

## The Missing Link

Harmony M.B.C., November 1, 2009 (Morning)

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**1Cor. 2:14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

**2Pet. 3:16** As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.

These verses tell us a great deal about people who lack understanding about the things of God. It also tells us why we are often at odds with some other people who practice religion. People who grapple with religion without a guiding light are soon lost in a sea of misunderstandings about the workings of God. Since the beginning of time, people have made efforts to reconcile spiritual concepts with carnal thinking and have always ended up shipwrecked on the rocks of human logic. Like sailors without a compass, without sight of the sun, without sight at all, they are adrift on the sea of ignorance which engulfs many souls who decide to sail waters for which they have no maps. Those who fly in airspace using dead reckoning and their own visual capabilities soon hit a storm and are flying blind. Sadly, they do not find their way to a safe landing, but rather continue to fly blind until they crash in eternity.

This morning we want to think about the fact that, since a host of people continually reject the things of the Spirit of God and continue to misunderstand and mis-apply scripture, it is important for us to understand why and to understand what can change it. May the Holy Spirit help those of us who are His people to leave here today knowing something about this, and if there are some here who are incapable of understanding and believing the things of God; particularly the gospel message of salvation; may you come to a different spiritual place today as the Holy Spirit speaks to you.

### I. For People Who Have Only the Carnal Mind, There Is A Missing Link

- Interesting thing about **1 Cor. 2:14** in use of “receiveth not.” This Greek is in the middle voice and what this means is the Holy Spirit wants us to understand that this is an intentional act by the person being referred to: In Classical Greek, the middle voice is often **reflexive**, denoting that the subject acts on or for itself, such as “The boy washes himself.” This is important because we often refer to this biblical rule given in our text by saying something like “The natural man cannot receive the things of the spirit of God...,” while, in fact, this verse does not address the idea of “cannot,” but rather talks about the fact that the natural man acts upon himself to not receive the things of the spirit of God.
  - > Natural man has built the mechanism by which the missing link is maintained...it’s called “attitude.”
  - > The missing link causes the natural man to have **no desire nor capacity** to receive the things of the Spirit of God. The “thing” we are focusing on today is the proper understanding of the Word of God.

- > When natural men take it on themselves to become involved with the Word of God, they are opposed to the real truth in that Word, and because of prejudice against truth **as an attitude** they will not properly understand it.
- > The second limitation that carnal man has is a spin-off of the first: "neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"
  - Remember as a kid when your mother tried to give you some bad tasting medicine you didn't want to take. Well, if you managed to wear mama out on that, you went through an experience something like natural humans go through regarding the things of God...you never knew whether that medicine would make you feel better or not, because you never received it!

■ What comes next? (Point # II)

**II. Twisting Scripture Is A Trademark of The Unlearned and Unstable** (“wrest, as *they do* also the other Scriptures....)

- Humans run the gamut on "wresting" (that is twisting out of shape) the word of God. Misinterpretation runs from misunderstanding about God himself to false views about the message of the Lord. People with only a carnal understanding will twist biblical revelation into things God never said or meant.
  - > A neighbor boy I ran around with some crashed his bicycle in a ditch one day and warped the from rim badly. So he pulls it off and worked on it to try to straighten it. I saw him a little later riding that bike and it looked like he was drunk...the half twisted rim had him going all over the road...he couldn't run a straight route!
  - > Some very broad-based things that are misrepresented and misunderstood by natural humans are:
    - God's creation of all things
    - Miracles
    - The Sovereign Prerogative of God in salvation through Jesus Christ alone
    - The position of works in the plan of God
    - The resurrection of the dead
    - Law vs. grace

**III. Destruction Is The End Product of Carnal Misuse of Scripture** (“wrest, as *they do* also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.”)

- Misunderstanding and twisting scripture will cause people to always derive erroneous conclusions about how God does business
  - > (Paul, concerning lost people in Eph. 4:18) “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:”
- Deriving the wrong conclusions about God will cause people to reject the truths of God
  - > (Many of the Jews thought they had all the answers about the Messiah and here are their opinions when Jesus revealed himself to many of them - John 7:27: Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. John 7:41-42 Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? 42 Hath not the Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of

Bethlehem, where David was?"

- Rejecting the truths of God closes off the only avenue for getting right with God
  - > (Jesus to a group of rejecting Jews in John 5:38-40) “ And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. 39 Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. 40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

#### IV. What Is The Remedy?

- One day, Jesus' disciples asked him a question after he had spoken a parable to a large group of people. They asked, "Why do you speak in parables?" (**Mat. 13:10**) He answered and said unto them, **Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.** (**Mat. 13:11-12**)

> In that answer He gave us the key: some people have been given the means to know those things the Lord reveals in His word...some do not have it. What is the difference? And where do they get that capability?

#### ■ Read **2Cor. 5:17-21**

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

**2Cor. 5:18** And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

**2Cor. 5:19** To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

**2Cor. 5:20** Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

**2Cor. 5:21** For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

> The new creature is the missing link between humans and God

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

> Humans in the natural state are unreconciled to God as a result of their trespasses

**Col. 1:21** And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

- Christ is the reconciler

- Be reconciled to God through believing that He was made to be sin for you in order that your sin might be wiped away and you might be made the righteousness of God.

- Let's go back now to 1Cor. and look at one verse in Ch. 2 again: **1Cor. 2:12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, **but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.**