

7/18/15

The Christian Church
Religious, not Spiritual

Even though the title of this commentary will understandably be met with strong objection, and natural (but, not spiritual) resentment, it is nonetheless an accurate critique of the degenerated church in the world today. The truth of it is sadly, but clearly, disclosed in the the third chapter of the Revelation prophecy of the end-time, Laodicean likeness of the universal church condition, in the final era of its history.

The modern day Christian, or most churches, because of the advent and proliferation of the Arminian, universal atonement, free will misinterpretation of the gospel are in a word, religious, if anything, but not spiritual, in their Christian life, which is a very serious distinction to be recognized, in identifying the underlying cause and effect of the Arminian misconstrued gospel beliefs, which have prevailed in the churches for centuries!

The word spiritual connotes different meanings among various religions, and may be mistakenly associated with (1) occult movements, or (2) Southern U.S. blacks music containing African and European elements, and (3) spiritualism, a belief that the dead survive as spirits that can communicate with the living, often through mediums. None of which, except sometimes the underlying basis of No. 2, are legitimate Christian practices.

To clarify the correct use of the word spiritual (biblically), it means that the new nature, or life principle of a Christian, is the Spirit of God imparted to him in his regeneration, or "new birth". He is, then, as in 1 Cor. 5:17, " a new creation in Christ", which is spiritual, compared to his natural mental faculty, which is not spiritual!

To think that a Christian automatically acts in accordance with his new spiritual nature is not true. That would be a degree of perfection that would be out of sync with the reality of our old, natural self, which we have to contend with during our

earthly life. It requires a continual or frequent conscious submission to God to "walk (think and act) in the spirit", by (1) turning away from the impulses and dictates of the old nature, or as scriptures defines it: the flesh, and putting on the new man, by the renewing of our mind. That is, learning biblical doctrine, or scriptural truths. And, it is vitally important to know that spiritual truth can only be understood by an active spiritually oriented mind, which is not an attribute of many Christians, nor is it a continuously present capability of any believer!

"Walk (a decisive act) in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust (impulses, or dictates, etc.) of the flesh." Gal. 5:16. This means at least a daily commitment, in order to walk faithfully with the Lord. It may seem like an unfair presumption, but it is my observation that even if most, or many Christians technically are aware of the presence of the two natures within the believer (flesh, and Spirit), the actions of most of them (nearly all), belie any reliance upon, or involvement of their new, spiritual nature--especially since it is prevented (blocked or impeded), mainly by a wrong interpretation of the true gospel!

How can it be that almost the entire universal church (probably 95% or more) still live by their same old, fleshly natures? Being, therefore, spiritually inactive, their Christian life is mainly only a religion, and not a spiritual way of life, as wrongly assumed! As the bible warns, and teaches us, a house (of works) built upon sand cannot stand! How many Christians think that principle only applies to others, or non-Christians when it applies to them, gospel-wise.

The gospel, the doctrinal foundation of the Christian life, laid by the Lord, is rock solid and eternally secure! But, if a Christian is motivated by a make-believe concept of that foundation, his works, however well intended, will also be done in the flesh, and unacceptable to the Lord, as having any spiritual value, or merit.

Inexcusably unbeknown to a large majority of Christians, the preceding comments are the only logical explanation for the historical degeneration of the church in general, which the Lord describes in Rev. 3 prophecy (which is "history written beforehand") of the end-time church, as "lukewarm, and wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked". Those words are directed to most of

you by the Lord, whom you imagine you are faithfully following! But, if you really were, those negative descriptions would not have been recorded, and some words of commendation could have been there, instead.

The purpose of this commentary is to recount what happened, historically, to the integrity of the original, scriptural meaning of the gospel., which has resulted in a centuries-old controversy between two opposing factions. The first group is called Calvinists, after John Calvin, a reformation era reformer, and on the other side of the conflict are Arminians. after the remonstrant, Jacobus Arminius.

Calvinist salvation doctrine represents the literal scriptural meaning of it, as held by the original and early churches, that did not deviate from the true gospel. The Arminian gospel concept is a liberal misrepresentation of the true gospel, which, if not willful and intentional, is still irresponsible, and every Christian is seriously at fault, for adopting that false salvation doctrine, which has corrupted, and virtually destroyed the integrity of the universal Christian church!

In a critical contrast between the two sides of the controversy that has gone on unsettled for many centuries, the Calvinists are proponents of (1) the gospel according to God, faithful, and honorable to him, and (2) the Arminian contradictory doctrine is, the gospel according to man, which is a product of disobedience, and disloyalty, and irreverence to God and his word!

Is there not a precedent, a pattern for how a church is supposed to operate, or conduct itself? Of course, God established the first church at Jerusalem to be the model to be followed by all churches, for all time. See Acts 2:42-47 for examples of the necessary unity of beliefs, and practices such as worship, preaching, prayer, evangelism and other things required to be faithful to the Lord.

There is, therefore, no excuse, or justification for churches today to hold doctrinal differences compared to the scripturally established truths maintained in the early church era, and which are to be uniformly followed by all churches, throughout their history. The complete literal gospel was recorded intact by the apostles, as it was received by them directly from God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In accurate biblical translations, the same pure gospel has been preserved for us, so that we may learn and faithfully understand, and uphold its truths today. So, what is the controversy, or conflict about? In a word (or two words), human nature, with its vicissitudes. Which is nothing more, in essence, than the old man, with his unspiritual nature, trying to do the new, spiritual man's job. Yet, that is the modus operandi of practically the entire church! It is why I referred to the church being religious, and not spiritual!

Somewhere, probably gradually, the faithfulness of the early churches gave way to human intervention (meddling and tampering), resulting in the advent of a corrupted gospel concept, beginning about the turn of the third century, with the false teaching of Pelagius, a British monk and theologian (?), who should never have been allowed access to any church, or personally by any believer.

It is church pastors that first cause, or let doctrinal misinterpretation creep into the churches. Like shepherds not closely guarding the flock, because of not maintaining integrity in their own beliefs.

What about your experience? What kind of church teaching, or evangelism did you listen to and accept, without ever proving whether or not it was the authentic gospel. First of all, that omission does not affect one's spiritual conversion. A natural, unregenerated person cannot understand, or legitimately acknowledge the true gospel. It can only happen after being born of the Spirit of God.

The two safeguards a believer has against false teaching are (1) the Spirit of God within him, to enable him to learn the truth, and (2) the pastor of the church he becomes a member of, if that pastor knows the truth of the gospel, himself--and most of them do not, because of the impact that the Arminian, false gospel has had on the universal church. As for true doctrine, a pastor, and others are responsible for what they teach, but **a Christian is responsible for what he learns**, so he cannot blame the church environment, for his doctrinal errors!

For the Christian to assure himself that he is learning the truth in what he is taught, or exposed to, there is the purposely recorded example that should be a rule for all believers to adopt, which is, doing what the Berean Christians did--that

is, they "received the word (taught to them) with all readiness of mind, but went home and searched the scriptures to see if those things be so".

And, though many may say that they follow that example (requirement), if it didn't stop them from becoming, or remaining an Arminian "gospel" believer, then they did not spiritually study the applicable scriptures, but only intellectually, in their old unspiritual nature, assumed they had learned the true gospel.

If they had dealt with the subject in their new, spiritual nature, they would have come to the truth. Whatever God requires of us, he gives us the ability to fulfill, if we follow his rules! Continual commitment to the truth is part of true discipleship, and cannot fail. Nor, conversely, can anything done by the natural mind ever have any spiritual value, or be acceptable to God.

Think of what the effect should be, of not knowing the truth of the very precious things that God and his Son did to make you a Christian? And, instead, substituting man's ideas, which derogate, and misrepresent the atonement as being a universal salvation provision, and contending that totally depraved natural man can (and must) exercise faith before he is indwelt with the Spirit of God, in regeneration; contrary to the fact that biblical faith is a fruit of the Spirit, not prerequisite to it! Natural human faith, which is all a non-Christian has, does not apply to spiritual matters. God does not really invite, or ask an unsaved person to come to the cross, which he cannot do! He takes the cross to the elect!

How do false beliefs redound to the glory of God? When, in fact, they serve Satan, who is either the author of them, or if the product of men's carnal thinking, then the devil exploits them, and keeps Christians deceived as long as they give him access.

Once a Christian starts his new life with a wrong belief of gospel doctrine, he puts himself in an unspiritual mindset, which will not leave him, nor will he be able to overcome it, unless he repents of that unfaithfulness--which, by and large, not many Christians ever do.

The gospel is the foundation of the Christian life, an essential truth to be appreciated and correctly understood in every doctrinal principle. Contrary to the popular misconceptions of Christians after the early church period, it is God alone

who personally and independently planned, through his Son, both who would be saved, and how and when he would carry it out.

No human means have any effect on the process, or execution of that salvation plan. Not by the ones converted, or any persons directly or indirectly associated with the ones that the Lord calls. Of course, the free-willers, which is nearly the entire universal church, think that God makes salvation available to all, which contradicts several gospel principles, (1) unconditional election, or predestination, of certain ones to be saved, (2) atonement, for the ones elected, only, (3) total depravity, including the inability of natural man to make any effective salvation decision (which is not even required, despite the Arminian insistence of it), and (4) irresistible grace, the unstoppable divine act of spiritual conversion of the elect.

Yet, look at the worldwide empire that the gospel according to man has created. The great majority of Christians who are immersed in the false, Arminian concept that prevails throughout the churches (mini to mega), missions, evangelistic organizations, bible schools, or unaffiliated believers--have misrepresented God, and the savior, Jesus Christ, by proclaiming lies as truth, without any apparent awareness, or conviction of the sin of propagating false teaching.

Do you think that the Lord will commend you for works done in the flesh? Because that is all they are, resulting in a largely wasted Christian life--being preoccupied with an unspiritual belief of the gospel, or something akin to Jewish idolatry, by following another God, or a false representation of the true God. If you think the term idolatry doesn't apply, consult a standard dictionary. I know that in your deceived gospel orientation, you think that I am the heretic in this controversy, because you have the false confidence of consensus support of the great percentage of Christians in the world, who believe like you do. **Majority opinion has no bearing on the truth!**

But, again, because you have not "walked (thought and acted) in the Spirit", you cannot discern scriptural gospel truth, and probably not much other doctrine, either, if any! You can, of course, speak doctrinal truths, in the words of scripture, but that doesn't mean in itself, that you understand the true meaning of those words. Therefore, without spiritual conviction of true biblical teaching, you only have opinions, or unproven assumptions of the subjects involved.

I know your mindset, because I believed (unspiritually), the way you do for the

first 10-11 years of my Christian life. Having come to know the real gospel doctrine, and seeing how contrived and full of holes the conventional false gospel concept is, I couldn't go back to that phony belief system, any more than I could believe in another ridiculous fabrication: that being natural evolution, the world's biggest fairy tale! Both theories have zero credibility. Even if the Arminians have several gospel principles right, the two or three they are wrong about destroys its integrity as a whole doctrine. And, God makes no allowances for anything less than total agreement with His word. The fundamentals must be learned and maintained, in order to stay sound in further truth of the subjects!

True Christianity is not a hope so, or think so, but a know so profession! It is indeed a science, a spiritual earthly life, with a systematized body of knowledge, including facts of the existence of a supernatural, perfect God, his divinity, his creation of the universe, and inspirational authorship of authentic scripture, with infinite power, ability, and authority--relating to everyone and everything in existence.

Scripture, especially doctrinal principles, not only do not need editing, it is forbidden by God to do so. So what do you suppose the Arminian twist of the gospel is? Editing, and bad editing at that! First of all, scriptural truth cannot be improved upon. It can be expressed in other words, as long as the true meaning of it is not changed, in any detail! And, it is arrogant, and pretentious for man to think that he can say anything better than God does!

Translators have already done the necessary language changes. Some resulting few bible versions are accurate and reliable. Others are corruptions of manuscripts, and there are faulty revisions of authentic translations to be watched out for. Of course, sermons, lessons, etc. can be stated in the speakers own words, **if they do not violate text and context** of established authentic scriptures. Christians who are spiritually committed to the Lord (thinking and acting in the Spirit), can discern the truth, or accuracy of versions of scripture themselves, knowing that God has preserved his word for us, no matter what man may do to alter, or corrupt it.

Most all Christians today are so falsely complacent with the man-made gospel they are indoctrinated with, that they can't believe that multitudes of fellow believers can be wrong about their "gospel". And, that a small minority (remember the Lord always has a faithful remnant) are doctrinally correct in their interpretation, to the extent that they can accuse the status quo in the strongest

terms, of it actually being unfaithful to the Lord and his word, particularly the gospel, the most important doctrine in the bible, which is the bridge from life "under the law of sin and death", to the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Or, from Satan's domain, to God's kingdom!

Man's gross misrepresentation of gospel truth, is probably the worst act of disobedience and disloyalty that a Christian can be guilty of, except possibly some form of blasphemy. But, interestingly, God says that Christians will not commit such sin, when they are walking with Him, "in the Spirit", per 1 Cor. 12:3, that "No man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth God accursed".

Why, then, do so many Christians not realize the gamble they engage in, by assuming their gospel belief is right, but not proving it? "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good". 1 Thess. 5:21. Otherwise, they are irreverent and disobedient to God! I wrote in another commentary, that the first thing the apostle Paul said to the Galatians when he visited them, was to castigate them in the form of his question to them, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?"

Well, God has been asking you the same thing, in his word, but you do not apply yourself to listen and study it to learn the truth about your errors, which would lead you to repentance and reformation. If God were to appear to you in person, at least audibly, the first thing He would say to you is, "Why have you not believed the true meaning of my gospel, but have followed the false teaching which originated from the ungodly source, of men like Pelagius and others, and have made it your constitutional doctrine, propagating it throughout the world?"

God would undoubtedly speak to you that way, because you have betrayed Him, by dishonoring His gospel--which is a form of idolatry, following the voice of another god, which ultimately is Satan, whose constant mission in life is to separate Christians from God, causing them to go astray, so that he can stand before God, and accuse you of disobedience, and unfaithfulness, while you go on espousing and professing the worthless babble of "another gospel", **which not only must grieve God, but evoke his righteous anger, as well!**

I assume that you defensively disagree, and resent what I have accused you of, but there is a direct, and implicit principle in scripture that cannot be compromised, or avoided. That is, that God's word must be defended and vindicated whenever it has been violated, and that correspondingly, error must be

exposed, and denounced for the damage it does to the testimony of God, and His word! Strange, that "defense and confirmation of the gospel", in those times applied to standing against outside false teaching, but now it is even more necessary within the church!

At this point, a review of church history would be in order, as it relates to the gospel. The following is a summary of the subject from my website:

Gospel Doctrine Chronology

From its original purity to its subsequent corruption.

God and Jesus - The source, and consummation of the gospel of sovereign grace.

The Apostles - Received the gospel directly from the Lord.

The Original Church - Received the gospel directly from the apostles.

2nd Century Churches - Probable beginning of gospel corruption, leading to a gradual, steady decline of gospel integrity.

Reformation Era - Attempts made to reform the false gospel doctrine, that affected the majority of churches.

Post-Reformation Era - After a brief period of partial reformation, the decline in gospel faithfulness continued.

Modern Church - Infected with Arminianism, the false concept of natural free will, and universal salvation opportunity.

Notable Objectors

(Manipulators of true gospel doctrine),

2nd - 3rd Century: Pelagius, British monk and theologian.

Reformation Era: Eck, Arminius.

Post-Reformation: Arminius, Wesley, Remonstrants.

Modern Church Era: Practically all churches, and other Christian organizations.

Notable Reformers: Luther, Calvin, Gill, Spurgeon.

Note: There are many others on both sides of the controversy, that could be added to the above.

The first church at Jerusalem, because of its complete faithful testimony, and integrity, is the model for all churches to be guided by, and emulate. All the elements of an orderly, approved church are recorded in Acts 2:42-47, and there are many examples of faithfulness throughout other New Testament churches.

There was at the time, persecution, especially of the apostles--which was a factor that no doubt strengthened their faithfulness, but do not let that be an excuse for less of a testimony in our times.

Nothing but a truly faithful church is acceptable to God, under any circumstances. Commitment, and discipline, and diligence are required of every believer. Anything less is lack of submission, and is disobedience to God's will! "Comparative" faithfulness is not an worthy testimony.

There is a verse of scripture that should humble us, among many, that says that whatever we do right, however much it may be, " is our reasonable service". And, "if we compare ourselves among ourselves, we are not wise". The only acceptable performance, is living as much as possible by biblical principles, which God promises to give us the spiritual ability to do! **Remember, God is the power of His principles; the dynamic of His demands!**

As for the dispute over gospel principles, there is an ironic factor here, which in itself proves that one doesn't have to (nor can he) believe the gospel to become a Christian. It isn't questioned that an Arminian believer may indeed be a Christian, just as well as a Calvinist believer. The question is how he, or anyone else actually becomes a Christian?

If belief of the gospel is a requirement to become a Christian (which it isn't), how could an Arminian Christian believe a false gospel, and be saved or redeemed? Certainly, God would not accept belief of an unspiritual gospel concept, that is not the truth of His word.

But, of course, the real truth of salvation is that God does everything necessary for it to happen. He certainly would not allow depraved, natural man to make a decision affecting a spiritual matter for which he has no discernment, or innate ability. 1 Cor. 2:11-14. So, in a simple statement of the truth--you don't have to believe to become a Christian (which you cannot do), but you have to be a Christian to believe--(which you will naturally do, if, and after God makes you a "new creation in Christ". 2 Cor. 5:17.

Referring again to the Acts 2 account of a faithful church, see the difference in church situations today, or for many hundreds of years since the early church era: (1) a new believer in the early case, would have heard the true gospel, i.e., in the church at Jerusalem, and becoming a member there, the pastor would teach the

new convert the elementary things he should learn, and advise him to personally study the scriptures to confirm, or disprove whatever he had been taught! And, especially until he is well grounded in gospel principles, to be on guard against the devil, who will try to deceive him.

(2) A prospective Christian today, would hear messages, or be witnessed to by Christians, who themselves were taught the same false gospel concept, and like them, would not be advised to study and be sure of his indoctrination. Or, if he was, having believed an erroneous gospel, he would continue thinking "in the flesh", and not be able to make a spiritual judgment of his beliefs! So, the cycle repeats itself thousands, or millions of times.

During the centuries of church degeneration, due to the gospel adulteration that has overtaken the church, false-based evangelism was increasingly over-emphasized, preoccupying the churches, and other associations--all with **no real results** in the salvation of souls, because they are predestinated and guaranteed to be redeemed by God's direct action, and at his appointed time!

Consider the question of churches (and especially mega-churches), whose priority is soul-winning, along with similarly motivated evangelistic associations, and missions--indoctrinated with the Arminian, universal atonement, free will, wrong gospel belief. Based on false doctrine, can their works be justified? No! Then try to visualize the astronomical waste of time and resources, of Christians not really serving God, but lured out of His will, and following man's leading, and exploitation by Satan. Can a lifetime of that kind of service (disservice), or assumed faithfulness count for anything, or is it all wood, hay, and stubble?

When the false teacher, Pelagius, lured some of the early church era believers down the wrong road, the first thing wrong (if they were church members) was that they were not convicted of the true gospel, so that false teaching would not draw them away from it. Once a Christian is convinced and convicted of the truth of a matter, he is really not susceptible to contradictory views and misinterpretations of the subject. As for the prevailing Arminian, universal availability of salvation concept, who would think that it would eventually burgeon into a takeover of practically the entire worldwide church, and hold it captive to Satan's dominion?

In essence, then, Christians today overwhelmingly act like the Israelites, in their Old Testament failure to obey God's ways, specified for them, when more often

than not they listened to other voices, and engaged in forbidden idolatrous practices. It is sadder, still, for Christians to be unfaithful, because generally, or dispensationally speaking, the Jews did not have spiritual natures (like Christians do) to guide and help them keep God's commandments, as they will be spiritually able to do as God's chosen nation, in a time yet to come.

A confirmed (scripturally proven) Calvinist, couldn't be deceived by humanly conceived theories that contradict the literal, logical truth of biblical doctrine--which is a complete, accurate science, not mere writers' opinions, or theological theories to be debated!

Regarding gospel misrepresentation, how can it be explained that by now millions of Christians, who were initially deceived by false teaching, stayed that way for the rest of their lives? Somewhere along the way, they must have sealed their minds, by yielding incorrigibly to the false indoctrination. Not "walking in the Spirit" is the simple, but true verdict! It is the one essential principle involved in doing anything for the Lord, or anything right as a Christian!

God calls the the Laodicean church members (Rev. 3:17) "blind", among other descriptive faults they are afflicted with. I don't know how anyone can dispute the prophetic application of those, and other charges to the end-time church's degenerate condition--which is the current fallen state of Christianity.

How did most of the universal church become spiritually blind? Well, since God has potentially provided the means of accomplishing every necessary thing he requires of us--which in a word, is "faithfulness", then any failure to fulfill that objective, is our fault! In other words, the vast majority of Christians made themselves, or allowed themselves to be "blind", and spiritually "deaf", as well.

For one thing, too many Christians seem to want to learn, or be enlightened (spoon fed) by preachers, and teachers, without working very hard at it themselves. With that typical mindset, they will not "study (enough) to show themselves approved". There are no shortcuts to the progress and growth that God requires of us, as in "rightly dividing the word of truth" (dissecting and discerning text, and context), giving the true sense of scripture.

In fact, most Christians are so locked in to their gospel fabrication, that the devil doesn't have to bother to come before God any more, accusing them (which is most all of you) of your unfaithfulness, because he has you right where he wants

you, out of God's will and fellowship, and you are not doing anything to extricate yourself from it. Why else does the Rev. 3 prophecy of the end-time churches use such descriptions of the church in general, as "lukewarm, and wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"?

It has to represent the large majority of Christians in the world today. And from my observation and experience with the gospel controversy, I doubt if there could be as many as three Christians out of a hundred that would not be guilty of those charges!

The specific faults of most all Christians producing the prophetic judgment of the typical contemporary church are:

1. Believing a false interpretation of the true meaning of the full gospel, especially the atonement (which is only for the elect), and faith (a fruit of the Spirit, possessed by Christians only, as a result of the new birth).
2. Not testing whether one's gospel beliefs are authentic, by the study of related scriptures (per the Berean Church example).
3. Refusing to heed scriptural admonitions, or listen to expository appeals for repentance and reformation of erroneous salvation doctrine.
4. Not "walking (thinking and acting) in the Spirit", but relying on the old, fleshly nature to make spiritual judgments, and decisions, i.e., erroneously thinking that majority consensus (on that unspiritual basis), proves that the Arminian gospel belief is right!

The foregoing false assumptions, are not the credentials of a doctrinally sound, spiritually thinking Christian. It's as if they have checked their new nature at the door, and are going on through the Christian life stumbling over the truth (especially the gospel), and gambling that they're doing the right thing. Trying to help them see the pitiful plight they are in, is like throwing a life preserver to a man in the middle of the ocean, and him saying no thanks, I'll take my chances! That doesn't apply to eternal security, but doctrinal faithfulness!

The status quo adherents of the liberalized tampering with the Lord's gospel, which has dominated the churches for many years, **do, of course, have the Spirit of God within them**, but, they do not let themselves be controlled, and motivated by their new, spiritual nature. It is doubtful that they (which is almost all them) have true spiritual knowledge, and judgment to make godly decisions, and be kept safe from many other temptations of Satan.

They did not resist the devil, when they unwittingly succumbed to the false gospel--and most never recovered from that deception, and delusion, nor did they even try to! If ignorance of the law is no excuse, certainly ignorance of gospel truth, with the consequences, and losses to come is a much greater failed responsibility!

A key fault that I addressed in another commentary, that is far more common than most Christians act as if they realize, but should, is that the average believer does not take God seriously enough! If he did, he would not be in the false gospel dilemma that he has been in all his Christian life! Because, if he persisted in following his new, spiritual nature he would not fail to come to the truth of any subject he studied. Which is exactly what God wants us to do. But, shamefully, it is only done by relatively few.

To elaborate on the continual conflict between a believer's two natures, a comparative example may help to explain how so many Christians do not know the true gospel, nor do they make any real effort to prove their belief, or respond to criticism of their false gospel doctrine. Let's compare a Christian's duties, and responsibilities to the job requirements of a company worker. The employee either knows the details of his job, or is told what to do by a person in charge of his work. A Christian's lifetime employer is the Lord, who has carefully recorded in scripture what the believer is required to do, to lead a godly life, serving the Lord, and fellow man (especially brethren)!

Both cases require a certain level of performance. An employee risks consequences for failing in his duties, i.e., reprimands for disobedience, or substandard performance, job security, pay cuts, loss of raises, even possible discharge.

A Christian is also ordered, in the bible, to do certain things, but since he is not directly, or visibly supervised, he often fails to do what is required of him. Which, of course, is disobedience of orders, or unfaithfulness. If the matter is serious enough, it can affect prayers, blessings, testimony, personal peace, and other graces.

Of course, the ideal level of integrity for both the natural man, and the Christian, exists when both can be trusted to be left alone, because they will do whatever is required of them, without having to be observed, or their performance questioned. If one was to test a cross section of business employees, and a

corresponding number of Christians, I wonder what the results would be!

I am sorry to say, that I would not be surprised that there would be significantly more company workers that would completely do what is required of them, than a similar number of Christians would do in obedience to the Lord! In fact, because of the erroneous gospel beliefs of most all believers, they would lose the contest on that point alone because that is virtually the most important responsibility of a Christian's life! That, I believe, is **the most inexcusable failure of allegiance and honor to God, or breach of trust that A Christian can commit!**

The widespread effect of not knowing the true gospel has been devastating. Nothing else could do the damage that a false concept of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has done. The prophetic picture of the end-time church in Rev. 3 is primarily the result of that doctrinal corruption that has prevailed in the church for centuries.

The scene in Rev. 3:20 is depicted by the words, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in, and sup with him, and he with me". And, then in verse 22, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches".

The conventional application of verse 20 as an evangelistic plea for souls to come to the Lord., is nothing more than a strawman argument (intentional, or not) for the real meaning. It is completely out of context, and is scripturally wrong to imply that natural, unconverted man can hear the Lord, spiritually, who, to repeat the fact, is not speaking to the unconverted, anyway! The sense of verse 22 corroborates, and attests to that explanation. "He that hath an ear", at least emphasizes the necessity to have spiritual awareness. And, since God does not communicate spiritual matters with unredeemed, carnal man, he is only referring to those who have been spiritually transformed (which is Christians, or true believers).

But, because those (which is most of the members of Christian churches) do not "walk in the Spirit", but in the flesh, they do not have spiritual ears open to the Lord! Because, when they began their Christian lives, they were taught, and believed a wrong interpretation of the gospel! And, nearly all of them have continued with that false indoctrination.

The Arminian, perverted gospel concept cannot be a spiritual belief, because

one who walks (thinks and acts) in the Spirit, can discern what is truth, and what is not, and would never accept false teaching on any subject he conscientiously studied, and scripturally proved! As long as one is sincerely trying to learn God's intended meanings of His word, He will keep him on track, and he will know it.

A caveat to the above is very important to know and remember; that is, that living according to our new, spiritual nature is not an automatic function of the Christian life! Our old, natural self is still with us on earth, and must be turned away from, and our new nature, turned to! When a Christian develops the habit of taking those steps, it will become **second nature** to him to make that decision, whenever a particular need arises, but, it should be common practice to "walk in the Spirit" (that is, with God), as much as reasonably possible, **all the time!**

It is to be considered a whole new "way of life". 2 cor. 5:17 says, 'I am a new creation in Christ, old things are passed away (to be reckoned that way, in effect), behold, all things are become new (technically, and potentially)".

Regarding the gospel, and any biblical doctrine, love and respect for God, and His word, plus a reverential fear of disobeying, or not pleasing Him, ought to be incentives enough to make us follow His specific principles, by learning and upholding them--all of them, as much as reasonably possible, like faithful disciples!