

Major Cults of Today



Editor:
Charles Orr, Sr.

Major Cults Of Today

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Charles E. Orr Sr., Editor

THE PURPOSE OF THIS LECTURESHIP BOOK

The Purpose Of This Lectureship Book Is To Promote The Cause Of Christ In Doctrine and Practice. This Will Be Done By Gathering Together Faithful Preachers From Around The State and Throughout Our Vast Brotherhood To Write and Lecture On Given Topics.

This Lectureship and Book Is Also Designed To Strengthen The Local Congregations Of The Church Of Christ, and Create A More Cohesive Element Between The Same. By This The World and Our Denominational Friends Can Learn More About The Plea To Restore The New Testament Church In Today's World.

This Lectureship and Book Is Also Designed To Help Us Understand Better The "Cults Of Today" and How To Deal With Them From God's Word.

Charles E. Orr Sr.

IN MEMORY OF

This book is dedicated to the memory of Brother John L. Lawson Sr. because of his tireless efforts to promote the cause of Christ. Never has there ever been a more faithful and dedicated servant to Christ and His church than he. When ever called upon to teach, preach, debate, or stand in any righteous way for the truth of the gospel, he was always ready. With bible in his heart, he would quote scripture from Genesis to Revelation as if he were reading from it. Yes, here was one who believed in having scripture for everything, thus showing his commitment to God's word. When it came to helping others with their financial and material need, he was always first to say; "brethren, lets do something to help." When I call to mind the many hours he and I would talk of the condition of the church, the lack of faithful men, and members to beat the bushes, and challenge the false teachers of today, and his admonition to me to keep fighting error with every fiber of my being, it encourages me to go on! Brother Lawson Loved the church of Christ! But just as strongly hated false doctrine and the institutions which promoted it.

He firmly believed that brethren spent too much time fighting one another. When the real enemy, {denominational and so called non-denominational churches, schools, and people} was out there laughing at us. HE WAS AND IS RIGHT!!!

Brother Lawson served the church at Sixty Ninth Street, in San Diego, California for many years, and one day, while handing out gospel DVDs, he parted this life for a home better than this. What a way to go! Sharing the gospel with some one else. So befitting brother Lawson.

We miss brother Lawson very, very much! So I close with his opening words every time we would talk; "well, hello my dear brother. Have you baptized anyone lately?"

ORGANIZATION OF LEADERSHIP

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**A
STUDY
OF THE
JEHOVAH'S WITNESS**

WHAT DO “WITNESSES” TEACH ABOUT THE “NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH?” WHY IS THIS FALSE?

Ulysses E. Johnson

INTRODUCTION

By definition, a cult is an organization that is “unorthodox” in its beliefs. Unorthodox means to break with tradition (Word Web Dictionary). God’s People are those people who strictly adhere to Bible Tradition as a matter of Commandment from The Head of God’s Kingdom. And everyone who desire to be God’s People in Truth will respect all Bible Traditions faithfully. When we say “Bible Tradition” in this manuscript, we do not mean man’s traditions based on The Bible. We mean traditions specifically stated or practiced in The Bible, 2 Thessalonians 2:15-17. Therefore we need to know that discussing a cult’s belief demands a look at that cult’s basic “mind set.” Also to be useful to the reader, any manuscript must have credibility. To achieve this, one must understand a basic “Jehovah’s Witness” belief. They believe that the earth was made to be inhabited always by man. When one understands that this basic Jehovah’s Witness doctrine cannot not be violated by any of the “Witness” cult, then the report of their belief on all other subjects can be received as one of credibility. With that said, let us state what the “Witnesses” teach on The New Heaven and The New Earth. Their official statement on the subject is as follows: “they are not the physical heavens that were created by God. Peter had just referred to a symbolic heavens, -human governments that are lifted up or exalted above their subjects. These heavens, have failed mankind

and will pass away. The new heavens, that will replace them is God's Kingdom made up of the King Jesus Christ and his 144,000 joint-heirs resurrected to heavenly life. The new earth, that Peter mentioned is not a new planet. Jehovah made the earth perfect for everlasting human life. At times, the Bible refers to the earth, when people are meant. The earth that will soon be destroyed consists of people who have made themselves part of this wicked world. Similarly, a world of ungodly people suffered destruction in the Flood of Noah's day. What then, is the new earth? It is a new society of people-God's true worshippers, who are upright in their hearts." Now that our understanding has been enlightened on their doctrine, we can discuss why this Jehovah's Witness doctrine is false doctrine.

**BIBLE AFFIRMATION: THE HEAVENS, THE
ELEMENTS, THE EARTH, AND ITS WORKS SHALL
PASS AWAY. PSALMS 102:25-26; ISAIAH 65:17;
MATTHEW 24:35, AND 2 PETER 3:10**

1. The context of Peter's statement is about a physical earth and physical elements (water) by which God used to destroy a wicked "world" of old. The earth at that time had water in it and around it. The water overflowed the earth destroying the world living on earth at that time. Peter says that once again that which surrounds the earth will go into destructive mode but by fire this time. The heavens being on fire shall burn up the earth and its works therein, 2 Peter 3:5-12.
2. God Almighty is an Eternal God, and he dwells in Eternity, Psalms 90:2. His Nature is eternal and He operates from that level. Earthly things (physical matter) are simply temporal and not meant to last forever. If one can see it, then it has a time limit. We are not to look to, or long after earthly things, but set our affection on things unseen and beyond earth where God dwells untouched by worldly corruption, 2 Corinthians 4:18, Colossians 3:1-4.

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For man to long for this earth (cleansed or not) as his eternal home is to refuse to advance to the level God has ordained for those who obey Him. Walking by Faith (not sight, 2 Corinthians 5:7) is the way of God's People. Their hopes and desires are in the "not seen" realm of the world to come and a city not made with hands, Hebrews 11:13-16.

3. The heavens to be destroyed is not the failed governments of the earth being replaced by The Government of King Jesus Christ because that has already happened. The Kingdom of Heaven was established as Daniel prophesied in the days of the Roman Empire, Daniel 2:44. God's People have been governed by that Kingdom for over two thousand years already. His Kingdom is not in the future, but is here and now, Colossians 1:13. God has been setting up and destroying kingdoms for ages (Daniel 2:20-21), and there is no special day of reckoning just for earthly governments. That Day of The Lord is for the perdition of ungodly men, not ungodly governments, 2 Peter 3:7. The earthly governments are not the problem, for they are ordained of God for our good. They keep evil and evil men in check and punish the evildoer, Romans 13:1-4. All the works of the world whether governments, businesses, dwellings or art, will end with the earth. The resurrected people of God will not have use for these earthly devises and works that we now use for they will be as the Angels of God in Heaven, not even marrying, Matthew 22:29-30. Why would we be admonished to not lay up treasures upon the earth if our eternity will be lived on earth? Heaven is our hope and that is where we store up our treasures where rust and moth (earthly corruption) does not diminish its value for its future use, Matthew 6:19-21.
4. The New Heavens and The New Earth is a replacement for the former things which were destroyed in The Day of

The Lord, 2 Peter 3:12-13. We do not know what The New Heavens and Earth will be, (1 Corinthians 2:9), nor do we know what we shall be, (1 John 3:2), but we look for a new country (dwelling place) of promise, Hebrews 11:13-16. The New Earth is not the old earth cleansed of disobedient people. God Almighty is The Creator not an over hauler. He promised to create a new heavens and new earth, (Isaiah 65:17-19) for His People and a Jerusalem of Rejoicing. The former things of sorrow will be done away and not even be remembered nor come to mind. The Lord has revealed that He will accomplish this after the great Day of Judgment. There is a wonderful account of it being done in the future which harmonizes beautifully with His Word in 2 Peter three and Isaiah sixty five. It is found in the book of Revelation which reveals a triumphant end to Christian Age on earth. God's People will gloriously overcome Satan, evil, and death, and then retire to Eternal Life of Joy, Peace, and Righteousness. But it will be new! Not refurbished! Even The City is New Jerusalem where there is continuous day, and its construction and make up is created by God who will present it to His Victorious People, Revelation 21:1-27.

5. God is not a respecter of persons, (Acts 10:34), and God's People are not divided into two casts or levels. If one is saved and accepted in, then he is rewarded as all of The Saints. An image of one hundred forty four thousand Saints from faithful Israel (represented by twelve thousand multiplied times twelve tribes), and a "great multitude" of Saints is found in the book of Revelation. These all were at The Throne of God and not separated into two groups of earth dwellers and Heaven dwellers, Revelation 7:1-17. The Children of God are all one in Christ Jesus. There is no distinction as to kindred, social status, or gender, and they are all Heirs according to "The Promise" Galatians 3:26-29. Jesus, The King of The

Kingdom teaches us that reward for good service to God is the same for all Servants, Matthew 20:1-15. There are only two types of rewards. There is the one of honor for the obedient, and the one of wrath for the disobedient, Romans 2:5-11. The only promise I find of reward variation is in the administering of punishment. The ignorant gets beaten with fewer stripes. But all of The Faithful will get the same reward, Luke 12:46-48.

6. The flood of Noah's Day brought on water to destroy the wicked, but at the same time it also upheld (saved) the Godly by floating them above the destruction. Baptism is a figure of the same in that it leaves no rescue for those who do not submit to it, and brings Salvation to those who use it to obey God from a good conscience, 1 Peter 3:20-21. The fire to come in The Day of The Lord will not keep the Righteous afloat above the destruction for the earth being destroyed will be gone and not be used anymore.

CONCLUSION

The Jehovah's Witness teaching on The New Heavens and The New Earth is false because it is contrary to Bible Principles and facts. God said "Let God be true and every man a liar." And when man contradicts God's Word, the doctrine is false, Romans 3:3-4. The New Heavens and The New Earth are prepared by God for a prepared People, (1 John 3:1-3) which are The Sons of God and there are many mansions in The Father's House, John 14:1-3. In Noah's Day there was no raising of the righteous dead because that was not The Day of Final Judgment. The same earth was needed to carry on earthly life as it was before. Man had to be fruitful and multiply, (Genesis 9:1-11) upon the earth after the flood, but no such requirement is given to Saints who will be saved from the destruction in The Day of The Lord. Even their bodies will not be the same but will be changed in an instant, (1 Corinthians 15:49-58) and not as Noah who kept

his same earthly body after the flood to carry on life on the same earth. Everything will be new in the new dwelling place where Christ Himself will come again and receive His Saints unto Himself, and where He is, they shall be with Him always, Amen!

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BIOGRAPHY

Ulysses Johnson

- Currently preaches for the Southside Church of Christ in Mobile, AL.
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- He and his wife, Ann, have two children

WHAT DO “WITNESSES” TEACH ABOUT BAPTISM, AND WHY IS THIS TEACHING FALSE?

Larry Williams

The driving forces of the Jehovah’s Witnesses movement have been Charles Taze Russell, Joseph Franklin Rutherford, Nathan Homer Knorr, and the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (Stewart, McDowell 1983).

Charles Taze Russell was born near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on February 16, 1852. His parents were Presbyterians of Scotch-Irish decent (Hoekema, Anthony, p. 223). At fifteen years old, he was in a partnership with his father operating a chain of men’s clothing stores. Also at age 15, Mr. Russell without a formal theological education organized a biblical class whose members eventually made him “pastor” (Stewart, McDowell 1983). Mr. Russell was deeply troubled with the Presbyterian’s teaching on predestination and eternal punishment. He issued a pamphlet entitled “The Object and Manner of the Lord’s Return” of which 50,000 copies were published. In 1876 he joined N. H. Barbour of New York, who was the leader of a disaffected group of Adventists. They left the Adventist’s movement because they agreed with Mr. Russell’s teaching on the second coming of Christ which was to be spiritual and non-visible (Hoekema, Anthony, p. 224). Mr. Russell and Mr. Barbour joined in 1877 to publish a 194-page book entitled “Three Worlds or Plan of Redemption”. A few years later Mr. Russell broke away from the Adventist’s disaffected leader Mr. Barbour because of his teaching that the death of Christ was not the ransom price for Adam and his race (Hoekema, Anthony, p. 225). On December 13, 1884 the “Zion’s Watchtower Bible and Track Society was established as an unincorporated body with Mr. Russell as its manger

(Hoekema, Anthony, p. 225).

Joseph Franklin Rutherford was born on November 7, 1869 in Booneville, Missouri to Baptist parents. He practiced law as a public prosecutor for Booneville, Missouri. He joined the Jehovah's Witnesses in 1906 and in 1907 became the society's legal counselor (Hoekema, Anthony, p. 228). Upon Charles Taze Russell's death in 1916, Rutherford became the second President of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. When Rutherford took the position of President of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, he endured conflicts with disaffected Jehovah's Witnesses groups, governmental accusation of patriotism, health, and religious observances (Encyclopedia of Arkansas 2008). Joseph Franklin Rutherford was the first to recognize the Brooklyn office as the home office for the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (Baalem, V., p.260), and he later published "The Golden Age". In 1931 members of the Society adopted a resolution affirming that from then on they were to be known as Jehovah's Witnesses basing the new name on the word of Isaiah 43:10. Joseph Rutherford served as president for the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society for twenty five years, he died in 1942. Under his leadership the Society moved from a democratic organization to a theocracy. The theocracy in the Brooklyn home office began the appointment of local congregational directors (Baalem, V., p.260).

Nathan Home Knorr was born 1905 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. When Knorr was 17, he became a full-time preacher and joined the headquarter staff in Brooklyn. Knorr improved the Society: by improving the Society's training program, organizing the theocratic ministry school, and translating the Bible into the modern English. During Knorr's administration as president, there was a tremendous expansion of the work into foreign countries (Baalem, V., p. 260).

The Jehovah's Witnesses definition for water baptism is

linguistically correct which indicates it is an overwhelming immersion and covering in water. However, their definition for the biblical purpose of baptism is incorrect. The Jehovah's Witnesses believe... the Christian water baptism is an outward symbol, that the individual who has being baptized had made a complete, unreserved, and unconditional dedication through Jesus Christ to do the will of Jehovah God. Their scriptures also refer to John's baptism, baptism with Holy Spirit, and baptism with fire, among others (Reasoning from the Scriptures, p.54). This definition indicates one is first saved and the act is symbolized by water baptism (Reasoning From Scriptures, p. 54). In fact, this concept has its roots in Calvinism, which is popular among many modern religious sects. The heated controversy of the fifth century between Pelgius and Augustine was over the concept of whether sin was original or was sin a deliberate choice. John Calvin lived between 1507 A.D. and 1564 A.D., he seized upon the doctrine of original sin as was advocated by Augustine, and it was endorsed in 418 A.D. by the general Council of the African Churches. Calvin later developed logical acrostic, "Tulip" which presented the concept of original sin into a logical language. Calvinism asserts man is born "Totally Depraved", he is in "Unconditional Predestination", he has "Limited Atonement", he enjoys "Irresistible Grace", and he has "Perseverance of the saints" (Turner, Rex, A.1980). Both the Baptist Church and Jehovah's Witnesses believe and teach Calvinism (Jennings, A., p. 55; 96). The Baptist Church's manual states, that the penitent regenerated believers are baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a symbolic release of the soul from the defilement of sin. There is an actual or a real remission of sins when one is believe in Christ-this is the declarative, formal, symbolic remission in baptism (Pendleton, J., p. 94). Therefore, the theory of Jehovah's Witnesses on water baptism, it is an outward sign off

inward grace which indicate a sinner is saved first...one being baptized has made a complete, unreserved and unconditional dedication through Jesus Christ to do the will of Jehovah God (*Reasoning From The Scriptures*, p. 54).

The New Testament baptism with its constituents demolishes the old house and creates a new house with one pendulum swing. The Jehovah's Witnesses do not understand the constituents in baptism, thus they are confused about its purpose. The constituents in baptism are water, blood, resurrection, the Holy Spirit, and Christ. First of all, biologically water is in the blood of every living being. Nevertheless, upon the death of a living person physiologically water and blood separates in the body. Christ's death on the Cross epitomizes the separation of water and blood at his death on the cross...the soldiers therefore came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him: but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was already dead, they brake not his legs: howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and straightway there came out blood and water... (John 19:32-34). Therefore the separation of water and blood indicates the death of Christ. The antediluvian world in Noah's culture and society was destroyed by the baptism of the flood (Gen. 6:6-12; I Peter 3:18-22). Furthermore, it was water baptism that destroyed the Egyptian's army in the Red Sea (Ex. 14:26-31; I Cor. 10: 1-5). The benefits of water baptism in the Christ's administration (Matt 28:19-28), is the death of the old man.... or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with (him) in the likeness of His death, we shall be also (in the likeness) of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with (him), that the body of sin might be done away with, so

that we should no longer be in bondage to sin.... (Ro 6:3-6). The old man is the man of sin. Paul in the book of Romans catalogues sins of the old man or flesh...and even as they refused to have God in (their) knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful: who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice... (Romans 1:28-32). Thus water baptism represents the death of the old man (Romans 6:7-11). Furthermore, Paul's letter to the Corinthians indicates the old man pass away... wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh: even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know (him) no more. Wherefore if any man is in Christ, (he is) a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new. But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation...(2 Cor. 5:17-18). Thus water represents death of the old, or man of sin.

Second of all, physiologically and spiritually the blood in water baptism indicates a living being. Blood indicates a living being because life is in the blood...for the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life...(Lev 17:11). The blood in baptism signifies the life of Christ. He was a live before the world was (Col. 1:15-17). He lived in the virgin's Mary's womb. He lived in days of his preaching ministry.

He lived in his judgment. He lived on the Cross, and thus he is alive today...he is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again" (Luke 24:5-6). The blood Christ is in baptism...or are Ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with (him) in the likeness of his death, we shall be also (in the likeness) of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with (him), that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin... (Romans 6:3-6). Christ's blood was shed in his shameful and humbling death (John 19:33). The Jehovah's Witnesses misunderstand baptism because they do not perceive that the blood of Christ and the Cross is in baptism (Romans 6:3-5).

The benefits of baptism are not only the death of the old man, but the cleansing blood of Christ for sinners. Other benefits of water baptism is, it washes away the initial sins, and continue cleansing the obedient Christians. ...but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanse us from all sin (I John 1:7). Furthermore, Paul teaches in the book of I Peter...knowing that Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot, (even the blood) of Christ: (I Peter 1:18-19). Only those whose robes have been washed in the blood of Christ are worthy to be before God's Throne (Rev. 7:13-15). Paul also indicates water baptism washes away sin (Acts 22:16), it remits sins (Acts 2:38), and it saves us (I Pet 3:21). The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society

assert baptism is a symbol which indicates sin has already been remitted, already washed away, and already purged (Reason From The Scripture, p. 54).

Third of all, if there is life and death in baptism so is resurrection. Seeds are plated into the heart of the earth; nevertheless they are resurrected through growth. Christ is alive because he was literally and physically raised from the tomb of Arimathaea (Luke 23:33-38; I cor. 15:4; 20). Christ was raised from the dead on the third day as the bones of Elisha raised a dead man (II Kings 13:21). Water baptism indicate a sinner's resurrection from the spiritual death, thus Christ raise the candidates for salvation out of death through baptism, and made them alive. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary bear witness that Christ is risen (Matt. 28:5). Christ is alive in baptism. We are buried with him (Col. 2:12; Romans 6:4). The Jehovah's Witnesses do not understand the purpose of baptism because they cling to Calvinism which teaches man is born a sinner therefore he is not responsible for his sinful behaviors. Their teaching denies the dignity and freedom of humanity (Pendelton, p. 54).

The benefits of baptism, it jump state the dead spirit of man by Christ through the Holy Spirit which is the third person of the Godhead (Titus 3:5; Ro. 12:2; Eph. 4:23).

If the Jehovah's Witnesses will accept the biblical teachings of water baptism and turn from Calvinism, their body of flesh and lifestyle will be demolished. They will experience an abundant life in this world and the one to come. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit will regenerate their dead spirit. Finally, Christ will be the Jehovah's Witnesses elderly brother and savior.

Christ saves sinners.... and Jesus said unto him, to-day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and save that which was lost (Luke 19:9-19). Salvation is Christ rescuing lost souls from distorted wills, condemned consciences, and

dead spirits. Christ saves because his work is eternal and unique...and without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; He who was Manifested in the flesh, Justified in the spirit, Seen of angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, and Received up in glory (1Tim 3:16). He saves sinners the same way He saved his disciples from the great tempest in the sea in which some marveled and said, "What manner of man is this that even the winds and sea obey him" (Matt. 8:23-28). Christ saves sinners through grace (Eph. 2:8), mercy (Tit 3:5), love (Eph. 2:4), and the propitiation by his blood (1 John 2:1-4). God has always saved those who obeyed him such as Moses, Noah's family, and Abraham. Christ saves today those who believe the Gospel (Romans 1:16-17), repent of their sinful behavior (Luke 13:3), confess his son ship (Acts 8:37), and is immersed in water baptism (Acts 2:38).

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WHAT DO WITNESSES TEACH ABOUT THE GODHEAD? WHY IS THIS NOT TRUE?

Kenneth B. Hill

INTRODUCTION

In today's society, many religious people have become out of touch and unconcerned with what the Bible teaches about God and the Godhead. Many have chosen to draw their own conclusions, while on the other hand, others have relied on various authors who have voiced their opinions and presented them as facts. These kinds of behaviors and attitudes have been the seed to a multiplicity of faiths which has sprouted out many different religions and cults. One of these cults is the religious group known as Jehovah Witnesses. This discourse will address the teachings of the Jehovah Witness group as they relate to the Godhead and conclude with an answer to the question "Why this teaching is not true?"

The Jehovah Witness religion is referred to by many religious groups and sociologists as a cult because it falls within the definition of the word. According to the Encyclopedia of Sociology, "a cult carries pejorative connotations as an exploitative group that demands unreasonable obligations from group members, usually under the direction of a manipulative charismatic leader and at the expense of members' former family and friends" (Burgatta 403). Some of their unreasonable obligations include a practice of refusing (1) to serve in the military, (2) to salute to the flag, (3) to celebrate birthdays or holidays, (4) and to give or accept blood transfusions. [Rejecting the medical practices of vaccinations, organ transplants, and blood transfusions, the Watchtower has caused the deaths of many of its members throughout history. Interestingly, vaccinations

and organ transplants have now been acknowledged by the Watchtower as acceptable practices, contradicting their previous doctrinal position] (Jehovah's Witness Cult 2). Furthermore, when it comes to the teaching of the Godhead, or the Trinity, the Jehovah Witnesses have established a belief that is foreign to the Word of God.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to divulge the truth on what the Jehovah Witnesses teach about the Godhead and also prove why this teaching is not true. It is imperative to make a distinction between the teachings of the Jehovah Witnesses and the truth of the Bible.

DISCUSSION

Jehovah Witnesses, also known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, was officially founded in 1884 as the Zion's Watch Tower and Tract Society, by Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916). The group officially espoused the name of Jehovah Witnesses in 1931 under the leadership of Judge J.F. Rutherford (Lewis 441). Some of their core beliefs are as follows:

1. There is one God in one person (*Make Sure of All Things*, p. 188).
2. There is no Trinity (*Let God be True*, pp. 100-101; *Make Sure of All Things*, p. 386); i.e., Unitarian.
3. The Holy Spirit is a force, not alive (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, 1985, pp. 406-407).
4. The Holy Spirit is God's impersonal active force (*The Watchtower*, June 1, 1952, p. 24).
5. Jehovah's first creation was his "only-begotten Son" ... was used by Jehovah in creating all other things (*Aid to Bible Understanding*, pp. 390-391), i.e., deny the eternity of the Son).
6. Jesus was Michael the archangel who became a man (*The*

- Watchtower*, May 15, 1963, p. 307; *The New World*, p. 284).
7. Jesus was only a perfect man, not God in flesh (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, 1985, pp. 89-90) i.e., Scripture is wrong.
 8. Jesus did not rise from the dead in his physical body (*Awake!* July 22, 1973, p. 4).
 9. Jesus was raised “not a human creature, but a spirit” (*Let God be True*, p. 276).
 10. Jesus did not die on a cross but on a stake (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, 1985, pp. 89-90), i.e., Scripture is wrong.
 11. Jesus returned to earth, invisibly, in 1914 (*The Truth Shall Make You Free*, p. 300).

These teachings have caused great controversies within Christendom. Some people have asked if Jehovah Witnesses are Christians. The answer to the question is “NO!” It is impossible to deny the deity of Christ, his death on the cross, and his physical resurrection and still be considered a follower of Christ.

Webster, has defined Godhead as the divine nature or essence: divinity; the nature of God especially as existing in three persons. According to the Bible, the Godhead consists of three *persons*: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Godhead is complete in Jesus. “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and not after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ; For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:8-9)

According to the Jehovah Witnesses, the teaching about the three in one Godhead, or Trinity, is a Satanic dogma of apostate Christianity that prevents people from know the true God, Jehovah. The Watchtower states:

“The doctrine in belief is that there are tree gods in one: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost... the Holy

Spirit is not a person and is therefore not one of the gods of the Trinity [Godhead]... the Trinity doctrine was not conceived by Jesus or the early Christians... the obvious conclusion therefore is that Satan is the originator of the Trinity doctrine" (Let God Be True, Watchtower Society 81,82).

The Watchtower, which is a magazine published by Jehovah Witnesses, denies the Godhead as being the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that, according to the Bible, God has a personal name, the Tetragrammaton, which is sometimes rendered in English, Jehovah, based on reading the word YHWH with the vowels of the Hebrew word for "my lord", the term generally used by Jews during scriptural recitation in lieu of pronouncing the ineffable YHWH. They view the use of the name as **essential** for true worship, since it makes God more personal and, according to its meaning in Hebrew, it inspires solid faith in the fulfillment of his promises (*The Watchtower*, 4/15/96 p. 17). To the Jehovah's Witnesses, Jehovah is regarded as Almighty God, the Supreme Being and Creator of everything, the sovereign of the universe. He is the Father, and therefore, separate from the Son, an invisible spirit 'person' - not just an abstract 'first cause'. They say he is "infinite, but approachable". He is **not** omnipresent, but has a location in heaven. He does not communicate with his people to this day in time (Insight In The Scriptures 969). It is possible to have a personal relationship with him as a friend (*Awake* 3/8/95 p. 21). He is kind and merciful, and would not 'torture' even wicked people (*The Watchtower* 4/15/93 p.5). The Holy Spirit is God's active force, not the third person of the Trinity (*The Watchtower*, 5/15/04, p. 29-31).

The Jehovah Witnesses also believe that Jesus is God's only begotten son. As such, he began his life in heaven. He

was God's **first creation** and the 'exact representation of God (Worship the Only True God 184). He is the perfect image of God. Yet he is a separate entity and much less powerful than God. Jesus was used by God in the creation of all other things (*The Watchtower*, 01/15/92 p. 20-23). Jesus was known as the Archangel Michael, and also "the Word," in his pre-human existence; his birth on earth was accomplished when he willingly allowed himself to be transferred, by God, from heaven to the womb of the Virgin Mary (*The Watchtower*, 06/15/98, p. 22). While on earth, Jesus was executed as a sacrifice to atone for mankind's sins. He ultimately becomes 'eternal father' to the human family. Jehovah's Witnesses reject the cross as a symbol for Christ's death, as it is seen as a later pagan addition. (*The Watchtower*, 1/15/92, p.7). They insist that his execution was on a single-beamed torture stake. According to Jehovah Witnesses, Jesus didn't die on a cross, but a single beamed stake, as pictured, (www.watchtower.org).

They believe that after his death, Jesus appeared to his disciples and convinced them of his resurrection, and then ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of Jehovah until he would become the promised king of God's heavenly kingdom. Jesus acts as the mediator of the "new covenant" referred to in Jeremiah 31:31 and Luke 22:20 for those going to heaven, the 144,000 (*The Watchtower*, 08/15/89, p. 30).

THE GODHEAD

God

It is true that God is one. The bible states that God is one. "One God" (Ephesians 4:6). "But to us there is one God" (1 Corinthians 8:6). "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (Zechariah 14:9). There are no other gods. "I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another (god), neither my praise to graven images" (Isaiah

42:8). There is only one God in Deuteronomy 6:4, Moses proclaims "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." Moses is not proclaiming that there is only one person in the Godhead because he clearly identifies a plurality (Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7). He is ensuring Israel that there is only one true Godhead in contrast to the many other gods which the idolaters worshipped (cf. Acts 17:23,24). Moses says "There is none other beside Him (Deuteronomy 4:35). However, there are three persons which exists as God: the Father (1 Peter 1:2), the Son (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 1:8) and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3,4). These three have the same essence and are necessarily equal in their attributes (Asher 1).

Jesus

Colossians 1:15, continuing the thought of verse 14, instructs us that Christ is exactly like God. He is from God and is God (John 1:1). No man can see the face of God and live (Exodus 33:18-23), however, God need to manifest or reveal himself to mankind. His purpose was to better teach and exemplify His perfect will. He fashioned himself as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross, not a single beamed stake (Philippians 2:8, 1 John 3:16). He lived a life that was perfect, upright, and without sin (Hebrews 4:15). Therefore, Paul calls Christ the *image of the invisible God*.

The firstborn of every creature means that Christ existed before all things. Christ took part with the Father, as being part of the Godhead, in the creation to create all things. He is the Creator and not a created being. Colossian 1:16,17 states: "**For by him 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: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.**" New World Translation. "He is the image of the invisible God, the

firstborn of all creation; because by means of him all [other] things were created in the heavens and upon the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, no matter whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All [other] things have been created through him and for him. Also, he is before all [other] things and by means of him all [other] things were made to exist" (Col. 1:15).

John 1:3 **All things were made by him [Christ]; and without him was not any thing made that was made.** New World Translation "All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence" (John 1:3).

Both scriptures point to the fact that Jesus created all things. How could Jesus create all things and not be a part of the Godhead. Genesis 1:1 states, In the beginning **God** created the heaven and the earth. If Genesis states that God created all things and then John and the Colossian letter states that Christ created all things, then that means one of two things:

- Either the Bible contradicts itself (which no person who believes the Bible as God's word can do).
- Or Jesus must be part of the God of Genesis 1:1 who created the heaven and the earth.

This explains the plural pronoun [us] found in Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7. Also Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:2. "And God said, **Let us** make man in **our image**, after our likeness: 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" (Gen. 1:26) (KJV).

"And God went on to say: "**Let us** make man in **our image**, according to our likeness, and let them have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and the domestic animals and all the earth and every moving animal that is moving upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26) (NWT).

“And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:” (Gen. 3:22) (KJV).

“And Jehovah God went on to say: “Here the man has become like one of us in knowing good and bad, and now in order that he may not put his hand out and actually take [fruit] also from the tree of life and eat and live to time indefinite,—” (Gen. 3:22) (NWT).

In 1 Timothy 3:16, Paul declares that God was manifest in the flesh. John 1:1, the bible states: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (KJV)

“In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.” (John 1:1) (NWT). The Jehovah Witnesses have translated the Word to being a god and not God. They have demoted Jesus in an effort to prove that he is not part of the Godhead, but that will contradict the preceding verses in which they acknowledge that all things came into existence through him (John 1:3) and that God the Father wasn't alone in the creation (Genesis 1:26). In Genesis 1:1, the New World Translation states that it was God who created the heavens and the earth and not a god. The same God in Genesis 1:1 is the same God in John 1:1.

The Jehovah Witnesses also teach that Jesus was Michael the Archangel who became a man (*The Watchtower*, 05/15/63 p.307). This teaching is contrary to the teachings of the Bible. Paul writes in the Hebrew letter, [Christ] “Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.” (Heb. 1:4-6) (KJV).

Christ was superior to and had a better name than the

angels. God has never said unto any angel, "Thou art my Son." Christ is the Son of God and has never been an angel. All the angels have to worship him, so he could not have been Michael the Archangel.

"So he has become better than the angels, to the extent that he has inherited a name more excellent than theirs. For example, to which one of the angels did he ever say: You are my son; I, today, I have become your father? And again: I myself shall become his father, and he himself will become my son? But when he again brings his Firstborn into the inhabited earth, he says: "And let all God's angels do obeisance to him" (Heb. 1:4-6) (NWT).

The Holy Spirit

The Jehovah Witnesses teach that the Holy Spirit is an active force like radar. They deny that He is alive and the He is a *person*. By this denial, they once again deny the Godhead. Since the Jehovah Witnesses deny the Holy Spirit as being alive and a *person* then they will have to answer the following questions:

- Why is He called God? (Acts 5:3-5)
- How is it that He can teach? (John 14:26)
- How can He be blasphemed? (Matthew 12:31,32)
- How can He be the one that comforts? (Acts 9:31)
- How is it possible for Him to speak? (Acts 28:25)
- How can He be resisted? (Acts 7:51)
- How can He be grieved? (Ephesians 4:30)
- How can He help us in our weakness? (Romans 8:26)

If the Holy Spirit is a force, then how is it possible that the above mentioned are attributed to Him? A force doesn't speak, teach, comforts, etc..., nor can you blaspheme against a force (Slick 4-5).

CONCLUSION

The teaching of the Jehovah Witnesses concerning the

Godhead is not according to the Bible. They teach against the deity of Christ. They also teach against his death and resurrection, which is a focal point of the gospel. The Jehovah Witnesses also do not believe in the Holy Spirit as a person of the Godhead. They believe He is just a force. This teaching is not taught in the Holy Writ of God. To prove their points and justify their beliefs, they have translated their own version of the Bible, known as the New World Translation. Even with the New World Translation, the Godhead can still be proven. Be not deceived by Jehovah Witnesses. They are false teachers and their doctrines are dangerous. As John stated, "Beloved, believe not **every spirit, but try the spirits** whether they are of God: because many **false prophets** are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

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WHAT DO WITNESSES TEACH ABOUT THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED AND WHY IS THIS FALSE?

Vernon Sirmons

INTRODUCTION

One of most controversial teachings among those who truly believe that Bible is the word of God is the subject of Hell! Even more puzzling is the Doctrine of a group who calls themselves “the Jehovah’s Witnesses.” They often shock those who are untaught with materialistic-based teaching on this subject. This is the subject of this paper. What they say and what God right divided truth says on this particular subject.

ONE cannot immediately attack this error without preliminary discussion, so my based format for discussion will be as follows:

1. Jehovah’s Witnesses on the nature of Man
2. Jehovah’s Witnesses on physical death
3. Jehovah’s Witnesses on what after death now
4. Jehovah’s Witnesses on Hell
5. Jehovah’s Witnesses on eternity

In an attempt to be fair as well as up to date with the Witnesses I will quote what actual teach from their very own website(watchtower.org)

THE NATURE OF MAN

“Consider how the first man, Adam came to have life. The Bible states”: Jehovah God proceeded to form the man out of dust from the ground and to blow into his nostrils the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). Though breathing his sustained his life, putting “the breath of life” into his nostrils involved much more than simply blowing air into his lungs. It meant That

God put into Adam's lifeless body the spark of life-the force of life, which is active in all earthy creatures. (Genesis 6:17; 7:22)The Bible refers to this animating force as "spirit." (James 2:26). That spirit can be compared to the electric current that activates a machine or an appliance and enable it to perform its function. Just as the current never takes on the features of the equipment it activates; the life-force does not take on any of the characteristics of the creatures' it animates. It has no personality and no thinking ability. (Watchtower.org)

From the above quotation it is clear that Jehovah's Witnesses concluded the following about the nature of man:

1. He was formed by God from the dust from the ground.
2. Adam's body came to life when God gave him, "the breath of life" also known as "the spark of life" known too as "the force of life" which they even call his "spirit".
3. This spirit according their teaching is like electricity impersonal and with no mental power.

In the very first book in the Bible, Jehovah's witnesses show a lack of understanding of the Bible's doctrine of the human spirit. They do not define it properly and give false definitions in every major passage in both Old and New Testament. A serious word study of the word spirit will clearly show that that part of man is not a "life-force" but the personality of man!

The spirit in The Bible. Spirit (pneuma) defined: A movement of air; a breath of the nostril. The vital principle by which the body is animated. A spirit, i.e. a simple essence, devoid off all or at least all grosser matter and possessed of the power of knowing, desiring, deciding, and acting. A human soul that has left the body.

Those possessing spirits: God is spirit (John 4:24), Angels are spirits (Hebrews 1:13,14), Demons are unclean spirits (Luke 8:29), Man has a spirit within him (1

Corinthians 2:11).

Jehovah's Witnesses would define spirit (pnuema) as "a movement of air or breath." Just substitute breath for spirit in John 4:24, "God is a breath?" How absurd and ridiculous. Jehovah's Witnesses definition of the human spirit is just wrong, it is not impersonal but like God embrace his personality. All the other higher beings in this universe have this quality as well.

The Scriptures also teach that spirits are incorruptible. Certain connotations have arisen in regard to the word immortality. Surprisingly it mentioned some six times in the Bible in its different forms. It is also translated by two Greek words *aphthartos* and *athanasia*.

The first word "aphthartos" is defined as "Uncorrupted, not liable to corruption or decay; imperishable" (Thayer 88). In three places in the Bible, Romans 2:7; 1 Timothy 1:17; 2 Timothy 2:10 the meaning is that subject of its use does not decay or perish. It helps us to consider this in regard to God and his nature he in no way breaks down and becomes less than he has been through out all eternity. In Romans 1:23 he is called "the incorruptible God!" In that same verse man is described as "corruptible man" (*phthartos*: corruptible, perishable) [Thayer 652] a reference to the human body. Our bodies are perishable but just like God who is spirit our human spirits are not. The GREAT error that Jehovah's Witnesses make is they apply the reference to the body to the spirit and misunderstanding of the nature of man.

The second word "athanasia" (literally: deathless, not subject death) is used in reference to God in 1 Timothy 6:16 and the resurrected body in 1 Corinthians 15:53, 54. By his own eternal nature God cannot be subject to any form of death. Man though mortal in this life as the body dies puts on a deathless body in the resurrection: Immortality!

In summary about the human spirit. Man has a spirit that is capable of knowing, desiring, deciding, and acting. The human body is subject to decay and death in this life. The

human spirit or any spirit is NOT subject decay and perishing. The human spirit and the resurrected body will be reunited at the resurrection. Then man will be completely (both body and spirit) immortal after the resurrection.

PHYSICAL DEATH

With a false and unbiblical definition of the human spirit, Jehovah's Witnesses produce a incorrect definition of the death. Note the following quotation:

What happens to the spirit when a person dies? Psalm 146:4 says:-His spirit goes out, he goes back to his ground, in that day his thoughts do perish.-when a person dies, his impersonal spirit does not go on existing in another realm as a spirit creature. It returns to the true God who gave it. (Eccl. 12:7) This means that any hope of future life for that person now rests entirely with God. (Watchtower.org)

My investigation of Jehovah's Witnesses teachings revealed a fondness for taking a verse completely from its context to teach error and their so-called New World Translation only adds to the departure from truth. The Psalms passage is warning us not to trust in man because man is subject to death his spirit leaves and his body is buried in the earth, and whatever thoughts ("plans" NKJV) will be left undone.

A false premise yields a false conclusion, the unproven assumption that every reference to human spirit it is impersonal in nature. Just where does man get his personality and thinking ability from? I must agree that spirit of man does return to God for it's safe keeping. But one cannot draw the conclusion we do on existing because our spirit is in God's possession. Instead of looking for the Bible truth in regard to the nature of the human soul Jehovah's

Witnesses place the blame on ancient secular thinkers. Consider the following:

The ancient Greek philosophers' Socrates and Plato held that a soul inside a person survives death and never dies. What does the Bible teach about the soul? Adam "came to be a living soul," says Genesis 2:7. He did not receive a soul, he was a soul - a whole person. Yes, man himself is a soul. (Watchtower.org)

Even though 1 Thessalonians 5:23 states that man has, "spirit and soul and body" Jehovah's Witnesses make us according to their definition "a soul." So according to their doctrine, body plus an impersonal spirit yields living soul. So man's physical existence on this earth can be described as being "a soul" and with this basic misunderstanding in relation to nature of man quite logically leads to a false understanding of death. Notice the following:

What, then, is the condition of the dead? When pronouncing sentence upon Adam, Jehovah stated: Dust you are and to dust you will return. (Gen. 3:19). Where Adam was before God was formed him from the dust of the ground and gave him life? Why, he simply did not exist! When he died, Adam returned to that state of complete absence of life. The condition of the dead is made clear at Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10, where we read: The dead know nothing. In the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom, (NIV) Scripturally, death is a state of nonexistence. The dead have no awareness, no feelings, no thoughts. (Watchtower.org)

Physical body is made of dust and will return to dust, but the jump in logic that because physical body might be buried or return to the earth it simply does not follow that goes into a state of nonexistence. The condition of the body is not also the state of the soul or spirit. The use of Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10 is truly a twisting of the scriptures to one's own destruction. The theme and context of this poetic book is totally

disregarded a cut and paste job is done to the Old Testament text that is simple terrible. Just what is physical death as taught in the Bible? James 2:26 tells us: "So as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Death is a condition of the body and not the spirit, in physical death the spirit leaves the body and the body is dead. Why because the spirit does decay or perish it cannot die!

TEACHING ON HELL

Now we can finally get subject I was assigned to investigate; The Jehovah's Witnesses teaching on Hell. I'm troubled and I doubt the honesty of these people in how they handle the Biblical text and what has to be an intentional mistranslation of the New Testament Greek text in hopeless attempt to make something that is false true. Their logic does not follow and the conclusion just don't make sense! Consider the following quotation:

Since the dead have no conscious existence, hell cannot be a fiery place of torment where the wicked suffer after death. What, then, is hell? Examining what happened to Jesus after he died helps to answer that question. The Bible writer Luke recounts: Neither was [Jesus] forsaken in Hades [hell, King James Version] nor did his flesh see corruption, (Acts 2:31) Where was the hell to which even Jesus went? The apostle Paul wrote: I handed on to you. That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, yes, that he has been raised up the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4) So Jesus was in hell, the grave, but he was not abandoned there, for he was raised up, or resurrected. (Watchtower.org)

First to eliminate all misunderstanding in Acts 2:27, 31 the word is Hades and not Hell (Gehenna) as in the King James Version. So what is being discuss here the

intermediate state. That place where the immaterial part of man goes up till time of the resurrection and the judgment. Jesus Christ did not go to Gehenna, but Hades or Paradise (Luke 23:43). Completely missing from the New World Translation of the Holy Scripture is “that his soul was not left in Hades”. Jesus Christ had a soul. His soul was separated from his body (flesh). His body went to Joseph of Arimathaea’s new tomb. His soul went not to Heaven or Hell but to Hades! Jehovah Witnesses are trying to say the completeness of his being was in Joseph of Arimathaea’s new tomb. It is simple not the case. Jesus Christ body was in the tomb or grave but his soul was in Hades! Neither did it remain in that land of Hades but after three days his soul was reunited with his body. His body did not see corruption (under go physical decay) and his soul which is clear shown to be separate and apart from his body went to Hades not to state of non-existence. So in an effort to use Acts 2:31 to prove their doctrine of Hell it proves that is totally false. Jehovah’s Witnesses try to make Hell in the grave. But as I have shown the grave in the place where physical bodies are buried and the soul go to Hades. In an effort to peddle their false teaching about Hell Jehovah’s Witnesses try to use the picturesque signs and symbols of the book of Revelation to try to make their case notice the following quotation:

Could it be that the fire of hell is symbolic of all-consuming or through destruction? Separating fire from Hades, or hell, the Scriptures say: Death and Hades were hurled into the lake of fire. The lake mentioned here is symbolic, since death and hell (Hades) that are thrown into it cannot literally be burned. This [lake of fire], means the second death-death from which there is no hope of coming back to life. Revelation 20:14. (Watchtower.org)

Their conclusion Hell and its fire is not real it is only a symbol! Intentionally they fail to make distinction between Hades and Hell. Hades and Death are thrown into the lake of

fire not Hell. Revelation Chapter 20 mentions resurrections could it not be case that the resurrection the body being spoken of make Death and Hades unnecessary? The death of Death!

TEACHING ABOUT ETERNITY

As does Gehenna, the lake of fire symbolizes eternal destruction. Death and Hades are “hurled into” it in that they will be done away with when mankind is freed from sin and the condemnation of death. Willful, unrepentant sinners will also have their portion in that lake. (Revelation 21:8) they too will be annihilated forever, On the other hand, those in God’s memory who are in hell-the common grave of mankind-have a marvelous future. (Watchtower.org)

Gehenna or Hell and “the lake of fire” must be considered two different things one is from literal teaching of Jesus Christ and the other signified to John through visions on the Isle of Patmos. Jesus gives us some clear teaching that will help us understand these things better. In Matthew 25:41 Jesus said, “Depart from me you curse into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” Notice:

1. Cursed Human beings are the subjects.
2. Everlasting fire is the punishment.
3. It is a prepared for the devil and his angels.
4. These spirit beings will be placed in this place.

The punishment spoken about in Matthew 25 is an everlasting not temporary experience. “And These will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life,” (Matt 25:46). “And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the Kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire, Where the worm does not die, and the fire not quenched,” (Mark 9:47). Hell involves fire and that will not be put out. As we previously point out man has a immortal spirit that survives physical death. But instead of being

annihilated forever that spirit will be reunited with a resurrected body and will cast into Hell for everlasting punishment!

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BIOGRAPHY

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**A
STUDY
OF THE
SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST**

WHAT IS SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM?

Rico L. Brown

In his letter to the church at Rome, Paul proclaims “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Romans 1:16” Having that understanding, let it be known that the Word is not questionable in my sight, for it is a perfect document recorded and written to help an imperfect man strive to make heaven his eternal resting place. When matters of religion are discussed, I am reminded again of Paul’s instruction given to us in his first letter to the church at Thessalonica, in which he states for us to “Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good. I Thessalonians 5:21,” and these matters are further confirmed when John instructs us to “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. I John 4:1” With these thoughts in minds, let us take a closer look into the man made religion of Seventh-Day Adventism.

On the onset, one may ask what is Seventh-Day Adventism? Historically tracking, this movement can be dated back to the initial thoughts of William Miller. After fallacy was proven in Miller’s notions regarding Christ’s 2nd coming somewhere between 1843 – 1844, his thoughts were later coined as the “Great Disappointment.” Many left the advent belief, but there was a Miller remnant. Closely under Miller’s tutelage at this time were Hiram Edson and Joseph Bates. Who upon widespread disappointment in Miller’s 2nd coming prediction, attempted to explain his miscalculation by further study and revelation of the scriptures. They too would fail to witness the 2nd coming in their lifespan, but their thoughts and notion had severely impacted the life of Ellen White. White, who is the founder of record for Seventh-Day

Adventism, traces her roots to this religion back to early contact she and her family had with William Miller. From self-pronounced interpretations and revelations about Christ and the 2nd coming, Ellen White has been recorded as the official founder of what we now know as Seventh-Day Adventism. The Adventist beliefs are directly tied to “their convictional messages coming from the pen of Ellen G. White.” The Adventist religion is built upon some twenty-eight fundamental beliefs, but due to time, I will be analyzing a few that pose a direct conflict to God’s Word.

Let us begin by asking a simple question, spiritually speaking, who is Ellen G. White? Aside from being born to her parents in 1827 by the grace of God, Ellen White had no direct relationship with God to be considered one of His prophets. According to Adventism teachings on the gift of prophecy, Fundamental Beliefs #18 states:

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen. G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.

The Hebrew writer said:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 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; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being

made so much better than the angels, as he by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they, (Hebrews 1:1-4).

Based upon the simple fact that she was born some 1,794 years after the beginning of the church of Christ, we can be certain that she has no prophetic powers, views nor authority. Furthermore, her claimed personal prophecies directly contradict Peter's acclamation "that no prophecy of the scriptures is of any private interpretation. II Peter 1:20" We must recognize and remember that false teaching is nothing new. It was practiced while the Old Testament served as law, and falsehood is continually being practiced today. It is for this reason that I believe Apostle Paul gave us specific instructions in the Book of Galatians 1:4-9 which reads: I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." With unobjectionable biblical authority, it is safe to say that Ellen White attempted to add unto God's Word, came to no avail, and therefore likely, no, assuredly will have a home in hell.

Now, let us analyze some other familiar but false Adventist's beliefs. One of the backbones of Adventism is their belief of the Sabbath, which in Fundamental Belief #20 states:

The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and

ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts.

It is of no dispute that one of the Ten Commandments given explicitly states to "Remember the Sabbath." Also it is of no dispute that we are under a new law or the New Testament either. "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of a testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Hebrews 9:16-17" The Hebrew writer clearly shows the connection of Christ's death to the full strength of the New Testament. We have been given no reference or command in the New Testament to worship on the Sabbath, but the bible provides a significant number of accounts where Christians assembled and worshipped on the first day of the week:

1. We can reference the Day of Pentecost as recorded in the Book of Acts 2:1-4, as the same day mentioned by Moses in the Book of Leviticus 23:11 and 15, which came a day after the Sabbath, Sunday.
2. The Apostles preached salvation on the first day of the week as recorded in the Book of Acts 2:37-42;
3. The Lord's Supper was instituted and practiced on the first day of the week as recorded in the Book of Acts 20:7.
4. The church was commanded to give and take collection on the first day of the week according to

Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth in I
Corinthians 16:1-2.

Remember, we have been instructed to do all that we do, whether in word or deed, with the authority of Christ according to the Book of Colossians 3:17. It is safe to conclude that we have no direct or indirect examples of the New Testament church assembling to worship on the Sabbath.

Another facet of the Adventism beliefs is their concept of death and resurrection, and the millennium and the end of sin, which in Fundamental Beliefs state: #26

The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later. #27 The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever.

Hence, is the modern day concept known as premillennialism. It asserts that Christ shall have a distinctive thousand year earthly reign. First and foremost, let me very clear, there is no mention of this word throughout the bible in its entirety. Just as false as the Catholic Church and the Pope

are, so is the concept of premillennialism. The Holy Bible makes five distinct contradictions to this absurd notion:

1. No one knows when Jesus is coming according to the Book of Mark 13:32
2. There will be one general resurrection according to the Book of John 5:28-29
3. The kingdom is now in existence according to the Book of Colossians 1:13
4. Jesus is now reigning as king according to the Book of I Corinthians 15:22-28
5. At Christ's coming there will be no earth to return to according to the Book of II Peter 3:10
6. The land of promises to Israel have already been fulfilled according to the Book of Joshua 21:43-45

These mere six points are enough to dispute and bury this so-called non-biblical claim. Simply stated, if Christ is not now reigning, He has no kingdom. Furthermore, if this is the case, then the following books of scriptural texts are of no importance: Revelation 1:9, Colossians 1:13, Matthew 28:18, I Corinthians 15:23 and 26; but let us not forget the simple fact that the Word is perfect, and man is not! We have been warned to beware of false doctrine, and this is a clear indication of man's false teachings gaining biblical grounds without any sort of scriptural support.

While on the surface it appears to be accurate, the Adventist's beliefs on spiritual gifts and ministries are also misleading and false. Their Fundamental Belief # 17 states:

God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy,

proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, apostolic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love.

While most of the above mentioned ministries are actions of faith and belief in Christ to the true Christian, some are simply not attainable by modern day mankind. Concerning faith itself, the Book of Hebrews 11:1 states "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." One's spiritual walk is undoubtedly based upon their belief and trust in God, acceptance of His Son, and guidance by the Holy Spirit. The notion of spiritual gifts comes from the Apostle Paul's enumeration of all nine spiritual gifts, according to the Book of I Corinthians 12:8-10 which reads,

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.

Only one chapter later, Paul explains the condition for termination of such gifts. In the Book of I Corinthians 13:8-11, it states:

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophecy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

The Apostle Paul exclusively tells us that these are all 'in part' until that which is perfect is come. Has not the word of God been revealed and written in its entirety? To dispute such facts would only show ones non-acceptance of God's word. We are correct in concluding that the 'perfect' thing is God's complete revelation of His will for man. According to the Book of II Peter 1:3, with such things already taken place, the miraculous gifts performed in the early church are no longer existent. To state otherwise, would only open further avenues for such fallacies of the scripture.

Such false teaching as those being taught by Seventh-Day Adventism is constant reminder of why we as Christians must stay in the Book. More and more, we should gain a better understanding of why directions given by Moses like those recorded in the Book of Deuteronomy 11:18-21 are needful and necessary. False teachers have gained plenty of ground due to man's inadequacy to shun Satan and his ministers. It is my prayer that anyone whom is caught up in the false teaching of Seventh-Day Adventism or any other false religion may come to know the error of their ways, and come to the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

BIOGRAPHY

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“WHAT THE ADVENTISTS TEACH ABOUT THE SABBATH DAY AND WORSHIP” WHY IS THIS FALSE?

Allen D. Cross

BRIEF HISTORY

My Subject today asks a thoughtful question, and then requires some deep investigation as to why this teaching is false. To understand the Adventist, we must look at a man named William Miller, who lived from 1789 – 1849. Miller never really joined the Seventh Day Adventist Movement, per se, but the history of the movement has its roots in his so-called prophecies. Having been a skeptic in his early life, Miller was supposedly “converted” in 1816, and began studying the Bible without the help of any. From this self-imposed, private study of the Bible, Miller concluded in 1818, that the world was to come to an end in 1834 or 1844. He did not publicly state this conclusion, however, until 1831. He based his conclusion on the “Seventy Weeks” prophecy from Daniel 9:24-27. He also said that the Lord would return in 1834 or 1844, based on his calculations from Daniel 8:14. But as you know, by now, the world did not come to an end in 1834 or 1844, neither did Christ make His second advent from which the movement gets its name.

With the failure of Miller’s first prophecies, a number of his followers made a number of reinterpretations of the passages their leader had misused. Two of these minor figures were Hiram Edison of Port Gibson, New York and Joseph Bates of Fair Haven, Massachusetts. It was Bates, who after reading an article in 1845 on the Sabbath by Thomas M. Preble in a pamphlet entitled, *“Hope of Israel,”* became convinced that the Sabbath day was the Scriptural Sabbath for Christians to observe. Previous to Bates “enlightenments,” some Seventh-day Baptists, influenced by

Mrs. Rachel Oakes and Mr. Frederick Wheeler, a preacher, had been observing the Seventh day in Washington, New Hampshire. This was in 1844, making them the first Adventists in America to observe the Seventh day, based on a misinterpretation of the Scripture.

This group and Bates then united in the misunderstanding of the Scripture. They, together, began emphasizing the keeping of the seventh day Sabbath as the Jews of the old covenant in the Bible. And this doctrine, along with the other teachings of William Miller, caught the attention of Ellen G. Harmon, who later married James White.

Ellen G. White eventually became the dominant personality and moving spirit of the Adventist movement. As a practicing Methodist in her early life, she had been exposed to William Miller's Adventist doctrine at an early age. After accepting his erroneous teaching on the second Advent of Christ, she and her family were dis-fellowshipped by the Methodist church. It was after Miller's prophecies regarding the second coming of Christ failed, called the "Great Disappointment" of 1844, that Ellen began to claim that she was receiving visions from God regarding the truthfulness of the Adventist beliefs. In 1846, she married James White, a young preacher in the Adventist Movement.

The name Seventh Day Adventists, based on their belief in the Seventh Day Sabbath and second Advent of Christ, was adapted in 1860. The first General Conference met in Battle Creek, Michigan in 1863, thus marking the date of the official organization of the Seventh Day Adventist denomination.

And while this brief historical overview of the Seventh Day Adventist Church may be helpful to you in better understanding the background of this movement, the more important matter is the movement's misuse and wresting of Scriptures, old and new, to try to sustain a false position. And it is **this** false doctrinal position with which **this** lecture is

most concerned. The following lesson, therefore, is utilized in order to point up the glaring errors of the Adventism's greatest misunderstandings of the Scriptures and the Scriptural abuses. These misunderstandings and abuses will cause many sincere people to be lost eternally. The Bible tells us, "*Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding*" (Pr. 4:7).

ADVENTISM and "COMMANDMENT"

One of the gravest and most appalling errors of Seventh Day Adventism's approach to the study of the Scriptures is their gross misunderstanding of the word, "Commandment." Any place in the Bible, Old or New Testament, where the Adventist sees the word "commandment," they automatically assume that it has reference to the Ten Commandments. And while much of their literature bears out this fact of their misunderstanding, the most absurd example of this erroneous assumption that I can give is to refer you to a Scriptural reference made by Mr. William Cox, one of the Seventh Day Adventist ministers, in the debate in Houston, Texas. In a desperate attempt to show the audience that the Ten Commandments could never be reversed or changed, Mr. Cox read Numbers 23:19-20, which says, "*God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.*" Anyone familiar with the background of this passage knows that this "commandment" has no reference whatever, to any of the TEN COMMANDMENTS; the "commandment" here was specifically for Balaam to bless the children of Israel, and not curse them, as Balak wanted him to do (verse 7-12). Balaam told BALAK that God had given HIM that commandment, "*And I cannot reverse it.*" He did not say that God could not change or

reverse his own commandment if he so desired. The study of this passage not only shows the specificity of God's commandments, but it reveals that every commandment of God is not given to everybody! The commandment in this passage, which has no contextual connection with the Ten Commandments, was for Balaam alone to obey; and it did not apply to Balak. Thus, it is understood that God has specific commandments for specific individuals at specific times, and that what God commands one man or nation to do does not apply to every man or nation at all times. God has specific commands for specific individuals long before the Ten Commandments were given on Sinai. God's commandment to Noah to build the ark was specifically to Noah, not to every man on earth (Gen. 6:14-21). And the Bible says, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 6:22). God specifically commanded Abraham to leave his homeland and, eventually, to offer his only son for a sacrifice (Gen. 12:1-4; 22:1-2). Note, these commandments applied only to Abraham, not to every man of the earth at that time. And Abraham obeyed. Thus God said that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham's seed, "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Gen. 26:5). Here are "commands, statutes and laws" of God that were given to only one man, Abraham. Later, God gave His first written "*commandments, statutes and laws*". And they were applicable to only one specific Nation, Israel (Deut. 5).

Failing dismally to understand this principle of commandment specificity, the Adventists go any commandment anywhere in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, ignoring the person or persons to whom it was given, and try to bind it on everyone as one of the "Ten Commandments." What they fail to understand is that God, through the ages, has different *commandments*, in different *forms*, for different *people*, at different *times* (Heb. 1:1).

Now to illustrate, the “commandments” of Numbers 15:22, are not the same “commandments” of Revelation 12:17, for the “commandments” of the former passage have to do with how to offer certain offerings to God in the ceremonies of the law of Moses; and the “commandments” of the latter verse have to do with obedience to Jesus. Thus, ignoring this difference, or not knowing, Adventist will use both of these passages where the words “commandments” are stated and claim that both have reference to obedience to the Ten Commandments, and this Scriptural ignorance was so evident in the debate.

While the Adventists misuse and abuse the term “commandment,” seeking to confine its meaning to the Ten Commandments, they are at a loss for an answer when confronted with Paul’s statement in First Corinthians 14:37. Paul says here, “...*the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.*” And Paul did not write “on stone.” And while Paul reaffirmed the moral principles of the preceding dispensations, excluding the fourth commandment, he also dealt with many subjects that were not included in the Ten Commandments, writing his apostolic commandments on those subjects. And apostolic commandments, inspired by God’s Holy Spirit, are to be obeyed by all Christians. John says, “*And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us*” (1 Jn. 3:22-24).

Adventists must recognize the fact that there are some commandments, apostolically given, that are found only in the New Testament and are given only to New Testament Christians. Some the unique commandments are baptism (Mk. 16:15-16; Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 10:47) and the Lord’s

Supper (1 Cor. 11:23-29). Jesus had told the apostles to teach, “baptizing them; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” Thus, while baptism and the Lord’s Supper were not written, on the “tables of stone” as parts of the original Ten Commandments, they most definitely are commandments to be obeyed today. Therefore, when the Bible says in the New Testament, **“Blessed are they that do his commandments...”** (Rev. 22:14), it is understood that his commandments here cannot mean all his commandments to all persons who have ever been commanded by him in all situations; but his commandments that are given in this Christian dispensation that have to do with one’s **“having a right to the tree of life and entering in through the gate into the city.”**

Thus, it is apparent in studying the Scriptures that God has had different commandments for different people at different times. For example, John says, **“And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ...”** (1 Jn. 3:23). The Commandment to believe in the Name of Jesus as the authoritative Son of God was not given to those people of the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations. It was not a commandment to all people until after Jesus had resurrected from the grave and been glorified in heaven (Phil. 2:8-9; Acts 2:36; Jn. 7:39; 2 Pet. 1:11; Mt. 17:9). Certain commandments, therefore, are limited to certain time elements. And when Adventists understand this basic Bible principle, they will then understand how to **“rightly divide the Word of Truth”** (2 Tim. 2:15).

ADVENTISM AND “SABBATH DAYS of COLOSSIANS 2:16”

Having to accept Colossians 2:14-17, because it is in the Bible, Adventists find themselves in a precarious position. Realizing that this passage clearly says that the “Sabbath days” were included in that “handwriting of ordinances” that was nailed to the cross (Abolished – Eph. 2:15), the

Adventists try to save their pet theory about keeping the Sabbath day today, by explaining away “Sabbath days” of Colossians 2:16! They say that “Sabbath days” (Plural) as used there, had reference to the annual ceremonial Sabbaths because of the use of the plural “Sabbath days.” And while it is possible to present the Greek usage of this term as an explanation, it is not necessary. For the same plural terms are used in other passages of the Scripture which show clearly that the Sabbath days or Sabbaths are the weekly Sabbaths of the Old Testament.. The Old Testament reveals that there were holy days that were weekly, monthly and yearly. For example, First Chronicles 23:31 says, “...and to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the Lord in the Sabbaths (plural – weekly), in the new moons (monthly), and the set feasts (yearly)...” And again, “Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the Sabbaths (plural – weekly), in the new moons (monthly), and for the set feasts (yearly), as it is written in the law of the Lord” (2 Chr. 8:13). One other Scripture here will suffice, “He appointed the kings’ portion...and the offerings for the Sabbaths (plural – weekly), and for the new moons (monthly), and for the set feasts (yearly), as it is written in the law of the Lord” (2 Chr. 31:3). These Scriptures are given to show that the holy days that were abolished according to Colossians 2:14-16, were the same days that were kept under the law of Moses, all plural, the “Sabbaths, the new moons, and the annual feast days.” All these ordinances that were abolished were also described in the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth chapters of the book of Numbers. And specifically included in them is the Sabbath day of “every Sabbath day” (Num. 28:9-10). Also included were the meat and drink offerings. Thus Paul says, after stating that Jesus blotted out the law of Moses (Col. 2:14-17), “and let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink (Num. 28) or in respect of an holy day (Num 29 – yearly), or of the new moon (Num. 28:11 – monthly) or of the Sabbath

days (Num. 28:10 = 'every Sabbath' – weekly).

SABBATH OBSERVANCE TO CEASE

According to Hebrews 8:8-13, the law of Moses, including the observance of Sabbath, was to pass away and a new law be given instead; the law of Christ, the New Testament. The Apostle quoted the prophet: **“Behold, the days come, said the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of Egypt.”** God said, **“I will make a new covenant.”** The apostle concluded, in verse 13, **“In that he said, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is now unto vanishing away.”** God said nothing about only a part of the law being put away. Christ declared, on the contrary, **“One jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law til all be fulfilled.”** The old law was supplanted by the New Law. The old Sabbath, the seventh day, was supplanted by the Lord’s day, the first day of the week.

There can be no doubt that the Sabbath law was abrogated by reason of the death of Jesus on the cross. The law, including the Sabbath, was abolished. The inspired apostle Paul wrote: ***“And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds be blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament: which veil is done away in Christ”*** (2 Cor. 3:13-14).

Again, the Apostle wrote: ***“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man,***

so making peace” (Eph. 2:14-15). Furthermore, the Apostle declared: *“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross”* (Col. 2:14).

There can be no doubt about it. Paul concludes that the old law, containing ordinances and commandments, including the Sabbath, which was a partition between Jew and Gentile, was abolished in the death of Christ.

IS SUNDAY “THE LORD’S DAY”?

Where does the expression, “the Lord’s Day” come from? Does it refer to Saturday or to Sunday? What importance did the day Sunday have in the Church of the First Century? Was it an ordinary day? Or was it a special Day? What meaning does Sunday have in each of our personal lives today?

The Apostle John says he received Revelation *“on the Lord’s day”* (Rev. 1:10). What did he mean? John meant that he received the Revelation on Sunday. Sunday is the day on which the Lord Jesus Christ triumphed over all the forces of the evil one, rising from the dead. Sunday is the day he proved he is Lord. The First day of the Week is, indeed, “the Lord’s Day”!

The Lord’s Church, and his New Testament became a reality on Sunday. It was at the Jewish feast of Pentecost (Acts 2). This feast was set by counting “fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath” (Lev. 23:16). The day after any Sabbath is the first day of the week. Therefore, Pentecost fell on Sunday. Not only did Jesus rise from the dead on Sunday, he started his church on Sunday. It is the Lord’s Day. The purpose of the Lord’s Day is for our edification and spiritual growth.

CONCLUSION

The Lord’s Day, the first day of the week, is a spiritual feast day for Christians. It is a time when Christ and

Christians meet around the Lord's table; a time when Christians commemorate the death and sufferings of our Lord by partaking of the Lord's Supper in communion with his Body and his Blood (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-29).

The Lord's Day is the day of public assembly to worship God when Christians give of their material means for the cause of the Lord (1 Cor. 16:1-2). The early Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Friends, let us not pervert the Lord's day. The Lord's day is often exchanged for Father's Day, Mother's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Kids' Day, Hog-calling Day, Fishing Day, Reunion Day, entertaining Kinfolks Day, Car wash Day, and **My day of Rest Day.**

The First Day of the Week is the Lord's Day! It is the Lord's Day for Christians to worship, a day of inspiration and great religious activities.

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WHAT DO ADVENTIST TEACH FROM REVELATION 12:17, AND IS THIS TRUE?

Freeman Green

The Remnant Church

Main article: Remnant (Adventist)

The Seventh-day Adventist church regards itself as the "remnant" of Revelation 12:17 (KJV). The Remnant church "announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent" (Fundamental Belief no. 13). The duty of the Remnant is summed up in the "Three Angels' Messages" of Revelation 14:6-12, and its two distinguishing marks are seventh-day Sabbath observance and the Spirit of Prophecy (see below).

At baptism, Adventists may be asked the following question: "Do you accept and believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy and that people of every nation, race, and language are invited and accepted into its fellowship?"^[19] (NB. In 2005 an alternative set of baptismal vows was created, which does not contain a reference to the Adventist church as the remnant. Candidates may now choose whether to take the original vow or the new one.^[20]) Some scholars have questioned the traditional understanding, preferring to widen the concept of "remnant" to include other Christians. Wikipedia:

Remnant

In Seventh-day Adventist theology, there will be an end time remnant of believers faithful to God, sometimes known as the eschatological remnant to distinguish it from earlier concepts of "remnant" in the Bible. Traditionally the

Seventh-day Adventist Church has been understood to be a catalyst for the formation of this group, or as roughly equivalent to the group. This is *not* a claim that Adventists are the only one who will be saved, but that they have been specially entrusted by God with a message for the end times. This assertion is implied in the 13th fundamental teaching of the church, "Remnant and Its Mission". The interpretation is based primarily upon Revelation 12:17, which states: "And the dragon was wrath with the woman, and went to make war with the *remnant* of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (King James Version, emphasis added) The New International Version and other modern Bible translations often use "**rest**" in place of "**remnant**", yielding "...rest of her offspring..." or similar.

Fundamental Beliefs

Remnant and Its Mission:

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a **remnant** has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This **remnant** announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second **advent**. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness. (Revelation. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4; II Corinthians 5:10; Jude 3, 14; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Revelation 21:1-14.)" ^[1]

Advent means arrival!

Another fundamental teaching mentions the **remnant**

church:

The Gift of Prophecy:

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is **prophecy**. This gift is an identifying mark of the **remnant** church and was manifested in the ministry of **Ellen. G. White**. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; Hebrews. 1:1-3; Revelation. 12:17; 19:10.)" [1]

Church manual and baptismal vow

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual [2] contains a "summary of doctrinal beliefs" in its appendix that is designed especially for use in the instruction of candidates for baptism. The final point identifies the Adventist church with the "**remnant**":

28. In accordance with God's uniform dealing with mankind, warning them of coming events that will vitally affect their destiny, He has sent forth a proclamation of the approaching return of Christ. This preparatory message is symbolized by the three angels' messages of **Revelation 14**, and meets its fulfillment in the great Second Advent Movement today. This has brought forth the **remnant**, or **Seventh-day Adventist Church**, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. [2]

The church manual also outlines two alternative baptismal vows for candidates who are entering into church membership. The final question of the traditional longer vow (question 13) asks the candidate:

Do you accept and believe that the Seventh-day

Adventist Church is the **remnant** church of Bible prophecy and that people of every nation, race and language are invited and accepted into its fellowship? Do you desire to be a member of this local congregation of the world church?^[12]

Following baptism, the new member is presented with a "certificate of baptism and commitment" which contains a similarly worded statement, but expressed as an affirmation rather than a question. In 2005, an alternative baptismal vow was approved at the General Conference Session. This alternative vow contains three statements of belief, and does not mention the **remnant**. However, it does still require acceptance of the Fundamental Beliefs. Which version to use is up to the discretion of the parties involved.

Interpretations of the "Remnant"

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has traditionally identified itself as the end-time "**remnant**" on the basis of **Revelation 12:17**. Two of the identifying marks of the **remnant** listed in this verse are that they "**keep the commandments of God**" and have the "**testimony of Jesus**". It is suggested that the "**commandments of God**" refer to the Ten Commandments, which includes the fourth commandment regarding the seventh-day Sabbath. Also, **Revelation 19:10** equate "**the testimony of Jesus**" to the "**Spirit of prophecy**", which Adventists believe is a reference to the ministry and writings of Ellen G. White.

Adventist scholar Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, who himself supports the traditional Adventist interpretation, has observed that its acceptance may be diminishing in the present day church: "It is with great concern that some observe a tendency to de-emphasize or ignore this fundamental self-definition [of Adventists being the **remnant**]".^[13] Rodríguez identifies a number of different interpretations of the "remnant" that have gained popularity within contemporary Adventism^[13]:

In rough order from most conservative to most liberal:

1. *A **remnant** within the **remnant*** — only a select group within the Adventist church constitutes the **true remnant**. The church as a whole is in fact headed into apostasy. (This view tends to be held by ultra-conservatives such as Historic Adventists.)
2. *The traditional position* — the **remnant** is equivalent to the **Seventh-day Adventist denomination**.
3. *Remnant message* — although the Adventist church bears the unique "**remnant message**", all faithful and sincere Christians (regardless of denomination) can be counted as being among the remnant. **Focus is on the message, not an institution**.
4. *The Remnant is not yet a Reality* — the prophecy of **Revelation 12:17** is as yet unfulfilled, and as such the existence of the **remnant** is still future. This position has been suggested by Jack W. Provonsha.
5. *The **remnant** is an invisible entity* — this view regards the **remnant** as an invisible body which transcends the **Adventist denomination**. The traditional position which defines the **remnant** as an institutional/ecclesiastical entity is rejected. The view is promoted by progressive Adventists such as Steve Daily.

Another interpretation has a sociological focus:

1. *Sociological Understanding of the **Remnant*** — the mission of the **remnant** is to work for social and political reform. The **remnant** should not be defined in exclusively religious terms.

For a detailed defense of the doctrine, and for a survey of Adventist positions, see "The Remnant and the Adventist Church"^[3] by Ángel Manuel Rodríguez of the Biblical Research Institute of Seventh-day Adventists.

Criticism of the doctrine

Adventist criticism

"Progressive Adventists" reject the doctrine, or at least interpret it liberally. The progressive journals *Spectrum* and *Adventist Today* commonly publish articles and letters which deny this doctrine, instead claiming that the remnant is much wider than the Adventist church. See *Progressive and Traditional Adventists Examined* by Ron Corson. Adventist Steve Daily has criticized the doctrine in his book *Adventism for a New Generation*:

...It is the mandate to stop thinking just of ourselves as "God's chosen *people*" and start recognizing the existence and ministry of "God's chosen *peoples*." It is a call to move from an ethnocentric remnant theology to a spirit of religious affirmation which acknowledges that the "kingdom of God on earth" transcends every religious movement of mankind, and rejoices that the future kingdom will include "many mansions." ^[4] (p.314)

He clarifies that

This book is not a critique of Adventism, but one author's interpretation of how SDA beliefs and practices can best be applied and redefined in our rapidly changing world. ^[4] (p.2)

Adventist Ervin Taylor believes:

The view that the Seventh-day Adventist institutional church is 'the' remnant church of Biblical prophecy is a classic cultic, fundamentalist position. ^[5]

Raymond Cottrell wrote about challenges presented to him as the associate editor of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*,

What should an editor do with 'proof texts' that inherently do not prove what is traditionally attributed to them—as, for example, Numbers 14:34

and Ezekiel 4:6; Revelation 12:17 and 19:10; Daniel 12:4; Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:1,2; and most of the texts usually cited with respect to 'the law'? In most of these and a number of other passages, pastoral concern led us to conclude that the *Commentary* was not the place to make an issue of the Bible versus the traditional interpretation, much as this disappointed us as Bible scholars and would be a disappointment to our scholarly friends who know better.^[6]

The "us" Cottrell is referring to are the "[m]embers of the editorial team".^[7] (Revelation 12:17 and 19:10 were classic texts used to argue that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was the remnant.)

What Do Adventist Teach from **Revelation 12:17**, and is this true. Based on the above documentation the Adventist teach that they are the Remnant of which will be saved.

Adventist Traditional Position

We can summarize the main elements of the traditional position as follows. First, the remnant mentioned in **Revelation 12:17** describes the faithful ones left after the attacks of the Dragon against the church during the 1260 years (538-1798). Second, they are characterized as those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus. Third, the commandments mentioned here are the Ten Commandments, including in a special way the Sabbath. Fourth, the testimony of Jesus, according to **Revelation 19:10**, refers to the manifestation of the Spirit of Prophecy among the remnant. Fifth, since the **Seventh-day Adventist Church** is the main body proclaiming the perpetuity of the Law of God and the Sabbath and since, in addition, *there was a manifestation of the gift of prophecy in this particular church*, we can identify it as God's faithful, end-time remnant. Hence, to the question who is the **remnant** the answer is given:

Since there is not other religious body today outside of Seventh-day Adventists which uniquely and specifically has the characteristics of the **remnant** of faith and carries their marks, it follows that Adventists as they meet all the aspects of the **remnant** are the final **remnant** of faith of the end-time.

*This does not mean that there are no other Christians who live temporarily on the basis of limited light. They too are children of God. But until they join the commandment-keeping, faith-of-Jesus holding **remnant**, they are not part of the final remnant. In the course of time all children of God, whether in Christian churches or non-Christian religions, who listen to the Spirit of God and follow His **wōing** will be drawn by the faithful, global proclamation of the 'everlasting gospel' into the visible community of the final **remnant** of faith, which even now proclaims this message with power and conviction.[9]*

This understanding has been questioned on several grounds. It is still considered to be too exclusive in that it does not allow other Christians, who are considered by God to be faithful servants, to be part of God's **remnant**. In addition, this position does not take into consideration that being part of the *Seventh-day Adventist Church* does not automatically make one a member of the faithful **remnant**. We do have nominal Adventists who are not totally committed to the message and mission of the church. *Are we willing to say that they are in fact an expression of the faithful end-time **remnant**?* Did not E. G. White inform us that our church will have to go through an eschatological shaking in order for God to purify it? Any definition of the church as God's remnant will have to provide answers to those questions.

Here are some examples of the remnant in the Holy Book, the Word of God almighty:

Old Testament-- **B. Faithful Remnant**

Noah and his family are biblical references to a faithful

remnant recorded in Genesis 7:23: *"Only Noah was left and those with him in the ark."* This remnant is identified as a faithful one because Noah is described as *"a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God"* (6:10). The Lord said to him, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation" (7:1). During a time of universal wickedness Noah stood up as the only one who was loyal to the Lord and through him God preserved the human race from total destruction.

During the time of Elijah apostasy had reached national dimensions and the prophet concluded that he was the only one left loyal to the Lord: *"The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too"* (1 Kings 19:14). Elijah feared that no faithful **remnant** will survive the attacks of **Ahab** and **Jezebel** against them and consequently the Lord will be left without a representative among His people. He was overly concerned about the fate of God's faithful remnant and the Lord said to him, *"I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him"* (19:18). The prophet did not know the numerical extent of the faithful remnant preserved by the Lord and not by human power.

According to *Isaiah* the Lord was going to bring destruction on the land leaving behind Him a small number of survivors who were to be destroyed. But this word of judgment was followed by a promise of salvation for a **very small faithful remnant**: *"But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land"* (6:12-13). There is still a future for those faithful to the Lord. *Jeremiah* identifies God's faithful remnant as those who will return from exile and with whom the Lord will make a new covenant (31:7-9, 31-34). It is God Himself who will gather His people, His remnant from

among the nations and will bring them back to the land (23:3).

It is interesting to notice that it was God's intention to transform the historical remnant into the faithful remnant. This was to take place through a purifying process:

In that day the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem. The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire (Isaiah 4:2-4).

God's Remnant People in the New Testament

In the New Testament the use of terminology designating the remnant is limited but the concept is expressed through the use of different images. A good example is found in the preaching of *John the Baptist* and his call to the people to **repent**. He strongly reacted against the idea sustained by the Sadducees and Pharisees that they were legitimate sons of Abraham. John indicted them and identified the true sons of Abraham as those "*who produce fruit in keeping with repentance*" (Matthew 3:7-10). The implication was that there was within Israel a true faithful Israel, a **remnant** loyal to the Lord. He went further and announced that the time was coming when God will separate the faithful from the unfaithful from among His people: "*The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire*" (3:10). Through his ministry John the Baptist was gathering God's faithful **remnant**, characterized by a spirit of repentance.

During his ministry *Jesus* was in fact gathering God's **remnant** from among the people of Israel. Those who were to form part of the kingdom of God (the Church of God)

were asked to repent and believe the good news proclaimed by him (Mark 1:15). Not every Israelite was automatically a member of the kingdom of God; a decision had to be made for or against Jesus. We could refer to this group of believers as a **faithful remnant** but the fact is that those who listened to Jesus and who are/were added to him were not all faithful followers. At that time the owner of the field will say to his servants, "*First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn*" (Matthew 13:30). The implication is that the **remnant** that Jesus was gathering was a historical one formed by faithful and unfaithful followers. Only at the end would they be separated.

Paul refers to the Jews who believed in Christ as a remnant (Romans 9:27; 11:5), and "develops a sharp distinction between the Israel of the 'flesh' (9:8; 11:18) and the Israel of the 'promise,' . . . the faithful Israel that is not restricted to physical lineage (Romans 9:6-27). The new community of faith (the Church of God), made up of all who have faith in Christ (10:4, 9-13), includes Gentiles as well as Jews (9:24; 10:12)."[34] The church was then formed by a **remnant** of the Israelites and of Gentiles who by faith accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord.

CONCLUSION

The existence of a faithful **remnant** on the earth indicates that God is still active and very much involved in human affairs. He has not abandoned the human race handing it over to the evil forces active in the world. God's love for his creation proved favorably by sending Jesus Christ to die and organize His church—the Church of Christ. In His conflict against evil God is overcoming it and granting victories to His people. Throughout history He has always preserved for Himself a true **remnant** who is faithful to Him under any circumstances. It has always been God's intention to gather a historical remnant that is at the same time a faithful one, but

human weakness has not always made that possible. The true faithful remnant will become clearly visible at the end-time after the Lord passes the historical remnant through a sifting and cleansing process that will separate the faithful from the unfaithful within the historical remnant. Those who accepted the gospel call will be the remnant of the Bible if they remain faithful until the return of Christ or if death take them. In the New Testament it was closely identified with Jesus and his message of salvation. God gave Jesus a pattern of worship and Jesus left it for the church of Christ today—if the church follows Jesus in faith, obedience and practice she is the remnant of the Bible. So in conclusion the Adventist teaches that their church organization is the remnant of Revelation 12:17. The remnant of Revelation 12:17 are the members of the Church of Christ of which the woman of the passage is described. The devil has been at war with God's creation since the Garden of Eden. Here we see the dragon (the devil) warring with woman's offspring (the faithful in the Church of Christ). The remnant is the faith followers of the Letter and not those of the Law—that keeps the Sabbath as the day of worship. The day of worship is the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). We find no where under the New Covenant where worship was done on the Sabbath. Acts begin the Acts of the Apostles and Paul being an apostles said follow me as I follow Christ.

Our Article is taken from the Biblical Research Institute online: [Wikipedia:](#)

The Remnant and the Adventist Church
Ángel Manuel Rodríguez

BIOGRAPHY
Freeman Green

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**WHAT DO THE ADVENTISTS
TEACH ABOUT MAN. IS HE A
SOUL, OR DOES HE HAVE A
SOUL, AND WHY IS THIS
CONTRARY TO THE TRUTH?**

Johnie Scaggs, Jr.

I am thankful for this faithful congregation, and for her faithful minister Brother Charles Orr. My prayers are always with you all in all the work that you do in the kingdom of God. I am thankful for the invitation to speak and to be a part of this lectureship.

We are dealing with the doctrine which the Adventists teach concerning the soul of man. Does he or does he not have a soul? What happens to the soul of man after death if he indeed has a soul? And why is the doctrine of the Adventists contrary to the truth as set forth in the word of God?

THE NATURE OF MAN

In order to understand what the Adventists believe as to the soul of man after death, it is a must that one understand the doctrine of the Adventists regarding the nature of man. They believe that the mind, body and spirit (soul) are one, and cannot be separated. The doctrine of soul-sleeping that is set forth by the Adventists comes from a false understanding of the nature of man. This group, as with all materialists, believes that man is "wholly mortal" that is, they believe that the body and soul are one and the same, and therefore, when the body dies, so does the soul. Notice what the Adventists have said:

Nature of Man:

Man and woman were made in the image of God

with individuality and the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence upon Him and fell from their high position under God. The image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7; Ps. 8:4-8; Acts 17:24-28; Gen. 3; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12-17; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20; Ps. 51:10; 1 John 4:7, 8, 11, 20; Gen. 2:15.).<http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html>). Taken from their website, The Nature Of Man 1

Others have written:

To understand what happens to a person at death, one must understand what makes up his or her nature. The Bible portrays a person as an organic unity. At times it uses the word soul to refer to the whole person, and at other times to the affections and emotions. But it does not teach that man comprises two separate parts. Body and soul only exist together; they form an indivisible union. At humanity's creation, the union of the dust of the ground (earth's elements) and the breath of life produced a living being or soul. Adam did not receive a soul as a separate entity; he became a living soul.... The soul has no conscious existence apart from the body, and no scripture indicates that

at death the soul survives as a conscious entity. 2

They believe that the spirit of man goes back to God, from whence it came. However, it should be noted that they believe that the spirit refers only to the breath of man and does not refer to any of the attributes of man. The Bible plainly shows us that the spirit does not refer to the breath of man. Notice that James stated, "...the body without the spirit is dead ..." (Jas. 2:26). It is the body that is mortal and not the spirit. Paul also confirms this thought. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11). He also stated, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward [man] is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16). John wrote, "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held" (Rev. 6:9). David said, "Into thy hand I commit my spirit" (Psa. 31:5). Jesus also said, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46).

Foy E. Wallace, Jr., wrote on this point:

In a final reference to the immortality of the spirit in man, the word incorruptible in I Pet. 3:1-4 is the same Greek word immortality in I Tim. 1:17. The passage in Timothy reads: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory forever." The word immortal in this passage is the Greek word *aphthartos*. The passage in Peter reads: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning ... but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." The word incorruptible in this passage in reference to the spirit is the same Greek word *aphthartos* which is applied to God in I Tim. 1:17. The comparison is final and unanswerable: the spirit in man is as

immortal as the eternal God. 3

It should be obvious that the outward man is the body that will perish, but the inward man which is renewed day by day is the spirit of man. It is the spirit of man that lives on even after death! Now let us notice what the Bible teaches on the matter of man's nature. The Bible sets forth man as having three separate parts. Notice Paul's words; "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and [I pray God] your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23). From these words we learn that man is made up of three parts: (1) Body, (2) Soul, (3) Spirit. The body is that part of man which is made up of a material substance. It was God who designed or fashioned man from the dust of the ground. "And the LORD God formed man [of] the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7).

This is the part of man that will cease to exist. Notice what Solomon said; "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 2:7; cf. Gen. 3:19; Psa. 104:29). The Bible teaches that the body is the only part of man that is mortal. That is not to say that there will not be a bodily resurrection but that the body that we now possess will be changed (cf. I Cor. 15:51).

What about the soul? The Adventists say that the soul and body are the same and that you cannot separate them. They believe that the phrase, "...became a living soul" as used in Genesis 2:7 means that a soul was added to the body and not something that was put into the body as a separate entity; rather, the two became one, and thus when the body dies, so does the spirit, or soul of man.

However, W. E. Vine's says: Soma, body, and pneuma, spirit, may be separated."⁴ The separation of the soul and body can easily be seen in numerous passages such as I Thessalonians 5:23. The word "soul" is used a number of

different ways throughout the Bible. Sometimes, it is used to represent the totality of a person (Ezek. 18:20; I Pet. 3:20). At other times, it is used to demonstrate the life that is within the physical body (cf. Gen. 1:30; Acts 20:10). Jesus used the word to refer to the immortal part of man when He said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). And in I Corinthians 2:14, it is used in connection with the intellectual nature of man. The spirit of man is the mind, or conscience of man; it is the intellect of man. Consider what Paul said; "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (I Cor. 2:11). It is the "spirit of man" that knows what he is thinking. The "spirit of man" also refers to the emotions of man (Dan. 7:15). Sometimes the word "spirit" is used synonymously with "soul" (Acts 2:27). Contrary to what some others say, the spirit is that part of man that lives on forever (cf. Gen. 3:19; Eccl. 12:7). The prophet said that the spirit was placed WITHIN man, thus causing it to be a separate part of man. From these three entities of man, we can see that man is not wholly mortal. Man also has an immortal side as well as a mortal side.

If this doctrine on the nature of man were true, then we could understand to some degree why the Seventh Day Adventists believe what they believe on "soul-sleeping." However, their doctrine of the nature of man is not what the Bible teaches.

Is the body, mind and spirit a unit that is indivisible? Or can they be divided into separate units? The Bible is very clear on this subject. Was there ever a time when the body existed without the spirit or mind? Yes! Listen to the words of Moses, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul: (Gen. 2:7). Man was formed from the dust of the ground and after he was formed he was

given the breath of life and he became a living soul. Each was separate from the other.

Albert Barnes stated:

The second obstacle to the favorable progress of the vegetable kingdom is now removed. "And the Lord God formed the man of dust from the soil." This account of the origin of man differs from the former on account of the different end the author has in view. There his creation as an integral whole is recorded with special reference to his higher nature by which he was suited to hold communion with his Maker, and exercise dominion over the inferior creation. Here his constitution is described with marked regard to his adaptation to be the cultivator of the soil. He is a compound of matter and mind. His material part is dust from the soil, out of which he is formed as the potter moulds the vessel out of the clay. He is 'Aadaam (OT:121) "Adam," the man of the soil, "daamaah (OT:127) "adamah." His mission in this respect is to draw out the capabilities of the soil to support by its produce the myriads of his race.

His mental part is from another source. "And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." The word nshaamaah (OT:5397) is invariably applied to God or man, never to any irrational creature. The "breath of life" is special to this passage. It expresses the spiritual and principal element in man, which is not formed, but breathed by the Creator into the physical form of man. This rational part is that in which he bears the image of God, and is suited to be his vicegerent on earth. As the earth was prepared to be the dwelling, so was the body to be the organ of that breath of life which is his essence, himself. (from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft) 5

God has always pictured man as being divided into different parts. Solomon Said, "All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" (Eccl. 3:20-21). Notice also these words of Solomon, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). Moses wrote, "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. 6:5). Jesus also agreed with the statement of Moses, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment" (Mark 12:30). Man must love the Lord his God with all the parts of which he is made, and that is the heart, the soul, the mind and all his strength. We need to understand that the words, "soul, mind, heart and spirit" are used in reference to different parts of man.

Walter R. Martin wrote:

For a fuller treatment of Adventist teaching on soul sleep, we must discuss briefly the Bible use of "soul" and "spirit." In the Old Testament, the words "soul" and "spirit" are the Hebrew *nephesh* and *ruach*. In the New Testament they are the Greek *psuche* and *pneuma*. Although in the Old Testament *nephesh* and *ruach* frequently refer only to the *principle* of life in both men and animals, in many other places they mean the intellectual and spiritual nature of man. Such verses as Isaiah 57:16, Zechariah 12:1, Isaiah 55:3 and Genesis 35:18,⁹ belie the Adventists' criterion for determining the spiritual nature of man. On page 522 of *Questions on Doctrine*, the Adventists list eight Scripture passages about death, to show that at the death of the body, the intellect, will, and spirit of man (*nephesh* and *ruach*) lapse into unconsciousness

pending the resurrection. However, seven of these are from the Old Testament, and every one of them refers to the *body*. Adventists lean strongly on the Book of Ecclesiastes, especially 9:5-6¹⁰ to substantiate their doctrine. But Ecclesiastes 12:7 tells us that, upon the death of the body, "the spirit [*ruach*] shall return unto God." Unlike the mere principle of life in the animals, man possesses a cognizant, immaterial nature created in God's image.^{11 6}

DEATH, WHAT IS IT?

I believe that it will help us understand the nature of the body, soul, and spirit if we can understand what death is and the role which it plays in its connection with the makeup of man. The best definition I have heard is found in one word, "separation." In death, one is separated from the things of this world; after death, we no longer are able to obey the gospel of our Lord, nor are we able to influence anyone else to obey. We cannot come back from the grave and move others to do something against their own wishes. It is at the point of death that our final destination is sealed. The Hebrews writer said, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). After death we will stand before God and hear the sentence: either "well done, enter into the joy of thy rest," or "depart from me, I never knew you." In every case where one speaks about death, it is always seen as a separation. So when we die, our body and spirit will be separated from this old material world and at the same time our body will be separated from the spirit. The body will go back to the dust and the spirit back to God.

Robert Taylor, Jr., said:

Physical death calls for a separation of body and spirit. (James 2:26.) Such a definition harmonizes fully with Rachel's passing in the Old Testament,

“And it came to pass as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.” (Gen. 35: 18.) Adam Clarke, one of the greatest Hebrew scholars who ever lived, suggested that this passage proves conclusively that there is an immortal spirit in man which can exist separate and independent of its tabernacle of clay. 7

THE STATE OF THE DEAD

When speaking about the state of the dead the Seventh Day Adventist folks like to use Eccl. 9:5-6. They believe that this text teaches that man ceases to exist after death. Notice the text: “For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun” (Eccl. 9:5-6). What does the wise man mean by this language? The key to understanding the text is found in verse 6, in the phrase, “under the sun.” The dead are not living on earth any longer; therefore, they do not need to concern themselves with the things that take place under the sun, nor can they! Let us be faithful in dealing with the Scriptures. I know that when I die, I will be in a state of consciousness and in that state I will either be as was Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom or as was the rich man, in torment. It is there that I will await for the return of my Lord and rise up to meet Him in the clouds, to be with Him forever more. My state after this life will be determined by the manner of life which I now live while present in the body. I pray that all mankind would live the Christian life and thus be caught up in glory with our Lord and Saviour.

The Adventists believe that the phrase “dead know not any thing” is inclusive of their knowledge of things in this world and of things pertaining to the state, or existence, of the dead. However, one should note that their own lack of

consistency traps them; if the phrase “dead know not any thing” means things of this world as well as the world to come, then the next phrase, “neither have they any more a reward,” would carry with it the same idea. The word “neither” is a conjunction that connects words or groups of words. Thus, the word “neither” connects the first and second phrases together making them of equal force. If the dead do not know anything, then they also have no reward. There would be no reward in the world that they left, or in the world they have entered.

The dead are in a place somewhere between heaven and earth. I say this because of what Jesus said and did. Jesus told the thief on the cross, “...today shalt thou be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). When Jesus died, He went to Paradise. Paradise was not heaven because after He arose from the grave, He said to Mary, “I am not yet ascended unto the Father” (John 20:17). It was not until Acts 1:8,9 that our Lord ascended to the Father. From this we can understand that Paradise and heaven are two distinct places. But what is Paradise? In order to understand what Paradise is we need to study part of Peter’s lesson on the day of Pentecost. As Peter spoke about Jesus and David, he stated, “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men [and] brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption” (Acts 2:27-31). Peter confirms that David was speaking about the resurrection of Christ and that His soul (our Lord’s) would not be left in hell. If His soul was not to be left in hell, then it

had to have been there at one time, and the only time that could have been was when Christ was in Paradise. Therefore hell, as used in Acts 2:31, is Paradise. They are one and the same. The American Standard translates the word hell "Hades," which is a better translation. It is from the Greek word alpha, which means "not," and deo, derived from the verb "see," meaning in a very literal sense "unseen or hidden." So Christ, along with the thief on the cross, was in a world of the unseen, a world that you and I as human beings cannot see. But this does not mean that the dead do not know certain things about their existence.

The Bible plainly teaches over and over that the dead are in a state of conscious existence. This is taught both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, as we will plainly see as we develop this section of our lesson. The wise man stated, "In the way of righteousness [is] life; and [in] the pathway [thereof there is] no death" (Prov. 12:28). On this point Roy J. Hearn stated:

Materialists' definition of death is "ceasing to exist." Substitute, "...and in the pathway thereof is not ceasing to be." In this vein Jesus said, "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believeth thou this?" (John 11:26). Martha confessed her faith in Christ. Did she die? With reference to earthly existence, yes; her soul departed from her body; but the spirit did not cease to exist, for she believed in Christ.⁸

Look closely at the account of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16: 19-31. (It should be noted that even though many erroneously believe this to be a parable, the truth does not change whether it is an historical account or a parable, for a parable cannot describe that which is not truth. That is to say, a parable illustrates only a truth).

First, notice that both the rich man and Lazarus (beggar) died and were both buried (ver. 22). Second, notice the condition of Lazarus. He was in Abraham's bosom, and he

was in comfort. In order for Abraham to have stated that Lazarus was comforted, Lazarus would have had to have a consciousness of his state, or else these words would have had no meaning at all. Third, let us notice the rich man; (1) He could see, for he saw Lazarus (ver. 23); (2) He could remember who Lazarus was, for he called for him by name (ver. 24). Not only did he call for Lazarus by name, but he also called for Abraham by name; (3) He knew that he was being "tormented in this flame" (ver. 24); (4) He had the ability to remember his life and the things which took place in life (ver. 25); (5) He remembered that he had a father and that his five brothers were living in their father's house (vers. 27,28); (6) He also realized that they still had a chance to obey the Word of the Lord and miss the place where he was (ver. 28). This man was dead, and yet, he still could and did remember things of the past and present, and he could anticipate things of the future; for, he realized what had taken place in his life (past), he understood where he was (present), and he understood that if his five brothers did not change, they would find themselves in the same position as he was (future).

But notice also a third party, Abraham. Abraham was dead and buried, and yet he carried on a conversation with the rich man about all these things related to his condition, and of what he could and could not do in his present state.

Consider also the words of John; "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth" (Rev. 6:9,10). Notice, it was the souls of the faithful that John saw. These souls cried out about things that had taken place to them while they had lived on earth. They were in a conscious state. They could remember certain things about what was happening and knew what they desired to see happen in the

future.

CONCLUSION

When the Lord returns to bring judgment, we who are faithful will meet Him in the air and the dead in Christ will also meet Him in the air, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess 4:15-17). It will be at this time that we will be changed and we shall have a new body. What that body is like, we are not fully told. But it will be a glorified body, one that will live forever. I look forward to the day that I can be united with my Lord in the life to come.

ENDNOTES

1. (Taken from their web site <http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html>). The nature of man.
2. Seventh-Day Adventists Believe, pp. 353, 354.
3. Foy E. Wallace, Jr., "The Jehovah's Witnesses Movement," The Gospel For Today, pp. 373, 374.
4. W. E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 137.
5. Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft.
6. Martin R. Walter, The Truth about Seventh Day Adventism, p.127.
7. Robert R. Taylor, Jr., The Bible Doctrine of Final Things, p. 52.
8. Roy J. Hearn, "Peter In Lydda and Joppa, Tabitha Raised,

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**A
STUDY
OF THE
ISLAMIC RELIGION**

WHAT ARE THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM AND HOW DO THEY DIFFER FROM GOD'S WORD?

Jim Beltz

Our government, news media and several main stream religious bodies go to great lengths to assure the American public that Christianity and Islam are similar religions. These same entities try to convince us that we have nothing to fear from the supporters of this dangerous and diabolical religion. It is well past time for Americans, and especially Christians, to wake up and realize the peril perched at our door.

Our assignment is to examine the five pillars of Islam and compare them to what the bible reveals as truth. These five pillars were borrowed from previous Arabian, Jewish and Christian practices and incorporated into the Muslim religion. We shall see, upon investigation, that these are not just beliefs, but actions that are to be performed.

SHAHADA (Witness)

Which is the oral confessing of Allah. "*La-ilaha-illa-llahu: Muhammadu-Rasulu-allah.*" This means, there is no god but the God and Muhammad is His messenger. This simple statement has a great deal of power over the Muslim. We see it refers to the god of the Muslim religion and also to the messenger of that religion. This SHAHADA is the rallying cry of the Muslim people. We can even hear them chanting this confession during the news broadcasts. They find strength and solidarity in the SHAHADA.

A person must make this avowal in order to become a Muslim. They teach that a person who does not make this confession is without hope.

SALAT (Prayer)

The ritualistic prayers of the Islam religion fill the Muslim's life. Prayer, which is offered five times a day, is arranged around the times a person would be actively engaged with other daily duties. Prayer, for the Muslim, starts before daybreak. Another prayer is offered at mid-day followed by prayer at mid-afternoon. The evening is also filled with required prayer; at sunset and again before retiring for the day. It has been suggested that there is design in these specific times of prayer:

The prayers are scheduled at times that people fulfill some physical need. Prayer at such times prevents people from becoming overly focused on their immediate worldly needs. It is a reminder that God is the Provider, the Sustainer and Fulfiller of all our needs (www.viewislam.com/pillars/pillar2.htm).

These prayers are offered while facing Mecca and can only be recited after proper ablution in running water. A specific pattern must be followed in the washing. The hands are washed up to the wrists three times. Then the mouth is washed followed by washing the nostrils three times. Next, the face is washed three times using both hands then the forearms from fingers to elbows are washed three times. The head is washed once by running both hands from the forehead to nap of the neck and then back to the forehead. The ears are washed by placing the index finger in the ear and the thumb behind the ear. This is also done three times. The feet are washed three times each followed by the washing between all the toes. Now a Muslim is ready to pray.

SAWN (Fasting)

The month of Ramadan (the ninth month of the Islamic calendar) is the required fast of the Muslim. When this religion was first started this month (Ramadan) fell in the summer so Ramadan simple means "the scorching sun." Due to the lunar calendar the month rotates from season to season.

Tradition says that during this month the gates of hell are closed and those of heaven are wide open. The fasting starts at dawn each day during that month “from the time that one can distinguish a white thread from a black thread” (Sura 2:187). No food or drink is to be consumed until after sundown.

HAJJ (Pilgrimage)

A pilgrimage must be made to Mecca at least once in the lifetime of each Muslim. Upon arriving in the city all ordinary clothing is removed and white robes are worn. One cannot wash, with the exception of the ceremonial washing already mentioned. Women can wear no jewelry or perfume during the pilgrimage. Sexual relationships are also forbidden during the pilgrimage.

ZAKAH (Religious tax)

The Muslim would say that this is almsgiving, but it is, in fact, an obligation, therefore, not an offering. It is a tax they are required to give. It is not regarded as charity for it is not really voluntary. Depending on the source, this tax can vary from 2.5% to 10% of the family income. “Alms is for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the funds; for those whose hearts have been recently reconciled (to truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of God and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by God, and God is full of knowledge and wisdom” (Sura 9:60).

How do these pillars of the Islamic religion compare to God’s holy word?

THE SHAHADA

The shahada is composed of two parts. The first part refers to Allah (Arabic for God) and the second part refers to Muhammad. The Muslims believe in one God, but their view of God (Allah) is very different from the God we read about in the Bible.

The Bible teaches that the one God is made up of three Persons or Beings. Note the plural pronouns in these verses: "And God said, Let **us** make man in **our** image, after **our** likeness" (Gen 1:26 emphasis added, jb). "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of **us**" (Gen 3:22 emphasis added jb). The Bible teaches one God. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Ephesians 4:6) but that God is comprised of three Beings. The Quran, in contrast to the Bible, castigates the idea of a plurality in the Godhead.

O People of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter aught concerning Allah save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers, and say not "Three" - Cease! (it is) better for you! - Allah is only One God. Far is it removed from His Transcendent Majesty that He should have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And Allah is sufficient as Defender. The Messiah will never scorn to be a slave unto Allah, nor will the favoured angels. Whoso scorneth His service and is proud, all such will He assemble unto Him; (Sura 4:171, 172)

As if this wasn't enough, the Quran goes on to tell of those who believe in the plural nature of the Godhead will be excluded from heaven and receive a "painful doom" in the fires of hell.

They surely disbelieve who say: Lo! Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah (himself) said: O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Lo! whoso ascribeth partners unto Allah, for him Allah hath forbidden paradise. His abode is the Fire. For evil-doers there will be no helpers. They surely disbelieve who say: Lo! Allah is the third of three; when there is no God save the One God. If they desist not from so saying a painful

doom will fall on those of them who disbelieve
(Sura 5:72, 73).

When the bible, the one true source of spiritual information, is consulted, we find that Jesus is referred to as God on several occasions, i.e., Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1; 20:28; Philippians 2:6; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:8, etc.

The second part of the Shahada refers to Muhammad, the supposed messenger of God. It is not our intent, in this manuscript, to go into the background that led to Muhammad becoming the focal point of the Islamic religion. Our responsibility is to compare what the Quran says with what the bible teaches. It will be best for us to allow the two books to reveal the obvious incompatibilities in their teachings: "And to warn those who say: Allah hath chosen a son, They speak naught but a lie." (Sura 18:4, 5).

"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also" (1 John 2:22, 23).

"When it is not meet for (the Majesty of) the Beneficent that He should choose a son" (Sura 19:92).

"That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him" (John 5:23). "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:10-12).

"Allah hath not chosen any son, nor is there any god along with Him" (Sura 23:91).

'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him' (Matthew 17:5).

The Bible declares that Jesus is God's final revelation

for mankind (Hebrews 1:1-3). Muhammad comes along at the end of the sixth century and says it isn't so. Someone has to be wrong! Paul plainly declared that there is but "one faith" (Ephesians 4:5) and it was once (past tense) delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Therefore, another faith, any other faith, would have to be a false faith. Both the Islamic concept of Allah and their view of Muhammad are false premises of their false religion.

SALAD (Prayer)

Prayer is one of the greatest blessings a child of God has in this world. To be able to approach the Creator and lay our thanksgivings, petitions and desires before His throne of grace. However, it takes faithful obedience to be heard by God in our prayers. The wise sage of the Old Testament repeatedly warned all who would listen to him to be followers of the law in order for the supplications to be heard (cf. Proverbs 1:28, 29; 15:29; 28:9). Jesus confirms the same information in John 9:31, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth." Based upon the bible the, the followers of Muhammad are not doing His will and therefore remove themselves from even the possibility of having their prayers heard (1 Peter 3:12).

Prayer is a blessing and all spiritual blessings are "in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). The only way to get into Christ is through scriptural baptism (Galatians 3:27), which requires one to be buried in water for the remission of past sins (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3, 4). A thousand times a thousand prayers can be uttered while facing any compass direction a Muslim might choose and they all will be uttered in vain. One cannot be right with the one God of heaven while outside of Christ.

SAWN (Fasting)

In New Testament writings we find that fasting held an important place in the lives of first century Christians. We

know that Jesus fasted for forty days in the wilderness and was tempted of the Devil during that period (Luke 4:1, 2). The early church often fasted as shown in Acts 13:2; 14:23; 27:33; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 6:4-10.

What we cannot find in the pages of God's Holy Word is the specific command for His followers to fast. If an individual wants to fast or feels a need to fast in certain situations, then, by all means, they need to do so. But, no human can tell another human when to fast. It is a private matter, not a religious edict. When a man makes doctrine for others to follow those doctrines are vain commandments that transgress the commandment of God (Matthew 15:3, 9).

HAJJ (Pilgrimage)

Mecca is clearly thought of as the center point of the Islamic religion. The required pilgrimage to the city of Mecca stems from Muhammad's own association with that ancient city. His childhood was there along with what he claims as being the first visit of the angel Gabriel with revelations from Allah. It is where the Ka-bah is located. In their minds the Ka-bah is considered the most sacred place on earth.

God has no sacred place on earth. We often promote this type of thinking when we call the bible lands the "holy lands." There is nothing holy about that land. Such pilgrimages are meaningless wastes of time and resources. Salvation isn't in some geographical location. Salvation is in the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16, 17; 10:17). People need not turn to Mecca, but rather turn to the gospel.

ZAKAH (Religious tax)

According to the Muslim's thoughts, their possessions are made pure by setting a portion of them aside for those less fortunate. I'm sure all would readily accept the moral and scriptural view of helping others in need (Cf. Acts 20:35; 1 John 3:17, 18). The Muslims go beyond the free-will

offering the bible teaches and makes this offering a tax that must be paid.

This fundamental difference is significant. You never hear of a person in this country giving "a little extra" to the IRS at tax time. Why is this? If we are required to do something we will, but we won't go the "extra mile." The New Testament law of free-will offerings reveal a platform to do what we can as an offering, not as a tax. God's wisdom shines through again. Paul declared, through inspiration these words, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Corinthians 16:1, 2).

Our giving is based upon how we have been blessed. The manner and attitude of our offering is as vitally important as how much we set aside in that offering. Paul goes on to say, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). The tax of the Muslims isn't found in point or principle in the bible.

The Islamic religion is foreign to the scriptures. We often speak of being involved in a spiritual warfare, and without question, we are (2 Corinthians 10:4; 1 Timothy 1:8). The more we learn about Islam the more we realize the danger inherent in this false, militant religion. We actually are in danger of physical peril. Other world religions are a danger to us in a spiritual realm, but are willing, in general, to coexist with pure Christianity in peace. This is not so of Islam. The zeal for Allah, as set forth in their Quran, requires Islam to be perpetuated by force, if necessary, until all are under its dominance.

There is no compulsion in religion. On the other hand, false claims and facts are two different things. Americans in general and Christians specifically, need to be aware of the

dangers in believing the myth that Islam is a tolerant religion. "Islam is a religion born in bloodshed, nurtured on violence and matured in conquest" (Ney Rieber, *A resource for the Study of Islam* Star Publications, 1993, page 1).

It is past time for the soldiers of Christ to arise in opposition to this dangerous religion. The only thing that can defeat the religion of Islam is the gospel of Christ. A gospel taught by fearless individuals who know the bible and the blessings associated with God's sacred book. The Five Pillars of Islam have neither source nor substance from the Great God of heaven and earth.

BIOGRAPHY

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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “THE NATION OF ISLAM AND ISLAM:”?

Bobby Green

INTRODUCTION

According to most sources, Islam is the 2nd largest religion in the world with somewhere between 1 billion and 1.8 billion adherents. Not to be confused with traditional Islam is the Nation of Islam which is estimated to have about 100,000 adherents. Both forms of Islam refer to their god as “Allah”. Both forms of Islam believe in the *Five Pillars of the Islamic Faith: confession, prayer, fasting, alms giving and the pilgrimage*. For the purpose of this paper, my objective is to observe some of the differences between Traditional Islam and the Nation of Islam by comparing and contrasting their historical origins and their doctrinal emphases. The differences between Traditional Islam and the Nation of Islam that I would like to focus on is their historical beginnings and their theology as it relates to God, race relations and their final prophets’.

THE ORIGIN OF TRADITIONAL ISLAM

Traditional Islam had its beginning in the 7th century A.D when it was founded by Mohammed. Mohammed, the founder of Islam was of Arabian descent, born in the city of Mecca where he spent the first 522 years of his life. He was born 570 A D and died June 8th, 632 A D. Mohammed’s father died about 6 months before his birth and his died when he was six leaving Mohammed an orphan. For the next two years he was raised by his grandfather who died when Mohammed was only eight. Finally he came under the care of his uncle, Abu Talib. Mohammed grew up to be a merchant and by the age of 25, he was married. Religiously,

he had some association with a Christian monk from whom he probably developed the art of meditation. During the last 10 years of his life, at least once a year he would go up into the mountains and meditate for several weeks at a time. During one of one of his meditations on Mount Hira, a mountain near Mecca, Muhammad claimed to have been visited by Gabrielle. On one of his annual visits to the caves, Mohammed fell into a trance and Gabrielle revealed some things to him and he started preaching a message. His message claimed that there was only one God to whom everyone was to submit and that there was a coming judgment for everyone, even those who did not believe in God. As Mohammed's following grew, persecution arose and they were driven out of Mecca. Mohammed and his followers moved to the city of Yathrib where they attempted to forge a relationship with the Jews. When this relationship did not work, they murdered hundreds of Jews. As their adherents increased the religion of Islam grew stronger and Mohammed and his followers returned to capture Mecca by force.

After reclaiming Mecca and the surrounding area Mohammed was the leader of not only Mecca but much of the Arabian Peninsula. By the time of his death in 632 Mohammed was considered both a religious and a political leader. When Mohammed died he had no sons so he named Ali, his daughter Fatima's husband as his successor. However, most of Mohammed's followers did not have confidence in Ali's leadership so they named Abu, Mohammed's friend as his successor. When Abu died, two years later, they once again bypassed Ali and selected Umar as the religion's leader. Umar was assassinated 10 years later and again Ali was passed over in favor of Uthman. Twelve years later Uthman was assassinated and Ali was finally made Caliph. Six years later Ali was assassinated and Muawiyah took over the movement and began the Umayyad Dynasty.

All of these assassinations and in-house fighting generated many schisms in the Islamic religion. The majority of Muslims accepted the leadership of the first three Caliphs and became known as Sunnis. A minority believed that Ali was the rightful heir to the throne. They became known as the Shiites. In time there would be another splinter in the religion. As the Muslim elite continued to fight to expand the Muslim Empire, a group of commoners arose to challenge them. This group emphasized poverty and the consequences of sin and other spiritual matters. They became known as Sufis.

Today the Sunnis are the largest group in Islam. Their name means principle or path. They believe that they had the right to elect any leader since Allah never told them whom to elect. Therefore the first three Caliphs were in fact legitimate in their estimation. Within the Sunnis, there are four recognized orthodox forms of Sunni Islamic practice. The Shiites are the second largest group of Islam. The Shiites differ from the Sunni in that they recognize their leaders through progeny. Shiite leaders have absolute spiritual authority. They have the final say in matters of doctrine and revelation. Sufism seems to be considered a movement rather than a branch of its own since there are both Shiites and Sunnis who hold to these beliefs. Those who practice Sufism believe that they have direct revelation from God but that the talent must be developed.

THE ORIGIN OF NATION OF ISLAM

Nation Islam with a much shorter history had its beginning in the early 1930s. Wallis Fard, a merchant from Detroit claimed to be an adherent to Islam. (There is some confusion as to exactly who Fard was, some claim he was Arab, others claim he was a white ex-con while others claimed he was of English-Polynesian descent born in New Zealand.) As he sold goods to poor black families in Detroit, they would invite him into their homes. Fard would then

teach them the religion of Islam from the Koran. In time he met a man named Elijah Poole who had relocated from Georgia to Detroit with his family of eight to find a better life. Poole, along with two of his brothers became the most devout followers of Fard. Fard renamed Elijah Poole, Elijah Mohammed and he became the chief minister of Islam. Part of Fard's message was that the Caucasian people were a race of blue-eyed devils who were using the Bible to oppress black people. He explained that the true religion for black people was Islam, and that their God was Allah and the authority was not the bible but the Holy Koran. Fard eventually disappeared. Some attributed his disappearance to foul play while others say that he abandoned his followers. Whatever the case, no one knows what happened to Fard.

With Fard's disappearance, Elijah Poole, (now Mohammed) took the reigns of the movement. He moved to Washington D C where he went from city to city preaching the message that he was given by Fard. Mohammed and his son were imprisoned along with other black leaders but he was eventually released after 4 years. One year after Mohammed's release from prison Malcolm X joined the Nation of Islam. Because of his oratorical skills, the Nation of Islam became a national force. As Malcolm X continued to aid in the spreading of the Nation of Islam, he began to have doctrinal and moral differences with Elijah Mohammed. Malcolm disagreed with Mohammed's teaching on race and fathering children with his secretaries and other women whom expelled from the mosque.

After Malcolm X's made a foolish remark about the assassination of President Kennedy, Malcolm X's ministerial duties were suspended for ninety days during which time he was not allowed to speak in public. During this time, Malcolm X made a pilgrimage to Mecca and having witnessed what he believed to be Islam in its truest form, people of all races bowing in submission to Allah, he began to proclaim that Islam was a religion for all people and not

just blacks. These teachings eventually led to his assassination on February 21, 1965. In 1975, Elijah Mohammed's son Wallace Mohammed took the reigns of the movement. Wallace Mohammed was a friend of Malcolm X and over the years he had been expelled and reinstated into the movement a few times. When Elijah Mohammed died, Wallace Mohammed aligned the movement with traditional Islam and it became known as the American Muslim Mission. Eventually they completely assimilated themselves into traditional Islam.

During Malcolm X's ministry, he befriended a young man named Louis X. When Malcolm X was suspended from his temple, Louis X became the successor to that temple. When Elijah Mohammed died and Wallace took over, Louis X was displeased with the direction that Wallace was taking the group. There were a number of followers who agreed with him. So they broke away from the movement and Louis X (Farrakhan) became their leader and remains so today. He held to most of the traditional teachings of Elijah Mohammed especially concerning race.

CONTRASTING THEIR THEOLOGIES

Traditional Islam teaches "There is no God but Allah." They dispute any belief in an incarnation. As such Jesus Christ was not God, neither was Mohammed God. They believe Jesus Christ to have been a prophet. However, Mohammed was the final prophet and as such the final fulfillment. The Nation of Islam makes the same declaration that there is no God but Allah. However, unlike traditional Islam which disputes any idea of an incarnation, they believe that Allah was incarnate in the person of Wallace Fard. Additionally, the Nation of Islam seems to be polytheistic. They teach that there are many Gods. Some had a beginning and later died. They teach that God is a man, a black man in general and Master Fard in particular.

With respect to the final prophet, traditional Islam

teaches that Mohammed who was born in the 6th century was the final prophet of Allah and was given Allah's final revelation in the caves of Mecca. On the other hand Nation of Islam adherents believe that Elijah Mohammed who was born in the 20th century was also a prophet. Therefore 6th century Mohammed could not be the final prophet.

TEACHINGS ABOUT RACE RELATIONS

For the Nation of Islam, the Caucasian race is the enemy of the Negroes and is the devil. The Nation of Islam teaches that Yakub was a traitorous black man who was born near Mecca 6600 years ago. Mr. Yakub had done something wrong and he and his followers were exiled to the Isle of Patmos. He came up with a plan to create the white race by only allowing the lighter skinned people to marry. Thus the white race was created and they returned to Mecca to start a war and were banished to Europe where they lived as savages until Moses helped to civilize them. In time they used that knowledge to oppress blacks. Traditional Muslims on the other hand believe that Islam is a religion for all people. Thus unlike the Nation of Islam traditional Islam believes that whites can be Muslims.

TEACHINGS ABOUT THE DEVIL

As mentioned above the Nation of Islam views the devil as a physical manifestation. They view the entire white race as a race of devils because of their belief that whites are bent on destroying the "black man". On the other hand, traditional Islam's beliefs about the devil line up more closely with orthodox Christianity. Some Muslims view the devil as a fallen angel. Others believe that angels cannot fall and so place the devil in the realm of the Jin or Spirits. In any case, traditional Islam views the devil as a spiritual being while the nation of Islam sees the devil as physical beings – namely the white race.

ABOUT JESUS

Nation of Islam teaches that Jesus was a prophet who came to change the Caucasian race for the better but they would not listen to him. They do not believe that he was born of a virgin but that Joseph impregnated Mary while he was married to another woman. The Nation of Islam's teachings claim that Matthew 1:21 does not refer to Jesus of Nazareth but to Wallace Fard. Jesus was not crucified but a police officer stuck him with a knife in the heart while he was in Jerusalem. Like the Nation of Islam, traditional Muslims believe that Jesus Christ was a prophet with a limited message. Traditional Muslims believe that Jesus was sent only to the Jews for the purpose of confirming the message of the Mosaic covenant.

ABOUT SALVATION

The Nation of Islam teaches that there is no forgiveness of sin and no promise of heaven. There is no life beyond the grave. Heaven then for Nation of Islam adherents is peace of mind and security. Heaven is doing well on this side of life because nothing else exists. While the Nation of Islam sees salvation as happening here and now, traditional Muslims believe that salvation is future. They believe in the concept of hell and that salvation includes forgiveness of sin and deliverance from hell. They believe in a paradise where obedient Muslims go after they die.

CONCLUSION

There are many outward similarities between the Nation of Islam and Traditional Islam. They both label their religion as Islam and claim to use the same book and both groups believe in submission to Allah. While there are many similarities, there are also a great many differences. Historically, they are separated by roughly 1500 years. Traditional Islam's target group seems to be the entire world, while the focus of the Nation of Islam seems to be American

blacks oppressed by whites. Their major beliefs are different. Traditional Islam is monotheistic believing in one God with no reincarnation. While their counterparts are at times monotheistic, they are at times polytheistic believing in many Gods. Traditional Islam believes the devil to be a spirit while the Nation of Islam sees the devil as the Caucasian race.

These fundamental differences will affect the way that we seek to evangelize both group. If we fail to understand the great differences between the two groups, we will greatly diminish our effectiveness. In order to effectively evangelize these groups we must understand where they are coming from as well as their beliefs. While we do not change our message we may have to vary our approach depending on the beliefs of the group.

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BIOGRAPHY

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WHERE DID THIS ISLAMIC RELIGION COME FROM: GOD OR MAN?

Brian R. Kenyon

The quick answer to the question is simple: Islamic religion came from man! However, knowing that we must “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15; all Bible quotations are taken from the KJV unless otherwise indicated), we must prove the answer beyond the doubt of any rational thinker. In proving this answer, we will first examine some Biblical standards as to how a determination between man-made and God ordained religion can be made; then, we will examine the history of Islam; and finally, we will measure some major doctrines of Islam against what the Bible teaches.

WHO IS A FALSE PROPHET?

Early in Israel’s history, God’s people were taught the importance of adhering to the word of God—and the word of God alone (Deut. 4:2; 12:32)! However, because in all ages of God’s people there have been those who teach doctrines contrary to the true word of God, it has always been necessary to put these doctrines and their teachers to the test (cf. 1 Jn. 4:1; Rev. 2:2). Deuteronomy 13:1-5 was for this very purpose—to instruct Israel on how to test whether a prophet was a true prophet or a false prophet.

Moses, the inspired penman, acknowledged that what a prophet predicted could actually have happened: “If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass” (Deut. 13:1-2a). This is not, of course, to say that the sign or wonder came to pass because God approved

of the prophet and was truly working through him (cf. Mt. 7:21-23), but that what the prophet “predicted” did indeed happen, or at least appeared to do so. Signs coming to pass was one indication of a true prophet (cf. Deut. 18:20-22). A “dreamer of dreams” refers to one whose prophecy was received through dreams (cf. Joel 2:28). Dreams were used in prophecy both legitimately (Num. 12:6) and illegitimately (Jer. 23:25-32; 29:8). “Signs and wonders” were associated with the power of God in the Exodus narratives (cf. Deut. 4:34). Thus, it would seem appropriate to believe a prophet if his prediction actually came true.

However, in testing a prophet, there was something far more valuable than whether or not his sign or wonder came to pass—what he taught! Teaching God’s word was the test that overrode all other tests! The word that God already delivered was to be given priority over any future prophetic revelations (Deut. 4:2; 12:32). No sign or wonder—no matter how authentic it seemed—was to take precedence over God’s revealed will! If a prophet taught, “Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them” (Deut. 13:2b), then there were two responses the faithful children of God were to make. Negatively, “Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams” (Deut. 13:3a). Positively, “that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death” (Deut. 13:5a). The reason why they were to react this way was two-fold. First, “because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage” (Deut. 13:5b). The New King James Version translates the first part of this, “he preached rebellion against the Lord.” Imagine, all that God did for them, and this prophet is teaching them to rebel against God! The Lord’s bringing them out of Egypt and redeeming them was the basis on which Israel was commanded to love God and to have no other gods (cf. Deut. 5:6-10; 6:20-25). Not only did idolatry show ingratitude, it also would cut Israel off

from the only source of their salvation (cf. Jer. 2:27-28). Second, Israel was to react to the false prophet by not listening to him and by putting him to death “because he hath spoken . . . to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in” (Deut. 13:5c). Again, a comparison of translations helps. The word “to thrust” is also translated “to entice” (NKJ) and “to seduce” (NAS). The point is that these false prophets were drawing God’s people away from Him. The “way of the Lord” implies “a whole orientation of personal and social life toward the values, priorities, and will of God” (Wright 174). To go after other gods was to turn against every aspect of God and His will for Israel! The main reason for the death penalty for the false prophet was clearly stated: “So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee” (Deut. 13:5d). The death penalty for idolatry is consistent with the first commandment (cf. Ex. 22:20; 23:13). The death penalty needs to be seen, “not as a vestige of religious fanaticism or primitive barbarianism, but as a measure of the seriousness with which the covenant was taken as the foundation of Israel’s whole national existence and people hood” (Wright 173). The false prophet’s message to “go after other gods” was a message to practice idolatry.

Idolatry was rebellion against God. Rebellion against God was treason against the whole nation because it endangered the whole nation as the potential object of God’s wrath (cf. Josh. 6-7). In such a case, then, who should die: the false prophet or the whole nation?

WHAT CONSTITUTES A FALSE MESSAGE?

Galatians 1:6-9 depicts a standard by which to know the difference between manmade religion and God-ordained religion. Paul expressed his astonishment at the quickness with which the Galatians were being deceived into leaving the Gospel. Paul was surprised that “ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble

you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal. 1:6). The word “removed [turning away, NKJ; deserting, NAS]” is from a Greek word that means to remove, take back, and in the middle voice, as used here, it means to desert or turn away (Acts 7:16; Heb. 7:12; 11:5; Jude 4). Outside the Bible, the word was “used of desertion or revolt in a military or political defection and frequently had the idea of a change in religion, philosophy, or morals” (Rogers and Rogers 421). The present tense of the verb suggests that they had not completed their abandonment—there was still hope of stopping them! The tragedy with the Galatians was that they were not just abandoning doctrine, which would be bad enough, but they were also abandoning God, the very One who called them into “the grace of Christ” (cf. 2 Thes. 2:14).

The Galatians were abandoning God by accepting a different Gospel. The Greek word translated “another” (from heteros), in “another gospel” (Gal. 1:6b), means “another of a different kind.” Thus, it can be translated as a “different gospel” (NKJ). This “different gospel” the Galatians were leaning toward did not deny everything about Jesus Christ. Rather, the Judaizing teachers added parts of the Law of Moses to the Gospel of Christ (cf. Acts 15:1, 5, 24). The Galatians, however, were accepting a Gospel that did not exist. “Which is not another” emphatically denies that any “gospel” that also binds the Law of Moses (or anything else that God has not included) cannot be the Gospel of Christ. Here, the Greek word translated “another” (from allos) refers to another of the same kind. The point Paul makes is that the one Gospel does matter (cf. “one faith,” Eph. 4:4). We must not think that we have a choice of “gospels,” or “faiths”!

Some in Galatia were troubling the church by wanting to change the Gospel to meet their own approval (Gal. 1:7b). The word “pervert [distort, NAS]” means to turn, alter, or change; “to change from one thing to another, to change to the opposite” (Rogers and Rogers 421). The false teachers influencing the churches of Galatia wanted to change what

had already been taught! Paul made clear, though, that no being—angelic or human—had authority to change the Gospel! “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8). To make sure his readers understood, Paul repeated, “As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:9). “Accursed [anathema, ASV]” is word whereby one places another under the curse of God (Rom. 9:3; 1 Cor. 12:3; 16:22). This curse would include an apostle, a coworker of an apostle (“we”), or even “an angel from heaven”! The standard by which any so called “gospel” is to be measured is what the apostles of Christ have already preached (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Jude 3).

Both Old and New Testaments give God’s people the standard by which false teachers and false religions are to be measured. From the examples given above, two criteria will be applied to Islam and whether it originated from God or man. First, does Islam teach us to “go after other gods”? In other words, is the god of Islam the same as the God of the Bible? Second, do the doctrines of Islam harmonize with the Gospel of Christ or do they constitute a “different gospel”?

ORIGIN OF ISLAM

There is no doubt that the personality, life, and so-called revelations of the “Prophet” Muhammad are that to which the faith and practice of all Islamic religions are traced. Much of the alleged sayings and doings of Muhammad are “fictions which mirror the history of the theology, politics, and jurisprudence [law] of early Islam” (Anderson 92). There is much truth to the assessment that perhaps more than any other earthly man, “Muhammad shaped the destinies of his people, and though they left him far behind as they moved along the path of civilization, they still looked back to him for guidance and authority at each step” (Nicholson).

Muhammad's early life began around AD 570 at Mecca, where he was born. His father died before his birth, and his mother died when he was six years old. Little is known with certainty concerning his early childhood. According to tradition (as summarized by Anderson 93), Muhammad's mother gave him to a Bedouin woman to nurse, and thus he spent his earliest years among nomads. When he was twelve years old, he went with his uncle to Syria, where he met a "Christian" monk named Bahira. He was later employed by a rich widow named Khadija. She eventually put him in charge of her caravans, and she rewarded his loyalty with her hand in marriage. A number of children were born to them, but only one daughter, Fatima, survived.

As an adult, Muhammad was interested in religion. He was very dissatisfied with polytheism and the superstitions of his contemporaries. It is unclear whether he was attracted to monotheism through the influences of Christianity or Judaism, both of which were corrupt in that region. Whatever the influence, though, he was convinced that there existed one true transcendent God. It is obvious that early in life, he absorbed much teaching from the Jewish and Christian sources surrounding his upbringing.

Muhammad was about forty years old when he claimed to have received the first "revelation" of the Koran. The term "Koran" comes from "Qur'an," which is thought to come from a word that meant "reading," or "recitation." As it represents one of Islam's main standards of authority, it may be spelled "Quran," "Qur'an," or "Koran." For the purpose of this study, the term Koran will be used because it is the most recognizable in the English speaking Western world. The Koran consists of 114 chapters, called Surahs. It is said that a voice was heard three times that told Muhammad to "Read (or recite) in the name of the Lord." After this time, no more revelations came for a long time. Then suddenly, when passing through a period of deep spiritual depression, doubt, and uncertainty, he is said to have seen the angel Gabriel

which sent him home trembling to his wife for comfort, only to hear the voice say, "O thou wrapped up (in the mantle)! Arise and deliver thy warning!" (Surah 74:1-2; all Koran quotations are taken from Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation of the Holy Qur'an). These passages mark Muhammad's assumption of the prophetic office.

Response to Muhammad's revelations was poor at first. Only his wife, his cousin, his adopted son, and a few followers believed in his mission. Muhammad's claims were ridiculed by many. Thus, his preaching and revelations changed in tone. He increasingly began to compare himself with Biblical prophets who were also mocked and persecuted. However, as he would recall, judgment always fell upon the persecutors of God's prophets.

Because of this adverse reaction, Muhammad and his followers withdrew into Medina. This withdrawal is known as the Hijra. Because the response in Mecca was small, in AD 622 Muhammad took the decisive step of withdrawing with his followers (about 200 in all) to Medina. The inhabitants of Medina met him earlier during a pilgrimage, at which time they accepted his claims. Thus, they had prepared their fellow townsmen for Muhammad's coming. This withdrawal proved to be the turning point in Muhammad's career and has been appropriately chosen as the beginning of the Muslim era (Anderson 95). When studying Islam, it is not uncommon to see dates given in years AH (i.e., Muhammad entered Mecca in triumph in 9 AH), which means years "after Hijra," the beginning of Islam. In Mecca, Muhammad was the rejected Prophet, pointing his countrymen to the one true God and warning them of judgment to come. In Medina, he soon became very influential, eventually gaining the status of the "executive and the mouthpiece of the new theocracy" (Anderson 95).

Muhammad first believed that his message would automatically gain Jewish support. He thought of his message as the one true religion preached by Abraham and

all the patriarchs and prophets. He thought their message had been corrupted through the years of transmission, and that he was proclaiming it anew. For this reason his earlier references to the "People of the Book" (Jews and Christians) were almost uniformly favorable. In fact, at first he adopted several Jewish practices.

The Jews at Medina did not accept Muhammad's claims. Rather, they exposed his many inaccurate accounts of Old Testament history. As one can imagine, this would be quite embarrassing, especially since Muhammad claimed that his accounts were received from the direct revelation of God. To save his reputation, Muhammad alleged that the Jewish Scriptures had been corrupted in their transmission. From this time, Muhammad affirmed that his religion was that of Abraham, who was neither Jew nor Christian (Surah 2:129; 3:60, 89).

The origins of Islam cannot be traced back God. There are several prophecies concerning the coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah (Gen. 3:15; Deut. 18:15-18; Ps. 2; 110; Isa. 53:1-12; Dan.7:13-14; Mic. 5:2), but there are none that authenticate the coming of Muhammad. Thus, the "Prophet" Muhammad and Islam, the religion brought to the world by him, cannot be from God, which leaves only one alternative: Islam is of human origin.

DOCTRINES OF ISLAM

From a doctrinal standpoint, there are many inconsistencies between Islam and the New Testament, the standard of true Christianity. While the scope of this chapter does not include a detailed presentation to prove that the Bible is the inspired word of God, such can be proven true to any rational mind. The Koran, however, can be proven beyond doubt to have come from man, not God. The Koran was not written by Muhammad. In fact, Muhammad was illiterate—he could not read or write (Miller 139)!

The fact that Muhammad never wrote any of his so-

called revelations is confirmed by the Koran itself (Surah 6:7; 7:158; 17:93; 25:5; 29:48, 51). Instead, the Koran consists of written oral traditions by those who knew Muhammad. They were not guided by the Holy Spirit, but were written only as human memory could recall (Rodwell 1-2). As most of us know, however, human memory is not infallible nor inerrant! Regardless of the way in which the Koran came about, its teachings are what must be examined to determine whether Islam, the religion of the Koran, is from God or man. Because space will not allow an exposition of all the inconsistencies that the teachings of Islam has with the New Testament, a consideration will be given to a few of the major errors of Islam from a doctrinal standpoint.

ISLAM'S DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

Primary to the comparison of Islam and Christianity is a study of Islam's view of Jesus. First, Islam considers Jesus as a created being just like Adam. "The similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: 'Be.' And he was" (Surah 3:59 cf. Surah 3:64; 5:116-117; 18:1-5; 19:88-93; 23:91; 25:2). Islam sees no difference in the personhood of Jesus and that of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob (Surah 2:136; 3:84). Jesus was, therefore, mortal like any other human being. "Christ the son of Mary was no more than an apostle; many were the apostles that passed away before him." (Surah 5:75). The New Testament, however, presents Jesus as an eternal being, part of the Godhead (Jn. 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-17; Phil. 2:9-11).

Second, since Jesus was merely a created being, then Allah (which literally means, "the God") had no Divine Son. "No son did Allah beget, nor is there any Allah along with Him" (Surah 23:91 cf. Surah 6:101; 17:111; 19:35; 39:3-6). According to Islam, "those (also) who say, '(Allah) hath begotten a son...say...nothing but falsehood" (Surah 18:4-5). Jesus, therefore, cannot be the Divine Son of God according to Islam. The New Testament, however, depicts Jesus as the

Divine Son of God (Mt. 17:5; Jn. 5:23; 1 Jn. 2:22-23; 4:15; 5:10-12).

Third, Islam denies the atoning death of Christ on the cross. To those who claim that Christ was killed, the Koran responds, "but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them...for of a surety they killed him not" (Surah 4:157). This has most often been interpreted by "orthodox Muslims" as referring to someone else being mistakenly crucified in Christ's place (Anderson 101). One cannot help but to think that this idea was influenced by Gnosticism, which also makes similar claims in its attempt to explain away the crucifixion of Christ. The New Testament, however, attests to the shedding of Christ's blood on the cross to take away the sins of the world (2 Cor. 5:19; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 9:11-10:4; Rev.1:5).

Fourth, since Islam denies the crucifixion of Christ, it must also deny the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Instead, Islam teaches that Allah took Jesus in much the same way as the God of the Bible took Enoch (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5) and Elijah (2 Kgs. 2:11), without them having to die. "Behold! Allah said, 'O Jesus! I will take thee and raise thee to Myself and clear thee (of the falsehoods) of those who blaspheme'" (Surah 3:55). The New Testament, however, places much importance on the resurrection of Christ from the dead (Acts 2:23-24; 3:14-15; 4:33; 10:39-41; Rom. 1:4; Eph. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:8; 1 Pet. 3:18). In fact, Christianity is either true or false based on the truthfulness of the resurrection of Christ from the dead (1 Cor. 15:12-19)!

The contradictions between the Koran and the New Testament concerning Jesus Christ are insurmountable. There is no way to harmonize the two sources of authority. Since the Bible is the inspired word of God (2 Tim.3:16-17), and the Koran is not, we know that what the Bible presents as true concerning Jesus Christ is the truth! Dave Miller correctly summarizes, "If Christ is who the Bible represents Him to be, then Islam and the Quran are completely

fictional. If Jesus Christ is who the Quran represents Him to be, then Christianity is baseless and blasphemous" (155). Based upon its teachings concerning Christ, Islam cannot be from God, but must originate from man!

ISLAM'S OTHER DOCTRINES

Again, while the scope of this chapter does not allow a detailed discussion of every other doctrine of Islam that contradicts the truths taught in the Bible, we will examine a few of the doctrines of Islam. Remember, we must keep in mind that when two sources such as the Bible and the Koran contradict, both cannot be correct. It must therefore come down to which source is inspired by God, which is certainly not the Koran. With this in mind, note some of Islam's other doctrines.

First, Islam teaches that there is no Godhead, sometimes referred to as the Trinity or Triune God. "[...S]o believe in Allah and His apostles. Say not 'Trinity': desist: it will be better for you; for Allah is one Allah..." (Surah 4:171). To Islam, it is blasphemy to speak of the three personalities of the one God. "They do blaspheme who say: '(Allah) is Christ the son of Mary'....They do blaspheme who say: Allah is one of three in a Trinity: for there is no Allah except one Allah" (Surah 5:72-73). The Bible, however, is clear that God (Divine nature) consists in three personalities: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There is one God (Deut. 6:4). The Father is referred to as God (1 Cor. 1:3), but the Father is not the Son (1 Cor. 1:3) nor the Holy Spirit (Mt. 3:16-17). The Son is referred to as God (Jn. 1:1-2, 14), but the Son is not the Father (Heb. 1:5) nor the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:26). The Holy Spirit is referred to as God (Acts 5:3-4), but the Holy Spirit is not the Father (Mt. 3:16-17) nor the Son (Jn. 15:26). Therefore, there are three distinct personalities in the one Godhead (Mt. 28:19; Jn. 14:16; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Pet. 1:2).

Second, Islam, much like Mormonism, approves

polygamy. "If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two or three or four..." (Surah 4:3 cf. Surah 4:24-25, 129; 23:6; 30:21; 70:30). Surah 33:50-53 opens with the words, "O Prophet! We have made lawful to thee thy wives to whom thou hast paid their dowers...." and provides a justification of Muhammad's plurality of wives. Surah 66:1-12 shows how polygamy is not just permitted in Islam but that it is actually encouraged. The Bible, however, teaches that there is to be one wife for one husband for life (Gen. 2:18-25 cf. Mt. 19:3-9). Islam teaches that one can divorce for virtually any reason (2:226-227; 33:49; 58:2-4; 65:1-7). The New Testament, however, teaches that only the innocent of fornication is allowed to put away the spouse guilty of fornication for the reason of his or her fornication (Mt. 19:9).

Third, Islam is a religion of war and of forcing its beliefs by violence. "Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you...And slay them wherever you catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out..." (Surah 2:190-191). Muhammad was told, "Fighting is prescribed for you" (Surah 2:216). Islam teaches that it is better to kill its enemies than to suffer persecution from them. Concerning whether Muslims should fight in the Holy Month, the Koran instructs, "Fighting therein is a grave (offence); but graver still is it in the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah...Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter" (Surah 2:217). In other words, to be persecuted is worse than slaughtering the enemy, even if the slaughtering occurs during the Holy Month. Since warfare and fighting are characteristic of Islam, it should be of no surprise that "Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure" (Surah 61:4); or that "To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged;—and verily, Allah is most powerful for their aid" (Surah 22:39). Those who lose their life in fighting for Allah are promised "forgiveness and

mercy from Allah” (Surah 3:157), and paradise of “Gardens with rivers flowing beneath;—A reward from the presence of Allah” (Surah 3:195 cf. Surah 47:4-6).

Needless to say, Islam’s attitude toward war and violence is in direct contradiction to New Testament teaching. Jesus never took up the sword to advance the will of His Father. To the contrary, He rebuked one of His apostles for so doing (Mt. 26:51-54). Jesus told Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence” (Jn. 18:36). Rather than slaughtering its enemies, as Islam teaches, Christianity teaches to treat its enemies with love and compassion (Mt. 5:43-48; Rom.12:14, 20; 1 Pet. 2:23; 3:9). Not only does Christianity teach that suffering persecution is acceptable, it also teaches that persecution is a way to imitate Christ and to glorify God (Mt. 5:10-12; 2 Tim.3:12; 1 Pet. 4:12-16).

CONCLUSION

Many other doctrines of Islam could be listed that contradict Biblical teaching (such as creation, animal sacrifice, the afterlife, heaven, hell, etc.), but the ones studied above are enough for us to determine whether Islamic religion comes from God or man. As stated earlier, Ancient Israel was given a standard whereby a prophet was to be proven either true or false: if a prophet brought any other message than that revealed in Scripture, teaching them to follow other gods, he was to be regarded as a false prophet (Deut. 13:1-5). Clearly, Islam teaches doctrines that are not consistent with the Bible, God’s inspired word.

As Paul taught the Galatians, anyone who brings “another [different, NKJ] gospel” than what had been delivered to the saints is to receive the curse of God (Gal. 1:6-9). Islam teaches a different message than the Bible, which has been confirmed by God (Heb. 2:3-4), and

delivered to the saints (1 Cor.15:1-4; Rom. 6:17; Jude 3). Islam, therefore, stands under the curse of God!

There is a tremendous difference between Islam and New Testament Christianity. David W. Hester aptly summarizes this difference: Jesus shed His blood that others might live; Mohammed shed the blood of others that his teaching could be forced upon unwilling people....The Koran is supposedly attested by secret visions that no one ever saw, delivered in a cave. The Bible is verified by prophecies of Christ's coming, proof that He did come and genealogies to bear witness of His bloodline. Mohammed is still in his tomb in Medina. Christ's tomb is empty! (25)

From where did Islamic religion come? The answer is simple and easy to ascertain: Islamic religion came from man, not God!

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BIOGRAPHY

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**A
STUDY
OF
MORMONISM**

IS MORMONS POLYTHEIST, AND WHY IS THIS AGAINST GOD?

Melvin Hampton

Who are MORMONS? What does "Poly-the-ist" mean? *Merriam -Webster online: Etymology: French polytheisme, from Late Greek polytheos polytheistic, from Greek, of many gods, from poly- + theos god* What is "Polytheist?" or polytheism = belief in or worship of more than one god. Why Is This Against God? Because of what is, taught in the Bible about God.

In A Study of DENOMINATIONAL DOCTRINES and their refutation by the Scriptures, By Rod Rutherford - He states that The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) The Errors They Hold: They are wrong on the nature of God.

1. If one is wrong on this point, it matters little how much other truth he teaches for His, faith is without foundation. Hebrews 11:6, "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

2. Mormons are not Christians in any sense of the word for they are polytheists. The Bible teaches there is only one God, In Ephesians 4:6, "One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all." In First Timothy 2:5, "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" And in James 2:19, the Bible says, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."

3. The Bible teaches there are three Divine, distinct Persons who comprise the one God Head: a. The Father is called God: First Corinthian 8:6, "But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him." b. The Son Is called God: John 1:1-3. "In the beginning

was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without him was not anything made that was made." Hebrews 1:8 says, "But unto the son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom." c. The Holy Spirit is, called God: Acts 5:3, 4, "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

Mormons teach that all are potentially gods. ("In his mortal condition man is a God in embryo." (James Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, p. 530.) They teach that Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others have become gods. (*The Doctrine and Covenants*, 132:19, 20).

Mormons teach that God has a physical, human body. "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man is. . . ." (*The Doctrine and Covenants*, 130:22). The Bible says, "God is a Spirit" John 4:24, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth." And in Luke 24:39, the bible says: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

In Brother Wayne Jackson, article initial "Is Christianity Polytheistic?" At some point following the origin of humanity, however, various peoples begin to digress from the ideals of the one God in Christianity to Polytheistic.

If God exists in 'three persons,' and the Christian is to worship God, how is he different from other religious people who worship several gods?" There are some fundamental propositions that one must understand in approaching the distinction between "monotheism" (belief in one God) and "polytheism" (belief in many gods).

MONOTHEISM

The original religion of ancient mankind was monotheism, i.e., the worship of the one, true Supreme Being. This is demonstrated both by the testimony of the Bible, and by a study of anthropology. (We have introduced testimony for the anthropological evidence of man's original monotheism in our little book, *Biblical Studies in the Light of Archaeology*, 1982, pp. 5-6. Visit "Courier Publications" for ordering information.)

Genesis 1 begins with the affirmation that "God created the heavens and the earth." The term "God" in the Hebrew Bible is *Elohim*. In his famous work, **Synonyms of the Old Testament** (1871), Robert Girdlestone noted that *Elohim* is found some 2,555 times in the Old Testament. In 2,310 of these cases the title refers to the true God, while in the remaining 245 instances the word is employed in a variety of "lower senses."

Elohim is a plural term. Various explanations have been offered for this plurality (e.g., the idea that the word is designed to reflect the plenitude of divine majesty – i.e., the vast array of sacred qualities incapable of being expressed by a term of singularity). Some scholars, however, suggest that the term subtly previews the concept of the Trinity, which, consistent with the well-recognized principle of progressive revelation, blossoms fully and gloriously into bloom in the New Testament.

With reference to the plural form, Girdlestone emphatically stated: "It is clear that the fact of the word *Elohim* being plural in form does not at all sanction polytheism." Significantly, the corresponding verb, "created" (*bara*), is singular in number, which indicates that the divine, creative activity was a *unified* action (cf. Genesis 1:1 with John 1:1). Thus, this noted Hebrew scholar, while refraining from a definitive statement, nonetheless declared:

"[T]here is certainly nothing unreasonable in the

supposition that the name of the Deity [*Elohim*] was given to man in this form, so as to prepare him for the truth that in the unity of the Godhead there are Three Persons” (**Synonyms**, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973, 2nd Edition Reprint, p. 22).

It is important to observe that the biblical writers do not hesitate to affirm that God is “one” (cf. Dt. 6:4; Jas. 2:19), while using plural pronouns to reflect divine activity (cf. Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8). Jesus himself said: “I and my father are one” (Jn. 10:30). Note that “I” and “my father” reflect two personalities. The verb “are” is plural. And yet, “one” is a singular numeral. In the Greek Testament the numeral *hen* (one) is a neuter gender form, suggesting identity of nature. In this sentence, therefore, there is an affirmation of dual personalities sharing an identical nature.

But how can God be both “one” and “three” without a contradiction being involved? The solution lies in the fact that the numerals are employed in *different senses*. God is “one” as to the *divine essence* or nature; Deity is “three” in terms of *distinct personalities* – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (cf. Mt. 28:19-20; cf. 2 Cor. 13:14).

POLYTHEISM

At some point following the origin of humanity, however, various peoples begin to digress from the idea of the one God. Men commenced to personify the various forces of nature (e.g., the sun, moon, stars, fire, air, water, etc., and worship them). In the ancient Vedas (“sacred” literary compositions) of India, there are hymns directed to these entities. Hindu theology, with its numerous gods, developed from concept of “pantheism,” the notion that, ultimately, everything possesses the “god” nature. This is not radically dissimilar to the modern tenants of “New Age” ideology.

Polytheism attempts to cling to man’s basic religious instinct, i.e., the need to believe in some “higher power,” but rejects the one, true deity to whom man must be religiously and morally accountable.

Some cults, ostensibly associated with "Christianity," also argue for certain forms of polytheism. Mormonism is one of these.

The gods of the ancient pagan world were heterogeneous. They were vicious, warring beings, characterized by utter immorality. They mated and produced new gods; they brutally fought and destroyed one another. They were diverse in temperament and nature.

Note Paul's brief descriptive in his letter to the saints in Rome. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. 1:22-23).

CONCLUSION

There is therefore a vast difference between the Deity of the Scriptures – the one, eternal, perfect-nature Being, manifested in three Persons – and the discordant, temporal, factious and fictitious gods that were fabricated in the digressive imaginations of a rebel human family.

GOD

Mormonism teaches: That there are many gods. "A general assembly, quorum or grand council of the gods, with their president at their head, constitute the designing and creating power" (Key of Theology, page 52.)

THE BIBLE

There is only one God with three in the Godhead (Gen. 1: 26; Ex. 20: 1-3; Matt. 28: 19; John 1: 1-3; John 14: 25, 26; John 16: 7-10).

That these Gods have bodies of bones and flesh. "That which is without body, parts and passions is nothing. There is no other God in heaven, but that God who has flesh and bones. The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's." (D. and C., Sec. 130: 22.)

God is an omnipresent Being (Psa. 139: 7-11; Acts

17: 28; I Cor. 3: 16). God is an omniscient Being (Job 34: 21; Prov. 15: 3; John 2: 24, 24). God is an omnipotent Being (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 8: 3; 19: 1; John 1: 1-3). If God "has flesh and bones as a man. He could not be any of these three. God is a Spirit (John 4: 24; Luke 24- 39- I Cor. 15: 50).

That the gods have sex and marry and bear children and their children come to this world as human beings to get bodies. (Compendium (B) 287, Last sermon 1844.) "God, angels and men are all of one species, one race, one great family" (Key of Theology, page 41.) "Wisdom inspires the gods to multiply their species." (Key of Theology, page 52.) "Each god, through his wife or wives, raises up a numerous family of sons and daughters" (The Seer, Vol. 1, page 37.)

God's only marriage relationship is with Israel (Jer. 3: 14). Christ's only marriage relationship is with Christians (Eph. 5: 23-33). Christ is the husband and head of the Church (John 3: 29; Col. 1: 18). No marriage relationship after death (Mark 12:25).

That Adam is God and the father of our race. "Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, saint and sinner. When our father Adam came into the Garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize the world. He is Michael, the archangel, the Ancient of Days,, about whom holy men have written and spoken. He is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do." (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 6, page 50.) (Pearl of Great Price, page 60.)

Adam is not God, but was created by God (Gen. 1: 27; 2: 18, 20-25; 3: 8-11, 19; Ex. 20: 1-3).

That God is an exalted man who was once as we are and that we are to become like Him. "God himself was once as we are now and is an exalted man and sits enthroned in yonder heavens." (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 6,

page 3, sermon by Joseph Smith.) "And you have got to learn how to be gods yourselves...the same as all gods have done before you." (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 6, page 5, sermon by Joseph Smith.)

Man is a created being (Gen. 2:7. Christ from His fleshly side only was like us. (Isa. 7: 14; Matt. 1: 20 23).No man hath ascended into heaven but Christ, proving that Adam or none before Christ ever went to heaven and that none could have become gods (John 3: 13).

BIOGRAPHY

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WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF EZEKIEL 37:16-17 TO THE MORMON?

Benjamin Radford, Sr.

INTRODUCTION

(Ezek. 37:16-17)

Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, for Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and [for] all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.

The Divided Kingdoms

After King Solomon's death the nation of Israel was divided into two kingdoms (1 Kings 11-12). Two of the tribes, Judah and Benjamin, were given to Rehoboam to rule over. The other ten tribes were placed under the leadership of Jeroboam. This division persisted, and so, in the prophetic books of the Old Testament, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were designated as "Judah" and composed of the southern kingdom.

"Joseph," "Ephraim" and "Israel" were the collective names of the ten tribes who established the northern kingdom. Thus when you study Israel's history, the prophecy under consideration becomes very clear. God promises that He is going to unite the two kingdoms and make them one again (cf. Ezek. 37:21-15). It is then and there that He will make His covenant of peace with them and be their God.

MORMONS TEACHERS

Mormon teachers say that according to Mormon belief; the "stick of Judah" is the Bible and the "stick of Joseph" is

the **Book of Mormon**. And thus, the Bible and the Book of Mormon have become "one in God's hand". But, a careful examination of this passage reveals serious problems with this interpretation. Nonetheless, many who are ignorant of the Scriptures are impressed by their presentation and application of this portion of the Scriptures and have been influenced to join the LDS church (Padfield 1). Jeff Lindsay (LDS Apologist) says,

The Bible testifies of the Book of Mormon (**in my opinion**). For example, in Ezekiel 37:15-17, Ezekiel prophesied about the joining of two "sticks" (using the term from the King James Version) from different parts of the House Israel, one from the tribe of Judah and one from the tribe of Ephraim (from Joseph). These "sticks" refer (**in our opinion**) to two volumes of scripture. The Hebrew word used in Ezekiel 37 is not the usual word for stick, but is "etz", which means a wooden tablet. The wooden tablet, based on modern archaeological data, may refer to a writing tablet on which a layer of wax was coated for writing with a stylus. These tablets appear to have been a major medium of writing in the ancient world, though few survived because wood rots (interestingly, Agatha Christie's husband found one such tablet, with wax still intact, preserved in the bottom of an ancient well, as I recall). The tablets were like individual leaves of a book that could be bound together to make a book (or smaller books could be joined to make larger ones). Based on the Hebrew and based on what we now know about the use of "etz" as a writing medium, Ezek. 37:15-17 makes sense as a prophecy of two volumes of scripture that would be united in the last days. These volumes are the Bible (from the tribe of Judah) and the Book of Mormon (from the tribe of Joseph, for the founders of the Nephite

people who came out of Jerusalem were descendants of Joseph (5-6).

THE CENTRAL THEME OF EZEKIEL 34-37

The central theme of Ezekiel 34-37 is the re-gathering of the people of Israel back to their own land. It shows the hope and restoration of Judah from Babylonian captivity. The vision which God gave to the prophet Ezekiel of the Valley of Dry Bones, in chapter 37, represents the nation of Israel. The Israelites had been out of their land, had been buried among the Gentile nations, and were, in a sense, devoid of life. But God promised that He would bring His nation back to its land once again (Padfield 1).

Israel's Hope was Lost

At the time of this prophecy the nation of Israel was saying, "**Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off**" (Ezek. 37:11). But God assured the people He would keep His covenant with Abraham and David. God told **Abraham** that it would be a descendant of his who would bless all nations (Gen 12:3). God also promised **David** that his throne would be established and it would last forever (2 Samuel 7:11-16). And friends; God would fulfill His word to them -- "*Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel*" (Ezek. 37:12). In Ezekiel 37:21 we have the explanation given to us again, "*Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land.*"

The **first prophecy** of Ezekiel 37 portrays the moral, national and physical resurrection of Israel, while the **second prophecy** (Ezek. 37:15-28) predicts the future union of the twelve tribes and their restoration to Palestine under one Shepherd.

EZEKIEL 37:1-10 THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

Verses 1-3: The prophet states that he was in the spirit of the Lord and God placed him in the midst of a valley; the valley was full of dry bones, and the bones covered the floor of the valley. The prophet describes them as being very dry signifying that they were utterly devoid of life. They were in a hopeless state. **Verse 11** shows that the bones are used in the vision to represent the whole house of Israel, thus their present status was utterly hopeless, as far as human power was concerned. All of the tribes had been captured and exiled by the enemy, and were even now held in hard bondage in foreign lands.

The prophet is asked whether these bones could ever live again. Ezekiel responds by saying, "Thou knowest".

Verses 4-6: Ezekiel is now told to speak a message to the bones, announcing God's intention to return flesh to them, and a covering of skin, and place breath within them. They would then know that the Lord is God. Since the bones represented the house of Israel (**verse 11**), the resurrection relates to their return to Canaan and being established as an independent nation again.

The purpose of this vision was to provide hope. No power on earth could free them; God's power and providence would be necessary. He had promised them that He would return them to the land. In Jeremiah 29:10, the bible says "*For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place*". (Bob Winton; 182).

Verse 7-10: Ezekiel uttered the prophecy as he was told. As he expressed the prophecy, there was a sudden noise and a shaking as the bones in the vision came together, in the proper order, to form human skeletons. The bones had been scattered, and each individual was not at the same place. **Verse 10** shows that those whose bones were in the valley had been slain; their death had not been natural, but violent

and painful. As he looked at this awesome sight, he saw the sinews and flesh come upon the skeletons, and skin to cover each individual, but at this point there was no breath or life in them. The prophet was directed to speak to the wind, for it to come from all directions and breathe upon these bodies which had been slain, but now had been reformed. As God put the breath of life into the body of Adam (Genesis 2:7), so he now caused it to enter each of these lifeless bodies.

The individuals in the vision were given life by God's miraculous power, and they stood upon their feet. They had their full strength returned to them, and their number was exceedingly great. They represented a vast powerful army. The bible reminds us of the great resurrection scheduled at the end of time. All who are in the graves (i.e., all who have died) will hear the call and will rise from the dead. They will be given bodies, which will be changed into immortal, spiritual entities, perfectly adapted to their eternal destiny.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29). "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. 4:16-17). "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" (Revelation 20:13). "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on

immortality” (I Cor. 15:51-53).

SOME DIFFICULTY IN UNDERSTANDING

It is difficult for a worldly minded person to understand how God could resurrect desintegrated bodies. But God’s miraculous power can accomplish anything that He wills to do, despite our inability to comprehend the action. He was able to create the bodies occupied by Adam and Eve, demonstrating His awesome power. He spoke to Moses from a burning bush and the bush wasn’t consumed. Even Moses had to ask the question; why the bush is not burnt. (Exodus 3:3).

We do not understand how God is able to place the germ of life in a grain of corn, enabling that small kernel to produce a large plant, which bears ears which are filled with other kernels identical to the original, but He does it. God has promised to raise the dead; and the fact of the resurrection is therefore a foregone conclusion! The physical body is the only part of our being that dies and needs to be raised (James 2:26).

EZEKIEL 37:11-14 THE BONES REPRESENT THE WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

Verses 11-12, then he said unto me, Son of man, **these bones are the whole house of Israel:** behold, they say, our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them. Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will **open your graves,** and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

The meaning of the vision is crystal clear. The text says the bones are **the whole house of Israel** (not literally); but a representation of Israel. In other words God is speaking concerning Israel and their return from exile, depicting the transaction of such, as a national resurrection. At the time that this prophecy was given, Israel was in bondage in

Babylon, without any hope of returning to their homeland. There was no more life to their nation than there would be in a valley full of dry bones. God was sure to return Israel back to Canaan. Listen at Him again, thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, O my people, I will **open your graves**, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

In Verses 13-14, we can see what the result would be once God restored them to their land. They would know that God is the Lord. He had predicted the event, and when he fulfilled it, they would know clearly that He truly is the Lord. **Ezekiel 37:16-22 Israel and Judah would be united It is here that we find the meaning of the “sticks” that are joined together in Ezekiel 37:16-22.** In verse 16 Ezekiel is told to write on one stick “For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions.” This first stick represented the southern kingdom, or Judah. On a second stick, or piece of wood, Ezekiel was to write, “For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions.” This represented the northern kingdom, called Israel.

God then tells Ezekiel, in verse 17, to join the two sticks into one stick and have them become one in Ezekiel's hand. In doing so, God is saying that He will bring back together His divided and decimated people. We know that this is the meaning of the two sticks and their being joined together because it is stated very explicitly in verses 21-22. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.

The prophecy of Ezekiel 37:16-17 has a specific historical context. It is a prediction of the future unity of God's divided covenant people. *“One king shall be king over*

them all; and they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again." This passage tells us about the prophet being directed to take two sticks, one for Judah and one for Joseph (Ephraim, or the northern kingdom). He was told to join them together so that they would become one stick in his hand. The northern kingdom (Israel) went into Assyrian captivity in 721 B.C. and lost their identity as a nation. The southern kingdom (Judah) began going into Babylonian captivity in 606 B.C.

Thus in anticipation of the return of a remnant of the whole nation, God gave this picture of hope for Israel.

WHAT DOES THE STICKS REALLY MEAN?

These "sticks" of Ezekiel 37 are simply the divine edicts of God which He gave to Ezekiel to deliver to the people. It is stated in Ezekiel 37:20 that these royal decrees were to be in Ezekiel's hand before the eyes of the people. This was to show them that all twelve tribes would be united and become "one nation" in God's hand (Ezek. 37:22). This prophecy was fulfilled when God allowed His people to return from captivity in 536 B.C.; under Zerrubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, the "twelve tribes" which were divided in 931 B.C., some of whom became captives to Assyria in 721 B.C. and the rest to Babylon in 606 B.C., would return to the land of Israel as one nation.

This is summarized in Ezekiel 37:22, "*and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again*". I say again; the prophecy of Ezekiel 37:16-17 has a specific historical context. It is a prediction of the future unity of God's divided covenant people.

Ezekiel 37:24-25 this section of Scripture simply pictures the future glory of the Church under the reign of the Messiah, Jesus Christ! Ezekiel 37:24-25 (24) And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall

have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. 25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant **David** shall be their prince for ever. 26 Moreover I will make a **covenant of peace** with them: it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my **sanctuary** in the midst of them for evermore. 27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Ezekiel 34:23-24 (23) "I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them-- My servant **David**. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. (24) "And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant **David** a prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken. **David in this passage is Jesus**. The **sanctuary** is the temple of God **the church** (Ephesians 2:20-22). The covenant of peace was made possible through Jesus when He broke down the middle wall of partition that divided the physical Israelites from other people. Through Jesus and that covenant of peace which He made possible by His sacrifice, people of all races are **united as one under His rule** (Ephesians 2:13-18).

Notice now, there was only one man in Old Testament history named David. He was the son of Jesse, who slew Goliath and became Israel's beloved King. He wanted to construct a temple for the Lord, but because he was a man of war, he was not given that privilege. His son **Solomon** was to be given that honor (2 Kings 5:1-11). However, a prophecy was given to David, showing that another one of his offspring would one day build a house, a more wonderful temple than any other edifice:

Notice 2 Samuel 7:12-14 (12) And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels.

and I will establish his kingdom (13) He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. (14) I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom," (Heb. 1:8).

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up **Christ** to sit on his throne: He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of **Christ**, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:29-36).

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. (31) And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end, (Luke 1:30-33)

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever, (Dan. 2:44).

Can you see the picture? Since the return of Israel to Canaan; there has never been two kingdoms existing at the same time again. Today God has one kingdom (The Church of Christ) **Heb 12:28** wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

CONCLUSION

A careful examination reveals several problems for the Mormons interpretation. A careful examination of this passage reveals serious problems with this interpretation.

First of all, in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) the Hebrew word translated “stick” always refers to wood and is never used, even figuratively, to mean a scroll or book. Therefore, nothing in these verses even suggests a book or scroll.

Secondly, the Mormon Church’s interpretation ignores the historical background of Ezekiel’s message. At the time of the prophet Ezekiel (6th century B.C.), the nation of Israel was in turmoil. Since shortly after the time of Solomon, it had been divided into two kingdoms. The ten northern tribes, henceforth called Israel, had earlier been taken captive by the nation of Assyria in 723/722 B.C. Then the two southern tribes (the Kingdom of Judah), were taken into captivity by the Babylonians (606 - 583 B.C.). The dissolution of God’s covenant people was extremely distressing for the remnant of faithful Hebrew believers. It appeared that God’s promises had failed. This is the setting for chapter 37. The prophecy of Ezekiel 37:16-17 has a specific historical context. It is a prediction of the future unity of God’s divided covenant

people. The attempt by the Mormon Church to make this passage a prediction regarding the Book of Mormon violates the clear historical, grammatical context of the passage, and is thus a fallacious interpretation of this biblical passage.

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BIOGRAPHY

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1. Began preaching while stationed in Germany.
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WHAT DO THE MORMONS TEACH ABOUT THE CHURCH, AND WHY IS THIS FALSE?

Johnie Scaggs, Jr.

In dealing with the subject the Mormon Church and what they teach about the church we need to clearly understand who we are talking about. In this lesson we are talking about the Later Day Saints (LDS) commonly known as "Mormons." We are not talking about the Reorganized Later Day Saints (RLDS). The LDS have their headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah and the RLDS have their headquarters in Independence, MO. To understand what the RLDS believe about the church is very difficult in this age because they have tried to become more like the Protestant movement and less like the old Mormon Church. They have in many places and will eventually change their name from the RLDS to the Community of Christ Church. This is done in order to have more acceptance with the Protestant religion.

The LDS (Mormons) believe that they are the true church. It has no association with Roman Catholicism or with Protestantism. It believes that there are two churches, the Church of Christ (which they believe they represent) and the church of Satan. They recognize no other religious bodies as being from God.

Its theology, its organization, and its practices are in many respects entirely unique among today's Christian denominations. It possesses the divine priesthood of God, ... and is headed by prophets and Apostles as was the Church in the days of Peter and Paul. Indeed, if it had not been for Joseph Smith and the restoration, there would be no salvation. There is no salvation outside The Church of Jesus Christ of Later-day Saints. 1

They believe that before the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, He established His Church on the earth, built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, with Himself as the chief cornerstone. Sometime after the Lord established His church, the church began to fall away and from that apostasy the Roman Catholic Church arose along with all Protestant groups. From that time until the time when the Lord appeared to Joseph Smith the church did not exist. In 1820, Joseph Smith said he received his first vision from the Lord. He said that he saw two persons and they called his name and one of these persons pointed to the other and said, "This is my beloved son, hear him!" From 1820 till 1830 the Lord was revealing His church to Joseph Smith through visions. It was in 1830 that the Church of Jesus Christ of Later-day Saints was formally established.

One author noted:

In numerous publications it is emphasized that the church which had been established by Jesus Christ became corrupt. Apostasy triumphed and divinely appointed authority ceased. The church "drifted without direction" after the death of the apostle John. There was no revelation, authority, or divinely approved ministry until the true church was restored through the prophet Joseph Smith. 2

You can go to their web-site and find all the information that you will ever need to understand who they are and what they believe. Note these quotes from their own web-site:

A few hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ, people had fallen into apostasy. When the Savior began His mortal ministry, He restored His gospel and established His Church again on the earth. He built His Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, He himself being the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20).

Jesus Christ called twelve men to be His Apostles?—including Peter, James, and John—and

laid His hands on their heads to give them priesthood authority (Matthew 10:1; John 15:16; Matthew 28:19-20). Before the Savior's death and Resurrection, He gave His Apostles priesthood authority, to teach His gospel, perform the ordinances, of salvation, and continue to establish His Church in the world.

The Savior's coming fulfilled prophecy. He set a godly example and showed men what Heavenly Father was like. Yet He was rejected of men and crucified. He made the Atonement, by suffering for the sins of all men. After His Resurrection, Jesus Christ guided His Apostles through revelation, making the Church of Jesus Christ a church led by God and not by men (Acts 10; Revelation 1:1).

In addition to the Twelve Apostles, Christ appointed other leaders to assist the Apostles in the work of His Church. These included:

Seventies (missionaries), Evangelists (patriarchs), Pastors (presiding leaders), Elders, Bishops, Priests, Teachers, Deacons. These officers were given the authority (or priesthood) necessary to do the work of Christ's Church. They did missionary work, performed ordinances such as baptism, presided over congregations, and instructed and inspired Church members. As long as those who had the priesthood were alive, the Church grew and prospered.

When His followers asked Jesus Christ what kind of people He wanted them to be, His answer was simple: "Even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27).

Jesus showed you by His example and His teachings how you should live to be able to return to your Father in Heaven. Although you make mistakes, as you sincerely repent of your mistakes and try to follow the example of Jesus Christ, your life will be

filled with peace and inner joy, regardless of the circumstances around you.

From the beginning, God has called special witnesses, known as prophets, and commanded them to keep records of His dealings with His children. Both the Holy Bible, and the Book of Mormon, are such records. The Holy Bible contains a record of Jesus Christ's dealings with and ministry to the people in the Holy Land. The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ is a record of Christ's dealings with and His appearance to the people of ancient America. Both books teach about our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and of Their love for us. 3

It is interesting to note that you can read the book of Mormon and no where will you find even one reference to the church. In order to learn about what they teach concerning the church, one will have to read their book on the Doctrine and Covenants.

“Nevertheless, it is declared that ‘almost all of the doctrines of the gospel are taught in the book of Mormon with much greater clarity and perfection than...in the Bible. Anyone...will find conclusive proof of the superiority of the Book of Mormon teachings’ (McConkie 99).” 4

THE TRUE CHURCH OF THE BIBLE

Notice what the Bible says about the true church that belongs to Jesus Christ. The Mormons believe that the Lord established His church before His death and Resurrection. However, this cannot be true for the following reasons.

First, the church which Jesus built could not have been established until after His death and Resurrection because He purchased with His own blood. Peter wrote, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by

tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18-19). It is only by our continuing to walk in the light that the blood of Christ keeps on cleansing us of our sins, (1 John 1:7-9).

One can only come into contact with the saving blood of Christ through and only through being baptized into His death (Rom. 6:1-5). As the Hebrew writer wrote, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:14). However, if what the Mormon Church teaches about the establishment of the church be true, then it was established without the ability to purify those within the church. Jospel Smith forgot to make the connection between the blood and salvation in the church.

From the beginning of time blood has played an essential part not only for the existence of mankind but also in the salvation of mankind. Moses wrote, "For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off" (Lev. 17:4). Without blood in the body, the body dies. It is the blood that sustains life in all flesh, both man and beast.

Under the Old Law. God placed great importance in the blood to the salvation of those who lived by that law. God was angry with Pharaoh because he refused to let the people of God go. Therefore He promised that He would pass through the Land of Egypt at night and would smite the firstborn of man and beast. To the children of Israel He give them instructions as to how to escape the death of their first born and so Moses wrote, "And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it" (Ex. 12:7). "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye

are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt” (Ex. 12:13).

In Gen. 4:4, we learn of animal sacrifices. In chapter 12 of the book of Deuteronomy God gave instructions to the children of Israel as the giving of animal sacrifices. The blood of bulls and goats were given for an atonement for the sins of the people. “And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD” (Ex. 30:10). The Hebrew writer said, “For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:19-22).

Just as the blood of calves and goats under the Old Testament was connected to their forgiveness so much more is the blood of Christ connected to our forgiveness and our salvation. Notice what the Hebrew writer said, “...without the shedding of blood is no remission,” (Heb. 9:22b). Had Christ not shed His blood on the cross of Calvary, we could not have the forgiveness of our sins, and He could not have established the church.

Second, it was prophesied that the church would be established in the city of Jerusalem. Isaiah wrote, “The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say,

Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:1-4). David said, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth" (Psalm 110:1-3). Jesus stated concerning the church that "...repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:47-49). We find that these things were fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem just as prophesied. "And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me" (Acts 1:4). If any church claims to be established before or after the day of Pentecost or in some other location other than the city of Jerusalem they cannot be the true church of the Lord.

A third reason that the Mormon Church cannot be the true church is because of the organization of the church. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11).

Christ is the Head of the church. "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22). "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the

saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23). “And he 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” (Col. 1:18).

The Apostles were ambassadors for Christ in the church. They were eye witnesses for Christ, (Acts 1:8). They were responsible for teaching the doctrine of Christ in the first century church (Matt. 16:19). The Apostles were responsible for confirming the word with signs and miracles (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:4).

Prophets were inspired servants of God, “Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;” (Eph. 3:5).

Unlike the Mormon Church, in the Lord’s church we have Elders who rule over the local body of believers, (Heb. 13:17). These men must meet certain qualifications which are given in 1 Timothy 3:1-ff; and in Titus 1:5-9. Also in the true church of the Lord there are Deacons. These men are assigned specific duties within the local body in order to see that the needs of each member and the overall work of the church are not being neglected. They also, like the Elders must meet certain qualifications in order to serve as a Deacon, these are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The New Testament church also has within it Evangelists. These are men who are dedicated to teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, 2 Timothy 4:5. Lastly, but most certainly not least are members – all these together with the elders, deacons, evangelists, etc., make up the body of Christ which is the church of Christ or the one body of Ephesians 4:4, cf. Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.

Fourth, unlike the Mormon Church, the New Testament church has one book which guides them into all truth. Paul taught, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be

perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Furthermore, Paul instructed the young evangelist Timothy to “Preach the Word...” (2 Tim. 4:2). Jude says that we are to, “...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). The “faith” is the “one faith” of Ephesians 4:5. It is the same word that Paul told Timothy to preach in 2 Timothy 4:2 and it is that same word by which we are given all things needed. Peter said, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:” (2 Peter 1:3). Peter, do we need another book? No says Peter. God has given us ALL THINGS that pertain unto life and godliness.

To believe and practice the things written in the book of Mormon or in the Doctrine and Covenants is to be guilty of adding to the Word of God. John wrote, “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18-19). Likewise, Paul wrote these words, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again. If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-9).

If the book of Mormon were from God, then it would agree with all that is written in the Bible and therefore it would be and in fact is unnecessary to have. The book of Mormon is not another testament from God. It is the words of

a mere mortal man who was misguided to believe that he was being guided by the one and true God.

CONCLUSION

The Bible and the Bible only makes Christians. No other book in all the land will do what the Bible has done and will do if it is used as it should be used. As God's chosen people, we need to get back to knowing the Bible and helping others see the truth and come out of these cults and other denominational body and serve the one and only true God.

ENDNOTES

1. Robertson, Irvine, "What The Cults Believe" Second Edition, Revised, Moody Press, Chicago. 1979, p.17
2. Ibid, p. 17
3. Lds.or
4. Robertson, Irvine, "What The Cults Believe" Second Edition, Revised, Moody Press, Chicago., 1979, p. 21

**THE MORMONS TEACH THAT
“MORONI 10:4 (BOOK OF
MORMONS), AND JAMES 1:5
(HOLY BIBLE), TEACHES THE
SAME THING. IS THIS TRUE?**

Timothy Kidwell

Most everyone who has ever had a discussion in his or her home with a Mormon has found themselves at the conclusion of the presentation being challenged to read and pray about accepting the Book of Mormon as being from God. The Later Day Saint, (LDS), Elder leading the study will stress the importance of praying with a sincere heart, real intent, and with faith in Jesus Christ. The Mormon is convinced that if these three ingredients are properly used, the test will produce affirmative results. If after prayer the one being challenged does not come to the Mormon's accepted conclusion, then that person is somehow at fault. Mormons justify their challenge of prayer based upon the teaching of James 1:5 and Moroni 10:4 (from the Book of Mormon).

Moroni 10:4 reads, “And when ye receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.”¹

James 1:5 says, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (New King James Version).²

The claim by the Mormons is that these two scriptures teach the same thing. A simple examination of the two writings will provide the honest reader with a great

difference in their teachings. As previously stated the LDS Elder will challenge a person to pray and ask God if the writings of the Book of Mormon are truly from God. The non-Mormon is then reminded that even the Bible instructs a person to pray for wisdom and if they will do so with an honest heart God will give them the ability to know (have knowledge) that the Book of Mormon is from God.

Let it first be noted that proof of truth is based upon obtaining factual information. Once a person has in his or her possession the facts of a matter, it may then be said that they have knowledge. This person may now correctly say they **know** something is true or false. It would be erroneous for that person to say they have **wisdom** that something is true or false. Wisdom is the ability to rightly interpret factual information, and based upon that knowledge, act accordingly. Moroni 10:4 instructs a person to pray for knowledge. James 1:5 promises **wisdom** to those who ask it of God, not **knowledge**. The serious student of the Bible should always consider the context of any given scripture. The book of James was written to Christians who were experiencing trials. It was a fact that they were being faced with difficulties (Ja. 1:2). They already had knowledge of their trials. Wisdom from God would help them to properly deal with their hardships.

God promises wisdom to Christians who ask for it in prayer, but a promise of knowledge through prayer cannot be found in the Holy Bible. God's word does, however, command that we "Test (prove, examine) all things; hold fast what is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). The apostle John wrote that we should not "believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 Jn. 4:1). In speaking of those who were convinced to believe a false teaching the apostle Paul wrote, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble

you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-8).

How might a person "test" a doctrine? The answer: established truth (facts) determines what is a correct answer and what is an incorrect answer. What are the established facts (truth) that determine doctrine? Jesus answers that question for us when He prayed, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (Jn 17:17). Therefore a doctrinal teaching can be proven to be true or false by use of God's word. This is the same way the Bereans determined that Paul and Silas were teaching them correctly. Acts 17:11 says, "they (Bereans) received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so." The citizens of Berea were able to determine if Paul and Silas were teaching them the truth by examining the scriptures. Paul did not challenge them to pray and ask God for the answer. God had already provided them with the answer in His written word.

To determine the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon by prayer is not scriptural. A person must "test" it's teaching against the answer key, God's Holy Bible. If it contradicts what God has already revealed then it fails the test! Let us remember that to ask God for a revelation while refusing to accept and live by the standard that He has already revealed to us is the very reason King Ahab lost his life (1 Kgs. 22:1-40).

Would it be proper for a person to pray to God for the purpose of seeking permission to commit murder? How about adultery? Certainly not! Why? Because God has already spoken out against such transgressions. The truth of these matters has already been established in His revealed word. No amount of prayer will change that factual information. It does not matter how sincere a person may believe otherwise. To claim God gave a person permission to

commit murder or adultery proves that they could not have heard it from God. God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). He does not contradict Himself.

Why then should it be any different when it comes to the Mormon doctrine? What will prayer accomplish concerning the validity of the Book of Mormon if God has already spoken out against it? Nothing! No amount of prayer will change what God has already revealed. It does not matter how sincere a person may believe otherwise. Such action makes a mockery of prayer.

The challenge to pray by the Mormon contradicts the Bible as well as their own teaching. In one particular study with a Mormon I was given the routine test to pray and ask God to give me the answer concerning the book of Moroni. I asked the young man from the LDS church if I were saved or lost according to his doctrine. He did not want to answer my question, but upon my insistence he reluctantly affirmed that I was indeed unsaved and would remain lost until I accepted and obeyed the Mormon doctrine. To this I pointed out that the Bible teaches that God does not hear the prayer of a sinner (Jn. 9:31) and that for me to pray would be useless in my "unsaved" condition. This same passage says that I must worship God and obey His will for Him to hear my prayer (Jn. 9:31). Besides the fact that God does not give people knowledge through prayer, He is not going to hear my prayer unless I am already saved. The Mormon leading the study had no answer other than to say I should go ahead and try praying anyway.

Does God not tell us that we must pray in faith before He will hear our prayer (Mat. 21:22)? Does faith not come by hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17)? How then can we pray in faith before we have heard from God concerning the truth of the Book of Mormon (as instructed by the LDS elder)? The Mormon has no answer for these observations. On the subject of prayer our brother, Wayne Jackson, writes:

Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Our Father in

heaven," (Matt. 6:9). This phrase assumes a father/child relationship. Prayer is designed to be a mental or verbal contact between one who has entered into a covenant relationship with God, accepting him as a Father who has paternal authority, and who loves and blesses his children. According to the Lord's teaching elsewhere, that relationship is achieved by means of a process that is expressed metaphorically as being "born again" (Jn. 3:3-5). This event takes place when one accesses and understands the basic facts about Christ and his atoning death, and responds in obedience to the sacred plan for obtaining forgiveness of past sins (Ga. 3:26-27). Prayer is a special privilege for those who are "in Christ" (Jn 15:7; Eph. 1:3).³

The refusal to pray about the Book of Mormon's authenticity may bring an accusation from the Mormons that we have no faith in prayer. But it is because we do believe in the sacredness of prayer that we will not pray about Joseph Smith's work of fiction. As previously stated, the Bible is void of instruction to pray concerning the truthfulness of any doctrine. We are instructed to search the scriptures to see whether these things are so (Acts 17:11). We are to test the spirits (1 Jn. 4:1), and to prove all things (1 Thess. 5:21). This is accomplished by use of the truth, God's written word (Jn. 17:17).

Some Mormon elders have gone as far as to say, concerning the challenge of Moroni 10:4, that if a testimony is to be gained, the person praying must want the Book of Mormon to be true. This is strange considering the fact that because of the strong message the Bible has for the lost sinner; most people do not want God's word to be true. And yet, when a person has an honest heart they obey God's word because the truth convicts them (Acts 2:37).

CONCLUSION

The validity of the Book of Mormon cannot be decided by any test of its own devising. This is a dishonest way of measuring. It must be tested by the truth, God's Holy Word, the Bible. The teaching of Moroni 10:4 not only lacks any biblical foundation, it is contrary to God's established, revealed word. Therefore, because we can obtain knowledge of what is and is not from God we must use the wisdom supplied by God (Ja. 1:5) and act accordingly. Moroni 10:4 has been weighed in the balances and been found wanting. This passage alone proves the Book of Mormon to be another gospel, a false gospel that is to be accursed (Gal. 1:8).

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BIOGRAPHY

Timothy Kidwell

1. Third generation preacher
2. During his 22 years of service he has worked with congregations in AL, AR, MD, FL, TX, and GA
3. Spent seven years in stateside mission field, and has made four mission trips to Guyana, South America
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**A
STUDY
OF
GENERAL TOPICS**

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS THE “RAPTURE”?

Darnell Brown, Sr.

The purpose of our study is to investigate God’s word on the subject of the Rapture; to see if it is God’s teaching concerning Jesus’ return or if it is a myth.

The word “Rapture” means, “The state of being carried away with joy, love, etc. The other word that is used with this meaning ecstasy, which means the same but, adds the meaning of being overwhelmed with emotions.” (Webster New World Dictionary-Third College Edition)

If we speak of the rapture as just being carried away with love, joy, etc. by Jesus and leave it at that, then we will be well within the confinement of God’s word. Is there such a thing?

John tells us:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people and God himself shall be with them and be their God.” (Rev. 21:1-3).

John tells us in:

And God shall wipe away tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new and he said unto me, write: for these words are true and faithful (Rev. 21:4-5).

Yes, this is the time of love, joy peace, rejoicing, etc., when Jesus, come back for his own. But now, when people began to add the idea of coming back after seven years to earth with Jesus to reign with him here, this is where people began to add to Gods word and this is not right!!

The key point in understanding this subject is the statement made by our brother, John says: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (Rev. 21:1).

What follows concerning no sorrow, no tears, no death, etc, (cf. Rev. 21:7). Are all products of the new heaven and the new earth, this reigning with Jesus will be in that new heaven and new earth. I guess people just do not want to see this heaven and earth be destroyed, and I can't blame them, but, Peter said:

But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us - ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:7-9).

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye, to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be

dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things be diligent {hard working; industrious. Done with careful, steady effort; painstaking.} (Webster New World Dictionary Third-College Edition). that ye may be found of him peace, without spot and blameless, (2 Pet. 3:10-14).

In the DVD by “Dr. Jack and Rexella Van Impe entitle “The Rapture: Hope or Hoax””, it is stated that the rapture has been talked about as far back as the fourth century. The problem with this is that the word is not found in the “Holy Bible” at all. We do read in the Bible that Jesus is returning for his people,

But, I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if, we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

As for as ruling with Christ on the earth is concerned, the early church was told by the Apostle Paul as he corrected them in a matter, “Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as Kings without us: and I would to God ye did

reign, that we also might reign with you" (1 Cor. 4:8).

Peter also reminds the church that they are a royal nation to God. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). We, as people of God in a ruling position are told in; "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?" (1 Cor. 6:2-3).

So instead of worrying about if Christ is coming back to set up a Kingdom here on earth again, let us focus on living with Christ here and now in the Kingdom that he has already set up for us here which is his body or his Church. (Colossians 1: 18)

If we do not get it right here and now, we won't be around to be a part of that new heaven and that new earth wherever he decides to put it. Let us play it safe and look forward to meeting the Lord in the cloud as the Apostle Paul said; we would in, "...and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17b). All of this talk about Jesus coming back in seven years after he pick his people up on the cloud is just a way of trying to guess when Jesus will return.

We have already been informed about that day, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father, (Mark. 13:32). Jesus said that only the Father knows when that day is coming, (Matt. 24:36).

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BIOGRAPHY

Darnell Brown

1. Preaching the gospel over 45 years
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3. He and his wife, Sylvia, are laboring with the MLK congregation in Arcadia, FL.

IS IT SINFUL TO JOIN A FRATERNITY OR SORORITY?

Titus King

INTRODUCTION

A very recent movie which got very good reviews dealing with things that go on as a part of the Greek fraternal culture competitiveness was "Stomp the Yard." If you have ever been to a graduation ceremony of a major college or university, you could not have left without being exposed, in one way or the other, to some form of social fraternity or sorority. You either saw some Greek lettering representing the name of a particular fraternity or sorority or you heard the whooping it up with the various screams and chants that identified the particular fraternity.

Along with the above, and, probably the most noticeable and competitive, are the step shows that the various social organizations put on. One would have to be both blind and deaf to miss the great pomp demonstrated by the Greek culture that exists on the campus. It is this social structure that we will be dealing within our assigned lecture topic. Someone else has been assigned "Free Masonry." So we will leave it to the speaker who has it.

In dealing with our assigned topic as it pertains to the theme of this lectureship, "Major Cults of Today," we find it necessary to define the meaning of some terms, before we get into specifics on the subject. Thus is our prayer that when we are finished, we will have answered the question, "Is It Sinful to Join a Fraternity or Sorority?"

First of all, what or when is a thing sinful? The word of God tells us that, "All unrighteousness is sin . . ." (1 Jn. 5:17). In this same book we find, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 Jn. 3:4). So we see sin is "going against" the law of God Almighty. The apostle Paul told the church at Rome,

“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life” (Rom. 6:22, 23). As Christians, are we seeking death or eternal life? I believe all would say the latter. The only way we are going to obtain eternal life is to be free from sin.

Next, we find the word join. We find that The New Strong’s Concise Concordance & Vine’s Concise Dictionary states that it is, “primarily, “to glue or cement together,” then, generally, “to unite, to join firmly,” “...to keep company with” “...to cleave to,” “...to stick to,” “...to yoke together” (Strong’s 199). All these show that there is a sense of unity existing between something and someone. We cannot be separate, and, a part of something or someone at the same time. Jesus Christ, the son of almighty God, said, “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” (Matt. 12:30). From the above we must conclude, that we cannot be joined to something sinful and to God at the same time, for we know that God has no part with sin! What we “join,” “unite,” or “cleave to,” must be in agreement with the Word of God.

Finally, let us look at a fraternity, and/or, sorority. Webster’s Universal College Dictionary defines fraternity as follows: “1. a social organization of male students usu. with secret initiation and rites and a name composed of Greek letters. 2. a group of persons associated by or as if by ties of brotherhood. 3. any group or class of persons having common ties: the medical fraternity. 4. an organization of laymen for religious or charitable purposes. brotherhood” (Webster 322). Likewise, a sorority is defined as, “a society of women or girls in a college” (Ibid. 750).

In keeping with the theme, “Major Cults of Today,” we will briefly look at, 1) the history of fraternities and sororities, 2) some practices of fraternities and sororities, as we address the topic we have been assigned, in an attempt to

answer the question, 3) "Is it Sinful to Join a Fraternity or Sorority?" As we go about this task, we will be dealing basically with their existence on our college campuses in the United States of America. Also, most Biblical quotes will be taken from the King James 1611 version.

HISTORY OF FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES

Most of the consulted encyclopedias discussed "fraternities and sororities" basically in the same way. The Encyclopedia Americana, which, for the sake of time and space, I'll use as a basic reference, has this to say about our topic.

"FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES, frequently referred to as Greek-lettered societies, are self governing fraternal organizations associated with colleges and universities in North America. They are usually named by the initial letters of the Greek words expressing the aim or ideal of the group. Thus the name Phi Beta Kappa stands for three Greek words meaning "philosophy the guide of life."

These societies may be classified as (1) professional fraternities made up of faculty and students pursuing studies in a particular area; (2) honor societies aiming to recognize...leadership...as well as academic excellence among graduates and undergraduates...(3) recognition societies...with less rigid membership requirements than honor societies; and (4) social fraternities for men and women (sororities).

This last category is the largest and most influential group. In fact, when a student is spoken of on campus as a "Greek," it practically always means that he belongs to a social fraternity (Americana 20). The latter of the four, "social fraternities...the largest and most influential" are the ones we will be most concerned with, in our discussion. The World Book Encyclopedia states, "The best-known kind of fraternity is the general or social fraternity" (495). From the Encyclopedia Americana, we continue with the history of

fraternities and sororities.

ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Modern fraternities and sororities trace their origin to the organization of the Phi Beta Kappa society at the College of William and Mary on Dec. 5, 1776. While formed for social and literary purposes, the group had all the earmarks of the present-day fraternity, such as an aura of secrecy, a ritual, a handclasp, a motto, and a badge of external display. It embodied principles of high idealism and strong ties of friendship among its members.

Also among the ancestors of today's social fraternity were the literary societies of the early 19th century. Known by names such as Ciceronian or the Adelpian...

The formation of the Kappa Alpha society at Union College, Schenectady, N. Y., in 1825 marks the beginning of the modern social fraternity. A secret Greek-letter organization, it had many of the characteristics of the Phi Beta Kappa? Two years later, Sigma Phi and Delta Phi were established on the same campus. Sigma Phi in 1831 became the first to establish branch chapters at other colleges. These three fraternities, known as the "Union triad," set the pattern for much of the present fraternity in America.

The early societies were for men only, but in 1851 a sisterhood for women, first known as the Adelphean Society was founded in Wesleyan College, Macon, Ga. This organization became Alpha Delta Pi, generally regarded as the first women's fraternity. In January 1870, Kappa Alpha Theta was started, another pioneering Greek-letter society for women (Americana 20).

Once planted on colleges in America, fraternities and sororities continued to grow and have a great influence on the life of college campuses to this very day. From their very definition(s), we see early, they are against what is taught in the Scriptures, for they are divided into many chapters, all having their own rules and regulations. The apostle Paul,

writing to the church at Corinth, spoke against such practices. He said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). True, faithful Christianity, demands that we all be, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). Most, if not all, of today's social organizations, are not united, but, are very divided, highly competitive with one another in their practices. Continuing, let's look at modern day fraternal structure.

MODERN SOCIAL FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES

From such beginnings fraternities and sororities have spread over the United States and Canada. Membership at first was restricted to upper classmen but later extended to all undergraduates. In the 1960's and early 1970's there was a growing tendency to exclude freshmen. Honorary membership is sometime conferred on notable persons, though several fraternities rule against the practice. The rule that a student shall belong to one undergraduate fraternity only is strictly enforced. The ideal that membership means membership (or at least affiliation) for life is vigorously promoted, and many chapters draw both moral and financial support from influential alumni. The "shingle," a framed certificate and the pin or key proclaiming membership in a fraternity are regarded by many as cherished possessions (Americana 20-21).

Looking at the above, we readily see a violation of God's law, the law of open acceptance, as opposed to making selective choices. My Bible tells me that even under the law of, people were to be treated with equal and righteous judgment. Listen to the words of Moses as he spoke to Israel. "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shall not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy

neighbour" (Lev. 19:15). The Proverbial writer said, it is not wise to have respect for one person over the other. "These things belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of person in judgment" (Prov. 24:23). When fraternities "pick and choose their pledges," for whatever reason, they are showing respect to a certain group over another. God wants all His creation to be treated with the same respect, "For there is no respect of person with God" (Rom. 1:11).

As we look further, we see more disparity in the way of division because of the age and/or size of the fraternity or sorority. Much like the denominational world around us, though divided in many ways, they saw fit to unite to gain more power and control, and spread their dogmas to where they are today. One can readily see their influence on the campuses because of their "fraternity houses," from which their members operate, having very great influence on the campuses that allow them to operate, most times, with the knowledge, approval, and sometimes, support from the budgets of the various colleges and universities where they operate. Their history further shows the following.

"Some of the older and larger fraternities and sororities have chapters on many campuses, while some of the smaller never extended beyond their place of origin. To exercise a degree of administrative guidance and control over the various types of fraternities there are the Association of College Honor Societies, the Professional Interfraternity Conference, the Pan Hellenic Council, the National Panhellenic Conference, and the National Interfraternity Council.

The first building devoted exclusively to the use of a fraternity was probably a log building belonging to Chi Psi at Michigan not long before the Civil War. Fraternity houses developed slowly at first but became common in the 20th century. At first these were only campus group living quarters for men. Now many of the large universities supply chapter houses for their fraternities, and "fraternity row" may

be an impressive part of a campus" (Ibid. 21).

As our colleges and universities have grown in their influence of the education of our society, so has the influence of fraternities and sororities. History continues to show that, because of members strong ties to their various social organizations, men and women of great renown, have been, and are still active in the promotion of fraternity and sorority life in today's society. It is recorded by some historical writers as follows.

There has been no lack of eloquent and able defenders of social fraternity. Statesmen, clergymen, and leaders in other walks of life have said that the lessons of good fellowship, helpfulness, and loyalty they learned from their fraternities were the greatest formative influences in their lives. Fraternity life is often cited as a source of training for leadership. A great many presidents of the United States, senators, state governors, and Supreme Court justices have been fraternity men. How much of the success of such men can be attributed to fraternity life is impossible to judge. But by their nature social fraternities tend to draw their members from the more privileged groups of citizens, in which the young are well provided with the advantages that lead them toward success. Nevertheless, the number of leaders in most walks of life who have been fraternity men is impressive. This fact has been observable every since fraternities began to take an important place in American colleges and universities (Ibid. 21).

From just this statement, we see the way many male and female fraternity members have placed their fraternities' influence above that of family, home, church, community, and school, as having the greatest influence in their lives. There is little wonder we see the continued decay and destruction of morality in society today. We see a continual

rise in, the decay of the family structure ordained by God (Gen. 2:23-25; 3:16, 20, 21), open tolerance for fornication and homosexuality, abortion and other forms of murder, child molestation, open disrespect for authority and other things, all the way to some of the liberal tendencies that are being tolerated, and, allowed eventually to creep back into the church of our Lord. Our generation is straying further and further from God in our daily walks of life. Much of this can be contributed to more and more worldly training and less and less reliance on God's word for our guidance. As children of God, we are charged not to let this happen. We have been charged by God, through His Son Jesus the Christ to, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:18-20). If fraternities and sororities were religious, as some do claim to be, they would not be only open to certain ones, but open to all comers. Is not the body of Christ just so, open to all? I do believe it is. Social fraternities, being exclusive instead of inclusive are saying, we have the power to pick and choose whomever want to join; instead of the "Come...Come...come. And whosoever will, let him..." spoken of Revelation twenty two and verse seventeen. When fraternities and sororities are exclusive, they are, again, going against God, "For there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2:11)

Looking at a little more history of the social fraternities, we see some semblance of change being attempted by colleges and universities on fraternities, because of the exclusive practices stated above. "This exclusiveness has in the past given rise to the criticism that fraternities by their very nature are undemocratic. They have been banned on some well-known campuses. For example, all fraternities were abolished at Princeton in the latter part of the 19th century. In 1878, fraternities were banned at Virginia

Military Institute and Virginia Polytechnic Institute. In the 1890's and early 1900's several states in the South prohibited Greek-letter fraternities in state institutions. In 1946 the trustees of Amherst College ordered the national fraternities operating there to eliminate all membership restrictions based on race, color, or creed, or be discontinued. As a result, the charters of three fraternities were revoked or suspended. Subsequently, more than a score of institutions adopted similar legislation" (Ibid. 21).

Thanks be to God that some members of His human creation still possess some knowledge of the justice of God Almighty, and, believe that there should be some equal balance in the treatment of one's fellow man, even though it sometimes swings back and forth like a pendulum. As time went on we see more changes taking place in favor of the fraternal organizations.

"In 1953 the National Interfraternity Conference reaffirmed it's belief that each fraternity could establish its own criteria for membership, applicable to all chapters, as they might determine in convention. Later, the student councils at Amherst, Hamilton, and Williams voted for unrestricted fraternity membership as college policy. In 1962 a special committee recommended the discontinuation of the fraternity system at William. In 1960, Norwich University disbanded its fraternity Chapters. Randolph-Macon Women's College terminated the national status of its sororities in the same year" (Ibid. 21).

As we stated earlier, the fraternity system still showed it would not go "quietly into the night," but continued to fight for survival. "In spite of these problems, the fraternity system showed signs of growth during the 1960's. The National Interfraternity Conference reported a gain of 399 chapters between 1962 and 1967, or almost 80 per year, as compared to an annual average of 58 for the previous 6-year period. The National Panhellenic Conference gained 219 chapters during the same period, a gain of 44 per year as compared

with an average of 40 for the preceding 6-year period" (Ibid. 21).

I'm so glad for the providence of God, for no matter how bleak things may seem we must still believe in God's Word as did King David. He expressed his continued faith and trust in the actions of an Almighty God as follows. "I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Ps. 37:25). God takes care of his own.

So, always remember, no matter how much power Satan seems to possess, God is still in charge, and one day we will all have to face him, give an account, and, be judged for our actions in this life (Rom. 14: 10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10). As a last part of our presentation on fraternity history, although still alive, we see a decline in fraternity membership and power today compared to the past, we found this bit of information. "However, by 1970 fraternity members represented a smaller proportion of total number of students attending higher institutions than they did in the 1940-1960 period. With the upsurge in college and university enrollments and the rise in community colleges, many observers feel the influence of social fraternities in campus life is diminishing" (Ibid. 21).

Even with the above being said, fraternity life continues to exist, and, influence the life of too many students on many of our nation's top college and university campuses. The practices already mentioned, and many others, still exist, and are sanctioned, to a great degree, by the same campus administrations. We will look briefly at a few of these before we conclude our assigned topic. In doing so, we hope to inform you further, of a few things that are involved in becoming a member of such organizations. By doing this, we hope to see if they are sinful, and if so, why Christians should avoid becoming a part of them.

SOME PRACTICES OF SOCIAL FRATERNITIES

In order for a student to become a member of a fraternity

or sorority one must pledge and be initiated into that individual fraternity or sorority. When pledging, one must, as a prerequisite, swear an oath to that particular organization. This in itself is against the word of Jesus. Listen, as He spoke the following, in His "Sermon on the Mount." "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Mt. 5:34-37).

James, an Apostle of Christ wrote as follows. "But above all things brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation"(Jas.5:12).

From these Scriptures we readily see, that followers of Christ are not to be a part of any organization that puts itself in front of God. It is written also in the word of God: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Deut. 20:3). When we swear that oath, it is to that fraternity, not to God!

Secondly, pledging often includes the practice of hazing. It may be physical in nature. Involved may be, but no means limited to, "kicking, hitting with objects, punching, paddling, choking, forcing to drink large amounts of alcoholic beverages, forcing to engage in unwanted sexual acts, etc." Over the past years, several deaths have been reported, as pledgees tried to join the various fraternities. Psychological hazing is probably not reported as much as the physical. The "proving yourself" to the society by allowing he members to use and abuse you psychologically is just as bad, or worse than letting them use and abuse you physically. That's why many probably endure the psychological hazing because they do not equate it with the physical hazing. As Christians however, we should be able to see they are the same and not

abuse or allow our bodies to be abused. Why? Because our bodies belong to God! The Apostle Paul wrote this to the Corinthian church. "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God and ye are not your own.? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:18, 19).

This lets us know, our body belongs to God, and when we abuse the body, it is sin, and God has no part in any sin, for, "All unrighteousness is sin..." (1 Jn. 5:17).

Next we find most of the Greek lettered fraternities condone, encourage, and, participate in large scale revelry (wild parties), while professing to have Christian principles. One cannot expect to inherit the kingdom of God following such practices. Paul wrote to the church at Galatia: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyng, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

Christian friends, don't miss the "kingdom of God" by participating in such evil practices! Because of time and space, the last thing we will deal with before we conclude, is, Greek paganism. As Minister Charles A. Johnson III put it in his Pledging Pamphlet, "Membership in Freemasonry and Greek Lettered Organizations Is Sinful," we see paganism as a wide spread practice among ancient Greeks. "The pagan Greeks believed in a number of deities, both male and female. They believed these deities bestowed unto mankind with such traits as virtues, talents, and many other kinds of ideals and knowledge. These also represented elements in nature. They of course had other purposes as well.

Many of these deities had their own respective religious cults that followed specific rituals to honor, worship, and

sacrifice to their particular gods or goddesses. Many of these deities became known by what they gave to humans. Thus you have Mars the god of war, Venus the goddess of love, Minerva the goddess of wisdom, Apollo the god of the light, youth and music, etc.” (7, 8).

These are just a few of the false, pagan gods that the ancient Greeks worshiped. Following after other gods and placing them before God the Father has been, and, always will be sin. When one pledges to a fraternity or sorority, he is saying he will give honor and tribute to its way of life. According to Jesus’s teaching in His “Sermon on the Mount,” man cannot serve two masters. “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other: or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mt. 6:24).

Although we understand Him to be talking about riches in the context, the principal of dual loyalty can certainly be applied. That is why he had said earlier, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Mt. 6:21). Elsewhere Jesus stated, “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” (Mt. 12:30). Being against Jesus and righteousness, is being for Satan and sin!

CONCLUSION

“Is it Sinful To Join A Fraternity or Sorority?” Looking at the evidence presented, I would have to give a resounding, Yes! Yes! Yes! A Christian, a true child of God, cannot be a part of anything evil, because, God has no part with sin! By the above, we see the history, and practices, of fraternities and sororities is sin. To join and be a part of one is to be yoked to it.

Paul warned the Corinthian church to be separate from unbelievers and infidels. This same charge applies to Christians today. He wrote, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has

righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with the temple of idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them . and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean things; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters; saith the Lord” (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

Young people, and old alike; it would be wise to stay away from the joining of oneself to any such organization that goes against the will of Almighty God! As Christians, we are to “Touch not; taste not; handle not;...not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh” (Col. 2:21- 22). So in closing, remember this! “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:12, 13).

Be safe my Christian brothers and sisters, and stay away from the sinfulness practiced by fraternities and sororities!

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BIOGRAPHY

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HOW DOES THE DENOMINATIONAL WORLD VIEW "CHURCH"?

Owen Faulk

INTRODUCTION

I consider it a great privilege to participate in the fourteenth Annual Lectureship here at the Church of Christ, which meets here at West Orlando.

To the Lectureship Committee and all that had a part in putting this great event together, I am thankful to God and to each of you for this opportunity to be one of the speakers.

I also would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to brother and sister Orr who serve diligently with the congregation here.

The subject that I will consider at this time is: **How Does the Denominational World View "Church"?** (**First Timothy 3:15**).

This subject is of utmost importance; because the denominational world is confused in many ways in how they view church. Understanding that the world is filled with indifferent and complacent people, it behooves us from time to time to be reminded of what the **Lord said about His Church**. Paul writes:

Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself

a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee, (Titus 2:10-15).

The world looks at the church as if God needs them. But the Church was God's objective plan. Before the world was, the Lord's Church was in the mind of God, therefore we need God. Obviously, people must be taught and must learn that the Church belongs to God. He gave His only beloved Son up to die that you and I may be saved. In His death the price was paid. Therefore we must be faithful and obedient to Christ. At one time the church was unknown to mankind; therefore they did some things that perhaps they may not have done if they only knew what the Bible said.

Paul writes;

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (1 Cor. 2:7-9).

Words in definition term "Church" *means to call out of the world. Question,* what is the impact of this call? This question relates to the destiny of the souls of men! Not a few have rejected the church because they do not know the definition term "Church". Not only does everyone have the *right to know* the definition of the Church that Christ built, but also everyone *should know* what the church means in their life. Who wants to be a member of any organization without knowledge and appraisal of that institution?

In the world today there is much confusion because of the multiplicity of religious denominations. Does the Church of Christ, the church that Jesus built, which one can read

about in the New Testament, exist today? How may one identify the Church of the Bible today? Is the Church essentially related to salvation? (Questions like these are necessary, and it is important that the Bible answer them).

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE CHURCH

The Church that Christ built is not a denomination. The Lord's Church is the complete body of Christ, consisting of all who have been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. Christ Church has no "parent" church. His Church is "The Church", the only One body, One in Spirit, One in Hope, of your call (Ephesians 4:4).

A "denomination" is a sect suggestive of a fraction or **part of the whole**. The Church of Christ is no fraction or part of anything! **It is the whole**. Every member that belongs to the Church that Christ built is "added" to the church by our Lord. One cannot *join* the church or be *voted* in when becoming a member of Christ's Church. It is not a *multiple-choice* situation! man has no choice in this matter. Christ adds the saved to the Church (Acts 2:47).

The church that Jesus established is not a denomination of human origin. Christ's Church is a divine institution of divine origin, identified by *name, doctrine and practice in the New Testament*. The Churches of Christ plead for restoration of simple New Testament Christianity, to **speak** where the Bible **speaks**, be **silent** where the Bible is **silent**, to call **Bible things** by **Bible names**, and to do **Bible things** in **Bible ways**. The Bible makes Christians only!

SOURCE OF AUTHORITY

Essential facts relating to the Lord's Church must be ascertained from authoritative sources. There is only one true source of authority relative to Christ's Church, and that is the divine authority of the Bible. Jesus Christ is the head of the body, the Church (Ephesians 1:22-23). Look at His claim, "All authority hath been given to Him in heaven and on

earth" (Matthew 28:18). The inspired apostle declared, "And whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of [by the authority of] the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:17). Some people often ask questions like these, "What is The Church of Christ?" "What do (they) the Church of Christ believe?" or "What do (they) the Church of Christ teach?" These questions can only be resolved when we ask this question, what do the Scriptures teach concerning the Church. They are the divine source of authority that identifies the Church of Christ.

WAYS THE WORLD VIEW THE CHURCH

From the beginning the world looked at the church as the love God gave in the way of (John 3:16). God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Our Lord's love is shown through out the Bible.

The Patriarchal Age, God spoke to the fathers, (**Hebrews 1:1**) "God spoke in times past unto the fathers by the prophets.

Adam and Eve, in spite of there sins our **Lord** loved to the point that He clothe them. Sin brought them to an open shame (Genesis 2:25).

The Mosaic Age, God spoke to man as the heads of the family. Moses gave the law. In John 1:17 the Bible says, "For the law was given by Moses but **grace and truth** came by Jesus Christ

Under The Law of Moses, God spoke of His love in a way that the world should know that God's love causes Him to be jealous over them. (Exodus 20:1-5) God instructed Moses to speak to the children of Israel and Let them know that, I am The Lord thy God, You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God. (Exodus 34:14) For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Joshua said unto the people, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve (Joshua 24:15). And Joshua said

unto the people. Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins, (Joshua 24:19).

The Christian Age. God speaks through His Son to mankind: (Hebrews 1:1-2) God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 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 doctrine never changes: (Acts 2:42) And they continued stedfastly in the **apostles' doctrine** and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. **How shall we escape,** if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him: (Heb 2:3). **The Love God gave for us:** He gave His Son to buy us back because of sins, (John 3:16). And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up (John 3:14-15). That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

HOW DOES THE DENOMINATIONAL WORLD VIEW THE "CHURCH"

Many people make comments such as these: "Once Saved Always Saved, You think I'm going to Hell, Don't you, I'm Alright, Don't worry about me, A Person Who Leaves God Was Never Saved In the First Place, A God of love cannot Send A person to Hell."

The denominational world doesn't look at the Church as being the divine nature of God, and they are His subjects. The world feels as though they have a choice in the way to be saved. Each church has its own interpretation of the Bible; however let's view some of the Bible and let the Bible speak for it's self. (2 Pet 1:20-21), (20) Knowing this *first*, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. (21) For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but

holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. One must exegete the Scripture; the bible is of no private interpretation. What God says to one; He say t o all. For an example: "water baptism" (Acts 2:38) The Bible gives an example of how one must be baptized if he or she is to be saved. Peter wrote, "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:" (1 Pet. 3:20-21).

The Bible speaks of Baptism as being a burial: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:" (Rom. 6:3-5).

The world doesn't look at Salvation as authority given by God. They have their own interpretation. For example; they say all you have to do is just call on Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. **The Bible teaches that there are some conditions in this call.** When a person looks at the scripture, it must be kept in its context.

The world says, if one wants to be saved, the only thing he or she has to do is just confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in his or her heart that God raised him from the dead and they can be saved. They say this based on Romans 10:9, which says, That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

The world also says, if one wants to be saved the only thing a person has to do is just call upon the name of the

Lord. They say this based on Romans 10:13, which says, For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

First, Neither one of these scriptures has the word **only** in them. **Secondly**, before one obeys the gospel he or she will have trouble with the Lord responding to their call, because the Bible ask in Romans 10:14; How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? We **must let the Bible answer on every subject**. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:1-3).

The Bible is not of any private interpretation, what the Bible says to one, it says to all. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16).

DEEPER RESPECT FOR THE BIBLE

Men must respect the authority of Christ; and have the proper attitudes toward the scripture of The Lord: But he answered and said, **It is written**, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The Bible says, All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (Second Timothy 3:16).

Listen to the Bible; Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (Philippians 2:5). Examine **yourselves**, whether ye are in the faith; **prove** your **own selves**. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus is in you, except ye be reprobates? (Second Corinthians 13:5).

There are some **standards** that we **must** measure ourselves by, and the scripture is the standard of life: **Standard = Meaning** an established measure of weight or length, serving as a measure of value etc. Look at this necessary standard. Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, (Second Corinthians 13:5). The solemn duty of every Christian is to examine himself. The Holy Spirit tells us in the word of God what to do. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17). We know in our own hearts whether or not we have done what God has Commanded. [If we are to examine ourselves, (Second Corinthians 13:5), then there must be a standard by which this may be done].

Question: Shall we use the standard of others? *For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise (Second Corinthians 10:12).* There is a limitation to the human standard; we will not be judged by a human standard. The Bible says He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day (John 12:48).

God's word should be our standard: 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; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (Second Timothy 4:1-2).

Man must look at God's word as if looking in a mirror (James 1:21-25); we may see a true spiritual reflection by continually "looking into" God's word. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path (Psalm 119:105).

Worldly people have standards; (values by which they measure things).

Crowds: The denominational world sees the crowds as being blessings from God, however, people must be taught of God by the word of God: It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me (John 6:45).

Friends: (Matthew 7:13-14); The strait gate. Man must recognize the value of the scripture. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. (Matt 22:29). But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living (Matt 22:31-32).

HOW DOES THE DENOMINATIONAL WORLD VIEW "CHURCH"?

Latter Day Saints, during the 19th century Churches began to arise claiming to have an inspired prophet: Men like **Joseph Smith** founded the church called the Latter Day Saints in 1830. Since that time over 20 churches have now been formed which claim to be the true Latter Day church. It is interesting to note that the reason that this church was to be the truly restored church was because it had a prophet to protect it from error. Yet when one visits independence, Missouri ;(They have their own apostles 12 each).

Seventh Day Adventism, In 1840, The work of **William Miller** led to a small group of followers who believed the Lord would return between March 21, 1842, and March 21, 1844. After their calculations failed, others tried to set dates. A small group meeting in Washington, N.H. began to observe the 7th day as enjoined on the Israelites. Among those meeting was a woman named **Ellen G. White**, she claimed while in a trance she experienced vision regarding the Sabbath. The group she founded became known as the Seventh Day Adventist in 1846.

The Jehovah Witnesses: Were formed by Charles T Russell. In 1884 he formed a sect Called the Millennial Darwinists, however in 1931 the name was changed to Jehovah's Witnesses. Like the Sabbatarian churches; they reject the doctrine of Hell, and the spirit of man existing after death.

We can all see the Bible alike: When one begins to look at the **Church of the Bible**, he/she must recognize **Christ's authority** and that God has place Him; Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church. Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all (Ephesians 1:21-23).

When observing the scriptures man must recognize that God said; For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9). **God said; "the flood was coming"**. Eight souls were saved by water; The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ :(1 Pet 3:21). **God said; in the scriptures**, when people try to have their way, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. (Matt 17:5). Also Remember Lot's wife (Luke 17:32). **He also said;** For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt 12:40).

Therefore, the scriptures cannot be broken by: Tradition, desires of men, or opinion. When observing the scriptures, we learn that we have the sentence of death upon ourselves. An examination of the death sentence can be found in (2 Corinthians 1:8-11).

The sentence of death is to convince all people to get serious about life. In the eight verses of second Corinthians, a reference to a great tumult stirred up in Ephesus by Demetrius a silversmith, and his craftsmen against Paul, and the **doctrine of Christ (Acts 19:23-41)**. Notice Paul's **statement in** First Corinthians 15:31-32; I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die. Persecution was so intense until Paul felt as though he was on death row; in Second Corinthians 1:9 Paul would say, But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: The saints prayed that Paul and others be delivered from the sentence of death; verse ten says, Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; This deliverance was so great that Paul considered it a resurrection, the prayers of many of the saints was a great help to secure this deliverance.

Think of yourselves being in prison on "death row" Paul had been in a situation in Asia where he could have been killed, because of his work as a preacher. He had nearly lost his life at Lystra (Acts 14:19). Paul had the sentence of death in himself.

RECOGNIZING THE SENTENCE OF DEATH!

The Bible declares our appointment as a "death sentence" (Hebrews 9:27). And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: The day we were born we had the sentence of death upon us. "Some indeed die in infancy, Some die in youth, Some die in middle age, Some die in old age."

The rich, the poor, the educated and the uneducated all have the sentence of death. The Psalmist said; The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of

strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away (Ps 90:10). The Christian don't have to fear death: Forasmuch then as the *children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself* likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb 2:14-15).

REALIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SALVATION; we must trust in God! But we had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: 2 Cor 1:9. We are not to trust in material things; but godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. First Timothy 6:6-7.

We are not to put all of our trust in man! (Doctors may prolong life, but they can't prevent death). Definitely don't trust in our selves because Jesus said; in Matthew 16:24, Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Today's Bible disciples must follow the pattern of the Lord; it is in His pattern that we find salvation: Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is **none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved** (Acts 4:12).

CONCLUSION

Where did all the churches come from? In mans view of the church when they voice their own opinion: One would say "join the church of your choice" Others say, one church is as good as another, Others say, each church has it's own interpretation, Some say different translation are the cause of so many churches. THE BIBLE SAYS. THERE IS ONLY ONE CHURCH

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