

Your Mind in God's Plan of Salvation

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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.

*Why did God, of all the living beings
He created, give mind power and free
will only to spirit beings and to men?
Why was it necessary for God to do so
and what do mind power and free will
have to do with God's plan of salva-
tion for mankind?*

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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It is of critical importance for us to understand just what is human nature and why it was that Lucifer and the angels with him sinned as it will enable us to understand why men sin though, I'm sure for most of you, this seems to be so obvious that it is needless to conduct a study on the matter but oddly enough what the Bible says is the reason why men sin and what is commonly believed are not the same thing.

The conventional wisdom in God's Church has been that sin in converted individuals and the evil in this world are due to Satan; however, though Satan certainly is a contributor to the process, surprisingly enough, he is not the principal cause of sin in the lives of men or of evil in the world.

In the following study, we will explore together what is that other source of sin in men's lives. Everything said will be supported by Scriptures and be firmly Bible-based. These are not the ideas of the author of this study; they are simply knowledge and understanding from the Bible which you can check out with your own Bible which is the only sure criterion of truth. If you have been following Mr. Armstrong's exhortations, you have been proving all things since you first were called and chosen. You are then long-time members who have always proven all that Mr. Armstrong ever taught from the pages of your Bible and the Bible is no longer a mysterious book to you that you are still trying to understand. You are no longer babes-in-Christ, you are drawn from the breast, you have grown in spiritual maturity from regular study and are now able to partake of the spiritual meat of the Bible.

If you have been reading through the series of studies on this Web site, you know what the “meat” of the word is; if you don’t then I would recommend you read the following study available on this site [Are You Spiritually Mature?](#)

Mature is where you have to be, spiritually speaking, to be able to follow along with the explanations that will be given in the following pages. If your only reference point for everything you believe is whether Mr. Armstrong said it or not, then you are still a babe-in-Christ and not drawn from the breast (Isa 28:9) and God cannot teach you knowledge from the pages of the Bible. It continues to be basically an incomprehensible book to you that you are still trying to understand as in the days when you first called and chosen.

And, most importantly of all, you have not heeded Mr. Armstrong’s call that you check everything he said against the Bible to make sure it agrees with what the Bible says; the Bible is the criterion of truth not Mr. Armstrong, and so said Mr. Armstrong himself throughout his long ministry.

God says that He speaks to us through His Son Jesus-Christ. The Bible is the Word or Christ in writing, and through the pages of the Bible, God speakd to us

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;

This verse makes it clear that God’s Son is the holy spirit being in the Godhead who is God the Father’s Spokesman to His called and chosen ones. At the risk of stating the obvious, if God’s son is the Spokesman, then He is the holy spirit that works in the minds of truly converted Christians to give them understanding of God’s spiritual truth after having been called and chosen by the holy spirit God the Father.

Now going back to the main topic of this study.

Let’s start off by doing a detailed examination of a concept that is of the greatest importance for us to understand and which has not been mentioned all that often by Mr. Armstrong, and that is “absolute free moral agency.”

Free Moral Agency

What is absolute, free moral agency? It is that God has so created man-

kind and the angels that there is no power that can force them to believe something contrary to their will. They are totally responsible for the decisions they make as to what they believe. As we will see as we go on, there is a very important reason for Him doing so which is directly related to His purpose in creating man i.e., mankind is the means through which God has purposed to reproduce Himself.

We have often heard it said that someone can only change when he decides to change; no one can force him to change; the person has to personally make the decision to do so. Until that occurs, no amount of pleading, cajoling or pressuring the person makes any difference. You can't stop abusing alcohol until you decide to do so; you can't lose weight until you decide to do so; and the list goes on and on.

Mankind and angels have free moral agency or freewill; they are free to choose; no superior power prevents them or forces them to choose one way over another; the choices that they make are theirs, they are personally responsible for them and this is why God can judge them. In the case of the angels who are spirit beings their decision to obey or not God finalized their creation. The holy angels will always be in submission to God and the demons (angels who chose to not be in submission to God) will always be in opposition to God but God is more powerful and the time is coming when they will be punished for the choice they made.

What we are today as individuals and what we can become is the result of the choices we have freely made in our lives and that we will make in the future. But you will note that in general, mankind blames all of its shortcomings on forces beyond its control such as I'm fat because others stress me out; I'm an alcoholic because I'm sick, I gamble because I'm addicted; in other words, if it were not for others or my suffering from a sickness or an addiction of one kind or another, I certainly would not do the self-destructive things that I do; they're not my fault; the blame belongs elsewhere.

When speaking about free, moral agency Mr. Armstrong always turned to Deu 30:19 and taught with great emphasis that God **commands** mankind to choose.

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:

God commands men to choose and His desire is that men choose life i.e., the way of obedience to God that leads to eternal life. However, as

Mr. Armstrong repeatedly said in his writings and, in his sermons and Bible studies, the holy spirits of the God family — the holy spirit God the Father calls men and the holy spirit the Word and Spokesman teaches God's chosen ones — only ever leads, it does not force us to follow; we must make the decision to follow his guidance. The choice is left up to us; **GOD WILL NOT FORCE US TO OBEY HIM.**

Rom 8:14 For **as many as are led** by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

As many that follow the lead of the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; the decision to follow is made by the individual without God forcing him in any way to do so. The "Spirit of God" here refers to the 2 holy spirit beings of the Godhead, the holy spirit God the Father calls men and those who follow their calling (become chosen) are taught by the holy spirit, God the Word and Spokesman. Individuals when called and once chosen must in both instances accept to be led. It is fully their decision, God will not force them.

Christ says plainly that many are called but few are chosen (Mat 22:14).

Mat 22:14 For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

Why are they not chosen? They are not chosen because they refuse to follow their calling and choose to stay in the world from which they are being called out rather than choosing to commit themselves to a life of obedience to God.

Their eternal life hangs in the balance; it is a momentous decision of life and death yet, God will not force anyone to choose something against their will though He has the power to do so should He want to do so. However, if God were to force mankind to obey Him then He could not reproduce Himself through it. More on this later in this study.

There are some that follow their calling and become converted and for a while live their lives as good Christians then for some reason, they decide to go back into the world. Again their eternal life is in play. What does God do?

Heb 6:4 For *it is impossible* for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

Heb 6:5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

Heb 6:6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.

The point of importance for us to note here in these verses is not that if one falls away he cannot be renewed again to repentance though that is very true but rather, that a called out person who has come to the knowledge of the truth and lived it by becoming a converted members of God's Church can leave the truth and God will not stop him even though it means the second death for the person as this person can never return to the truth after having left it. God will respect his decision to turn away from the truth and go back into the world.

God will not force anyone to accept His calling and He will not force anyone to remain converted; the Scriptures fully bear this out as we have just seen and as will be further demonstrated in the following paragraphs.

God created Adam and Eve to be the originators of mankind. They were of great importance to Him as from them would develop the nations that would populate the earth and from which God would reproduce Himself and create an eternal family, nation and kingdom. Despite the supreme importance of Adam and Eve to the fulfillment of God's plan to reproduce Himself, He allowed Adam and Eve to be tempted by Satan and He allowed them to make the wrong decision. God could have prevented Adam from making the wrong decision but He chose not to do so; it had to be Adam's decision, freely taken. I do not mention Eve here because she was deceived while Adam was not (1 Tim 2:14) and he was therefore the only one that could make a decision clearly knowing what was at stake. The Bible makes clear that sin entered into the world by [one](#) man (Rom 5: 12; 15-17; 19).

Lucifer who became Satan and the angels placed on the earth with him who became devils were tested before the creation of mankind. God created the angels before the creation of the material universe and before the creation of man. Their potential was to rule over God's creation but they first had to qualify to do so by demonstrating their ability to administer God's government over the earth.

We know that the angels were created before the creation of the universe and of man as they were there when the universe came into existence.

Job 38:4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

The sons of God here are the angels who were individually created by God; in that they were created by God they are His sons.

And in Rev 1:20 we can plainly see that “stars” are angels; of course, not in all contexts, sometimes the word “star” refers to the physical stars in the sky that we see at night.

Rev 1:20 The mystery of the seven **stars** which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven **stars** are the **angels** of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Angels or the created sons of God were made before God created the universe as they were present at its creation and shouted for joy at seeing its great beauty; it is only much later; how much later the Bible does not say, that mankind was created.

What about Lucifer who was one of only 3 archangels created by God? He was at God's very throne (Ez 28:16) and perfect in his ways (Ez 28:15) and a being of great beauty (Ez 28:17).

Eze 28:14 Thou *art* the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee *so*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

Eze 28:15 Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

Eze 28:16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Eze 28:17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

God gave him rule over the earth as his first estate (Jude 1:16) and 1/3 of the angels to assist him in this task. He left his first estate (Is 14:13-14) and wanted to take over God's rule of the universe.

Please note, it was a first estate, if Lucifer had qualified to be given greater responsibilities by remaining obedient to God and faithfully administering the government of God on the earth, he would have been given the responsibility of administering God's government over the universe.

Why did God not prevent him from sinning by rebelling against Him in a vain attempt to replace Him on the throne of the universe? God is more powerful than Satan; when the time comes to do so, He will put him in chains in the bottomless pit and place a seal on him so he cannot deceive the nations (Rev 20:1-3) and He will punish the sinning angels.

Why did God not prevent Lucifer from sinning; why did He not prevent Adam and Eve from sinning; why does He allow men to not follow their calling; why does He allow truly converted men to turn away from the truth and lose their salvation?

It is because God gave the angels and men absolute free moral agency i.e., God has decreed that there is no power on earth or in heaven that can force angels or men to believe something against their will. Mr. Armstrong used to say that "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." His mind has not been changed; he still believes the same thing and what a man believes is the basis for what he does.

WHY WAS IT NECESSARY FOR GOD TO GIVE FREE MORAL AGENCY TO ANGELS AND MEN?

If there is a higher power in the universe that can impose its will on angels and/or men, then the decisions made by angels or men would not be their decisions but that of the higher power imposing its will upon them and they, angels and men, could not be held responsible for their decisions.

Also, if driven by a higher power, angels and men would not have individuality or personality, they would be like the bees in a beehive; all would be forced to follow the decisions imposed on them by the higher power. They would be like puppets controlled by their master. It would be the mind of the higher power acting through them. If this were the case, angels and men would have no independent decision making powers and God could not hold them responsible for their actions.

Along with free moral agency, God gave angels and men mind power i.e., the ability to think, make decisions, acquire knowledge and act upon it. Mind power is required for free moral agency to be possible. Animals have no mind power; their entire life is controlled by what we

call instinct i.e., they have little or no freedom or ability to deviate in any significant way from a fixed range of behavior even if doing so would save their physical lives. They do not have the ability to choose given man and the angels.

How is man's animal brain able to think?

Mind Power

God has purposed to reproduce Himself through mankind and He created man in His own image i.e., with the same kind of mind but with less power.

Gen 1:26 And God said, Let **us** make man in our image, [**with mind power**] after our likeness [**in their physical appearance**]: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. [**Man was to have dominion or rule over all the other animals created and this is made possible by the fact that man of all God's physical creation was the only one to whom mind power was given.**]

Gen 1:27 So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Man was created after the character image of God in that He has the same capacity to think, make decisions and acquire knowledge but with mental abilities that are considerably less powerful than God's.

Why did God give man mind power and not to any of the other living beings He created?

God gave angels and men mind power and free moral agency or free-will so they could be beings that separate and distinct from Him and who have their own individuality and personality and not be like robots wholly controlled by their creator without any ability to think on their own. Angels and men were created to become part of God's kingdom and had to have mind power and freewill to be separate and distinct individuals from God. They could not be simple extensions of God's consciousness as God's kingdom even with the creation of angels and mankind would continue to consist only of God and the Logos. There would still be no other living being with independent mind power and freewill which make possible individuality and personality. God would still be alone with the Word in the universe.

Let's now examine how mind power in combination with free moral agency or freewill were used by Lucifer and the angels placed on the earth with him.

Lucifer

In time sequence in the Bible, the first sin ever committed was by Lucifer. In Isaiah 14, we find a description of the sin of Lucifer.

Isa 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

Isa 14:13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, [Lucifer was on the earth] I will exalt my throne [Lucifer was sitting on the throne of the earth; he wanted to increase his ruling authority] above the stars of God I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

Isa 14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; [Lucifer was ruling over the earth] I will be like the most High. [He wanted to have rule not just over the earth but over the whole universe]

Isa 14:15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

Isa 14:16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, *and* consider thee, *saying*, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

Lucifer was at God's throne and was perfect in his ways from the day he was created. The following verses of Ezekiel 28 confirm this and also give us other information about who was Lucifer prior to his downfall.

Eze 28:12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. [God here is not saying this about a man for this could not ever be said about any man; though the beginning of the verse is talking about the king of Tyrus, the narrative switches quite evidently to another being which as we read through Ezekiel 28 we can readily recognize to be Lucifer.]

Eze 28:13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

Eze 28:14 Thou *art* the anointed [chosen by God] cherub that covereth; [Lucifer was one of the angels whose wing covered God's throne] and I have set thee so: [and it is God who chose him for this task] thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

Eze 28:15 Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. [Lucifer was created perfect in terms of the purpose for which God had created him. He was perfect in his ways until iniquity was found in him i.e., he was perfect until he sinned.]

Eze 28:16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: [God's kingdom] and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Eze 28:17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

Lucifer's heart or, mind we would say today, became filled with pride because of his great intelligence. The wisdom that God had given him while he was at His throne was corrupted because of his brightness or great intelligence. He came to think that he could administer God's kingdom better than God; that he, instead of God should be the Supreme ruler.

Lucifer and the angels were created with mind power and freewill and we know this because Lucifer and the angels sinned. Only beings with mind power and freewill can sin for both are required to make choices knowingly and freely. Without mind power and freewill, living beings would be like robots following programmed behaviors triggered by the different conditions they encounter. Human beings would be like all

the animals God created without mind power and free will and who are entirely driven by what we call instinct which is really the programming placed in them by God at the time of their creation.

Lucifer's and the angels' spirit creation was incomplete and the last step in their creation process was that they had to use the mind power and free will given them to voluntarily and without any external power forcing them one way or another, to decide whether to accept God's rule over them or to rule themselves. That final act would forever set their character as one of obedience to God or as one of beings living according to their own set of self-devised rules. Spirit beings once fully created cannot change. Angels and men to be part of God's Kingdom must commit themselves to obey God or not when left completely free to do so; they must freely and voluntarily choose it. That was the test the angels had to pass and that all men will have to pass in order to be part of God's Kingdom.

Lucifer and the angels put on the earth with him were not evil in any way. What God creates is very good; it is not in any way evil yet Lucifer and the angels placed on the earth with him decided to combine their efforts to try to overthrow God.

Why did they come to want to supplant God and how did they eventually convince themselves that they could succeed if they tried it?

Though placed in a situation where there was no one encouraging or forcing them to disobey God, Lucifer and the angels that followed him still did so knowing that the remainder of their existence as eternal beings would be forever adversely affected if they were unsuccessful. Lucifer and the angels with him knew what would be the result of their disobedience. There was a strong incentive for them to obey rather than disobey God given the severity of the punishment for disobedience and yet, they disobeyed. Angels would have had to have been told by God what would be the result of their disobedience or they could not have been held responsible for doing so. This is the pattern throughout the Bible and is the very basis of God's plan of salvation. Mankind is not now under judgment because it is deceived i.e., it does not know what sin is and therefore cannot be held responsible for sinning though they do suffer the consequences of doing so. The law is always in effect whether one is aware of it or not.

What drove Lucifer and the angels that followed him to disobey when the stakes were so high? Had they obeyed, they would have been given permission to administer God's government over God's whole creation; not just the earth which was their first estate. By disobeying God, they disqualified themselves from ever being part of God's administration of the universe as they would never become part of God's Kingdom. Instead, the

administration of God's government over a new heaven and a new earth will be the reward of those flesh-and-blood human beings who inherit salvation (Heb 2:6-7).

Lucifer was perfect in his ways; his mind was not defective in any way; God did not create him or any of the angels with malfunctioning minds. The wisdom that Lucifer had and which God had given him while he was at His throne became corrupted because of his brightness (great intelligence); his heart or mind was lifted up or filled with pride because of his beauty. Yet, the beauty and brightness which he had were from God and were therefore not a bad or evil thing.

So why did Lucifer and the angels sin?

Let's continue our analysis.

The Human Mind — Logic and Emotions

Angels have mind power and free will i.e., they have the power to make choices as made evident by the choice many of them made to disobey God. If the angels had no mind power and no free will, they could not have sinned as their existence would have simply been an extension of God's existence; they would not be beings with independent minds capable of making their own choices. They had free will as they were able to make the decision to try to overthrow God; their thoughts were not under the control of God's mind or of any superior power imposing its will on them. God held Lucifer and the angels that followed him responsible for the decision they made to attempt to overthrow Him; had this decision being the result of a higher power compelling Lucifer and his angels to rise up in opposition to God, God could not have held them responsible; but God held them responsible and this very clearly demonstrates that it was their decision knowingly and freely taken.

This brings us to examine the human mind whose functioning is very complex and which to a very large extent continues to be a mystery to man's science. However, despite its great complexity, our minds can be divided into basically two parts: the logical mind and the emotional mind. We have mind power and free will like the angels and every day of our lives we have to deal with the logical and emotional sides of our minds.

The logical part of our mind functions in such a way that two or more persons confronted with the same hard facts on a given matter will usually come to the same conclusion. As a simple example, $2 + 2 = 4$ for everybody all the time; if you jump off a 12 story building, you will die; etc. Hard facts are those facts which are objective as opposed to subjective and which

can be easily and consistently demonstrated regardless of who is doing the experiment. For example, if I step off the end of a tall building, gravity will pull me down and I will be killed when I hit the ground. No matter who tries it, what they personally feel or believe about the matter, they will achieve the same result.

This is not the part of our minds that gives us trouble. The part that causes just about everything to take on properties that go beyond the simple physical reality of our five senses are our emotions. Emotions are the non-logical part of our minds and they play a lesser or greater role in just about every decision we make whether we realize it or not. Emotions such as ambition, fear, pride, vanity, love, hate, anger etc. color our perception of reality and if we are not careful, they can lead us to develop an imaginary world that becomes more real than reality itself and which comes to form the basis of our thinking. When our thinking because of emotions becomes disconnected with reality is the time we can and do get ourselves into trouble.

Our emotions and our imagination need to be kept under control; they make our lives more interesting and more enjoyable but if we lose control of them, we will make ourselves rather unhappy sooner or later as our imaginary world will collide with reality which does not change (hard facts as opposed to subjective facts) to suit our wishes.

Emotions and our imagination are so powerful that they can, as previously mentioned, actually cause us to lose contact with certain aspects of reality especially when we have a strong desire for something which for some reason or another we cannot have. Wanting a new car is a pleasant thing but being able to pay for it without causing ourselves financial problems is a major restraining factor. If I allow myself to become sufficiently obsessed with the idea of having a new car, my mind can start to invent ways for me to be able to do so, ways which logically would not be possible. But, if I persist in thinking and thinking about it, my emotional mind will eventually find a way to overcome the restraints of my logical mind. I will eventually succeed in convincing myself that things will be fine even if I know after having looked at my financial situation that I cannot afford the car. I buy the car and get myself into serious financial difficulties and ultimately, I have to give the car back to the dealer. I allowed my emotional mind to overcome the objections of my logical minds as it was more pleasant for me to do so and I imagined that somehow in some unknown ways things would work themselves out.

Emotions and our imaginations have caused us all at one time or another to deny reality in order to try to get something for which we had a great desire but really didn't have the means to do so and the result has always

been the same; getting what we wanted caused us grief; the car was repossessed, I couldn't keep up the payments; I had to move to a smaller house, I couldn't afford the mortgage payments anymore on the big house of my dreams, etc.

Our minds can deceive us if we let them and cause us to deny reality. The process starts with the conscious and willful decision not to restrain our minds, not to keep control of our thoughts and to let our emotions and our imagination run wild. We can let ourselves become obsessed with wanting certain material goods or other things to which we attach great value and importance (the Bible word for obsessing over material things or having an excessive desire for something is "lust"; this is another important word to keep in mind as we continue this study) and if we allow this to occur, we set off a train of thought which eventually causes us to lose contact with reality and we get ourselves into big trouble.

Our minds are very powerful; they are powerful to the point of being able to create a new reality for us that better fits our desires and causing us to nurture it and develop it until, for us, it becomes the basis for all we say and do. We must protect ourselves from becoming delusional by not taking the first conscious and voluntary steps on the path that leads to deluded thinking by keeping control of our thoughts, desires and emotions.

2Co 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

2Co 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

2Co 10:5 [Casting down imaginations](#), and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Why this discussion of the human mind; because the mind is the source of all our actions. Everything starts in our minds before becoming an outwardly visible action or behavior; the thought precedes the action; we must first think it before we can do it.

There was no power forcing or influencing Lucifer and the angels placed with him on the earth to sin; so why did they sin?

The Source of Temptation

It is generally believed that Satan is the one and only source of temptation in the life of Christians and unconverted men generally. If I am tempted to do evil, it is Satan urging me to do so; this is what everybody says but

is there another even more powerful source of temptation which affects men's lives. You will recall that no one tempted Lucifer and the angels that followed him to rise up against God and yet they did knowing the very serious punishment that would result if they failed.

Where did the temptation to do so come from?

God says he cannot be tempted with doing evil and neither does he tempt any man.

Jas 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

So where does temptation to do evil come from?

Jas 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his **own** lust, and enticed. [Notice, this is not saying that a man is tempted by the lusts of Satan; no he is tempted by **HIS OWN LUST**. Man is quite capable of being lustful without any assistance from Satan as this verse very clearly says.]

Jas 1:15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. [Once we have thought about it long enough our thoughts drive us to action, we take action on our lust and we sin.]

Where does lust begin? It begins in men's minds and if we do not control our lustful thoughts, we will finish by acting upon them or as the Scriptures say, "Then when lust has conceived, it bringeth forth sin." (Jas 1:15)

Jas 1:14 makes it very clear that the main and greatest source of temptation is a man's own lust and this realization is of the greatest importance in terms of understanding why the angels sinned and why during the Millennium, sin will continue even though Satan will then be in chains in the bottomless pit and unable to deceive the nations. ([Mass Conversion of the Nations during the Millennium?](#)) Lucifer sinned because of his own lust for power as did the angels that followed him and men sin because of their own lusts.

I know that the statement about the Millennium being a time where sin will continue as in our days differs from what the ministry taught i.e., it was believed that after Christ's 2nd Coming that the nations would readily convert during the Millennium and that converts would not face the same problems as those now living before Christ's Second Coming. But men

living during the Millennium will continue to have mind power and free will and have to deal with their own lusts; lusts which do not come from Satan's broadcasting in their minds but from their own minds which gives them the power to think and to freely make choices. The nations will not be deceived or tempted by Satan during the Millennium in the same way Lucifer was not deceived or tempted by anyone to attempt to overthrow God and yet he, and the angels that followed him, sinned.

2Pe 2:4 For if God spared not [the angels that sinned](#), but cast [them](#) down to hell, and delivered [them](#) into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

If Satan is the principal source of temptation as is commonly believed, then during the Millennium when he is in chains and a seal placed on him so he can no longer deceive the nations, there would be considerably less sin on the earth.

Rev 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

Rev 20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Almost everybody then alive would of necessity inherit salvation as God will be pouring out of His Spirit upon all flesh. They wouldn't have to resist the temptation to sin coming from the devil and they would all have the holy spirit the Word dwelling in them and yet, it is clear there will be sin during the Millennium and a whole lot more than we had ever imagined.

Physical Gog and Magog will attack Israel to destroy it some time after the beginning of the Millennium (See Ez. 38: 14-23) Israel restored to the original Promised Land is prospering. Those living in Jerusalem and in Palestine in those days will be the physical remnant of the nations constituting end-time Israel returned from captivity and who have been resettled in the Promised Land. (See [Administration of God's Plan of Salvation During the Millennium](#)) They will undergo a process of conversion for 3 1/2 years where Christ will complete His 7-year ministry with Israel and make the New Covenant with those who become converted.

Dan 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abomi-

nations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Jer 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Jer 31:32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

Jer 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jer 31:34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Heb 8:8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

They will then become part of God's holy nation and kingdom of priests in embryo, spiritually conceived but yet to be born again in a resurrection from the dead. Remember Christ said that His Church would never die out. There will be human beings until the time of the end of the Last Great Day and consequently, God will have His Church in existence until the end of the Last Great Day. God's Church is a spiritual nation, God's NT spiritual nation of Israel which began on the day of Pentecost. It is made up of converted individuals or small groups of believers found all over the world who just about all the time do not know each other.

There will be sin during the Millennium and the Last Great Day due to the simple fact that there will be human beings with mind power and free will living on the earth in those days. We know that at the beginning of the Millennium the physical nations of Gog and Magog will attack Jerusalem. We also know that immediately after the end of the Millennium there is a multitude as the sand of the sea that is unconverted and which will rise up from all nations and march against Jerusalem to destroy it. There will be millions of unconverted people at the end of the Millennium marching

against Jerusalem (Rev. 20:8). These will not be the Gog and Magog of the beginning of the Millennium; they were destroyed by God.

These individuals will all have been called; God says He will pour His spirit upon all flesh (See Joel 2:28) which means that everyone will be called during the Millennium and the Last Great Day but, **BEING CALLED IS NOT SYNONYMOUS WITH BEING CONVERTED**. Not all those called follow their calling and, for those who do and become converted, not all remain converted.

Christ plainly says, many are called but few are chosen, (Mat 22:14) and of those entering into God's Church, many will choose to take the broad way that leads to perdition (Mat 7:13); it is only the few that find and stay on the strait and narrow way that leads to life.

Salvation is an individual process based on decisions made by individuals; decisions that are freely and knowingly made without individuals being forced to choose one way or another; there will be no mass conversion of the nations.

How can we know?

At the end of the Millennium, a great multitude as numerous as the sand of the sea will attempt to destroy Jerusalem and Israel.

Rev 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

Rev 20:8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea.

Rev 20:9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Later in this study we will explore together who is this great multitude that rises up against Israel at the end of the Millennium. But for the time being let's spend some time examining what the world will be like during the Millennium and what is the relationship between the state of the world and man's sinfulness?

The World or Human Civilization

Christians have to come out of the world and though still living in the world, are not to be part of its way of thinking and acting.

What is the source of the government of this present evil world as Paul calls it?

God through John gives us the answer.

1Jn 2:15 Love not the world, [man's system of government cut off from God] neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1Jn 2:16 For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

1Jn 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

The system of governance devised by men is the result of the lust that is in men, the lust of their flesh, of their eyes, their pride of life. Again notice, the source of this lust is not stated as being Satan's lust in them but men's own lust, it comes from their minds, their thoughts. Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed (Jas 1:14). Notice, it does not say that it is only some men that are drawn away of their own lust or that it is Satan's lust in men that is the problem; NO, **EVERY** man is tempted when he is drawn away of his **OWN** lust.

Does temptation ever come from Satan? Yes, it does. Satan can do as he did with Eve and feed our minds with reasons and excuses to justify to ourselves the sinfulness that we want to do. Satan can suggest and provide justifications but we are not ever under any obligation to follow them and as Christians we cannot be deceived as to what is right and what is wrong (Math 24:24) Nevertheless, Satan can certainly broadcast in our minds ways and means of justifying breaking God's law but he can't force us to do evil because of the absolute, free moral agency God gave man.

Again, if man is under the control of a more powerful being which can force him to act in certain ways contrary to God's law, man cannot be held responsible by God; he is then simply the instrument of a higher power; that higher power bears the responsibility.

Basically, temptation comes from our own lust and how does that manifest itself in our daily lives? Are our minds malfunctioning or is lust simply

made possible by the fact that we have been given the freedom to choose.

It is lawful to eat but it is sinful to do so excessively; it is lawful to drink wine but drunkenness is a sin, sex is lawful within marriage but it is sin if engaged in outside of marriage, etc. Man is a free moral agent and nothing can force him to choose something contrary to his will. We can choose to be temperate in our drinking, to eat in moderation and to restrict our sexual activity to marriage or not. We have appetites, emotions and an imagination which can all be used to our profit or they can be used in an abusive way which is lust or sin. Satan can only suggest; he cannot force obedience to him.

Therefore, man is responsible for the decisions that he makes in how he drinks, eats, treats others, whether he steals or is honest, etc. He cannot blame his abuses of food and drink and his misuse of sex on anybody else; not Satan, not his neighbors, not society, no one else but himself. If man is not responsible for his actions and that they are the doings of a superior force imposing its will on him, then he cannot be under judgment as the decisions made through him are not his own.

Please note that in today's world, the norm is to say that no one is responsible for the evil that they do. And of course, the world does not speak of anything being evil. Someone gambling away or drinking away their financial resources is said to be the victim of an addiction of some kind. The world's thinking is that men are inherently good and they cannot be responsible for the bad things that they do; it is the fault of an irresistible force such as a sickness of some kind, or it is because of society, a bad upbringing, too much discipline, not enough discipline, too much love, not enough love, etc. etc. etc.

In light of the information provided up to this point, let's re-examine why Lucifer and the angels sinned.

Why Lucifer and the Angels Sinned

Lucifer and the angels placed on the earth with him sinned without there being a higher power of any kind influencing them to do so.

What caused them to sin?

God gave angels the same types of minds as men and are capable of emotions. This is seen here and there in the Bible.

Mat 8:31 So the devils [besought](#) him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

Mar 5:12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

The devils cast out of the possessed man pleaded with Christ to allow them to enter a herd of pig; they were greatly distressed at the thought of being cast out and they pleaded with Christ that He would let them enter the herd of pig that was nearby. Distress and pleading are emotional responses.

In Revelation, it says the devil is come down to you with great wrath.

Rev 12:12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having GREAT WRATH, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Wrath is an emotional reaction.

In Job we read of the angels shouting for joy at seeing the great beauty of God's creation.

Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for JOY?

All these things are from the emotional side of the mind.

Angels like men have an emotional side to their minds and when emotions are involved some alteration of reality occurs in the mind if emotions are allowed to overwhelm the logical mind. As previously explained, this can and does occur when we develop an excessive desire for something, whatever it might be, which we cannot have for one reason or another. We keep thinking and thinking about it seeking some means that could be used to allow us to get the highly desired object. We become obsessed and begin to imagine ways we could use to get what we want. We develop a view of reality which omits certain aspects which would prevent us from having what we want. The alternate reality that we fabricate for ourselves comes to replace reality itself and this new false reality becomes the basis for our actions but since it is only a fabrication of our mind, in time, actions taken on the basis of this fictive reality we have built for ourselves can only cause us problems which are more or less severe.

Initially, it would have been clear to Lucifer and his angels that it was not possible for them to overthrow God and that the penalty for attempting it was too great to even risk it. But as time passed, in their mind they started to desire to have God's authority and began to allow their minds to think up different ways how this could be accomplished. After how long nobody

knows, their lust for God's authority was complete, they acted upon it or as James 1:15 says it: "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin...." Lucifer and his angels combined their efforts to try to overthrow God and were cast back down to earth. Lucifer became Satan and his angels became devils.

The point of importance for us to know and understand here is that the origin of the sin of Lucifer and of the angels was in THEMSELVES. It was not as a result of some other power encouraging them to disobey God.

It is one of the consequences and great risk of giving living beings mind power and free will which makes it possible for them to make choices that are contrary to God's law.

Angels (before their spiritual creation was complete) like men had the power to either obey or disobey God; to use the capabilities given them for good or for evil. Once the angels sinned their creation was complete, and they became permanently hostile to God. It is the same situation for men who can choose to eat responsibly, drink reasonably and contain their sexual nature or not with this critical difference that men can change from their bad behavior once given to know the truth. However, they can lose their salvation if after being given to know the truth, they willfully and knowingly turn away from it.

Satan may influence men's minds but he definitely cannot control them (demon possession starts with men deluding themselves to satisfy their lust) and the choice of whether to follow or not Satan's influence is wholly men's responsibility; there is no power in the universe that can compel them to do so including Satan.

Giving mind power and freewill allows for individuality and personality in human and spirit beings. God didn't want to populate His kingdom with mindless robots incapable of independent or original thought but giving them the power of independent thought and choice also meant taking the chance that this power could and would be used for evil rather than good. There could not be restrictions put on the angels or men's power to choose or they would not have had true freewill and would have been under the control of a higher power which would have left them without individuality or personality.

What was the great temptation of Lucifer's and the angels with him? They wanted to have God's power, they wanted to become the supreme power of the universe and rule over it; they lusted for the power to be supreme rulers of the universe. Lucifer had been given the authority to rule over the earth as a test of obedience and also for God to evaluate his ability to

do so in accordance with the requirements of god's government. Would Lucifer and the angels with him remain faithful to the task given them?

Lucifer became dissatisfied with just ruling over the earth and wanted more power. He wanted it so badly that he risked his eternal fate by attempting to dethrone God and he enlisted the help of the angels put on the earth with him to do so, thinking that their combined force would be greater than what God could resist. It should be noted that power is the greatest temptation and it was the ultimate temptation used by Satan with Christ when his first two attempts failed. Satan offered Christ rulership over the earth which would have put Christ under Satan's rule. Christ rejected Satan's offer.

As a related aside of importance, it should be noted that the history of mankind is the history of war. Wars have been ceaselessly waged causing untold suffering, misery and death for the purpose of determining who is going to rule. Power is the greatest temptation and there is an unending struggle between individuals, groups and nations to establish who is to rule over whom. The battle is never ending; everybody wants to rule over others and the quest for power knows no bounds and no end.

Lucifer and the angels sinned because they allowed their emotional minds to finally blind them because they so much wanted to have God's power; because of their lust for power. Initially, they knew that it was a very risky thing to try to overpower God but they so much came to want His power that they started to devise and invent all sorts of plans and schemes to do so and ultimately convinced themselves that it could be done. They knew, but their lust for power made them ignore the reality that God as Creator was stronger and could not be overthrown.

They allowed themselves to become enticed by their lust as James says and they sinned.

Knowing and understanding this is of crucial importance to us as we have the same mind as God and as the angels but with less power and are subject to making similar bad decisions for the same reasons they did i.e., allowing ourselves to be enticed by our lust which means letting our emotions and imaginations lead us to believe we can have the object of our lust without causing any problems to ourselves or sinning.

Satan can only exert influence on men's minds; he very definitely cannot control them; he has never had that power. We are fully responsible for our own salvation; the evil that we do is not because of anybody or anything else but our own decisions to keep or not keep our thoughts, our emotions and our imagination under control by using our logical mind to

keep from knowingly and voluntarily taking those first voluntary steps that ultimately lead to our making ourselves believe that somehow we can get or do what we know we should not without any adverse consequences to ourselves.

The Original Sin

Adam and Eve were neutral before being exposed to Satan; they simply obeyed God without question. But up to that point, there had not been given an alternative. There was only God and they didn't have any other thing to choose from. They had no reason not to obey God and there was nothing urging them not to do so. Up to that point in their existence, they had never been given a choice in how they should conduct their lives. God gave mankind mind power and the absolute power to choose; nothing can force man to choose something against his will. But, to be able to choose, there must be alternatives from which a choice can be made. If no alternatives exist, there is then no possible choice. You cannot choose between A and B, if you do not know there is an A and a B from which to choose or if there is no A or B from which to choose.

So God gave mankind a choice and the choice was presented to Eve by Satan the devil who had already made the choice not only to disobey God but also to overthrow Him and replace Him on the throne of the universe and had been unsuccessful. Eve then presented Satan's proposal to Adam.

The choice given Adam and Eve was not the same as the one given Lucifer though they are related in that they both involved ultimately a decision to obey or disobey God.

God put Lucifer on the throne of the earth along with 1/3 of the angels as a training exercise for them to demonstrate their ability to administer God's government over the earth. If there had been no rebellion, Lucifer and the angels would have been given the authority to administer God's government over all of God's creation. That was the challenge Lucifer faced. The choice he had to make was to either faithfully continue administering God's government until God declared Himself satisfied that he, Lucifer would be able to exercise rulership over His whole creation or to forcefully attempt to seize that power for himself. The test continued until Lucifer and the angels with him made that final decision to obey or not obey God which completed their spiritual creation.

Lucifer after an unknown amount of time came to the conclusion that he had the ability to replace God on the throne of the universe and decided to mount an assault against God. Satan rejected the commission given him and tried to replace God with himself as ruler of the universe. Basic-

ly, Lucifer and the angels that followed him decided to disobey God; the choice they had to make was to obey or not God's command to rule over the earth; they chose not to do so.

Adam and Eve were also given a choice as to whether they would obey a specific command given them by God. God commanded them not to take of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for in the day that they did they would surely die. Based on what Eve said to Satan when he tempted her, God's command was clear in her mind and it is also clear that without Satan's intervention, neither she nor Adam would have taken of the forbidden tree. Up to that point, Adam and Eve were perfectly obedient to God and would have remained that way but for Satan coming to tempt them by saying that God was withholding from them the power to be like Him by not letting them decide right and wrong for themselves which is what it meant for them to take of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God had created man with the power to choose and the biggest choice he had to make was whether to freely choose to obey Him or not when offered an alternative. Man had to be put to the test to see what he would do when confronted with a choice i.e., Satan would tempt them to disobey God by making it very attractive for them to do so with the ultimate and biggest incentive being that they would be like God and, not to fear, they would not die as God had told them they surely would.

The Scriptures reveal that Eve was deceived by Satan; she was taken in by what he said and believed it. The Scriptures also show that Adam was not deceived (1 Ti 2:14) by Satan and knew what would happen if they took of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Nevertheless, to please his wife, he took of the tree also and their eyes were opened to new realities which they had not seen before.

Up to that point God's Spirit had been with them; now, it left them; it was no longer providing guidance, knowledge and understanding to them. They both became subject to (not under the control of) the influence of Satan's spirit which flooded their minds with all sorts of untrue notions and ideas about how they should conduct themselves and generally live their lives to be happy. They were not compelled to follow these thoughts that came into their minds; they could ignore them if they so chose and make their own decisions which, after all is what they had decided to do. The choice given them was not whether to become slaves of Satan but rather whether to ignore God's command not to decide for themselves good and evil as symbolized by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

If they had decided to obey God, then the holy spirit God the Word would

have remained with them and guided them in all things but here again, they would not have been forced to follow God's guidance as that would have meant that they had no power to choose.

Whether making the decision to obey God or to not obey God, the free moral agency of man remains the same; neither God will nor Satan can compel man to obey them and this is how God wants it.

Why?

God has purposed to reproduce Himself through mankind and man, when left entirely free to obey or disobey Him, must demonstrate that he is ready to self-willingly commit himself to obeying Him even if this at time involves some hardship and this until the end of his natural human life because this is what he has freely and self-willingly chosen to do; NOT because of being forced to do so by any higher power.

In other words and as we have often heard, those who will make up God's Kingdom have to be individuals of **CHARACTER** i.e., they have to be individuals who have freely and knowingly chosen to obey God; who have evaluated and accepted the cost of doing so; who will spend the rest of their lives putting forth effort to restrain themselves from pursuing their lusts as much as they can and who will patiently and faithfully continue doing so until the end of their natural live. Mankind was given mind power and free will to make personality and individuality possible and most importantly, so they could be beings of character who can choose to voluntarily obey God and restrain themselves from evil when there is no one and no power forcing them to do so because they have personally and voluntarily chosen to keep obeying God.

1Jn 5:18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God **KEEPETH HIMSELF**, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

God will in the resurrection elevate man's existence to the God plane; He will share his very nature with man who in the resurrection will become God as God is God. But in order to be part of that resurrection, man must first demonstrate as a human being his sincere and abiding desire to obey God and to exercise his self-will to try to keep as much under control as possible, his physical appetites and passions and his own lust. Upon coming to the knowledge of the truth, man must undertake to bring his thoughts and actions under the control of God's law to the greatest extent possible and this, until his death and in this way showing that he really wants to become part of God's Kingdom. Salvation is a free gift from God as it is by grace through faith but our faith to be saving faith requires works

on our part i.e., obedience to God's law as much as we can or in other words using the mind power and absolute freedom of choice that we have to restrain our lust, resist Satan and keep our minds under control.

Source of Evil in the World

It being clear that neither God (by choice) nor Satan has the power to compel or force obedience given that God has given man absolute, free moral agency, it then follows that the mind of men has a much greater role to play in the salvation process than once believed.

Man is not the helpless slave of Satan forced to obey him. Man at Satan's prompting chose to make his own decision as to right and wrong; he did not choose to become Satan's slave nor could he have done so. God gave man the absolute power to choose; if mankind's power to choose was taken away at the time when he chose to determine for himself good and evil then God's plan of reproducing Himself through mankind would have been effectively rendered impossible from the moment Adam and Eve chose to follow Satan's suggestion and God's Kingdom would remain composed of only God and the Logos.

Neither God nor Satan has compelling authority over mankind. God has the power to compel obedience but He has chosen not to do so; those eventually making up His kingdom must freely choose to obey Him.

Understanding men's minds allows us also to better understand God's mind as man is created in the character image (has the same mind capabilities with much less power) of God.

The criterion of course is the Bible and in the Bible God does indeed reveal to us how God and men's mind work but we have been blinded to what God says by preconceived notions some of which emanate from traditional mainstream Christianity such as the overwhelming influence of Satan on men's minds or that all lust and sinful behavior have as their origin Satan. The ability of the human mind to be evil all on its own is not taken into account.

Men's minds can be influenced by Satan but Satan cannot compel obedience.

How is it then that men can on their own, without being forced by Satan, conceive and execute evil?

Actually, it's quite simple, God told them they did not have the ability to correctly define good and evil by themselves; they did not rightly know the difference between good and evil; He had to do it for them.

God says clearly in the Bible that there is a way that seems right to a man but the end thereof is death i.e., men have different notions of right and wrong and this causes them to fight for their own version of "the" truth which leads to wars.

Pro 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Pro 16:25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Man cut off from God cannot correctly determine right from wrong. This is one of the principal sources of evil in the world. Mankind took upon itself to determine good and evil and what seems right to them is actually not right and ultimately leads to evil, the ways of death.

Once man comes to the knowledge of the truth, he then must use his mind power and freewill to bring his own lust under control to the greatest extent possible.

The mind power and free will given man are the primary means whereby evils occurs in the world. Satan cannot force obedience to him; men don't have the ability to correctly define good and evil and **GOD SAYS CLEARLY** the decisions that men make about what seems right to them are wrong decisions that result in evil and death. **EVIL IN THE WORLD IS NOT THE RESULT OF SATAN CONTROLLING MEN'S MINDS.** Satan like God can influence men's minds but neither He nor Satan can force men to believe something against their will. What we believe is the foundation and source of what we do and of why we do what we do.

The human mind and the free will given man give mankind the power to choose good or evil; it can do either one. In the absence of the holy spirit God the Word leading them, men make choices which they consider to be good but which God says ultimately lead to bad results and death. The way to peace they have not known because it is impossible to have peace when everybody defines for themselves right and wrong. It is unavoidable that one's definition of good will come into conflicts with others definition of good and eventually lead to conflicts resulting in war.

So what does God have to say about the unconverted human mind?

The Unconverted Mind

In the Old Testament we read that God was taken by surprise at the unrelenting wickedness of man and sorry He had created mankind; their

thoughts were evil continually. He destroyed all of humanity in a great flood except Noah and his family.

Gen 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

Gen 6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

Gen 6:7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

Gen 6:8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Once men chose to define for themselves good and evil, mankind was lost from the beginning as they did not have the ability to know correctly and consistently the difference between the two. The choices they would make would more often than not be wrong and be a source of trouble for themselves and others. The intent is always to do good, but the result is almost always the creation of evil.

The Bible clearly states that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23) and that therefore, there was a need for a sacrifice for sin that would pay the death penalty for the sins of mankind for the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23). Christ came and died to make possible the forgiveness of sin and since the day of Pentecost men are being called to come out of the world and become part of God's Church. Their minds are then opened up to understand the truth of God and they are no longer deceived nor can be deceived regarding what is the truth (Mat 24:24); God has shown it to them.

What happens after conversion? Is it no longer possible for converted men to sin?

No, sinfulness is still possible.

Why?

The Converted Mind

The converted person remains vulnerable to the lust of his own flesh, and it is possible for him to turn away from the truth after having known it as a result of the absolute free moral agency given man by God. God will re-

spect man's decision even if man's decision will result in the second death.

The process of conversion occurs in the mind as does the abandonment of the truth. Throughout the process of conversion, the mind is the principal element that is at work and it will also be the main factor in any departure from the truth. Accepting and remaining with the truth and, rejecting the truth both occur in the mind. They are all decisions that are wholly man's responsibility; Satan nor any other power can force man to believe something against his will; man is fully responsible for his own salvation and cannot blame anyone else but himself for losing it.

What does God in the Old Testament reveal to us about the mind of man.

The Human Heart According to God

In the Bible, God gives us knowledge of the human mind which is rejected by mankind because it is knowledge that goes against their belief that human beings are inherently good. God says they are neither essentially good nor basically bad but certainly very able to engage in evil

Jer 17:9 The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

This is quite a statement that bears closer examination.

The heart, the human mind like the one we all have and that Adam and Eve had, is deceitful (dishonest, cunning, untrustworthy, devious, lying) above all things (more than anything else); and, it is desperately (very much, greatly, to a great extent) wicked (evil, bad, depraved, immoral, sinful) who can know it (who can understand why it does what it does given its very high degree of deceitfulness; it will always try to hide the true motives for the evil that it does to maintain that what it wants to do is good.)

Jeremiah 17:9 is God's evaluation of the human mind after seeing the behavior of mankind over thousands of years.

Man was not created as an evil being; everything that God creates is good. God did not create a being through which He wanted to reproduce Himself with a great and abiding predisposition to do evil. Man is not inherently evil nor under the irresistible influence of some higher power compelling him to be evil; he is also capable of doing good. But God says that man's mind is very deceitful which is to say that it is very capable of devising all sort of excuses to justify the evil that it does. It seeks to justify it to itself and to others as necessary to maintain that it is not evil. After thousands of years of seeing what men do, God's evaluation of mankind is that the human mind is desperately wicked i.e., it readily engages in doing all sorts

of evil which for the most part involves following the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life and seeks to justify it as not being wickedness.

The last part of Jer 17:9 “....who can know it...” is God expressing His frustration with the workings of the human mind which so readily engages in wickedness while strenuously seeking to justify to itself and others that the wickedness that it does is not evil. This is the result of mind power and freewill which can be used to do either good or evil. Mankind wants to be thought of as good while satisfying its lust. It does not make any sense to God.

And we read the following in the book of James.

Jas 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Jas 1:15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

And in Proverbs, God tells us that:

Pro 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Pro 16:25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Man is neither evil nor good. Man has mind power which allows him to acquire information, evaluate it and decide whether it is good or bad and how to use it. He has free will which is to say, nothing can force him to believe something against his will; not God, not Satan, not any other force in heaven or on earth.

He is handicapped before his calling by not knowing the true difference between right and wrong and this accounts for most of the evil that occurs in this world and he has Satan's broadcasting influencing his mind but with no power to force him to obey him (Satan).

The effect on the world of men defining right and wrong for themselves is easy to see. It mostly leads to evil and this is the system that the Bible calls “the world.” The Bible says that what we see in the world is the following:

1Jn 2:16 For **ALL** that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

1Jn 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

God's description of "the world" or of man's self-devised system of government is that it is based on lust; the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and, pride (an excessive satisfaction with self).

Now please note, these verses are not saying that it is Satan's lust in men that is the cause of evil in the world; NO, it is the lust that men are capable of engaging in because of the mind power and freewill given them by God. The unconverted do not rightly know the difference between right and wrong and the choices that they make are what seems right to them but it is the way that leads to death. This is why unconverted mankind always sees itself as being good as it always thinks that it is making the right choice. Tyrants and dictators always see themselves as the defender of the poor and destitute against the forces of evil while they impoverish and immiserate them by the laws they devise and impose on them.

What About in God's Church?

What does the Bible teach us about what truly converted individuals do in God's Church? Those who have been called and have accepted their calling have come to the knowledge of the truth regarding right and wrong, good and evil and have committed themselves to following it to the best of their abilities until the time of their natural death.

Though converted, they are still subject to their own lust and Satan's influence but having free moral agency, Satan does not have the power to force them to obey him; he can only influence them. They are fully responsible for the decisions that they make and for controlling their own lust; otherwise, God would not be able to judge them.

This is the state of those who have been called, converted and are actively obeying God in God's New Testament Spirit-begotten Church which started on the day of Pentecost with the giving out of God's holy spirit, the glorified Christ (John 7:37-39) who is the Word and Spokesman to the disciples and all those that would become converted.

What does Church history as recorded in the Bible reveal about the behavior of first century Christians which is a type of the way Christians throughout the centuries would conduct themselves including in the very days in which we live and during the Millennium and the Last Great Day?

Paul warned Timothei that those coming to conversion and that would form the congregations of the true Church would grow tired of hearing the truth which corrected them and seek out other teachers that would

be more to their liking i.e., that would be after their own lusts. Of course, this is not solely talking about the congregations of the days of Timothei and Paul; it would apply to God's true church congregations across the centuries until the time of the 3rd resurrection.

2Ti 4:1 I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2Ti 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but AFTER THEIR OWN LUSTS SHALL THEY HEAP TO THEMSELVES TEACHERS, having itching ears; [Notice, this is talking about their OWN lusts; not Satan's lust in them; they have the absolute freedom to choose and to engage or not in lustful behavior which is sin; Satan has no power to force them to do so. Paul forewarns Timothei that this is what TRUE converts would do; they would not endure in the truth.]

2Ti 4:4 And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. [they will willfully turn away from the truth; no one will force them to do so; this is what it means to apostatize]

New converts would grow weary of being corrected and would want to go back to their former lives. They would find teachers that would make them feel comfortable in their lusts by telling them that they are all going to heaven and not to worry, they don't have to change anything of what they are doing; God is love and will understand; He is merciful and Christ's sacrifice covers their sins and that they are no longer under the law.

Then in Galatians 1: 6-7, we read of Paul expressing his great surprise and utter astonishment at seeing in just how little time (... I marvel that ye are SO SOON removed from him that called you....) since their conversion the Galatians had turned to other teachings which are not the teachings he had given them and which they had said they believed. They had already turned to another gospel message which Paul categorically says is NOT another gospel as they were saying it was as there is no other gospel than the one he taught them and which he personally received from Christ. New converts were quickly turning away from the truth to follow other so-called truth or gospel preached by the false teachers that abounded in their days as they do in ours.

Gal 1:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Gal 1:7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

In the book of Acts, Paul warns the church that after his going off to Rome, false teachers would arise right from among the elders appointed to protect the brethren from false teachings. They would preach perversions of the truth given them by Paul in order to get a following for themselves.

Act 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Act 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

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

Act 20:31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

Paul had been warning them ceaselessly over the last three years about these false teachers that would arise right from among the elders of the Church and that would try to draw them away from the truth he had given them. It was a very real threat and one that Paul knew would come to pass and this is why he put so much effort in warning the Church.

This is an utterly amazing Scripture which clearly states that truly converted men ordained as elders to protect the church from heresy would themselves become teachers of perversions of the truth to get people to follow them. It is also a very strong warning not to ever put our faith in men but in the Scriptures, not even Mr. Armstrong as he said emphatically so many times to the Church. The Bible is the only sure criterion of truth and we are to follow the teachings of Mr. Armstrong **ONLY AS THEY CAN BE PROVEN WITH THE BIBLE** and so said many, many, many times Mr. Armstrong to all of us.

Are we hearing what he said????

Mr. Armstrong restored some of the foundational truth given the Church by the apostles which they received from Christ; an invaluable contribution of knowledge and understanding by God through him to God's elect.

In the book of Hebrews, Paul expresses his frustration with long time Church members who should have fully mastered the foundational truth of the Church which he had taught them only to find that they did not know it as they should. He had to teach them the basics all over again rather than spend time teaching them truth (meat) that builds on the foundation of truth (milk) he had given them and which they had largely forgotten.

Heb 5:11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

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.

These long-term converts should have been studying and reviewing the truth they had received to maintain it fresh in their minds but they had not been doing so. Their time and energy was being spent on other things which they considered of more value and interest. Yet, they were members of God's Church to whom God through Paul had revealed mysteries which men have sought to elucidate for ages and never could. The great treasure trove of God's knowledge given them was treated with indifference and apathy. Other things, even after having been given to know the mysteries of the truth of God, were on their minds and took up all their time.

This was not only written for the church of Paul's days. God through Paul is telling us about the spiritual condition of the Church that would exist across the centuries.

All these Scriptures paint a bleak picture of the spiritual condition of God's Church throughout the ages. Surprisingly, converts to the truth would not be filled with lasting zeal; they would amazingly grow rather quickly tired of the truth and of the responsibilities knowing the truth imposes on them.

This is both surprising and somewhat disheartening but this is what the Bible clearly reveals if you will believe your Bible.

Recent Church History

Many of us have been members of the organization founded by Mr. Arm-

strong. What was then the spiritual condition of those who were part of that organization; what happened during Mr. Armstrong's administration and what happened after Mr. Armstrong's death?

Were there many that came into it and in a relatively short amount of time left it?

Did some in the ministry appointed by Mr. Armstrong rise up against him, leave and take with them many members of their congregations if not whole congregations?

Did Mr. Armstrong's own son rebel against him and leave with many brethren to found a Church he called: The Church of God International?

Did several ministers band together in a project called the STP (Systematic Theology Project) whose goal was said to review the doctrines of the WCG against the Bible to ensure they were well proven? However, this STP was going on without Mr. Armstrong's knowledge and its real goal was to change the doctrines he taught.

Did Mr. Armstrong find out through faithful brethren that ministers pastoring congregations that were far away from headquarters were teaching their own version of the truth?

Did Mr. Armstrong often tell the brethren that they were not zealous for the truth he was giving them? He said he could reveal to them a new truth of great importance and no one would talk about it but if he were to say anything about make-up, the same day everybody would be talking about it from one end of the country to the other.

If you answered yes to all of these questions, you are right. This is what occurred in the days of Mr. Armstrong's administration of the organization he called the Worldwide Church of God (WCG).

I, like so many others, used to think that truly converted Christians through the ages were filled with zeal wanting to obey God at any cost, filled with energy and enthusiasm for the truth and never being able to get enough of it. But the Bible, if we will believe what it clearly says, tells us that this has not been the case. I will not go back through all the items already covered but if you have been attentively reading up to this point, you know and understand that it is not the majority of those called who have accepted their calling and of those who have accepted it, it is not the many that remained faithful.

I know this bursts many people's bubble of thinking that just about every truly converted member of God's Church would be saved somehow by God in ways unknowable to us.

Would you believe what Christ Himself says about the subject?

What does He have to say about the subject of being called, conversion and salvation?

Calling Conversion and Salvation

Mat 22:14 For **MANY** are called, but **FEW** are chosen.

This Scripture has been memorized by many and has been used countless times in sermons. Let's examine what this verse is saying. Christ says that of the "many" that are called to come out of the world and to commit themselves to obeying God until the end of their natural lives, it is the "few" that are chosen.

Why are they not chosen?

When one is called, the holy spirit God the Father begins to teach them spiritual truth which had before always been rejected because it could not be understood. But now, with God's Spirit around the person, his eyes begin to open to a new reality he never knew existed. At first, he is very excited by what he is learning and gradually God brings him to the point where a decision has to be made. Will he abandon his old ways, his former friends, change things in his life which he now knows are wrong but which he likes a great deal; will he stop celebrating Christmas and following other pagan rituals that everybody else follows; in brief, is he ready to make the sacrifices required for him to be able to become a member of God's Church and commit himself to a lifelong study of the Scriptures and of obedience to God in all things as best as he can?

Here is where of the many called, few are chosen. They refuse to abandon their old lives and to live in newness of life. They, like Lot's wife, don't see that the world that God is asking them to leave behind is all that bad and besides, they found it quite enjoyable; why should they leave it? Gradually, they lose their initial interest in the truth God had given them and slide back into the world and its ways.

Now, what did Christ have to say about those who are chosen i.e., about those who accept their calling and set off on the path leading to the eternal Zion or God's Kingdom?

In Mat. 7:13–14 Christ gives out a strong warning to those who have ac-

cepted their calling and are entering into God's Church. Will all be saved simply by the fact they have accepted their calling? What is the danger that new converts have to be wary of as they start of on their new Christian life?

Christ plainly and clearly tells us what the danger is and also, that many are those that lose their salvation because of their not heeding His warning to God's Church.

Mat 7:13 Enter ye [you who have been called and have accepted your calling] in at the strait [narrow, physically speaking; demanding or which requires effort, spiritually speaking] gate: for wide [easy to go in through it physically speaking; not demanding much effort spiritually speaking] is the gate, and broad is the way, [it is easy to stay on it unlike the narrow way which requires constant effort and vigilance] that leadeth to destruction, [loss of salvation] and MANY [of those called and who have accepted their calling and who are coming into God's Church] there be which go in thereat:

In the next verse, Christ continues His explanation as to why most new converts choose the broad way that leads to destruction or to the loss of their salvation.

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

Why do most new converts take the broad way; because it is the way that requires the least effort on their part; the one which allows them to maintain a foot in the Church and a foot in the world thinking that being in the Church will ensure their salvation; that all they have to do is make a show of spirituality, attend Sabbath services and the annual holy day celebrations and they will be saved. They do not want to fundamentally change their lives though they do make some changes but the harder things they do not do; they rely on God's mercy, love and grace to pull them through thinking they are basically good people and God knows it.

They are not spending a lot of time studying their Bibles or praying; they are not putting forth a lot of effort to come out of sin or rearranging their lives and habits to make it easier to avoid certain persistent sins such as drinking too much. They still want to keep their drinking buddy friends and don't want to appear weird in front of their friends and family by no longer celebrating Christmas. They've done so all their lives and trained their children to do so and hey! he used to be the life of the party; what will their friends think and on and on it goes. But, they are faithful in at-

tending services and celebrating the Holy Days. That is the broad way of which Christ speaks in Matthew 7 and which leads to destruction and which Christ says the "many" take with it being the "few" that get on the strait and narrow way that leads unto life or salvation.

Contrary to what was widely believed, it is the few of those that become converted that take their conversion seriously and do the hard work of making the changes in their lives required for them to live as Christians.

Sadly, but realistically and as difficult as it may be to accept, it is the few of the called and chosen who will be saved because they do not remain faithful.

I know just how shocking it is to come to this realization but the Scriptures are clear and it is Christ Himself saying so.

There is no "And they all lived happily ever after no matter what they did with their calling and conversion" to this story. It is neither the many in the past nor the many now or in the future that will inherit salvation. It is the few who find the strait and narrow way that leads to life or salvation and who stay on it; so says Christ.

After the death of Mr. Armstrong, people's true character came out in the open when the ministry announced that they were not police officers. Long-term members and newcomers then all felt free to no longer hide what they thought and did when back home from services. The very next Sabbath, women, old and young, came in wearing make-up and, in some cases, not just a little make-up. Some were saying how naked they had felt all these years from not being able to wear their makeup and were overjoyed at now being able to openly use it not realizing how much their spiritual nakedness was showing. Cohabiting couples came out joyfully in the open, women of all ages started wearing short skirts and other revealing clothing.

But a few, a very few, looked upon all this with consternation and quietly ceased attending meetings. The ministry called them dissidents and announced that they had been disfellowshipped when in fact they had left of their own accord. They preferred being alone and practicing the truth to the best of their abilities than to be part of a group calling itself Church of God but which no longer followed Christ's teachings.

And as Christ said to the few faithful disciples that followed Him: **"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."** (Luk 12:32)

If of the "many" that are called few are chosen and of those entering God's

Church it is the many that take the broad way that leads to destruction, what will occur during the Millennium when Satan will be bound and a seal put upon him that he should not longer be able to deceive the nations and when God pours out of His Spirit upon all flesh?

Will there be a massive, ongoing conversion of the nations where just about everybody living during the Millennium will become deeply converted, remain faithful and be saved?

The ministry, in so many words, taught that the Millennium and the Last Great Day would be the time where it would be the exceptional individual that would not be saved.

Is this what the Scriptures say will occur during the Millennium?

The Millennium Gog and Magog

It is a sure thing abundantly supported by Scripture that God during the Millennium will restore the physical conditions of the earth to a state identical or very similar to the one that existed in the Garden of Eden before Adam sinned (Isa 11).

It is also clear in the Scriptures that all will be called (Joel 2:28) and there is also no doubt that Satan will not be able to deceive the nations during the Millennium (Rev 20: 1-3).

I will not go into all the relevant Scriptures as you probably already know them as well as I do. They were very commonly used at every Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day celebration. In passing it should be noted that New Testament Christians celebrate the Feast of Ingathering not the Feast of Tabernacles. This is explained in detail in the following study available by clicking on the following link: [OT and NT Feast Celebration Difference](#)

During the Millennium mankind will find itself in ideal physical circumstances, the holy spirit God the Father will call all men (Joel 2:28) and Satan will not be able to deceive the nations. What could go wrong? Why would there not be massive and lasting conversion of the nations?

Let's see what the Bible says of what will go on during the Millennium.

Some time after the beginning of the Millennium, there will be an attack by the physical nations of Gog and Magog on Israel returned from its end-time captivity and resettled in the Promised Land. They, Gog and Magog, will be supernaturally destroyed by God with "an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone" (Ez 38:22).

Then at the end of the Millennium there will be another attack by a Gog and Magog which is made up of individuals from all nations from the four quarters of the earth; not from 2 nations living in specific regions of the world; they come from all over the world. They are individuals from all nations that descend on Israel to fight against it (Rev 20:9). They compass the camp of the saints and the beloved city and they are destroyed by fire coming down from heaven.

Rev 20:9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

This group of people from all nations (they are from the four quarters of the earth) is "spiritual" Gog and Magog; they are "spiritually" deceived by Satan. God calls them Gog and Magog as they will like the physical Gog and Magog at the beginning of the Millennium march against Israel to destroy it.

For a detailed explanation of who are the physical nations making up the Gog and Magog that will attack Israel at the beginning of the Millennium I refer you to the following Web site: <http://www.herbert-armstrong.org/> where you will find lesson 3 of the 58 lesson Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course.

At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be loosed out of his prison and go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth and those that he deceives will be from all over the world and their number will be as the sand of the sea, a very great number of individuals.

Rev 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

Rev 20:8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

It is of great importance to stop here and make a distinction which is essential for us to understand exactly what Satan's power is over mankind. Being deceived is not the same things as being compelled or being forced to obey Satan.

The Scriptures are clear that Satan has the power to deceive the world.

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.

What is the deception that Satan is empowered to exercise over mankind? He deceives them, before their conversion, as to what is the correct difference between right and wrong. The Satanic veil of deception over men's eyes is lifted by God at the time of their calling. For the first time in their lives, they then realize that all along they had not known the correct difference between right and wrong but now they do and will ultimately face a choice that will determine their eternal fate. If the individual does not accept his calling, he again becomes deceived about the true difference between right and wrong. If an individual follows his calling and becomes converted and then turns away from the truth, he will again become deceived. This is the power Satan has but even if he can deceive the unconverted, he cannot force the unconverted or the converted to obey him. All he can do is influence their minds; not control them.

So who are the ones that can be deceived?

Is it converted individuals who have become part of God's Church? No, Christ Himself tells us that the elect cannot be deceived; therefore, it cannot be members of God's Church at the end of the Millennium that Satan deceives.

Mat 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, **IF IT WERE POSSIBLE**, they shall deceive the very elect.

Would it be people who have become converted during the Millennium and who have subsequently turned away from the truth? If they have turned away from the truth, then as the Bible makes clear, they have become blind again and they will not be able to recapture the truth they have left behind i.e., become again converted as made plain in Heb 6:4-6. Having turned away from the truth, they have lost their salvation and will be in the third resurrection.

Who then are the individuals that will be deceived in large numbers by Satan once released from the bottomless pit at the end of the Millennium and who will constitute spiritual Gog and Magog?

THE ONLY PEOPLE THAT CAN BE DECEIVED AND WHICH SATAN DECEIVED IN THE PAST AND WHO ARE TODAY DECEIVED, AND WHICH WILL BE DECEIVED IN THE FUTURE ARE THOSE WHO ARE NOT CONVERTED. They were either called and

chose not to follow their calling or they became converted but after a while, they turned away from the truth.

As previously explained, many are called but few are chosen and of those that are entering God's Church, it is the many who take the broad way that leads to perdition. This will not change during the Millennium and the Last Great Day. Christ's words on the calling out and conversion process will apply until the end of the Last Great Day.

It should be crystal clear to all of us that being called is not synonymous with being converted and that if one becomes converted, it is possible for that person to go back into the world. Once saved is not always saved and according to Mat 7:14 it is the "many" that find their way back into the world and the "few" that maintain their conversion until the end of their physical lives and inherit salvation.

I know just how hard this may be to believe but don't believe me, believe your Bible.

In the past we had somehow imagined despite these Scriptures (and there are others) that in the end, just about everybody would be saved but for a hardcore few who would refuse to obey God.

Why are so many during the Millennium not saved as we would reasonably expect to occur given the ideal conditions that will then exist?

This brings us back to the main focal point of this study and that is the role of the human mind in the salvation process.

Blessing and Curse of Mind Power and Free Moral Agency

Mankind has been given mind power and the absolute freedom to choose in that neither God will, nor Satan can force man to obey them. Mind power and freewill are required for a created living being to have individuality and personality. This of the greatest importance to God who created mankind to reproduce Himself; it is critical that all those who are to become a part of His Kingdom freely choose to do so. In this life they must demonstrate character which is basically self-control by striving to the best of their ability to restrain the lust of their own flesh and Satan's attempts to influence their minds to do evil.

God has placed in man the ability to enjoy food, drink, music, art, literature, the beauty of a sunset or of a sunrise; to fall in love, to enjoy accomplishing different types of work, to play a musical instrument, etc. All these things can be highly pleasurable and enjoyable to us and are not sin.

The challenge for all truly converted members of God's Church is to use the mind power and freewill given them in accordance with the requirements of God's law. In order to do so, they have to voluntarily and freely adopt an attitude of mind where their constant desire and effort is to sincerely try to live their lives in accordance with God's law.

Maintaining this attitude of obedience to God in all things through the exercise of our freewill and this for the duration of our natural, physical lives is the character trait that will become permanent in our unchanging spirit body at the time of the first resurrection and which will make it possible for you to become a part of God's Kingdom.

Basically, God wants us to learn and to practice the habit of self-control in the use of our physical senses and mind power with His law providing us with the knowledge of good and evil we need to guide us in making the right choices. This habit of self-control along with our abiding attitude of obedience to God in all things maintained all throughout our converted lives will make it possible for us to inherit salvation in that this is the condition for God to impute Christ's righteousness to us which is what saves us. These qualities of character will then become a permanent part of our glorified spirit bodies.

The physical appetites in our bodies, the pleasures of the flesh and of the mind are all there to enrich and make our lives fulfilling but they are a double-edged sword as the saying goes. If we make a proper use of these things, they serve to edify us spiritually and are profitable physically. If we abuse and misuse our physical senses and mental abilities they then become lust; lust which comes from our own selves. God leaves us completely free to use these things in accordance with His law or not.

Of course, the ultimate criterion is the attitude of the person: do they really want to try to obey God in all things and are not excusing their shortcomings but rather asking God to forgive them when they sin and continue to try not to repeat the same lustful behavior. We do not have to be perfect in obedience and God knows we can't be; but we need to have an unchanging desire to obey God in all things and to constantly work at reducing sin in our lives and very importantly, to acknowledge our sins when we sin and ask God to forgive us. We must resist the human temptation to rationalize away our sins which is the road that leads to perdition.

Man, even now, is neither inherently good nor evil. Those who embark on a life of evil do so knowingly and by choice; no higher power is forcing them to do so; it is the same situation for those who choose to try to live their lives as much as they can in accordance with God's law.

We must control our thoughts, our emotions and our imaginations and not let them blind us. Please note that the decision to not let our emotions and imaginations run wild and eventually blind us is one that we make willingly and knowingly. We bear the responsibility if we become blind as IT WAS A RESULT OF DECISIONS WE TOOK WHILE WE WERE NOT BLIND.

The unfortunate reality though is that even among those truly converted, after a time, they fail to do so and gradually drift back into the world with their minds deluding them into thinking that because they are still attending Sabbath day services and annual holy day celebrations, they continue to be members of God's Church.

The Bible reveals that this has been the problem since the beginning of God's New Testament Church and that it will last until the end of the Last Great Day for the human mind does not change over time.

Hopefully this study might serve as a wake-up call to some of you.

Of course, as explained all throughout this study, it's entirely up to you as it has been entirely up to mankind from the beginning.

God will do His part in calling you and in covering your sins with Christ's grace but He will not force you to live the truth when He makes it available to you.

Concluding Thoughts

This study is longer than what would usually make for quick and easy reading, and I wish I were able to provide the same information in a much more concise way, but I wanted to ensure to the best of my ability that the message would be complete and understood.

In the following paragraphs, I will try to summarize and condense the essential information provided in this study in the hope that for those who have patiently read through this lengthy document may find it useful in sharpening their understanding of the main message of this study; so here goes.

Men and angels were given mind power and freewill by God for them to have individuality and personality. Otherwise, these creations of God would be like robots fully controlled by their creator. God and the Word would then still be alone in the universe.

Mankind and angels were created neutral i.e., they were free to obey or not obey God and there was nothing forcing them to obey or disobey; they were free to make up their minds as to what they would do.

Mankind and angels were given the basic essential information they needed to know and understand the consequences of choosing to obey or disobey God and then, they were given the opportunity to choose.

Lucifer and the angels' choice were to either accept God's rule by continuing to administer God's government over the earth or choose to rule themselves. Making this choice would complete their spirit creation and would become a forever unchangeable part of their personality or character. Lucifer and the angels that followed him chose to overthrow God and take over ruling the universe. Essentially, Lucifer and the angels that followed him chose to rule themselves rather than remain under God's rule. As a result, their spirit character is set as forever in opposition to God.

Adam and Eve were also given the same choice; would they rule themselves according to their own understanding of right and wrong or would they submit themselves to God by letting God decide right and wrong for them. Lucifer become Satan tempted them to define good and evil for themselves and rule themselves. They took the decision to rule themselves.

They were all given the ability to freely make the decision for themselves through the mind power and freewill given them by God.

There was no higher power that could force Lucifer and the angels and, Adam and Eve to choose to obey or to disobey God. It had to be their decisions freely taken.

Why then did Lucifer and the angels sin and, why did Adam and Eve sin?

The mind of God, of Lucifer, of the angels and, of Adam and Eve are capable of emotions. Emotions enrich our lives and make them more pleasant, but they are not logical. The decisions that we make are the product of the constant interplay of logic and emotions; they are not the result of either pure logic or pure emotion.

The emotional component of our minds if not kept under control can and does cause us to make bad decisions. Words spoken and actions taken when angry are often regretted when our anger has passed. God is capable of emotions as the Bible clearly shows; He was often angry with ancient Israel; He expressed disappointment with mankind whose thoughts were evil continually; He destroyed them all in a great flood except Noah and his family; the Day of the Lord is God's wrath, and His wrath is filled up at the pouring out of the 7 last vial plagues. Man's mind is capable of emotions because it is after the image of God's mind which also has emotions.

Our minds and that of angels are capable of lust i.e., of developing an excessive desire for something whether it be food, drink, love, money, power, etc. In the case of Lucifer and the angels it was an excessive desire for power. These things are pleasurable and make life enjoyable when used in accordance with God's law. However, if abused and/or misused they will cause us misery and in God's eyes, lust is sin.

If we allow ourselves to lust by not controlling our thoughts, our minds will start to devise ways and means for us to fulfill our lust. It will provide us with means to justify it to ourselves and to others. No one wants to think of himself as being a sinner or that what they do is sinful. The mind will create an altered reality to enable us to feel not guilty and uncomfortable about fulfilling what we know deep down in our minds but will not admit to anyone else, is our lust.

Lucifer and the angels and, the first man and woman sinned because of their own lust. There was no higher power to influence Lucifer to sin and Satan has no power to force anyone to sin; his only power is one of influencing the thoughts of men.

James tells us that men sin because of their own lust.

Jas 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his OWN lust, and enticed.

It is not the lust of Satan in them; it is their own lust. Lucifer and the angels sinned because of their own lust; not because of any higher power forcing them to do so. Satan influenced Adam and Eve to sin but he has no power to force them to do so; it was their decision and this is why God could hold them responsible for it.

What will happen during the Millennium when Satan is unable to deceive the nations and God pours out His Spirit upon all flesh? Will there be no more sinning and a massive conversion of the nations?

Sin will continue as it does today and for the same reason, men's lust. Men's mind will remain the same during the Millennium and they will sin for the same reason.

Christ says plainly, if we will believe our Bible, that many are called but few are chosen. They are not chosen because they do not follow their calling. Christ also says of those who are coming into God's Church that they should take the strait and narrow gate that leads to life but He also says that it is the many that will take the broad way that leads to perdition.

This is the way things have been since the creation of man and which will continue until the 3rd resurrection.

It is not the many that will be saved but the few that are called, chosen and faithful.

God is a God of justice and of love and all are given the same opportunity and placed under the same conditions. All will be given the same chance to be saved but it is only those who until their death will use their mind power and freewill to resist the lust of their own flesh to the greatest extent possible and try to obey God to the best of their ability that will inherit salvation.

Rev 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and **THEY THAT ARE WITH HIM ARE CALLED, AND CHOSEN, AND FAITHFUL.**

Unconverted mankind is not the slave of Satan; converted members of God's Church and unconverted mankind are subject to Satan's influence through his broadcasting through the air but Satan has no power to impose his will on either the converted or the unconverted.

The main source of sin is our own lust; not Satan. It is why during the Millennium when Satan is imprisoned and cannot deceive the nations there will be just as many as now while Satan's broadcasting is ongoing, who will lose their salvation because of being enticed by their own lust.

Our salvation wholly depends on the decision we make to keep our minds and thoughts under control so we do not start on the road that leads to our deceiving ourselves in order to allow ourselves to follow our lust without feeling guilty and to make ourselves believe that we are still headed for salvation.

Man needs to learn self-control based on God's law. He has the power to choose or not to exercise self-control. If he chooses a life of self-control this is the attitude of obedience to God that will be rendered permanent at the time of the resurrection of God's saints as glorified spirit beings.

Man now has but a little power and must demonstrate his willingness to use the freewill and mind power given him to control himself when coming to the right knowledge of good and evil by forcing himself to follow the good and restraining himself from engaging in evil. God wants to see man follow the good and resist the pressure to give free rein to their lust as much as they can.

God will do His part in calling you and in covering your sins with Christ's grace but He will not force you to live the truth when He makes it available to you and He will respect your decision to not obey Him even if it means your eternal death.

HAPPINESS IN THIS WORLD IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT SELF-CONTROL AND IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BECOME PART OF GOD'S KINGDOM WITHOUT IT.

Your happiness and salvation are entirely up to you; God will do His part; the challenge is for you to do yours by putting to good use the absolute freewill and mind power God gave you.

