mr. Armstrong taught that the Bible is not addressed to the world for the truth that it contains is SPIRiTual and can only be known by revelation. This requires one to have been called and chosen so as to have the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman giving him understanding of the spiritual truth of God the Father. Otherwise, God's truth is a mystery and hidden to mankind. The Bible only talks about the nations of the world as they come in contact with the physical nation of Israel. Occasionally, it talks **about** the world but never **to** the world. The Bible was written for God's Church. This is a very important point to keep in mind that will help us correctly understand the verses of Romans 1:17-21.

Why would Paul in a letter sent to the Roman churches which is made up of converted individuals (who are more or less zealous in their obedience to God as other verses show) start off early in his letter by seemingly speaking of those in the world who are unconverted. Apparently, he is saying that they have no excuse not to know of the existence of God given

He has manifested Himself to them in an unmistakable way through His material creation. Therefore, they are without excuse for not obeying Him and God's wrath being on them because they hold the truth in unrighteousness?

We know according to the Scriptures that the world is not now judged since it is entirely ignorant of and is cut off for the time being, from knowing the true God and the truth of God (1st Pet 4:17).

1st Pet 4:17 For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it* first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?

So, those in the world, the vast majority of mankind who has yet to be called, cannot, now or anciently, be coming under judgment or be under God's wrath for disobedience to God. The world does not know the truth of God; it does not and cannot know it now, nor did it know it anciently (since the beginning of creation (Rom 1:20)) and will not know it until some time after the 2nd Coming of Christ when salvation will be opened up to all mankind as stated in the book of Joel.

Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; [God the Father is the holy spirit of the God family that spiritually begets men or calls them] and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

So what is the correct meaning of Romans 1:17-21?

Of what and to whom is Paul talking in verses 18 and 19 of Romans 1 which say that God has showed them that which may be known of Him and that the wrath of God is on those who hold the truth in unrighteousness?

Who are the ones to which God has shown what may be known of Him, who are ungodly and unrighteous and, who hold the truth in unrighteousness?

Can the unconverted know the truth and can they be ungodly? Unrighteous?

As previously stated, man doesn't know nor can he know the truth of God which is spiritual and knowable only by revelation which requires the in-dwelling presence of the holy spirit God the Word and Spokes-

man i.e., one has to be a true member of God's Church; not just someone physically attending services but someone who has kept alive the in-dwelling presence of the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman by maintaining their attitude of obedience to God in all things without exception.

Would the wrath of God (Rom 1:18) be upon those in the world since they are in total ignorance of God's truth and of the necessity of obeying Him?

Does the calling out process and conversion follow from the observation of a beautiful sunrise or sunset, or from looking at the awesome, vast expanse of sky with its countless billions of stars or through science discovering more and more of the incredible and seemingly limitless wonders of the universe and of the human body?

If it does, why are there so few converts as all can admire, and most people have done so at one time or another in their lives, and marvel at the wonders of nature in its myriad manifestations?

The Great Creator God

The answer to the apparent contradictions between the truth of God given to His end-time Church by God and the commonly held belief that God is revealing Himself to mankind through the wonders of the material universe, requires that we go back to a previous study of mine, written to clarify another Scripture of Paul.

This study is posted on this Web site; simply click on the following hyperlink to view it: [Will God's Saints Restore the Current Universe?](#) If you have not already done so, I would encourage you to become familiar with its content.

For the sake of advancing this study, I will give a summary of the main points covered.

Romans 8:22-23 are the main Scriptures discussed.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travailleth in together until now.

23 And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, [\[sonship\]](#) to wit, the redemption of our body.

Truly converted Christians have God as their father. In this life, they are spiritual embryos which are to be born as immortal spirit beings by a resurrection from the dead. Their father is God and when born again, they will be God's son not adopted sons. If Christians were "adopted" sons it would mean that God is not their father.

Regarding Rom 8:22-23, the clarifications provided are to the effect that the "creation" of which Paul speaks in these verses is not the physical-material universe created by God. The word "creation" of Rom 8:22 refers to God's ongoing spiritual creation who are those whom God calls and who are undergoing a lifelong process of conversion.

The Scriptures refer to Christians as being new creations in Christ (2 Cor's 5:17; Isa 43:7) and of being Christ's workmanship (Eph 2:10).

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: **[creation]** old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Isa 43:7 Even every one that is called by my name: for **I have created him** for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

Eph 2:10 For we **[truly converted Christians]** are his workmanship, **created** in Christ Jesus unto good works, **[of obedience to God]** which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Truly converted Christians are the creation, God's spiritual creation, that groans and travails waiting for the time when they will become glorified spirit beings and God's born again sons. They are eagerly awaiting and longing for the time when they will become actual sons of God.

Groaning and travailing is not something that God's physical-material creation can do as it is an inanimate object incapable of expressing such emotions.

Now, pursuing with this current study.

God's Ongoing SPIRIT-ual Creation

God is first and foremost "creator." Creation identifies the one, true God. God created the heavens and the earth, and the physical creation is complete as per Gen 2:1:

Gen 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

But God has not ceased creating. Mr. Armstrong taught that with the physical creation being complete, God is now working at creating perfect, holy, righteous character in the physical human beings He has created.

Joh 5:17 But Jesus answered them, **My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.**

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is the gift of God:*

Eph 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Eph 2:10 For we **[true Christians]** are his **workmanship, created** in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Man was created incomplete, not physically speaking, but spiritually. For him to become complete, another spirit had to be added to his human spirit in order for him to be able to have a relationship with His Creator.

What follows are some wonderful Scriptures where this is explained and which I could not help myself from quoting in full, though only a part of them applies to the current topic (I Cor'ns 2:11-12):

1Co 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

The spiritual things and truth of God cannot be perceived by means of man's 5 physical senses which are limited to being able to perceive the physical-material world.

1Co 2:10 But God hath revealed *them* unto us **[His called out and chosen ones]** by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

How does God reveal Himself and to whom does He reveal Himself to? By the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman AND only to us i.e., those whom He has called and who have repented and believed; NOT by observation of the wonders of the material universe created by God.

1Co 2:11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? [what makes it possible for a man to know and understand other men is the spirit of man which is in all men] even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

In the same way that the spirit of man makes it possible for men to be able to know and understand the thoughts, aspirations, desires, goals, etc. of other men so does the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman make it possible for men to understand the thoughts, mind, plans and character of God which are otherwise totally, completely and wholly impossible for mankind to know.

1Co 2:12 Now we [God's called out and chosen ones who have repented and believed] have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God [the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman by whom God created everything (John 1:3)]; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; [God the Word] and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Now continuing with our review of 1Co.

1Co 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost [spirit] teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

1Co 2:14 But the natural man [the unconverted] receiveth not [does not accept, rejects and is hostile to] the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, [not only does he reject them it is impossible for him to know them] because they are spiritually discerned.[can only be known by those who have the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman dwelling in them.]

This last verse makes it clear that the only way men can get to know and understand the things of God; the only way that God manifests Himself to them is by the in-dwelling presence of the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman who teaches them all things.

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.)

Those who will become converted will receive the holy spirit and as clearly stated in John 7:39, this holy spirit is the glorified Christ who before His incarnation was God the Word.

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 dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

The world cannot accept the existence of the Spirit of truth because it cannot confirm its existence with any of their physical senses (sight, taste, touch, etc.) and it cannot know him because this knowledge is spiritual truth to which the world has been cut off from knowing since the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.

The Spirit of truth was Christ who dwelled with the disciples and who would be in them on the day of Pentecost as well as in all true Christians.

Joh 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [from God the Father] that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

The New Man MADE by God

So what is the state of a person in whom dwells the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman?

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:

Christians are a new creature or new creation (see Eph 4:24, middle of next page); a SPIRIT-ual one; true believers are God's Spirit-begotten yet-to-be-born sons; a new creation through the great miracle of God's calling which for the first time makes it possible for the natural or carnal mind to be transformed (regenerated) to be able to know and understand the truth of God and not immediately reject it and be hostile to it.

old things are passed away; (continuation of 2 Co 5:17)

The old things are passed away; the old carnal-minded man died, the new man no longer thinks the same way, he no longer sees or understands the world in the same way. The true believer is a new creation, God's spiritual creation, something made by God, a new creation that

can understand God's eternal power and Godhead so that they, God's spiritual creation, are without excuse (Rom 1:19). The person has been transformed from his old self to a new self or man (the new man) whose eyes and ears have been opened for the first time to the awesome and wonderful truth of God which has been hidden from ages and from generations (see Col 1:26 quoted below)

behold, all things are become new (continuation of 2 Co 5:17)

For the first time the called out one sees the world with new eyes and ears; he realizes the error of all he thought before about the world he thought he knew and understood in light of the awesome new knowledge and understanding given him. All becomes new in terms of what is this present world, why it is the way it is, what and why mankind exists, the purpose and destiny of mankind, the existence of an all-powerful Creator God working out here below His great plan of salvation for mankind, etc. ; he is a new creature or creation in Christ.

Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is **created** in righteousness and true holiness.

Col 1:26 *Even the mystery [the truth of God] which hath been hid [from unconverted mankind] from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints [those called, chosen and remaining faithful]*

There is a process of creation that is ongoing and it is a spiritual one. It begins with God's Church and will continue until all human beings who either become members of God's Kingdom or have their existence forever destroyed because of their having rejected their calling or having turned away from it, in the Lake of Fire which is the second death from which no resurrection is possible.

Therefore to summarize, true believers are a new creature or creation (2nd Cor'ns 5:17), are God's workmanship (**something made by God**) created in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:10) and; the believer is a new man which after God is created (Eph 4:24);

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

To Whom Will God Manifest Himself?

The next thing that needs to be clarified and established is to whom will God manifest Himself.

Jesus said He and His Father would manifest themselves to true believers (see verses from John 14 below).

Nowhere is it said in the Bible that they would manifest themselves to the unconverted by means of the great beauty of the material creation.

In the following verses of John, Christ Himself tells us to whom He and His Father would reveal themselves. Would Paul personally trained by Christ be teaching something different to the Roman churches?

The following verses clearly show to whom Christ and the Father would manifest themselves.

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 [to he who has God's commandments and keeps them i.e., God the Father's called out ones who have repented and believed.]

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, [1st John 5:3] he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

Col 1:26 Even the mystery [the truth of God] which hath been hid [from unconverted mankind] from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:[NOT to the unconverted world but to God's spiritual creation; a thing made by God; His saints.]

God will manifest Himself only to those whom He has called, who have repented and believe (have His commandments and keep them) and not to the world as it does not and cannot love God (Rom 8:7), is deceived (Rev 12:9) and, are unknowingly (are deceived) the servants of sin under Satan (See Rom 6:16 below).

Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Rev 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The love of God is that we keep His commandments (See 1 Jn 5:3 below) and it is to those keeping His commandments after their calling to whom God the Father and Christ will manifest themselves (See Col 1:26 below).

Rom 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his **servants** ye are to whom **ye obey**; whether **of sin unto death**, or of **obedience unto righteousness?**

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

Col 1:26 *Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:*

With this information in mind, let's now read through Rom 1:15-21.

Re-examining the Message of Romans 1

Keeping the foregoing explanations in mind, let's go back to the original question of determining what is the correct understanding of Romans 1:15-20 and especially of verses 18-19 and 20.

Here we go.

Rom 1:15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Rom 1:17 For therein **[the Gospel of Christ]** is the righteousness **[spiritual truth]** of God revealed from faith **[from those who have been given the truth, us the apostles who received it from Christ]** to faith **[to those who are given to know the truth (see Math 13: 10-11 following this verse)]** that we, the apostles, have from Christ and are giving to you i.e., God's called and chosen **[ones]:** as it is written, The just **[those whose sins have been**

forgiven] shall live by [in accordance with] faith. [the truth they have been given.]

Mat 13:10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

Mat 13:11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you [not to the unconverted of the world] to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Rom 1:15-17 is very clearly addressed directly to the membership of the Roman churches; it is a warning and an admonition to them because some have not been living by the faith they had received as other Scriptures in Romans make clear. Paul here is talking to converted Roman Christians and us today, in God's church.

And, why are God's saints or the just (those whose sins have been forgiven) to live by faith which is the to endure in the truth they have been given and which they have believed?

Rom 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed
[by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman to truly converted Christians]

from heaven against all ungodliness

On those truly converted Christians who are not following the truth given them. Please consider that the unconverted are not judged i.e., their salvation is not in play but they do suffer the consequences for their law breaking as the law affects both the converted and the unconverted; walking off the end of a 10 story building knowingly or unknowingly has the same effect for the converted and the unconverted; breaking God's spiritual law, knowingly or unknowingly, leads to conflict and war between individuals, groups, nations, etc. but not to loss of salvation for the unconverted which at this time is the whole world save God's saints.

and unrighteousness

Those not rejecting all sin in their lives; those stopping to fight against certain sins in their lives; those compromising with sin; the world cannot be unrighteous not knowing what is righteousness. Of whom Paul is talking is made clear by what follows.

of men, who hold the truth [men who have been given to know the truth; who possess the truth; who are holders of the truth; those who have been called, repented and believed]

in unrighteousness

They return to their sinful ways; not trying to change them with God's help. God's wrath is upon those who have been given to know the truth and who return to a life of unrighteousness; God's wrath is not on the unconverted; the world is not now under judgment; Paul is writing this to the Roman churches; he is addressing it to them; to those in the Roman churches called and chosen by God the Father; he is not talking about or to people in the world; this should be clear by now.

Rom 1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them [not by or through men seeing and marveling at the great beauty of God's physical creation but to them, God's S-P-I-R-I-T-ual creation];

for God hath shewed *it* unto them [to His Spirit-begotten sons i.e., his saints NOT the world and He showed it to them by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman that dwells in them after their conversion.]

Rom 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

God's invisible characteristics, He being a spirit being and being beyond the capability of our human senses to perceive, have been manifested to those He has called out; those He has called out are God's creation. They are God's workmanship, a new creation in Christ, something made by God. "The invisible things of Him" can be understood by those things which He has made i.e., by those who are His spiritual creation to whom He has given His Holy Spirit.

Paul is not saying that mankind from the creation of the world can, by observing the wonders of God's physical creation, come to know and understand the true God, His character, His purpose for mankind, etc. Rather Paul is saying that God having clearly revealed Himself to them (His called out ones, those in the Roman churches, them and us today), to the things He has made, to His spiritual creation, that they are therefore without excuse for not obeying Him because they have been given to know the truth.

Rom 1:21 Because that, when they [the called out ones; God's spiritual creation; the things He has made]

knew God, [were given to know the truth of God]

they glorified him not as God, [they refused to humble themselves and obey Him]

neither were thankful; [they were not thankful to have received the truth; to have had their eyes and ears opened]

but became vain [notice, it says they **became** vain, it didn't happen all at once; it something that developed over time after their calling, repentance and belief. They slowly drifted back into the world.]

in their imaginations, [minds, inner thoughts]

and their foolish heart [mind] was darkened.

And as a result of their rejecting God's truth preferring to go back to their past beliefs, they lost the truth they had been given [their foolish heart was darkened]; and having lost it, they can never get it back.

This verse explains what some in the Roman churches have done with their calling. It should be clear that not all who are called follow their calling by changing their ways to obey God in all things to the best of their abilities until the end of their natural physical lives.

Unfortunately, as we know from Mat 7: 13-14, it is the majority of those called and who become members of God's Church that take the broad way that leads to destruction.

Mat 7:13 Enter ye [the newly-converted coming into God's Church] in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many [of those coming into God's Church] there be which go in therethat: [And why don't they go in through the strait and narrow gate? The next verse tells us.]

Mat 7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

There are few of the newcomers into God's Church who enter through the strait and narrow gate because it requires a whole lot more of them than what they are willing to put themselves through for the rest of their

lives. So they compromise with the world maintaining some of their previous beliefs which they now know to be false; they compromise with the world's ways which does not demand that they keep on making an effort to change to God's ways and convince themselves that all is fine. God says that is the broad way that leads to destruction.

The true Christians that were in the Roman churches and who were no longer faithfully holding on to the truth they had received from Paul are the things made by God (true Christians are made by God; are God's spiritual creation) who hold the truth in unrighteousness and on whom the wrath of God is revealed from heaven as is the case for all those who have been given to know the truth and turn away from it. Their fate is the second death in the Lake of Fire which is the wrath of God revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness. Only God's called out ones can be ungodly; all the others are totally deceived and not under judgment.

So, Paul in Romans is addressing the converts in the Roman churches and is giving out a warning to some of the members specifically, and to the whole membership generally, about how some have treated their calling and is warning them of God's wrath or judgment on those who have done so. It is a warning for them and us today, not to do as they have done and to take heed.

Spiritual Condition of Church across the Ages

At this juncture, to add to our understanding of what Paul was saying to the Roman churches, we need to understand that contrarily to the widely held belief that first century church converts were consumed with an intense desire to obey God, a careful reading of the epistles reveals quite a different picture if one should take the time to study into the matter. I will not go into a detailed explanation of why this is so but suffice it to say that first century converts and converts throughout the ages including ourselves have faced the same problems of having to deal with the impact of this present evil world, Satan's broadcasting in our minds and the weakness of our flesh. I will only quote the following Scriptures that gives us a very different perspective of what the epistles are talking about and of church members' attitude toward the truth they had been given to know and understand.

2Ti 4:2 Preach the word; **[to the Church membership]** be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. **[WHY, WHY, WHY?]**

2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they **[the members of the**

Church] will not endure sound doctrine; [will have had enough of being reproved, rebuked and exhorted] but after their own lusts [according to the evil that they want to do] shall they heap to themselves [seek out and follow] teachers, [teachers that will approve of the evil they want to do] having itching ears; [being eager to have others approve as good those evil things they wish to do and praise them.]

2Ti 4:4 And they shall turn away [a willful act; they don't do this because they are deceived] their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. [and shall eagerly believe the lies being told them by those they have made teachers over them, that the evil that they do is good and that they are good people.]

As an aside, did anyone ever meet a former member of God's true church who thinks he has lost his salvation by going back into the world or joining another church of his choosing? I haven't.

Men turning away from their calling is something that has been occurring since the foundation of the one, true Church to our present days. The warning given to the 7 churches of Revelation 2-3 which is history and prophecy of the spiritual condition of the one, true church across the ages up to the 2nd Coming of Christ is that one must overcome and endure unto the end to inherit salvation. As we can see from what is being told to each era church, there were always serious and widespread problems with obedience and holding on to the truth. Christ is not warning the churches for no reason. A fascinating study in itself that I would encourage you all to undertake.

Let's get back to our examination of Romans 1 and, specifically, of verse 22.

Rom 1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

Refusing to humble themselves after their calling by the holy spirit God the Father, they became fools ("they became" a process occurring over time; it didn't happen all at once); they went back to deciding good and evil for themselves. As a result, they lost the truth they had been given and returned to their former lives in the world and gave themselves over to a host of sins as described in verse 22 and subsequent verses of Rom 1.

Rom 1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

Thinking they knew better than God the difference between good and evil, they became fools. They lost the guidance of the holy spirits of the

Godhead and God's truth became foolishness to them as it is to the unconverted world.

Rom 1:23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

The most important thing in their life was no longer God but material things which became idols which to them represented God.

Rom 1:24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

Having lost the truth they dishonoured their own bodies as described in Rom 1:26-27; 29-30.

Rom 1:25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

They worshiped the material creation rather than the creator.

Rom 1:26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: [sexual perversions]

Rom 1:27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; [homosexuality] men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

Rom 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Rom 1:29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

Rom 1:30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

Rom 1:31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

Rom 1:32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

This is being told to the members of God's church and I will agree that at first look, it does seem a bit incredible that members of the true church would engage in the type of sins described in verses 22 -32. It may help to bring things more into perspective if one simply reflects on what occurred after the death of HWA and the destruction of the corporate body of God's church. There was a wholesale abandonment of the truth and previous pillars of the church (ministers, leading men), at least from what one could visibly see, did such things as divorce their wives and remarry (even ministers did this); some former members declared themselves homosexuals and lesbians; some were openly fornicating or committing adultery; many were attacking the truth they had once accepted, and the list goes on as described in Romans 1:22-32.

The sinfulness being talked about in these verses describe what fallen Christians will do as well as what the world cut off from God has always done. Indeed, the fallen Christians go back into the world and act just like the world out of which they had been called and what Paul is describing in these verses is the fate of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. They were given to know the truth; they have rejected it, have gone back into the world and being under judgment, have lost their salvation. They will suffer the wrath of God, the second death.

In Conclusion

Hopefully, the foregoing explanations will be clear enough and should they not be, then I would suggest that this essay would be a good starting point for anyone so interested in doing so, to engage in a detailed study of the Scriptures to establish the truth of the matter discussed in the preceding pages.

All in God's church are given the same command by God through Timothy.

2Ti 2:15 Study [the Scriptures] to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman [one who works at studying] that needeth not to be ashamed,[for not knowing or correctly understanding the Scriptures as one should but instead] rightly dividing [having a correct understanding of] the word of truth [as a result of continuously studying it].

