

Errors Of Armstrongism

Jesus said, "Most definitely I tell you, unless one is born-again, they cannot see the Kingdom of God ... You must be born-again" (John 3:3 & 7).

'If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved' (Romans 10:9).

Armstrongism is a strange mixture of faiths. The Worldwide Church of God, also known as the Church of God International, was founded by Herbert W Armstrong and continued by his son, Garner Ted Armstrong. Herbert stated in the 'Plain Truth' magazine (July/August 1973) 'the work going on from the Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God, is the only work on earth proclaiming the very Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world in great power'. The Armstrong's actually believe from the death of the apostles until Armstrong began his church in 1934, the true Gospel was lost and he restored it. They also believe Herbert Armstrong was 'the Elijah who was to come'. He certainly was not because Jesus told us John the Baptist was the one who came in the Spirit and power of Elijah.

A man named Ronald Weinland believes he is one of the end-time prophets spoken of in Revelation. He is not because the two witnesses are Jewish men from Jerusalem. We regard that as delusions of grandeur. As we do a study of this cult, we will see that there are many other glaring errors in their doctrine. Like all cults, as people cluster around a certain leader or false prophet, erroneous facts come to light. Without fail, every false prophet leads others to believe, he and only their particular followers have the last word from God, and light is found only within their organisation – all else is darkness.

The Bible speaks clearly about such erroneous beliefs and tells us not to accept them. 'As we said before so I now say again; If anyone is preaching to you a Gospel different from what you received from us, let him be accursed (doomed to eternal punishment)' (Galatians 1:9). 'Reject all falsehood, let everyone speak the truth with his neighbour, for we are all parts of one body' (Ephesians 4:25).

Although the Christian church is divided into many man-made segments such as Baptists, Evangelicals, Anglicans, Catholics, Presbyterians, Pentecostals etc, all have the one steady basic belief – Jesus was born the Son of God when the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary and she conceived Jesus, he was born as a human Child, grew to be a normal but sinless Man to die for our sins and did so with great victory, defeating death when He was raised from the dead. Believing that, makes us all part of the one Body of believers. Not one of the above mentioned denominations is better than another and all genuine believers will enter the Kingdom of God set up by Jesus, regardless of what building they choose to fellowship in.

Armstrongites believe they will become gods, and this idea of created men or angels wanting to become like God, or 'as gods' is not a new idea. It is the age-old blasphemy taught by the devil to the gullible. Eve was challenged by this same thought. 'You will not surely die, for God knows in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil' (Genesis 3:4 & 5). Lucifer said, "I will make myself like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:14). That arrogant attitude had him thrown out of heaven forever.

Not only do Armstrong publications discuss subjects like 'What it means to be equal with God' (Tomorrow's World, April 1971), but the same article goes on to promise Armstrong's followers they will some day advise and counsel God Himself! The Lord promises Christians we will be joint-heirs with Jesus as kings and priests and will reign on earth (Revelation 5:10) but we will never, ever be gods. There is only one true God revealed in the pages of the Bible and there is no one equal to the Father. He alone is worshipped; all others worship Him. The Lord says, "I will not give My glory to another" (Isaiah 48:11) ... "I am the First and the Last and besides Me there is no God" (Isaiah 44:6) ... "I am the Lord and there is no one else; there is no God besides Me" (Isaiah 45:5).

Without fail, every cult denies salvation is by grace alone, through faith and Armstrongism is no exception. They substitute a 'works program' designed to have their followers look to their organisation for salvation rather than to our Saviour, Jesus. This is in spite of the clear words written in the Bible, 'It is by free grace you are saved through faith, and this salvation is not of yourselves but it is the gift of God. Not because of works lest any man should boast' (Ephesians 2:8 & 9). We cannot be saved through works. We mortal humans simply cannot work out our own salvation. We depend entirely on God the Father, and His Son Jesus. Good works should certainly follow salvation but works are not a condition of salvation because it is free and by faith in God.

Armstrong's have corrupted the term born-again. Jesus fully explained in precise detail what being born-again means (John 3:1 to 21). Armstrong teaches his followers they are not born-again until the resurrection

and expect them to believe they are to live out their lives as 'embryo's' and are not 'born' until they die. The devil knows if you keep waiting until your death before you attempt to be born-again, then he has got you for eternity and he knows it! There is not one verse in the Bible that can back up Armstrong's theory. As genuine born-again believers, Christians can point out scriptures like, 'As many as did receive Him, He gave the right to become the children of God, to those who believe in His name' (John 1:12). 'You have been born-again, not from mortal seed but from One Who is immortal, by the living Word of God' (1 Peter 1:23). There is also the second scripture written on the top of page one of this text taken from Romans 10:9. Our born-again experience occurs when we receive Jesus, many years prior to our resurrection.

Further to this, the Bible tells us our transformation into the Kingdom of God is immediate – at our conversion. 'The Father has delivered us out of the kingdom of darkness, into the Kingdom of the Son of His love' (Colossians 1:13). Note it is written in the past tense! When we are saved, we are already living in the Kingdom of God, right now. Jesus also spoke in the past tense. "I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, the person whose ears are open to My words and believes in Him Who sent Me, has eternal life and he does not come into judgement but he has already passed over out of death into life" (John 5:24).

Armstrongism also denies the bodily resurrection of Jesus, teaching instead that He was raised as a 'spirit' being but Jesus already refuted that. 'They were startled and terrified because they thought they saw a spirit. Jesus asked, "Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and feet, that it is truly Me! Touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have"' (Luke 24:37 to 39). Jesus is not a spirit, He is still a Man and always will be a Man. 'There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus our Messiah' (1 Timothy 2:5).

One major error of Armstrongism is the denial of the exclusiveness of the triune Godhead, reducing the Holy Spirit to an impersonal force and an 'it' while at the same time exalting men to be 'gods'. That teaching shows the wrong attitude to the Holy Spirit and is blasphemy. The Holy Spirit is a 'He' and He is a Comforter and a Teacher. Jesus said, 'The Comforter (Counsellor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and He will help you to recall everything I have told you" (John 14:26). We must not have a wrong attitude to the Holy Spirit. 'Whoever blasphemes the Holy Spirit can never receive forgiveness but is guilty of an everlasting sin' (Mark 3:29). "The Holy Spirit distinctly declares in the latter times, some will turn away from the faith, giving attention to deluding and seducing spirits and doctrines that demons teach through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared" (1 Timothy 4:1 & 2).

Armstrongism has other doctrinal errors designed to keep his followers isolated from their families, friends and the true Christian body, to make their members dependent on the cult group for all their social life. All of these errors in doctrine can be corrected by simply studying the scriptures, which are the God-breathed words of the Lord (2 Timothy 3:16).

No cult has the answer to salvation and following a cult will result in misled people going to a lost eternity. Only accepting Jesus as our Lord and Saviour and accepting His sacrifice on the cross for all mankind will result in an eternal life with God the Father, His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit Whom God sent to us after Jesus ascended into heaven as Jesus promised (Acts 2:1 to 4).

Amen and God bless you.

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