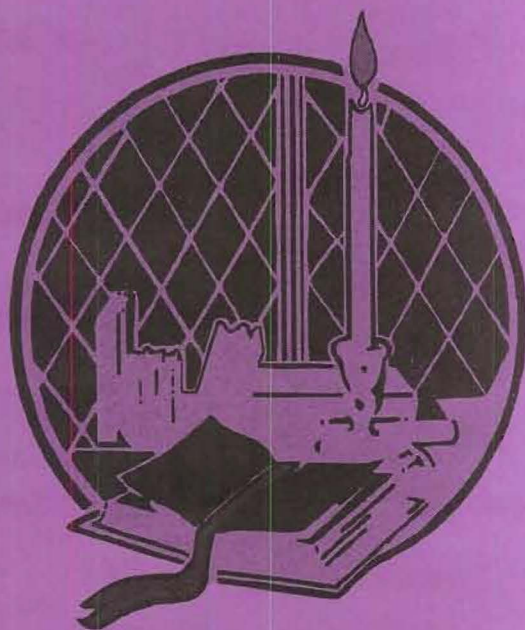


World Religions in the Light of the Bible



Oscar P. Craft

Duluth Church of Christ

Lectureship

May 18-22, 2002

3239 Highway 120

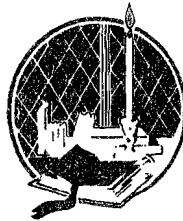
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5/18/02

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PREFACE

The lessons in this book have been prepared by faithful men at the request of the eldership of the church of Christ at Duluth. The events connected with terrorism in the world that have made “9-11” a part of our language—possibly forever—have exposed the fact that religion can be wrong. But the only way we can call something wrong is by appealing to a standard. Thus, we are presenting information in this book that is compared to the Bible. We believe that the Bible is the only standard that can measure up to being totally reliable for every person and every situation (2 Timothy 3:16,17). And this includes the judgment day (John 12:44-50).

The world is full of religions—thousands of them! And “Christianity” is full of denominations—thousands of them! This book is written to challenge you to sort through the claims of these religions in the light of the only perfect book—the Bible.

Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. He died, was buried, and resurrected on the third day as confirmation of the truth (Romans 1:3,4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4). He established one church (and no denominations) on the first Pentecost (which was a Sunday) after His ascension to the Father (Daniel 7:13,14; Matthew 16:18,19; Acts 2:1-47).

We invite you to read this book, get a set of the cassette tapes, and search the scriptures to see if these things are so (Acts 17:11).

For information on additional books, tapes, or personal study, please contact us.

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WHICH CHURCH DID JESUS ESTABLISH?

“Let us all worship together.”

This was the heading I noticed in a weekend edition of a newspaper. Under this heading were 198 separate listings for churches in a small-town area in West Virginia. Doesn't that strike you as being a bit odd? How can we all worship together if there are 198 different places in such a small area—places where the worship is very different from place to place, doctrines that are taught in one building would not be tolerated in the one down the street, the “plan of salvation” varies from preacher to preacher, and the source of authority is not the same in each place?

I am convinced that the sentiment, “Let us all worship together” is a good one. I am also convinced that the existence of so many churches and religions makes it impossible for us to all worship together.

This leads me to invite you to think about the title of this lesson:

WHICH CHURCH DID JESUS ESTABLISH?

Let's notice each one of the words in the title.

“Which?”: This implies that there is more than one church in existence today. As a matter of fact, there are more than 2000 different religious groups in the United States alone! And the number grows almost daily. Add to this the religious organizations around the world, and you have utter chaos.

“Church”: This is a word that refers to a group of people called out for a particular purpose. The Greek word, “ekklesia” (ek-lay-see'-uh), refers to the “called out people of God” almost every time it is used in the New Testament.

“Did”: This is a verb in the past tense. It reminds us that the action of establishing His church is something that Jesus has already accomplished. It is done, and doesn't need to be done again.

“Jesus”: This is the name of the One Who is the Builder of the church. Frankly, I am not interested in any religion that was not begun by Jesus! It is the goal of this series to help everyone who studies it to reach the same conclusion!

“Establish”: To “begin,” “build,” “maintain,” “strengthen.” Is it possible that there is ANY religious body that Jesus did not begin? If your answer is “Yes”—then is it also possible that there are MANY religious bodies that He did not begin?

Again, our question is “Which church did Jesus establish?” Please consider it in light of the following two scriptures. First, we note Matthew 15:13, spoken by Jesus to a group of

“clergymen” whose hearts were closed: *“But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.”* A careful reading of Matthew 15 will show you that Jesus was teaching that all religions that were not planted by God will be destroyed by God. Second, in the next chapter (Matthew 16:18,19), Jesus was speaking to His apostles (whose hearts were open on the subject): *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*

Now let’s see how these passages help us to understand our initial question, “Which church did Jesus establish?”

1. Jesus did say that He was going to establish His church (singular). He did not say that He would establish His churches (plural), nor did He say anything about establishing denominations.
2. He also said the He was going to establish it—not some man, woman, or group of people.
3. He made it clear that anything not planted by His heavenly Father would be rooted up.

With all of this in mind, don’t you see how wise it is for you and me to look for the church which Jesus established? Don’t you see how foolish it would be for you or me to be a part of something that God is going to root up?

I am convinced that the church that Jesus established is identified so clearly in the New Testament that we can find it if we will compare the Biblical description with the churches of our day.

I am also convinced that there is nothing more urgent than that we begin this search immediately. So, let’s identify His church by studying five broad categories that contain twenty-six characteristics of the church of Christ.

DISCUSSION

I. JESUS ESTABLISHED THE CHURCH WHICH HAS UPWARD CHARACTERISTICS.

There are at least five of these “upward” characteristics, indicating the heavenly origin of the church and the ongoing involvement of the heavenly hosts in the success of the church across the years.

First, the church has God the Father as its Planner. Ephesians 3:10,11 says, *“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in*

Christ Jesus our Lord.” God is thus the planner of the one church which is the means by which He shows forth His wisdom. He perfectly planned how to bring the church into existence, He perfectly planned all of the essential characteristics of the church, He perfectly planned for the work and mission of the church in this world, and He perfectly planned that the church would have its earthly ending at the return of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:21-28). Every one of the false religions in this world comes up short in every one of these areas, for it is not possible, under any circumstances, for human beings to design (much less implement) a plan that can meet any of the spiritual needs of any person anywhere!

Second, the church has Jesus Christ the Son as its Head, Mediator, King, Sacrifice, High Priest, etc. The Bible is literally filled with names and titles of Jesus. All of them emphasize the roles that He has in the plan of God. As we recognize the needs we have, and as we read the pages of the Bible, we see His characteristics as the ones that match our needs, particularly when it comes to obtaining the remission of sins and gaining entrance into the church He purchased with His blood. Note some of His names and titles in the following passages: John 3:16; 20:30,31; Ephesians 1:22,23; 1 Timothy 2:5; 6:14-16; John 1:29; Hebrews 4:14-16.

Third, the church has the Holy Spirit as its Revealer and Confirmer. Jesus promised that He would send this “Comforter” to the apostles and those upon whom the apostles laid their hands. That mission was accomplished, and this aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit ceased, just as certain aspects of the work of the Father and the Son ceased when no longer necessary (Mark 16:17-20; 1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Hebrews 2:1-4; Acts 8:14-17). The Holy Spirit now works through His sword, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17).

Fourth, the church has faithful angels as its ministering servants (Hebrews 1:4-14). Although we do not know a great deal about the work of angels, it is a great comfort to know that they have always been willing to work for and fight on behalf of the people of God.

Fifth, the church has heaven as its eternal reward (Romans 8:16,17). The reward for the faithful is not the earthly millennium concocted by power-hungry clergymen! It is an eternal home of the soul created by God and prepared by Jesus for all of the redeemed of the ages (John 14:1-3)! Millions of people have been deceived by Satan through many schemes of denominationalism and world religions to focus their attention on this earthly existence as the basis of their “hope.” But there is only one hope (Ephesians 4:4-6), and it is a heavenly hope (1 Peter 1:3-9). Therefore, we are taught to set our minds on this one thing (Colossians 3:1-4; Philippians 3: 9-14). The Bible doctrine of heaven is a major New Testament theme, regulating the plans, goals, expectations, and hope of the church that Jesus established.

All five of these “upward characteristics” are clearly revealed in the Bible, and need to be understood as we develop our understanding of the items that compose the truth about the one true church of Christ.

II. JESUS ESTABLISHED THE CHURCH WHICH HAS INWARD CHARACTERISTICS.

There are at least nine of these “inward” characteristics, making it possible for you and me to identify the people of God in contrast with the many counterfeits that deceive precious souls. As we list these points and give appropriate Bible references, let us note how clear the Bible is on the importance of each item.

First, it has the redeemed as “members” (1 Corinthians 12:12-27); “saints” (Romans 1:7); “soldiers” (2 Timothy 2:3); “brethren” (1 Corinthians 15:58); “disciples” (Acts 11:26); “Christians” (Acts 11:26), etc. In other words, the people who make up the church of Christ identify themselves with words and names given in the New Testament, not by names invented by uninspired human beings.

Second, it engages in worship that is in spirit and truth as its thankful praise to God (John 4:23,24; Hebrews 13:15). There are five items of worship in the New Testament pattern for worship on the first day of the week. They are: singing (Ephesians 5:19); praying (1 Timothy 2); giving (1 Corinthians 16:1,2); preaching (2 Timothy 4:2); and the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7-11). There is nothing in the New Testament that gives us the authority to change any of these things, to eliminate any of them, or to add other acts of worship to them.

Third, it has edification of the body in love as its internal mission (Ephesians 4:7-16). This has to do with the strengthening of the church from within by engaging in the works that God has given to the local church. These works are designed to provide spiritual exercise for the congregation that results in every person’s growth and a corresponding strengthening of the whole body.

Fourth, it has brotherly love as its internal bond. Jesus emphasized the significance of this commandment in John 13:34,35; “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*” (NKJV). In 1 John 4:7-21, the apostle gives a list of things that are designed to promote the power of brotherly love, ending with the powerful statement that it is a command.

Fifth, it has requirements for its members. For example, the New Testament requires certain attitudes, the right example, proper relationships, commitment, a godly walk in Christ, and that we follow the New Testament pattern in all things (Colossians 3:17). These things are taught all through the New Testament, sometimes in extended lessons such as the sermon on the mount (Matthew 5:1-7:29). Examples of people who lived up to these standards are also common (Acts 2:42-47).

Sixth, it has absolute unchanging moral standards for the risen life of its members. Colossians 3:1-17 is a good discussion of this point, but it is another common theme of the New Testament (Galatians 5:19-23; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; Ephesians 5:1-17).

Seventh, it has qualified leadership in each congregation either in reality or as a goal to be met as soon as possible (elders and deacons; 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; 1 Peter 5). The early church appointed a plurality of elders (two or more) in every city (Acts 14:23). Deacons were also appointed (Philippians 1:1).

Eighth, it has a God-approved pattern for problem solving (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Thessalonians 3; etc.). The scriptures cover all kinds of problems, including personal problems, moral issues, doctrinal points, and the need to have pure motives in all circumstances (Galatians 6:1,2).

Ninth, it has a sense of urgency as its motivation in all things. This sense of urgency relates to the value of souls, the brevity of life, and the vanity of earthly things (James 4:13-17). This can be seen throughout the book of Acts and in such militant passages as Ephesians 4:17-6:24. One result of this attitude was that the gospel spread rapidly across the Roman Empire in only about 30 years (Acts 1:8-28:31).

All nine of these “inward” characteristics are clearly revealed in the Bible, and need to be understood as identifying marks of the Lord’s one and only church.

III. JESUS ESTABLISHED THE CHURCH WHICH HAS DOWNWARD CHARACTERISTICS.

There are at least five of these “downward” characteristics which provide an indestructible foundation for the church which Jesus built.

First, it has prophecy as its support. The Old Testament, coupled with the preaching of John the immerser and Jesus the Christ, provides us with hundreds of passages to lay a solid foundation in fulfilled prophecy. 2 Peter 1:19-21 says, *“And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”* (NKJV).

Second, it has true doctrine to uphold the unity for which Jesus prayed and died (John 17:20,21; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:1-6). The statements in these scriptures help us to sum up our goal of unity as follows:

1. Such unity as exists between the Father and the Son.
2. Such unity that is based on following the written word.
3. Such unity as existed in the early church.
4. Such unity as in an outgrowth of the obedience of faith.

Third, it has a perfect Book as its source of spiritual nourishment (2 Timothy 3:14-17; John 12:44-50; 1 Corinthians 2:1-16). This book, the Bible, has all of the information that anyone needs to have in order to live in such a way as to please God throughout life, and to arrive safely at the judgment bar of God.

Fourth, it has prayer as its power to “move mountains” (1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Timothy 2:1-8). In addition to being a major avenue of ascribing praise and thanksgiving to God through His Son, prayer is a means of requesting the providence of God to work in the world on behalf of His cause and in the lives of His people.

Fifth, it has Jesus as its Living Builder and Foundation (Matthew 16:18,19; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 15:1-4). In light of the multitudes of religions that exist today, and the fact that all of them have a foundation, this point is extremely critical—we simply must be certain of the foundation before we begin building! Jesus is the only right foundation! Any religion that is not built on Him is built on the sand, and is doomed to fail (Matthew 7:24-27).

All five of these items are frequently mentioned in the Holy Bible, and deserve the same attention today as when they were revealed as characteristics of the only church that exists with the approval of God.

IV. JESUS ESTABLISHED THE CHURCH WHICH HAS ALL-WARD CHARACTERISTICS.

There are at least three of these “all-ward” characteristics, serving as rallying points and urging the church of Christ on to more victories for Jesus.

First, it has the footprints of Jesus as its path (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, 1 Peter 2:21-25). The life of Christ is one of the most needed, and rewarding, studies we can do. His life demonstrates that man can please God through obedience. It also is a life that can be imitated without fear of failure. Following His path always works!

Second, it has the heavenly host “cheering it on.” This includes the faithful patriarchs, the faithful from the Mosaic age, the faithful who have died since the cross, the faithful heavenly beings, and the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Hebrews 11, 12; Revelation 4,5).

Third, it has the love of God to offer to every soul on earth. John 3:16 says, “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” Since God is no respecter of persons, it is necessary for the church to tell every person on earth about His love (Acts 10:34,35).

All three of these characteristics are brought to our attention regularly in the word of God, and are essential items in the list of characteristics that help to identify the one church that pleases God.

V. JESUS ESTABLISHED THE CHURCH WHICH HAS OUTWARD CHARACTERISTICS.

There are at least four of these “outward” characteristics, providing the light that this sin darkened world needs.

First, it has the “Great Commission” as its mission in the world (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16: 14-20; Luke 24: 44-53; John 20: 19-23; Acts 1:1-11). The church of Christ has the obligation to take the entire gospel to every person in every nation during every generation until the Lord returns.

Second, it has “this present evil world” as its battleground (Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 6:10-20). The people of God must never forget how powerful and large the armies of Satan are. Individual Christians and entire congregations can be overcome by the enemy, so constant vigilance is necessary (1 Peter 5:8).

Third, it has terms of entrance that are the same for all. No one can be added to the church which Jesus built apart from compliance with all of the terms of entrance. They are—

1. Sinners must hear the word of God (Acts 2:22; Romans 10:17; Matthew 13).
2. Sinners must believe in Jesus Christ (John 8:24; Acts 16:31).
3. Sinners must repent of all sin (Acts 3:19; 17:30,31).
4. Sinners must confess their faith in Christ (Acts 8:37; Romans 10:9,10).
5. Sinners must be immersed for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

Fourth, it has benevolence as its way of “doing good” for one another and all men (Acts 10:38; Galatians 6:10).

All four of these points are essential to an accurate understanding of the role that the church has in the plan of God.

CONCLUSION

We have now briefly listed twenty-six characteristics of the church that Jesus built. Could it be that there is any one of them that is not important?

Jesus’ coming to earth was, in part, to build one church (it is also called the body, kingdom, army, vineyard, family, temple, etc.). He did accomplish that mission!

Won’t you continue studying? Won’t you let the Bible identify the church He built for you? Won’t you become a member of His church? Won’t you help to make it possible for us to worship together scripturally by following the Lord Jesus Christ?

By the way, have you ever wondered where Jesus would worship if He were in your town next week?

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SEVEN THINGS ABOUT APOSTASY

INTRODUCTION

The emphasis in this series has been on the broad way that leads to destruction. It is not only filled with multitudes of lost souls (Matthew 7:13,14), it is also cluttered with many religions that were not planted by God (Matthew 15:13).

But there is—and has always been—a way that is right. And it has always been possible for those who are on that way to fall away from it (1 Corinthians 10:12).

In this lesson, we will study seven elements of the subject of apostasy (“a falling away”). But while we do so, let us also think seriously about the following things as part of the overall goal to avoid falling away from God: Let us become aware of God’s feelings about apostasy (He will punish those whom He loves if they fall away). Let us learn the simplicity of avoiding apostasy (by keeping His commandments). Let us learn the pattern for recognizing apostasy (from the Bible and such study helps as we are given in the rest of this book). Let us call people out of apostate and unauthorized religions (In other words, let us “Speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent;” go “Back to the Bible;” encourage the “Restoring of New Testament Christianity;” preach that the “Bible only makes Christians only—and the only Christians;” etc.).

At the end of the lesson, I will ask you if you kept the items in the previous paragraph in mind while learning the seven main points that now come before us.

DISCUSSION

I. THE POSSIBILITY OF APOSTASY: TAKE HEED!

Ever since Eden, God has made it clear that people can fall away from His favor.

Adam and Eve were given commandments on the very first day. Those commandments included the warning of the consequences of disobedience (Genesis 2).

Israel was warned throughout the wilderness wanderings that they could forfeit their inheritance through disobedience (Deuteronomy 4).

The church received letter after letter from inspired apostles and prophets with numerous warnings about the possibility of apostasy (Galatians 5:4).

This type of warning also applied to every individual Christian. In Hebrews 3:12,13, the need to take heed of this danger is stated as clearly as possible. *“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”*

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF APOSTASY: BE NOT DECEIVED!

Under this heading, I want to note a few things that we can learn about the characteristics of apostasy from five different men in the Bible.

Moses spoke several times during the last month of his life in the book of Deuteronomy. In these lessons, he taught the second generation about the failure of the previous generation to be faithful to God. Their failure included the many sins of the forty years in the wilderness, such as unbelief, idolatry, false worship, pride, heeding poor leaders, etc. He also taught them by way of warning. They were not to forsake God's commandments, commit idolatry, fellowship the sinners in the land, fail to teach their children, etc.

Solomon spoke at the dedication of the temple (see 1 Kings 8 and 2 Chronicles 6). In this long and moving ceremony, he prayed to God about the things that the people might do to arouse His wrath in the future. Several times, he described situations that would result in the need for them to be restored to fellowship with God. All of these descriptions are much needed today, for they describe how people can apostatize. Sadly, the people of Israel did the very things he described...

Paul wrote often about the characteristics of falling away. Most of these writings are to the church, but a very appropriate text for this lesson (and this lectureship) is Romans 1:18-23, where he actually lists the steps that were taken by the Gentile world to move farther and farther away from God into their total idolatry and immorality. They went so far that He gave them "up" and "over" (vv. 24,26,28).

Peter wrote of the characteristics of the great spiritual tragedy of apostasy in 2 Peter 2. In four sobering sections, he presented the destiny of false teachers and those who follow them. The sad reality that there are false teachers who are headed to damnation comes first (vv.1-3). The fact that God knows the difference between them and the godly is proved with several examples from history (vv.4-11). A description of those who engage in this fight against God is given in the strongest of disgusting terms (vv.12-19). And he concludes by describing the apostate ones as being in the worst possible of all spiritual conditions (vv.20-22).

Jesus also used several opportunities to describe those who were fallen from God. Possibly one of the most needed for religious leaders (and those who follow them) is in Matthew 23. Note in this description that He exposes more than their teaching! Their attitudes and manner of living is also corrupt—according to Biblical standards.

Let us sum up this point by considering Gal 6:7,8; *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."*

III. THE EXTENT OF APOSTASY: NO REMEDY!

The story of the fall of the people of God under the Old Covenant yields the sad result of a divided people. The North (Israel) and the South (Judah) fell. They fell in spite of the warnings, in spite of the lessons they should have learned from one another's sins. And they fell in spite of God's many encouragements to obedience and blessing.

Israel fell first, in 722/21 BC. They walked in the sins of Jeroboam, who "made Israel to sin." Jeroboam was the first king of the north, and at the time that the two groups split (after the death of Solomon), he established a pattern that they followed for about 250 years. Prophets such as Elijah, Elisha, and Hosea were unable to convince the nation to be faithful to God (although some individuals did obey). The apostasy became so complete that God chose to use the evil Assyrians to punish them.

Judah fell in stages at the hands of the Babylonians in 606/597/586 BC. Many prophets warned them, too. Even during and after the invasion of Babylon, prophets such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel described their sins, and the degree to which those sins had affected their relationship with Jehovah. The end of the historical books of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles also describes the extent of this apostasy.

The New Testament also describes the extent of apostasy with regard to the church, both by actual cases, and by descriptive warnings. For example, 1 Corinthians presents the kinds of sins that can gain control of a congregation in several places. They were not speaking the same thing (ch.1), they were childish in attitude (ch.3), they tolerated immorality (chs. 5,6), they abused the pattern for worship (chs. 11-14), and they had those who taught false doctrine about the resurrection (ch.15). Warnings of future apostasy are also common in the New Testament (see 2 Thessalonians 2, 1 Timothy 4, 2 Timothy 3).

A statement of the full extent of apostasy is found in 2 Chronicles 36:16; *"But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy."*

IV. THE CONSEQUENCES OF APOSTASY: WRATH!

Of Israel, God is said to have given them a king in His anger, and taken Him away in His wrath (Hosea 13:11).

Of Judah, note the description of how God allowed the people to be treated during the beginning of their 70-year captivity (2 Chronicles 36). In Jeremiah 25, the Lord described His feelings about them in terms of His wrath and the fact that the captivity was just—just what they deserved!

In the New Testament book of Hebrews, we are given some of the most severe warnings about the consequences of apostasy that can be found in the whole Bible (see Hebrews 3:7-19; 5:11-6:20; 10:19-39; 12:4-17).

In eternity, the true extent of apostasy will be felt by all of those who fell away from God and never came back in repentance. What could be worse than this? Matthew 25:31-46 shows that people can be guilty of apostasy for things that are not thought of as being all that important. The lesson is obvious—NOW is the time for us to learn what is important!

Hebrews 12:29 says, *“For our God is a consuming fire.”*

V. THE EXAMPLES OF APOSTASY: FOR OUR LEARNING!

Old Testament examples of falling away from God are certainly preserved so that the true people of God today can be warned by them. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Paul uses some of these familiar stories to help the church at Corinth to see the need to change all of the many things that they were doing wrong. This kind of passage justifies the idea that we should look to all other examples of sin in the Old Testament in order to learn the seriousness of sin—particularly as it applies to the lesson at hand. Christians must learn about the reality of apostasy! But it is far better for us to learn from these tragic examples than it is to learn by experience! Experience is not the best teacher in such things, my brethren. The Bible is the best teacher!

New Testament writings also have a great deal of information for our learning. Study, for example, the seven letters to the churches in Asia (Revelation 2,3). Note the many positive and negative statements that were meant to help them to correct problems and avoid sin—and also note that all seven of these churches ceased to exist later on. At some point, a generation arose in each town that failed to learn from that which is written.

Religious history since the close of the New Testament is full of stories of apostasy and its fruits. Many of the religions that exist today are not technically “apostate,” since one cannot apostatize until he has first obeyed God. But all of the religions that exist today (except the faithful churches of Christ) exist as testimony to the power that Satan has to work through those who are guilty of apostasy from God’s way. Denominationalism, world religions, fallen congregations among us, and individual Christians who are not walking in the “highway of holiness” (Isaiah 35), are daily reminders to those who know the word of God—reminders of the need to learn from these things that we simply must “keep on keeping on.”

1 Corinthians 10:11,12 says, *“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”*

VI. THE DENIAL OF APOSTASY: BELIEVE A LIE!

In the Bible, there is another tragic story of a man who just did not get the point that he had left God’s way in apostasy. He was King Saul. In 1 Samuel 15, he received God’s orders regarding the Amalekites, and proceeded to disobey those very simple commands. But he did not view it as disobedience—apostasy. He even claimed that he had actually obeyed God! Verse 13 says, “And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD.” As the story progresses, Saul did at least admit his sin. But today, and ever since, many men have done things that are as opposite to

God's commands as that which Saul did—and have not had the integrity to even acknowledge it! It is no wonder that God is just when He punishes us for falling away (as He punished Saul).

Another denial of apostasy is in the Calvinistic doctrine of the “impossibility of apostasy.” In light of all of the lessons in this series—and the scriptures that serve as the foundation for these lessons—how could anyone affirm the doctrine of “once-saved; always-saved”?

Current religious thought is so steeped in the idea that no religious idea is really wrong (except for Satanism, a few cults, and the churches of Christ!), that it is very fitting for us to claim that people of this generation have decided to tell religious lies and that they have believed them (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

Today, as much as any time in my own memory, we are living among millions (if not billions) of people who are doing no more and no less than that “which is right in their own eyes” (Judges 17:6; 21:25).

VII. THE REMEDY FOR APOSTASY: AS MANY AS I LOVE,

Jehovah desires that all who have fallen away, and all who could fall away, will seek Him and His ways. There is no other answer to apostasy than the way of God (Matthew 6:33; Jeremiah 6:16; Deuteronomy 4:29).

He commands that all who have forsaken Him repent of their apostasy (see the letters to the seven churches of Asia in Revelation 2,3; also note Joel 2:12-14).

He demands that His people see the need to come out from among those who sin—and refuse to fellowship all forms of evil (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 John 9-11).

He teaches in His word that apostasy can be prevented by teaching, accepting, following, and teaching the next generation to do the same with regard to His holy word (2 Timothy 2:2; Matthew 28:18-20).

CONCLUSION

As we conclude, I want to go back to the introduction. I said that we would ask whether or not we kept our minds on these four things as we studied. Did you do it? Did you concentrate on—

1. God's feelings about apostasy?
2. The simplicity of avoiding it by keeping His commandments?
3. The pattern for recognizing apostasy?
4. The call of God's word to come out of it?

God only has one authorized religion today. It is the church of Christ, purchased with His blood. There are thousands of religions in the world at this very moment. Two religions would

be one too many—so let us be busy tearing them down through evangelism and faithful living (Jeremiah 1:10; 2 Timothy 4:2). Let us be as aggressive in answering the Lord's prayer as the first century church was (John 17:20,21; Colossians 1:23).

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HUMANISM

AN OLD RELIGION WITH NEW FACES

INTRODUCTION

“And Pharaoh said, ‘Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go’” (Exodus 5:2). The people of ancient Egypt worshipped many gods. One of those gods was the king, or Pharaoh, a mere mortal man. Pharaoh believed he was a god, with great power, because he had authority over a nation, and because his subjects believed he was a god. He believed in his power so much, that nine of the ten plagues did not change his mind in regard to letting the children of Israel go. But the last plague, death of the firstborn son, showed him who possessed a power far surpassing his own. The Ancient Egyptians did what many in our own society are doing to corruptible man -- deifying flesh and humanizing Deity.

Humanism is indeed an old philosophy and religion. Only today it has some new faces. This modern secular humanism reaches into all facets of our society. We can see it in our public schools, the media, government, Hollywood, business policies, and in the attitudes of our society. It is such a compelling religion, it has reared its ugly head in the church of our dear Lord and Savior. The fundamental idea behind this religion is that we, as human beings, have no superior in intellect. Humanism seeks to remove the notion of a supreme being altogether. The thing about this religion, is that you can believe in some of its principles and not believe in all of them, and still be considered a humanist. As we look at this religion, let us consider a few things: a definition of Secular Humanism, what this religion teaches, how the Bible defeats the tenets of this movement, and finally, why it is a danger to our society.

WORDS MEAN SOMETHING

Our words mean something. It is how we communicate effectively. However, words change meaning over a period of time, as they get used in differing contexts. Let us take a look at how some of the meanings of certain words pertaining to our subject have changed over the course of time.

Terminology	Renaissance Era	Present
Humane	Non-Biblical Literature	Kind toward others
Humanitarian	A believer in Humanity	Philanthropist
Humanist	A scholar who studied Humane literature	A believer in Non-Christian Ideals, Values, and Concepts
Humanism	A love and respect for Ancient literature	A System of beliefs which excludes God and makes man supreme Judge over everything

This chart shows us how these terms have been used in the past, and how they are used today.¹ When we talk about Humanism and the humanist today, we are talking about a system of beliefs that has removed God from reality, and a group of believers who are essentially atheists, and believe that human beings are the ultimate intelligence in existence. We must be clear, however, the fact that someone believes in God does not mean he does not hold some humanist ideas. We will see how this religion has even infiltrated the church.

A RELIGION INDEED

On further study of the definitions of Humanism and humanitarianism, we see the following two definitions: a) the doctrine that man's obligations are concerned wholly with the welfare of the human race; and b) the doctrine that mankind may become perfect without divine aid.² The latter of the two definitions is a telling one. First of all, a system of beliefs that has order and "doctrines" is a religion. Many philosophers and leaders of education and government see secular humanism as a religion. In 1960 a court case involved a humanist who did not believe in God. Supreme Court Justice Hugo L. Black ultimately declared Secular Humanism a religion along with Buddhism, Taoism and others. Second, it is evident from the scriptures that God made man a spiritual being; he has the need to worship and be fulfilled spiritually. Just because individuals struggle to remove the existence of God, they cannot deny their need to seek spiritual fulfillment. They just choose to worship humanity, the created, and not God, the Creator.

Many who proclaim to be humanists also claim there is no God. Atheist Corliss Lamont suggests the cosmos created gods by way of human imagination, instead of God creating the cosmos.³ The reasoning is that nature created the supernatural, and not the supernatural created the natural. Without God, of course, the humanist can live as he wishes, with no eternal consequences. If nature is all that exists, when death occurs consciousness ceases to exist. The fulfillment of their life, they claim, is in the present. This life is it. This line of thinking does all kinds of damage to authority. If man is the ultimate authority, then any behavior not specifically prohibited is acceptable. If a law did not include murder as a crime, and if man were the ultimate authority, murder would not be wrong. When man is the last authority, society decides the morals. The laws would reflect the fickleness of man.

The humanist believes in a natural creation and that the material, not the spiritual, is eternal. The *Humanist Manifesto II* states, “science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces. As far as we know, the total personality is a function of the biological organism transacting in a social and cultural context.”⁴ Therefore, many embrace the Darwinian view of macroevolution. All arguments presented to them are thought to be weak at best. For instance, the cosmological argument is supposedly weak because God must have a cause. If He need not have a cause, then, they ask, “Why cannot the universe also exist without a cause?” Carl Sagan, author of *Cosmos*, proclaims that science is sufficient enough to prove that God and the supernatural do not exist.

From the idea that only nature exists, humanism says that the mind, or conscience, and the body are one and the same. The conscience is less a byproduct of the physical brain than it is the brain “deceiving” the body.⁵ There are two schools of thought in this area. The first is the humanist, or naturalist view, namely monism, which says there is no such thing as a conscience separate from the physical body. The second is called dualism, which states that the body, or the physical, and the mind, or the spiritual, are two separate entities. Humanists have adopted the monistic philosophy to go along with macroevolution and their disbelief of the supernatural.

THE BIBLICAL DEFENSE

“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:22). This verse really hits home as we look at the destructive religion of Secular Humanism. We must deal with the doctrine and not with the individuals, since each person maintains his or her own personal view. Those viewpoints are entirely subjective, and as such ebb and flow with the human rationale. The Bible clearly states, “In the Beginning, God...” (Genesis 1:1). God does exist. We have sufficient evidence to show that God does exist. “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). This passage tells us that in nature we find the invisible God. Scientific methods are inept to prove the existence of God. However, logic demands, based upon the evidence, that a supreme being does exist. The arguments for the existence of God do hold up to scrutiny and can only be averted by false reasoning.

Based upon the fact God does exist, the remainder of Genesis 1:1 says, “created the heavens and the earth.” Nature and the material world are temporal and not eternal. It had a beginning, and it will have an end (2 Peter 3:10). Only the spiritual realm is eternal. The spiritual created the physical. We have the creation account in the first two chapters of Genesis. From these two chapters we can answer the question: “Where did I come from?” Jesus also refers to the creation and God’s part when he said, “But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female” (Mark 10:6). There was not a long period of time in the history of the earth where human beings were nonexistent. It is not true to say that, from a chemical soup, life emerged, and millions of years (some say billions) passed before human beings evolved. Christ mentioned the fact that human beings were on the earth from the very beginning of time. A believer in God cannot rationally believe in any other explanation than what is plainly set before us in Genesis one and two. A rational person cannot honestly believe in any other

explanation. It takes more faith to believe in evolution than it does to believe that God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis also holds the key to the dualistic view of mind and body. *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them”* (Genesis 1:27). God is a spiritual and eternal being. When He created man, He passed those qualities on to man. Is man a physical being, and subject to pain, suffering and death? Yes! But man also has a conscience which suggests the presence of two entities coexisting. Paul writes, *“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven”* (1 Corinthians 15:45-47). There is no disputing the fact that the earthly man and the spiritual man were created at two separate times. The physical man was created first, and then the spiritual man. *“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”* (Genesis 2:7). Logically, there had to be a body to receive his soul from God in order for him to be a living and spiritual creature. It is further undeniable that people are unique in the inner life of the mind – what they are in their thought world determines how they act.⁶

THE PROBLEM WITH HUMANISM

The religion of Humanism is an aggressive/passive one. The proponents of Humanism actively speak out, but not necessarily by shouting that they are Humanists. They are much more subtle. When given a forum, they preach their doctrine to any who will listen. Smooth words are floated out to the audience where the emotions are touched. “The individual matters,” “all humans are equal,” “bigotry must be stopped,” and “let us help our fellow man.” These phrases sound good on the surface, but underneath we gain a much different picture. Humanists want to replace our belief system with another. Humanists would like to replace these beliefs:

- Religions based on supernatural beliefs
- Biblical ethics in society
- The family as the basic unit of society
- A national republican form of civil government
- Multi-national civil governments

With these beliefs:

- A religion based only on natural beliefs
- Humanistic ethics in society (subjective at the core)
- The individual as the basic unit of society
- A democratic socialist form of civil government
- One world global civil government⁷

The trouble is that many God-fearing citizens in these United States of America, even though they believe in God, defend and promote some of these Humanistic ideas. We can see how our schools are being ravished by evolution and the idea that the individual is all that

matters. The students then get the idea, even if never bluntly stated, "I have no soul, I am not special, therefore it matters not what I do in life." We have seen the consequences of such a belief system. When people allow government to take care of their needs, and the individual is supreme, then no one else matters. People become absolved from all responsibility for how they treat other people and even their own family. As long as they abide by civil law, there are no consequences to immoral behavior.

CONCLUSION

Humanism is a religion indeed. Unfortunately we cannot go into greater detail. However, we can know that Humanism is a religion with a doctrine and motives. Many in not only this country but in other places in the world are embracing this old religion with new faces. It teaches atheism and the absence of the spiritual world. It seeks to deify humanity while humanizing Deity. Humanism has a lot of support from wealthy and influential people, especially in this country. We as Christians must stand up and be vocal about the true God of the Bible. His role in creating a magnificent creature made in His own image, man, is truly remarkable. Most importantly, do not allow others to do your thinking for you. Many are led astray because of sweet sounding words. If you do not wake up to the truth, it may be too late. One thing is certain, "no one will be an atheist on the Day of Judgment."

¹ Waggoner, Robert L., Chart Revised 5/27/94

² Webster's Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language (New York, New York, Portland House) p.691

³Noebel, David A., *Understanding the Times*, (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1991), p. 50

⁴ *Humanist Manifesto II*, p. 17

⁵ Noebel, David A., *Understanding the Times*, (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1991), p. 125

⁶ Schaeffer, Francis A. *How Should We Then Live?*, (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1976) p. 19

⁷ Waggoner, Robert L., Chart Revised 8/8/94

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MATERIALISM

Luke 12:15-21

INTRODUCTION

- A. The Islamic faith now boasts 1.3 billion disciples.¹
- B. The Catholic denomination now reports 1 billion members.²
- C. While these are the two largest religious bodies, Materialism, as a practice, has many more followers.

DISCUSSION

- I. JESUS' WARNING AGAINST MATERIALISM (Luke 12:15).
 - A. God does not warn us of trivial matters (Matt. 7:15, 2 Pet. 3:17).
 - B. Materialism is the belief that "life" is defined solely by what we possess.
- II. THE FOOLISH FARMER.
 - A. He Thought Only Of Things.
 - 1. His life revolved around his fruits, barns, and goods.
 - 2. He expected these things to bring him ease and merriment.
 - 3. We must control the things placed in our care and not allow them to control us (Luke 16:9-11).
 - a. Be careful how you obtain things (Jeremiah 17:11; Proverbs 28:8; Luke 16:19-21; James 5:1-4).
 - b. Be careful how you retain things (Mark 14:7; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 6:17-19).
 - c. Be careful how you spend things (Proverbs 21:17, 20).
 - 4. If we are in control of our things we will be able to see beyond them.
 - B. He Deliberated Only On His Own Desires.
 - 1. Ten times in verses 17 through 19 we find the use of the pronouns I and my.

2. Man cannot direct his own steps (Jeremiah 10:23; Acts 26:9).
3. The man who follows his own counsel dies (Proverbs 14:12).
4. We must make all our decisions according to another's desires (Colossians 3:1-3, 5; 1 John 2:15-17).

C. He Prepared Only For The Present.

1. He expected his riches to last for many years (Proverbs 23:4-5).
2. He expected this present life to last for many years (Proverbs 27:1; James 4:13-15).
3. He left behind the earthly body with all its ease and provisions and ventured forth with an unprepared soul (Ecclesiastes 2:18-19; Proverbs 11:4).

CONCLUSION

- A. Anyone who provides earthly riches for himself without first ensuring he is rich in God's eyes is a fool (Luke 12:21).
- B. We must plan for the future with the wisdom of farsightedness (Deuteronomy 32:28-29).
- C. If our treasure and our heart are both in heaven we will be content while here on the earth (Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Timothy 6:6-8)

¹ www.adherents.com

² *ibid*

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NEO-PENTECOSTALISM

ORIGIN & HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

- A. “Neo,” (or new), a term generally used to describe a resurgence of glossolalia.
- B. Within a decade the movement had spread to 150 major Protestant denominations—reaching millions by 1990—by 1997 millions of Catholics had claimed the “experience.”
 - 1. Fostered in decade of the sixties (twentieth century) among many mainline denominations.
 - 2. Most recognize its inception (April 3, 1960) when Rector of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California, announced he had received the “gift of tongues.”
- C. For our study we go behind these events to the origin of the “Holiness,” “Pentecostal” Movements.

DISCUSSION

I. BACKGROUND.

- A. Pentecostalism is the largest religious movement to originate in the United States. Beginning in 1901 with a handful of students of C. F. Parham in Topeka, Kansas, by the end of the twentieth century, this movement had grown to become the largest Protestant body in the world.
- B. John Wesley, founder of Methodism, provided the background theology for the movement.
 - 1. From Wesley came the “experience” subsequent to salvation—variously called—“entire sanctification,” “Christian perfection,” “heart purity,” or the “second blessing.”
 - 2. John Fletcher, colleague of Wesley, was the first to call the “experience” a “baptism in the Holy Spirit.”
- C. From 1867 to 1880 the holiness movement had gained increasingly among the Methodists. Pioneers from non-Methodist background during the latter part of the nineteenth century included C. H. Mason (Baptist), B. H. Irwin (Baptist), A. J. Tomlinson (Quaker), N. H. Holmes (Presbyterian).
- D. By the close of the twentieth century, Pentecostal bodies included The Assemblies of God, Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), Church of God and Church of God of

Prophecy (Cleveland, Tennessee), Seventh Day Church of God, Church of God and Saints of Christ, Church of the Nazarene, Church of God by Faith, Church of God in Christ, Calvary Pentecostal Church, Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness, Pentecostal Holiness Church (Franklin Springs, Georgia), Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, International Church of the Four Square Gospel, Full Gospel Churches, a number of Community, Inter-Denominational, and Independent Churches.

II. ORIGINS.

- A. Around the turn of the twentieth century, Holiness Churches came to be known as “Pentecostals.”
- B. We will examine some of the larger and better-known groups as to origin and peculiarities.
- C. The first group appeared in 1901 under the leadership of Charles Parham, a former Methodist.
 - 1. First “baptized in the Spirit” (?) accompanied by “tongues,” was Agnes Ozman, a student at Parham’s Bible School (January 1, 1901).
 - 2. According to Roswell Flowers, Secretary of the Assemblies of God, Ozman’s “experience” was the event that “made the Pentecostal Movement of the twentieth century.”
 - 3. From this event (Ozman’s experience) Parham formulated the idea that “tongues” was evidence of the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.”
- D. Forerunners (or embryo) of Pentecostal Churches began in the nineteenth century.
 - 1. The first included the African-American Church of God in Christ (1887), and the Pentecostal Holiness Church (1898).
 - 2. Originally formed as “second blessing” holiness denominations, these added baptism in the Holy Spirit, with tongues as initial evidence of a “third blessing,” and were thereafter known as “Pentecostals.”
- E. In 1906 the Movement began to gain worldwide attention.
 - 1. In 1906 W. J. Seymour (black) moved from Houston, Texas, to Los Angeles to open a Church, using an A.M.E. building at 312 Azusa Street and founded “The Apostolic Faith Mission.”
 - 2. For three years Seymour conducted three services daily at the Azusa Street location, thus providing the impetus for widespread mission efforts.

3. With all ethnic groups represented, Seymour's efforts were sometimes described as "The American Jerusalem."
4. Seymour and Charles Parham are often identified as co-founders of world Pentecostalism.
5. Sidney Ahlstrom, Yale religious historian, stated that "Seymour was the most influential black leader in American religious history" (1972).

III. CHURCH OF GOD (ORIGIN AND FOUNDER).

A. The first Pentecostal Church in the southeast sprang from a holiness movement in Cherokee County, North Carolina, around 1903.

1. On May 27, 1903, A. J. Tomlinson (Quaker) moved from Indiana to North Carolina where he was introduced to W. F. Bryant, a holiness preacher.
2. Tomlinson conducted services in Bryant's home where his "vision" of a "restoration" began to take shape.
3. Along with Bryant, Tomlinson attended a revival at Camp Creek Holiness Church where he suggested the church be known hereafter as "The Church of God."
4. Tomlinson became their preacher, and by 1904 the twenty-member church had grown to four large congregations.
5. At the end of 1904 Tomlinson moved to Cleveland, Tennessee, where, under his leadership, the movement enjoyed tremendous growth.
6. Within four years the small Camp Creek Church in North Carolina had grown to several churches in North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee.
7. It was not until 1907 that Tomlinson sought "baptism in the Spirit." After this experience his ministry took on additional energy and growth.

B. By 1922 membership in the Church of God had reached about 22,000.

1. From the outset the church was "ruled" by a General Assembly with Tomlinson as Overseer.
2. In 1922 disruption arose in the General Assembly over the divorce question and allegations of misappropriation of funds by the "Overseer."

3. These, along with other matters (some involving Lee College, Cleveland, Tennessee), resulted in the formation of a denomination within a denomination known as The Church of God of Prophecy.
4. Following his death, A. J. Tomlinson's son, M. A. Tomlinson, was elected General Overseer.

C. Organizational Structure (called by Tomlinson, a theocracy).

1. Resembling the Methodist Episcopal form of government, the General Assembly became the body to which all State and Regional Overseers, as well as their numerous auxiliaries, must submit by which they have their origin, and by which they are maintained.
2. The Church of God of Prophecy – History & Polity (James Stone, 1997) – “The General Assembly is the apex of the organizational structure within the Church of God. The assembly sits as a court of justice over the total structure of the church. The General Assembly being the final authority in interpreting the word of God through the Spirit stands at its rightful place as the voice of authority in not only ‘matters of doctrine,’ and ‘Church discipline,’ but also in all ‘general practices’” (p. 187).

IV. ASSEMBLIES OF GOD (LARGEST PENTECOSTAL DENOMINATION WITH SOME 38 MILLION MEMBERS WORLDWIDE).

- A. U.S. alone has more than 2.5 million who worship in 12,000 Assembly of God Churches.
- B. Began in 1914 in Hot Springs, Arkansas.
- C. Phenomenal growth via radio and TV evangelism. TBN, world's largest religious network, is carried over 3171 TV stations – with 21 satellites. Founded and owned by Paul and Jan Crouch.
- D. Structure and doctrine similar to Church of God – although some among them do not insist that “tongue speaking” is the initial or only manifestation of baptism in the Spirit.
- E. They assert: “Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers.”
- F. Affiliates: National Association of Evangelism, The Pentecostal and Charismatics of North America, The Pentecostal World Fellowship, and The Assemblies of God Fellowship.

V. SOME MODERN PENTECOSTAL LEADERS.

- A. One of the first Pentecostal preachers to use TV effectively from the middle of the twentieth century was Oral Roberts of Oklahoma. Roberts stunned the Pentecostals by returning to the Methodist Church.
- B. Others included (In Assemblies of God) Jim Baker, Jimmy Swaggard, and Pat Robertson.
- C. Benny Hinn, Betty Jo Robinson, Kenneth Copeland.

CONCLUSION

- A. It is evident that the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism within one century marks it as a force with which to be reckoned.
- B. The “exuberance” with which they deliver their message (although far too frequently reaching a level of exhibitionism) could be properly cultivated by those dedicated to the restoration of pure New Testament Christianity.
- C. Following lectures will deal more directly with Pentecostal teachings and practices.

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NEO-PENTECOSTALISM

AUTHORITY & DOCTRINE

INTRODUCTION

A. Much of the theology of Pentecostals coincides with the teachings of other Protestant groups.

1. They believe in the “Trinity,” (the United Pentecostal Church being an exception).
2. They teach the doctrine of “original sin.”
3. They believe in the virgin birth of Jesus.
4. They hold that the scriptures are both inspired and infallible.
5. Premillennialism, future rewards, and punishment.
6. The Lord’s Supper (most “wash feet” subsequent to its observance) and water baptism are viewed as the two ordinances of the church.

B. Pentecostals differ, however, with many mainline denominations in a number of ways.

1. “Tongue speaking” as initial evidence of baptism in the Spirit.
2. Miraculous, instantaneous, “divine healing.”
3. Visions, dreams, etc.
4. All the gifts of the Spirit to be manifested in all ages of the church.
5. Many hold that a “spiritual service” (worship activities) is manifested by “handclapping,” “jerking,” “shouting,” and “simultaneous prayers.”
6. Female ministry.

DISCUSSION

I. PENTECOSTALS BELIEVE THAT HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM IS TO BE EXPECTED—EVEN REQUIRED.

- A. They point to the “experience” of Acts, chapter two, as a proof text, believing they enjoy the “same experience” as therein described.
- B. This “experience” is often described as a “second work of grace” or “entire sanctification.”

- C. NOTE: Inasmuch as this “experience” follows salvation, they may not consistently teach that one is “set apart” when first becoming a Christian. And if “sanctification” is known only upon receiving a baptism in the Spirit, one cannot “see the Lord” without the “experience” (Hebrews 12:14).
 - D. The Nazarene Manual States: “We believe that entire sanctification is an act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which we are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotement to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect. It is wrought by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding and indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service.”
 - E. NOTE: A strange follow up (in the same manual) to this declaration is the demand for expulsion of those “sanctified ones” who are guilty of impenitent sin. Further, while teaching that sanctified persons “cannot sin” the manual provides instructions for the discipline of a “sinning preacher.”
- II. “UNKNOWN TONGUES” (ECSTATIC UTTERANCE) IS SEEN BY MOST PENTECOSTALS AS INITIAL EVIDENCE (AND WITH MANY THE ONLY REQUIRED EVIDENCE) THAT ONE HAS BEEN BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- A. Some Pentecostals teach that baptism in the Spirit, either prior or subsequent to water baptism, is essential to salvation (some in Assemblies of God being an exception).
 - B. Pentecostals hold that the “tongues” of Acts, chapter 2, and those of 1 Corinthians, chapter 14, are not the same phenomenon.
- III. PENTECOSTALS BELIEVE THAT HEALING OF THE BODY IS IN THE “ATONEMENT” (Isaiah 53:5b).
- A. Public services, including TV programs, are punctuated with testimonials of healings received.
 - B. Substantiation of such claims is missing, with the exception of some minor illnesses made better via power of suggestion (positive thinking).
 - C. Very few have claimed to raise the dead, feed multitudes with a handful of food, or restore a severed limb.
 - D. Most “miracles of healing” demonstrated (?) by Pentecostals have to do with internal, unseen, and unverifiable illnesses, or the casting out of demons.

IV. PENTECOSTALS BELIEVE IN A DIRECT OPERATION OF THE SPIRIT IN CONVERSION OF THE ALIEN SINNER.

- A. That the Spirit “enlightens,” provides “special insights,” “visions,” etc.
- B. It is believed that God speaks through their General Assembly by direct operation of the Holy Spirit.
- C. They feel that their mission programs, auxiliaries, and fund-raising methods are inspired by a direct operation of the Spirit.
- D. Example: Oral Robert’s vision of Jesus in the sky, and God’s warning to him that he would die if he failed to raise the funds necessary to save his financially defunct hospital.

V. SOME QUOTES FROM PENTECOSTALS UNDERSCORING THEIR CURRENT DOCTRINES:

- A. (2002 – Assembly of God website) – “The inward evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Spirit. The outward evidence is a life of righteousness and true holiness.”
- B. (2002 – Church of God in Christ website) – “We believe that baptism in the Holy Ghost is an experience subsequent to conversion and sanctification and that tongue speaking is the consequence of baptism in the Holy Ghost...We believe we are not baptized with the Holy Ghost in order to be saved...we therefore believe that a Holy Ghost experience is ‘mandatory’ for all men today.” (?)
- C. (2002 - Under “Doctrines of Church of God in Christ” website) – “Adam’s sin...carried a permanent..depraved human nature to all his descendants. This is ‘original sin.’”

VI. PREMILLENNIALISM.

- A. Pentecostals believe that the second coming of Christ is imminent.
- B. Paperback publication by Edgar Whisenant (1988) entitled, 88 Reasons Why the Rapture Could Be in 1988.
- C. That Christ will occupy the old throne of David in Jerusalem for a thousand years.
- D. All hold a “second resurrection” with some believing in a “third.”
- E. Eschatological (or end time) seminars are frequently conducted by Pentecostal “experts.”

F. Most such “experts” hold that while we cannot know “the day nor the hour” when Christ will come, we may know the year, the month, and even the week.

VII. PENTECOSTALS BELIEVE THAT WOMEN, AS WELL AS MEN, ARE CALLED OF GOD TO BECOME “PASTORS.”

A. The majority of female evangelists appearing on TV are from a Pentecostal background.

B. The Church of God and The Church of God of Prophecy impose limitations on female Pastors.

CONCLUSION

A. Things “peculiar” to Pentecostalism in the past have swiftly infiltrated other religious groups, sometimes manifested within Churches of Christ.

B. Most of the doctrines of Pentecostalism, as we have seen, were derived from both Methodism and the Holiness Movements growing up within the context of teachings of the Wesleys.

C. Pentecostals are to be commended for their emphasis upon righteous living and the condemnation of elaborate displays in dress, ornaments, etc.

D. Our next lecture will focus upon Pentecostal doctrines and their relationship, or lack thereof, to the Bible.

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NEO-PENTECOSTALISM VERSUS THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION

- A. There can be no doubt that Pentecostals affirm a commitment to the infallibility of the Bible.
- B. An examination of their teachings and practices, however, places that claim in doubt.
- C. In the hands of their competent leaders, their doctrines may appear to be well defended.
- D. In this study we will set out and respond to a number of the most obvious fallacies among them.
 - 1. Our study will in no manner exhaust the number of fallacious claims made and doctrines taught.
 - 2. Neo-Pentecostals claim that the Bible validates their experiences, while in reality it is the other way around—first comes an “experience,” which in their minds is an assurance of salvation and the truth of the Bible.

DISCUSSION

- I. “TONGUES.”
 - A. Almost without exception Pentecostals affirm that tongue speaking is an “ecstatic utterance,” or, as some would define it, “angelic language.”
 - B. They, however, admit that the tongues of Acts 2 was a foreign and intelligent speech, they maintain that the tongues of Mark 16:17 and 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14 were “unknown.”
 - C. While some among them claim to have spoken in a foreign tongue, objective examinations have shown the claims spurious.
 - D. The Bible clearly affirms that “assurance” of salvation is known through obedience (1 John 2:3).
 - E. Tongues of the New Testament, says Paul, were given by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:10).
 - F. 1 Corinthians 13 and the “duration” of speaking in a miraculous tongue.

II. PENTECOSTALS AND THE STEPS OF SALVATION.

- A. As do many protestants, Pentecostals (with one exception) begin the process of salvation with the requirement of “repentance,” move next to “faith,” and then to what they term “receiving Christ,” and finally to “confession with the mouth.”
- B. “Water baptism,” (say most Pentecostals) and “church membership” have no relationship to salvation.
- C. The Bible affirms that the process of conversion begins with faith that is imparted by hearing word of Christ (Romans 10:13-17; Acts 2:29-37; Romans 5:1,2; Acts 18:8).
- D. Upon hearing the word “faith” becomes the first step (Acts 16:31,32).
- E. Those who “heard and believed” were, in Bible conversions, instructed to “repent.”
- F. Confession with the mouth, in the conversion of the eunuch, preceded baptism (Acts 8:37,38; Romans 10:8-10).
- G. In His worldwide commission, Jesus placed baptism in the plan (Mark 16:15,16; John 3:5).

III. PENTECOSTALS AND SANCTIFICATION.

- A. “Sanctification,” in their view, is an “experience” subsequent to justification.
- B. This “experience” has for the past century been viewed by Pentecostals as baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- C. The Bible teaches that we are sanctified “by the truth,” the word of God (John 17:17,19).
- D. The Bible also teaches that one is sanctified “by faith,” and that such sanctification is the result of being “in Christ” (Acts 26:18; 1 Corinthians 1:2).
- E. The Bible teaches that we are sanctified by the blood of Christ (Hebrews 10:29).
- F. Gentiles are said to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:16).
- G. We are said to be called “by the gospel” unto sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:13,14).
- H. We are sanctified with the “washing of water” by the word (Ephesians 5:26; 1 Corinthians 6:11).

- I. By “purging” one’s self from dishonorable practices, fleeing youthful lusts, etc., we maintain our sanctification, and are meet for the Master’s use (2 Timothy 2:20-22).

IV. PENTECOSTALS AND HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM.

- A. Pentecostals believe they have received a baptism in the Spirit subsequent to conversion, and that the “experience” corresponds to the “filling” of Acts 2.
- B. Recipients of a baptismal measure of the Spirit in the New Testament age possessed the ability to recall and confirm the things taught them by the Lord (John 14:26; 16:13; Hebrews 2:3,4).

V. PENTECOSTALS AND PREMILLENNIALISM.

- A. Pentecostals teach classic premillennialism.
- B. They teach that Christ is to return to planet Earth to set up the Messianic Kingdom. They fail to recognize that the kingdom was “set up” (past tense) as promised by the Messiah (Matthew 4:17; Mark 9:1).
- C. They teach that Christ will come again to occupy the throne of David in old Jerusalem. They fail to recognize that Christ is already sitting upon David’s throne (Acts 2:29-36).

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THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

- A. The New Age Movement has permeated the society in which we live.
 - 1. In times past the Movement was characterized by a promotion of the bizarre which triggered some resistance. Russell Chandler, author of *Understanding The New Age*, said that as a result of the resistance “behind the scenes . . . New Age thinkers quickly realized they needed to evolve and become more respectable. Thus, the fads have faded, but key New Age principles are now part of the cultural landscape.”¹
 - 2. Dick Sutphen “also emphasizes that once the occult and New Age terminologies are removed, these ideas become acceptable to the general public.”²
 - A. Christians need to be aware of the teachings of this movement so they may compare them to Bible Truth and not be influenced to leave God and turn to self.
 - B. A brief study such as this cannot do justice to the scope of the movement. We can only hope to spark some interest for further study.

DISCUSSION

- I. WHAT IS THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT?
 - A. Marilyn Ferguson describes this movement as a “leaderless but powerful network” which “promotes the autonomous individual in a decentralized society.”³
 - B. Douglas Groothuis defines the adherents of this movement as “a constellation of like-minded people and groups all desiring a spiritual and social change that will usher in a New Age of self-actualization.”⁴
 - C. Elliot Miller summarizes the movement as “an extremely large, *loosely* structured network of organizations and individuals bound together by common values (based in mysticism and monism—the world view that “all is one”) and a common vision (a coming “new age” of peace and mass enlightenment, the “Age of Aquarius”).”⁵
 - D. D. A. Carson states that “the aim is . . . to grow in self-awareness and self-fulfillment, to become self-actualized, to grow to our full potential, until we are rather more at one with the god/universe than we would otherwise be. The focus, in short is self...”⁶
 - E. Dennis McCallum defines New Age Mysticism as a “diverse assortment of modern mysticism, ranging from the occult to traditional Eastern and Native American spirituality.”⁷

- F. Gary DeMar says that in “the case of the New Age Movement, pagan philosophies have merely been reformulated.”⁸ He further observed that “what’s being sold to the West today as the “New Age Movement” is a repackaged, Madison Avenue approach to Eastern thought forms.”⁹
- G. Randall Baer, a member of the New Age Movement for 15 years and one who rose to nationwide fame as an expert on crystal power, wrote: “Essentially, it is a Satan-controlled, modern-day mass revival of occult-based philosophies and practices in both obvious and cleverly disguised forms.”¹⁰
- H. In describing a “psychic faire” which took place in San Rafael, California, The Gwinnett Daily News on Thursday, August 31, 1989, on page 21A reported:

It is a fair that surely is out of this world, even by the stratospheric standards of higher consciousness in Marin County. The card games are all tarot and the rides are said to take you all the way to the farthest edges of the astral plane, where you can free-fall through an out-of-body experience and get grounded in one of a dozen or so past lives – all without leaving your folding chair. There are touchy-feely booths where you can plumb your own space, raise your kundalini energy and determine the color of your aura. And there are the workshops on bloodless Philippine-style miracle healings, achieving your goals in ‘this life-time’ and the ever-popular demonstrations of trance channeling – the eerie act of conjuring voices from the spirit world. Yes, the energy is flowing at the Psychic Faire in the sprawling Marin County Civic Center, where hundreds of practitioners of New Age spirituality have assembled to test their sixth-sense strengths.

II. THE HISTORY OF THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT.

- A. This movement has its roots in transcendentalism.
 - 1. Transcendentalism is “**1** : a philosophy that emphasizes the a priori conditions of knowledge and experience or the unknowable character of ultimate reality or that emphasizes the transcendent as the fundamental reality **2** : a philosophy that asserts the primacy of the spiritual and transcendental over the material and empirical”¹¹
 - 2. “Transcendentalism made it possible for man to be his own god.”¹²
 - 3. “The worldview of transcendentalism was close to pantheism which denied the need for salvation or for a Savior.”¹³
 - 4. “Transcendentalism ‘sought an end to the dispassionate rationalism of the Enlightenment by combining mysticism with romanticism. The generally accepted notions among the Transcendentalists are that God is immanent, that truth is per-

ceived not through rationalism but by intuition, and that all dogmatism and authority-based religion is to be rejected.”¹⁴

5. Some of the early leaders in the acceptance of transcendentalism were Henry David Thoreau (1817-62), Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82), and Theodore Parker (1810-60).
6. “The New Age Movement, a revival of nineteenth-century transcendentalism, became a spiritual respite for a number of beleaguered souls who have shaken off the meaningless that comes with naturalism, scientism, and materialism. The New Age Movement meets spiritual yearnings without requiring subordination of the will to a personal and sovereign God, a hopeless situation.”¹⁵
- B. “Pythagoras, born about 570 B.C. was teaching the belief in Greece almost as far back as the ancient Upanishads; the documents which first taught the doctrine in India ... Herodotus, one of the earliest to mention the belief, claims that certain Greeks took the doctrine from Egypt and passed it off as their own.”¹⁶
- C. “Constance Cumbeys explains that ‘the New Age Movement received its modern start in 1875 with the founding of the Theosophical Society by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky,’ who ‘worked in ‘telepathic communication’ serving as a ‘fulcrum’ for the masters.’”¹⁷ Duane McCampbell adds that “a Civil War Colonel, H. B. Olcott” was involved with Blavatsky in beginning the movement in New York City.¹⁸
- D. “After Blavatsky died, Alice Ann Bailey wrote more than twenty books in an effort to provide foundational instructions for the New Age to come. ‘Alice showed tenacious hatred for orthodox Christianity and fierce loyalty to the cause of occultism and Eastern mysticism.’”¹⁹
- E. James Redfield’s book, *The Celestine Prophecy*, has enjoyed much success. A work of fiction, the book “concerns the discovery of nine insights that were written in Aramaic in Peru about 600 B. C. (9)...the appeal of the book is the nine insights...”²⁰
- F. “‘The hippies may be gone, but the effect of the counterculture remains. The age of exotic, Eastern ‘guruism’ may be waning, but the gurus’ teachings are not. What was once on the esoteric periphery has moved into the spotlight. Much of what used to be underground is seeping — if not rushing — into the mainstream, as a plethora of New Age teachers, practices and events contend for our souls.’”²¹
- G. “Among the more affluent in particular, the religion *du jour* is the New Age movement, whose roots are both premodern and pagan, though much of it is so intertwined with postmodern relativism as to make it difficult sometimes to distinguish them.”²²

III. THE TEACHINGS OF THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT.

- A. Monism, which is “the view that reality is one unitary organic whole with no inde-

pendent parts.”²³ plays a large part in the thought of New Ageism.

1. Listen to “the concise summary of monism given by Fritjof Capra. He says that the ultimate state of consciousness is one ‘in which all boundaries and dualisms have been transcended and all individuality dissolves into universal, undifferentiated oneness.’”²⁴
 2. Shirley MacLaine explains: “My whole body seemed to float too, not only my arms, but all of me. Slowly, slowly, I *became* the water, and each tingling bubble was a component part of the water...I felt the interconnection of my breathing with the pulse of the energy around me. The air itself seemed to pulsate. In fact, I *was* the air. I was the air, the water, the darkness, the walls, the bubbles, the candle, the wet rocks under the water, and even the sound of the rushing river outside.”²⁵
 3. “The NAM also draws upon the Chinese religion/philosophy of Taoism for an explanation for this all-is-one belief. Primary to Taoism is the T’ai-chi which pictures the two symmetrically balanced but opposing forces yin and yang...The ideal is to keep these two opposing forces in balance.”²⁶
 4. Monism is not new. “It was the view of Parmenides (500-450 B.C.) and had a strong influence on Plato (400-350 B.C.).”²⁷
 5. Monism eliminates an objective standard of morality.
 - a. “Guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh stated: ‘I don’t believe in morality’ and ‘I am bent on destroying it;’ ‘to emphasize morality is mean, degrading, it is inhuman.’”²⁸
 - b. Terry Cole-Whittaker, in her book, *The Inner Path from Where You are to Where You Want to Be*, writes: “Because life does not have a purpose per se, you are free to assign it one at will. (That is what is meant by free will, not the ability to do something God opposes. It is not possible to do something God opposes. You are the All and the Everything and you cannot oppose yourself.) In this, as in all things, your will is God’s will and **Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.**”²⁹
- B. Pantheism, which is “a doctrine that equates God with the forces and laws of the universe,”³⁰ is acquainted with Monism in this system.
1. “Eastern thought is essentially pantheistic...‘New Age’ thinking is a blend of western naturalism and eastern pantheism ...But, in order to be born to the east, one must actually die to the west. That is, one cannot accept eastern philosophy without virtually surrendering any connection to the thought patterns of western culture.”³¹

2. MacLaine further explains: "The same divine will was in all living things. We were part of it, and it was part of us. The task was to find that divinity in ourselves and live by it. Hence the answers are all within the self. Look into yourselves, explore yourselves, *you* are the universe."³²
3. "In the world of pantheism, God did not create the world; He **is** the world. Men were not made in the image of God; we **are** God. Mankind thereby exalts himself."³³
4. "L. L. White, philosopher and New Age precursor, forthrightly proclaims the position: 'It has long been held that whoever denies (the transcendent) God asserts his own divinity. In dropping God, man recovers himself. It is time that God be put in his place, that is, **in man**, and no nonsense about it.'"³⁴
5. "Swami Muktanada, who had tremendous influence on Werner Erhard, founder of EST and Forum, pulls no punches: 'Kneel to your own self. Honor and worship your own being. God dwells within you as You!'"³⁵
6. "Steward Brand, writing in the introduction to the popular *The Next Whole Earth Catalogue*, says: 'We are Gods and might as well get good at it.'"³⁶
7. Observe this statement from a New Age magazine. "All paths lead to God. The true path finally becomes self empowerment: the path of self-love. Then one demonstrates that they can manifest God and no longer need to look outside themselves for this information. They have become the path themselves."³⁷
8. *The Gwinnett Daily News* of Thursday, August 31, 1989, on page 21A, reported on a "psychic faire" held in San Rafael, California. It was sponsored by the "Church of Divine Man," a Berkeley-based religious sect. Of these matters, the article further stated:

The latter-day infatuation with the psychic world has prompted dozens of self-avowed New Age 'readers' and 'healers' to hang their shingles out in Marin County, which also harbors the Deja Vu Publishing arm of the Church of Divine Man, a branch of the movement's Yin Yang Seminary for clairvoyant children and the Marin Birth Center in San Rafael. That clinic provides expectant parents with certified nurse midwives and 'spiritual birth attendants' who offer guidance on communication with 'baby beings' both during and after pregnancy.

9. Since we are God, we may create our own reality. Shirley MacLaine writes: "I have come to realize that 'reality' is basically that which each of us perceives it to be. That is, what may be real to me is not necessarily real to a friend, much less a stranger. We each live in a separate world or reality."³⁸

10. “Perhaps no other form of radical individualism can claim to go further than New Age.”³⁹

a. Genesis 3:1-6

b. Randall Baer wrote: “New Age man, believing himself to be divinely perfect and ultimately all-powerful, sets himself up on a cosmic throne. This highly touted god-man claims to have inherently unlimited powers to command and manipulate the universe according to his sovereign will. Man is elevated to divinity, deity, and sovereignty—the essence of the blasphemy of the New Age spiritual humanism that seeks to exalt sinful man to godhood and to displace Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”⁴⁰

C. Evolution.

1. “Before the ink was dry on Darwin’s *The Origin of the [sic] Species*, occult circles had appropriated the theory for their own ends. Evolutionary theory resonated perfectly with the notion of gradual progress that was implicit in the emanationist cosmology of occultists and mystics, seeming to put the authority of science behind what they had always believed. *For if humanity had become human by passing through ape-hood, it seemed plausible enough that it was headed toward godhood.*”⁴¹
2. “Since the overall thrust of New Ageism is self-discovery, it only makes sense to imagine that we have reached our high state of development through evolution—and that we can advance even further with just a little cerebral development.”⁴²
3. Shirley MacLaine wrote: “As I lay in the tub thinking, I wondered how long it would be before scientists would find ways to verify the evolution of the soul in the same way that they had verified the evolution of the body.”⁴³
4. James Redfield wrote: “I perceived everything to be somehow part of me...I experienced the entire universe looking out on itself through me...The realization was present that my life did not, in fact, begin with my conception and birth on this planet. It began much earlier with the formation of the rest of me, my real body, the universe itself...I watched as the first matter exploded in the universe...”⁴⁴
5. Theistic evolution, the idea that God began things and then allowed them to continue through the process of organic evolution, paved the way for a New Age theory that is “greatly expanded and is not based upon acceptance of the Genesis version of creation...One of the dominant leaders in the movement to accept the New Age philosophy that evolution was overseen by some Supreme Being was Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. A French Jesuit priest, Teilhard lived from 1881 to 1955. Today there are at least thirty-four groups in the Teilhard network...Teilhard believed man had evolved as far as he could physically, but was continuing to

evolve mentally and spiritually. Spiritual evolution would eventually lead to a 'single consciousness,' culminating in the transformation of the earth into the New Jerusalem. During this time, 'Christ' is to return in the flesh, according to Teilhard, and rid the world of all divisive thoughts. We will have reached the ultimate goal—"universal unification."⁴⁵

6. "Marilyn Ferguson, an active and well-known proponent of New Age thinking, made the same point in her book, *The Brain Revolution*. She said: 'Are we evolving as a species? That seems to be the question of the hour...Man's next stage of evolution is envisioned as a transformation of consciousness, an expanding awareness of his own potential and his place in the universe. Shortly before his death in 1961, Carl Jung said that modern man was faced with the necessity of rediscovering the life of the spirit because "it is the only way in which we can break the spell that binds us to the cycle of biological events." Jung, Burbank, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin predicted that the line between the physical and the psychic would disappear. Teilhard said, "Matter no longer exists. There is nothing but spirit."⁴⁶
7. Theodore Roszak, a historian of modern culture wrote: "We undergo the development we envision for ourselves; we get the evolution we deserve. If we continue to see evolution as an empty game of chance in which will and aspiration play no part, then we doom our own higher development. We will, in effect, have *willed* ourselves into impotent drift and stagnation. If we recognize evolution as the unfoldment of visionary energies, then we will have liberated those energies as an evolutionary force, and not only within our own lives, but within the history of our species as a whole."⁴⁷

D. Reincarnation and Karma.

1. Reincarnation is the belief in the "rebirth in new bodies or forms of life; *esp*: a re-birth of a soul in a new human body."⁴⁸
 - a. There are many versions of reincarnation. "The early reincarnationists, and still the majority of all present-day reincarnationists, believe that the soul also incarnates into non-human forms, such as rocks, frogs, or trees."⁴⁹ This is a part of reincarnation that many of the New Agers ignore.
 - b. "...the most basic teaching is that each soul is immortal, having always existed from the very beginning..."⁵⁰
 - c. "It is a chief doctrine of Hinduism. It is an important part of Theosophy, Scientology, as well as Witchcraft. A self-proclaimed 20th century witch, Syble Leek has written a book, *Reincarnation A Second Chance*."⁵¹
 - d. "Reincarnation is supposed to explain many of life's problems. For instance, homosexuality. New Age advocates claim that we have all experienced living

in different lives as different sexes (male and female). In Shirley MacLaine's book *Out on A Limb*, she presents her claim, through a revelation from the "John character," to have lived several times, twice as a male and once as a female (pp. 198-200)."⁵²

e. Celebrities have claimed to have lived in previous lives.

1) "General George Patton, a leading U.S. General in World War II, fancied he was a reincarnated soldier."⁵³

a) "When his nephew asked him point blank if he believed in reincarnation he responded, 'For myself, there has never been any question. I don't just think, I know there are places I have been and not in this lifetime.'"⁵⁴

b) "Patton is reported to have told friends 'that he could recall fighting with the Greeks on the plains of Troy, and that he has served in Caesar's legions, battled the Huns and ridden with the crusaders to the Holy Land.'"⁵⁵

2) Helen Reddy claimed to have been a man several times in other lives. She said: "I've been a man many times. That's what I'm trying to atone for now...I first saw a past life transgression when I was 17...I've seen a lot of them. I had an out of body experience when I was 12. I've always had some sort of physic sense, but I didn't really delve into past lives until my teens...I keep coming back. I can't seem to get it right. I just keep coming back and back and back."⁵⁶ She claimed to have been a 12th century stable boy and a horse-riding bodyguard for an aristocrat.

3) "The movie actor, Alan Ladd, is an example of one who under hypnosis recalls being a knight in King Arthur's Court in a previous incarnation. Investigators have found that as a child Mr. Ladd spent huge amounts of time pretending he was a knight in King Arthur's Court and is recalling those experiences under hypnosis."⁵⁷

f. Movies have taught reincarnation.

1) A mid-seventies movie entitled, "The Reincarnation Of Peter Proud," taught reincarnation.

2) Another mid-seventies movie entitled, "Audrey Rose," taught reincarnation.

g. Randal Clayton Bradford, a psychic counselor in Los Angeles, in commenting on people rushing to cash in on the New Age phenomenon stated: "'First, you have to devote 15 or 20 lifetimes to refining and developing your tal-

ents,'...‘and then you devote 10 to 20 years to being trained by the higher powers who walk the earth...’”⁵⁸

- h. F. Lagard Smith, in an interview with the Gospel Advocate, revealed that “New Age reincarnationists are telling us that abortion is all right because, after all, the entity that is entering the fetus simply decides not to go ahead with a life plan and communicates psychically with the mother in her decision to have an abortion.”⁵⁹
- i. New Agers misapply Scriptures to, seemingly, teach their dogma of reincarnation.
 - 1) They misapply Matthew 11:8-14 to teach that John was the reincarnation of Elijah.
 - 2) They misapply John 9:1-3 to teach that the disciples believed in reincarnation and that Jesus did not correct them.
 - 3) They misapply Exodus 20:5 to teach that this points to punishment in future lives for present sins.
 - 4) They misapply Matthew 5:48 to teach that Jesus was promising perfection to all men and this will finally be accomplished through the cycle of reincarnation.
 - 5) They misapply John 3:5 to say that Jesus was teaching reincarnation.
 - 6) They misapply Matthew 16:13,14. “I. S. Cooper, one of the early leaders of Theosophy draws from this the following conclusion: ‘In short, the rumor was current that in the person of Jesus ‘one of the old prophets is risen again,’ which indicates how widespread was the idea of reincarnation at the time,’ (I. S. Cooper, *Reincarnation: The Hope of the World*, p. 10).”⁶⁰
- 2. Karma is believed to be “the force generated by a person’s actions held in Hinduism and Buddhism to perpetuate transmigration and in its ethical consequences to determine his destiny in his next existence.”⁶¹
 - a. “The doctrine of karma teaches that each soul is working its way to perfection by overcoming imperfections in previous lives.”⁶²
 - b. “Buddhism teaches that the goal of the spirit’s many incarnations is to achieve nirvana – a blowing out of the spirit flame – which frees the spirit from having to suffer through any future incarnations.”⁶³
 - c. MacLaine writes: “It was up to us to get in touch with ourselves spiritually so

that we might achieve some insight as to what our purposes in life are. For every act, for every indifference, for every misuse of life, we are finally held accountable.”⁶⁴

- 1) “The way that the theory can capitalize on unexplainable disasters is well illustrated by the explanations given by Theosophists after the sinking of the Titanic. Theosophists explained that those who went down with the ship were being punished for their sins in a previous life.”⁶⁵
- 2) MacLaine’s friend, David, states: “All our previous lives are what have molded us. We are the product of all the lives we have led.”⁶⁶
- d. In a conversation between MacLaine and her mother in *Dancing in the Light*, we read: “And I think that our family, and every family for that matter, is a group of souls very closely connected because we have been through many incarnations together. I think we *choose* to be together, to work out our drama. We choose our parents, and I think the parents choose the children they want to have before they ever come into an incarnation.”⁶⁷
- e. New Agers misapply Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6; and Galatians 6:7 by saying that these teach karma.

E. Spiritism.

1. The beginning of the movement.
 - a. “Often credited with beginning the modern movement is John Fox from Hydesville, New York. In 1848 people flocked to his house to hear rappings’ that presumably came from a peddler who had been murdered on the premises and buried beneath the house. For some reason he allegedly had messages for the living...Seances became popular as heartsick souls craved to hear a message from beyond the grave.”⁶⁸
 - b. Gary DeMar attributes the beginning to the Fox sisters, Margaret and Katie on March 31, 1848. DeMar observes: “The sisters eventually became mediums. Their communications with these supposed dead spirits became known as ‘The Rochester Rappings.’ While the Fox sisters later disavowed any supernatural powers – they stated that the noises originated from their cracking the joints in their toes – their cottage had become a spiritualistic shrine, with a large marker, ‘There is No Death,’ affixed to the property.”⁶⁹
2. “A number of spiritist bibles have been published, such as *A Course in Miracles*, *Oahspe*, *Cosmic Consciousness*, and *The Spirit’s Book*. A description of the largest one follows:

The Urantia Book was received via automatic writing by anony-

mous individuals in the 1930s. It is 2,100 pages long and details a vast aggregate of ascending universes and evolving beings, and purports to disclose previously unknown information about the histories of the earth ("Urantia") and Jesus."⁷⁰

3. "The latest surge of popularity began with Jane Roberts in 1963."⁷¹ Her "books were based on messages spoken through her mouth by an entity who called himself Seth. Seth's main message to the world, reiterated again and again throughout the hundreds of pages of Seth books, is that life and death are mere illusions we create out of our own minds. He wants us to believe that our spirits survive death and may come back to live on earth again in a different body, or may move onto a higher plane of existence such as he had achieved."⁷²
4. John Klimo, in his book *Channeling*, (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1987, p. 2), describes channeling this way: "Channeling is the communication of information to or through a physically embodied human being from a source that is said to exist on some other level or dimension of reality than the physical as we know it, and that is not from the normal mind (or self) of the channel."⁷³
5. Three well-known spiritists.
 - a. Ramtha.
 - 1) Ramtha "is supposedly a 35,000 year old 'ascended master' from whom we should purportedly learn."⁷⁴
 - 2) He "communicates through a housewife...J. Z. Knight from the state of Washington. Ramtha purports to be a former warrior king (seven feet tall) who became more enlightened in India."⁷⁵
 - a) "Douglas James Mahr describes what happens to J. Z. Knight...when she begins to channel...Ramtha: 'When Ramtha begins his appearance in the embodiment of J. Z. Knight, a completely different sensation from that of J. Z.'s embodiment is felt. The body of J. Z. Knight is still present, but a totally different personality emerges – her body seems larger and stronger, bursting at the seams; the softness of J. Z.'s mannerisms and facial expressions are replaced by those of a man; body postures and gestures are surging with power; his concentration becomes an intensity, the voice is that of another knowingness.'"⁷⁶
 - b) Mrs. Knight also claims to have channeled Jesus Christ. She said "she made contact with Jesus at a Christmas event in 1983."⁷⁷
 - c) Jeffrey Knight, her fifth husband, sued "his former wife because he claims he accepted her \$120,000 divorce settlement in 1989 while under Ramtha's influence." He claimed "the Ramtha business is a

fake.”⁷⁸

- 3) Dick Sztanyo quoted Ramtha from *Voyage to the New World* (Ballentine, 1987). The following quotes come from Sztanyo:⁷⁹
 - a) He teaches that the Christian God is an “idiotic deity” (p. 219). “God, the principal, is all things” (p. 250).
 - b) “You are **God**” (p. 61). “God, the Father is you” (p. 136). “Love yourself...live in the moment, to exalt all that you are” (p. 149).
 - c) “There is no such thing as evil” (p. 60). “For 2000 years we have been called sinful creatures but we are equal with God or Christ” (pp. 180-81).
 - d) “Do not preach to this world...the world doesn’t need saving—leave it alone” (p. 130). “Relinquish guilt...do not live by rules, live by feelings...You are the Lord of Hosts, **you** are the Prince of Peace” (p. 149).
 - e) “God has never judged you or anyone” (p. 62). “No, there is no Hell and there is no devil” (p. 252).
- b. Lazaris. He “channels himself through former insurance supervisor Jach Pursel. Shirley MacLaine called him to public attention in her 1987 book, *It’s All in the Playing*.”⁸⁰
- c. Tom McPherson. He is “a former Irish pickpocket from Elizabethan times (sic)” who “speaks through Kevin Ryerson, but so do John, an Essene scholar from the time of Jesus, and a few others. Shirley MacLaine catapulted his personalities into the limelight in *Out on a Lim*...Those who channel through Kevin are spirits between incarnations; generally, they just want to make the world a better place.”⁸¹ “F. LaGard Smith asked Kevin Ryerson to interpret the same dream on two occasions four months apart. He received two different interpretations of the same dream from the same ‘psychic.’”⁸²
6. “Marilyn vos Savant summed up this channeling business well in the August 29, 1995 *Parade Magazine*, when asked, ‘Are the abilities of channelers real?’ She responded:

“Channeling” is an act staged by people who pretend to “channel” the spirit of an ancient or mystical figure through themselves. Then they speak words designed to make others think the imaginary figure is speaking. In my opinion, only their ability to deceive innocent people is real (14).”⁸³

7. If we are God, as the New Age doctrine claims, why the need for these spiritual guides? Does God need a guide?
- F. The New Age Movement is a mixture of Hinduism and other Eastern religions mingled with witchcraft, Satanism, necromancy and other occultic practices along with feminism, astrology, evolution, holistic medicine, and extreme ecology.
1. Hinduism:
 - a. Shirley MacLaine wrote: "The ancient Hindu vedas claimed that the spoken words *I am*, or *Aum* in Hindi, set up a vibrational frequency in the body and mind which align the individual with his or her higher self and thus with the God-source. The word God in any language carries the highest vibrational frequency of any word in that language. Therefore, if one says audibly *I am God*, the sound vibrations literally align the energies of the body to a higher attunement. You can use *I am God* or *I am that I am* as Christ often did, or you can extend the affirmations to fit your own needs."⁸⁴
 - b. Reincarnation and karma have their roots in Hinduism. "Hinduism teaches that souls transmigrate to various physical forms until they finally achieve union with Brahman and are absorbed as a raindrop in the ocean, losing all individuality."⁸⁵
 - c. "The range of options is formidable—crystals, meditation, homegrown Hinduism..."⁸⁶
 2. Extreme ecology.
 - a. Many New Age Movement adherents are involved in ecological movements as well. "Offenses against the earth are also believed to be offenses against deity, which is sometimes portrayed in the form of the mother goddess of the earth, or Gaia."⁸⁷
 - b. "*The Celestine Prophecy* stresses having more forests and fewer children in the future...The author of *The Aquarian Conspiracy* writes that we now know the earth is 'a jewel in space, a fragile water planet...All countries are economically and ecologically involved with each other, politically enmeshed.'"⁸⁸
 - c. "An Earth 'goddess,' usually called Gaia, is venerated by many New Age feminists who believe that cultures in Earth's ancient past worshipped her."⁸⁹
 3. Occult practices.
 - a. New Agers rely on crystals which supposedly contain healing and energizing powers. They also believe in "the seven chakras (nerve centers) of the body through which 'a mysterious fire of love' rises up (during meditation) within

the individual in his cerebrospinal system known as *kundalini shakti*.”⁹⁰

1) Catherine Bowman wrote: “Crystals are here to teach and serve us. To the awakening mind, they are capable of performing a multitude of functions such as dream guidance and direction, cleansing the body of negative energies, focusing the mind, mental and physical healing, telepathy, linkages to special places, and other potentially limitless tasks.”⁹¹

2) “Crystal expert Connie Church lists these other handy uses for Crystals:

- Bury your crystal in the soil for a day to perk up a potted plant.
- Put your crystal in your fruit or vegetable bin to enhance freshness.
- Place it on your sixth chakra . . . and ask it for the lottery numbers...
- Tell your crystal you’ll get caught up on your backlog of paperwork....
Place it on your pile of papers as you work, and watch yourself zoom through the pile.
- Put your crystal on the dashboard while you are driving and let it guide you to the perfect parking spot ...”⁹²

b. They also refer to the “third eye,” “an occultic belief that a center of psychic powers is located at the forehead between the two (physical) eyes.”⁹³

4. Holistic medicine.

a. This “is a New Age theory which says a patient’s psychological and mental health must be involved in treating his body.”⁹⁴

b. Holistic medicine includes acupuncture, visualization, meditation, yoga, hypnosis and massage.

1) “Through meditation, hypnosis, ‘creative visualization,’ and ‘centering,’ we are taught that we can become conscious of our ‘higher self,’ our god within.”⁹⁵

2) “In practical terms, adherents can use the power of visualization and imaging to enhance physical and emotional health...”⁹⁶

c. “New Agers have borrowed from Hinduism the theory that there are seven ‘energy centers’ in the body which are called ‘chakras’ (a Hindi word). They control the various aspects of one’s well being. The seventh chakra is supposed to be located in the top of the head; through it, one finally reaches integration with God. Each chakra in the body is symbolized by a color of the rainbow; the rainbow has come to symbolize the New Age Movement...”⁹⁷

1) “In *Going Within*, she [MacLaine] describes how that in meditation one is able to concentrate on, and align his seven primary chakras, thereby bal-

ancing his whole being.”⁹⁸

2) “The Chakras are listed as follows:

- a) “The first, the base or root chakra, is located at the root of the spine and governs the understanding of the physical dimension. It is the center through which one experiences the ‘fight’ or ‘flight’ responses. It externalizes in the adrenal gland, governs the kidneys and the spinal column, and is perceived as RED.
- b) “The second chakra is located in the sexual organs and is the chakra of creativity. It governs attitudes in relationships, sex, and reproduction. It is seen as ORANGE.
- c) “The third chakra is located in the solar plexus. It externalizes as the pancreas, governs the action of the liver, spleen, stomach, gall bladder, and aspects of the nervous system. It is the clearinghouse for emotional sensitivity and issues of personal power. It is YELLOW.
- d) “The fourth chakra is the heart chakra. It externalizes as the thymus gland. This chakra governs the heart, blood, and circulatory system and influences the immune and endocrine systems. It is the center through which we feel love, and is the color GREEN.
- e) “The fifth chakra is the throat chakra. It externalizes as the thyroid gland, and governs the lungs, vocal chords, bronchial apparatus, and metabolism. It is the center of expression, communication, and judgment, and is BLUE.
- f) “The sixth chakra is located in the center of the forehead, and is better known as the ‘third eye.’ It externalizes as the pituitary gland, and governs the lower brain, nervous system, the ears, nose, and left eye—the eye of personality. Through this center we consider our spiritual nature. It is seen as the color INDIGO.
- g) “The seventh chakra is located at the top of the head. It externalizes as the pineal gland and governs the upper brain and the right eye. Through this chakra one may ultimately reach the feeling of integration with God. It is seen as VIOLET or sometimes the combination of all colors, hence WHITE.”⁹⁹

3) “The seven chakras correspond to the seven notes on the music scale as follows:

RED chakra = C
ORANGE = D

YELLOW	= E
GREEN	= F
BLUE	= G
INDIGO	= A
VIOLET	= B

During meditation, one visualizes the chakra, concentrating on its color and humming its matching note. This will help one to feel harmonious. In keeping with this chakra-sound connection, New Age music has been developed to help soothe the mind, heal the body, and raise one's consciousness."¹⁰⁰

G. The New Age Movement stresses the hemispheric distinctions of the brain and uses this to move Westerners toward Eastern thought.

1. Shirley MacLaine wrote: "The Eastern system of thought tends toward going within for the answer. It is right-brained: intuitive, open, **capable of holding contradictory concepts without confusion**. The traditional Western system of thinking is more left-brained: linear, logical, and rational."¹⁰¹
2. "If a New Ager is caught in a logical absurdity or contradiction he may simply remind you that the problem lies with you for depending upon the linear logic of your left hemisphere!"¹⁰²
3. "To understand how the field of physics has gotten into the realm of religious metaphysics, one must look back a century to the start of relativity and quantum mechanics. The misinterpretation of two sets of laboratory experiments is the basis of all of 'modern' physics...These two misinterpretations have given rise to many contradictions and paradoxes found in modern physics. It is little wonder that this has produced the trend toward the acceptance of the Eastern mystic religions whose underlying theme is that two contradictory statements can both be true ...If these ideas were, indeed, true, there could be no such thing as science. The very foundation of science is the idea of cause and effect. If contradictions and indeterminacy were the rules of nature, it would be impossible to repeat experiments in the laboratory."¹⁰³

H. The New Age Movement promotes a world religion which paves the way for a world government.

1. "The 'brotherhood' of all mankind is taught. It matters not whether one is called a Christian (the world's usage of the term), Buddhist, Hindu, or even an atheist. The goal is a spiritual unity of all the world. World religion is the result. New Agers depict this as an all-inclusive circle. However, it shuts out all true Christians who recognize the **narrow** path leading to life eternal (Matthew 7:14). Persecution will result as these individuals are ostracized as being unloving, unkind, and narrow-minded."¹⁰⁴

2. "Before the New Age Movement gained so much prominence, humanists were world government's major propagandists...Now the New Age leaders have taken the baton and are running for all they are worth toward world government. Their inspiration is the unity of all mankind...World religion is the exit ramp leading off the road of nationalism and onto the road of world government. Under no circumstances would world government be able to tolerate Bible-believing Christians saying Jesus Christ is 'the way, the truth, and the life,' and that no man can come to the Father but through Jesus Christ (John 14:6)...the key to opening the door to world government is world religion...In order to bring about world government, there MUST be unity. World religion provides this necessary unity."¹⁰⁵
 3. B. F. Skinner of Harvard University "published a frightening book entitled: *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*" in which he wrote: "My book is an effort to demonstrate how things go bad when you make a fetish out of individual freedom and dignity. If you insist that individual rights are the 'summum bonum'; then the whole structure of society falls down."¹⁰⁶
 4. "In the struggle to establish an adequate world government, the teacher has many parts to play. He must begin with his own attitude and knowledge and purpose. He can do much to prepare the hearts and minds of children for global understanding and cooperation. At the top of all the agencies which will assume the coming of world government must be the school, the teachers and the organized professional."¹⁰⁷
- I. The New Age Movement is connected with postmodernism.
1. "Having evolved rapidly along with the rest of culture, the movement has now moved almost completely into the sphere of the postmodern. Today, New Age consciousness and postmodernism share an overlapping philosophical base."¹⁰⁸
 2. "New Age consciousness is an effort to affirm the good parts of all religions and develop a new meaning for spirituality. New Agers generally follow postmodern assumptions, and should therefore be viewed as within the postmodern fold."¹⁰⁹
 3. Russell Chandler observed that "the goal is to redefine spirituality...to change our culture's dominant world view — which is still Christian, more or less...This all seems so tolerant. It seems like it combines the best of all the religions. Everyone is right...It doesn't matter if you're praying to your inner light, to Sophia, to the Trinity or whoever. Whatever works for you is fine. After all, there are no standards."¹¹⁰
- J. The New Age Movement promotes idolatry. "Images of ancient goddesses are offered for sale. These include 'Sekmet, powerful of heart,' 'Gaia, goddess of the earth,' 'the snake goddess of Crete,' 'Kuan Yin, goddess of compassion and Great Mother of Asia,' and other better known goddesses, such as Venus and Aphrodite."¹¹¹

IV. THE SPREAD OF THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT.

A. “A few years ago, most generic bookstores had a ‘New Age’ section. Today, this is rare, but that doesn’t mean that the wave of religious trends that crested in the 1980s simply vanished. Truth is, it soaked in. ‘You don’t see New Age shelves anymore because you can find New Age books in almost every part of the store,’ said Russell Chandler . . . They’re in the psychology section, and over on the women’s shelf. You’ll find them under self-help, stress, holistic health and the environment, too.’ . . . New Age faith, said Chandler, has ‘become so visible that it’s now all but invisible.’”¹¹²

B. New Age ideas are spread by those in the entertainment industry.

1. Shirley MacLaine is probably one of the most well-known of the promoters of New Ageism. “She has popularized the teachings of the New Age movement and embodies just about all of its facets.”¹¹³
2. Linda Evans found wisdom in the words of Ramtha.¹¹⁴
3. “‘When Sharon Gless (of the ‘Cagney and Lacey’ show) accepted her Emmy award in September 1987, she included Lazaris among the people she thanked.’”¹¹⁵
4. Bruce Willis, in discussing his brother’s death stated: “‘I was in the room when Robert died...I kept talking to him with the hope that he could hear me. I never knew if he did. But Demi later introduced me to this woman who can receive information from the other side. Until then, I was always up in the air about what happens when we die. I had a question for this woman: ‘Did my brother know we were in the room that night?’ And she began speaking in the voice of my brother, in his cadence, cursing like he did...For the next five minutes, she talked as my brother, and tears rolled down my face.’”¹¹⁶
5. Richard Gere “sums up the spirit of the age: ‘Cosmically, there’s nothing wrong with being heterosexual, homosexual or omnisexual – with being anything, as long as you don’t hurt anybody, yourself included.’”¹¹⁷

C. New Age ideas are spread by songs.

1. Joe South’s 1970 song, “Walk a Mile in My Shoes,” contains the words: “And the law of karma says you’re gonna reap just what you sow.”¹¹⁸
2. John Lennon’s song, “Instant Karma” (1970) also promoted this false idea.
3. Culture Club sang “Karma Chameleon” (1983).

4. Willie Nelson sang “Just a Little Old-Fashioned Karma.”

5. “John Denver, heavily influenced by Werner Erhard’s est programs (now called ‘The Forum’) said: ‘One of these days I’ll be so complete I won’t be human. I’ll be a God.’”¹¹⁹

D. New Age ideas are spread through the educational system and especially through psychology courses.

1. “Many educators are involved in the New Age, as reported in a survey taken by Marilyn Ferguson: Of the Aquarian Conspirators surveyed, more were involved in education than in any other single category or work. They were teachers, administrators, policymakers, educational psychologists (p. 280, *The Aquarian Conspiracy*).”¹²⁰

a. “Do you know what happens to your child once he or she is bundled up and sent off to school each day? Are you aware of the ideas teachers are putting into your child’s head? Beneath the calm exterior of our nation’s schools lies a raging volcano known as the New Age doctrine and ritual. Each day, children are made to walk through the fire of this volcano so that the values of the New Age will become second nature to the upcoming generation.”¹²¹

b. “Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was mentioned most often as having influenced the thinking of the respondents. Teilhard’s writings are uniting the areas of science and religion into one convergent view of the Universe and Man’s future.”¹²²

c. “One of the founding fathers of New Age psychologies is Carl Jung.”¹²³ He was listed “second in influence” among those surveyed. He shares many of Teilhard’s philosophies.

d. “Mentioned third, Abraham Maslow presents many of the same underlying thoughts as Teilhard, but from a different perspective. He adheres to an aspect of the New Age often referred to as ‘third force’ psychology”¹²⁴

2. “Many New Age psychology courses have been developed and some of them have been mixed with Eastern mysticism such as ‘Werner Erhard’s the Forum (formerly est) and John Hanley’s Lifespring.’”¹²⁵

3. Many of the teachings of New Age psychology center in man’s loving himself and finding fulfillment therein. Implicit in this connotation is the inessentiality of using Biblical doctrine to select our values. How then will students learn to select values? Goble explains:

Perhaps the most unique aspect of Maslow’s Third Force Theory is the belief that there are values or moral principles common to the

entire human species, which can be scientifically confirmed. Maslow strongly feels the need for a usable system of values that does not rest upon blind faith alone. 'It is certainly true that mankind, throughout history, has looked for guiding values, for principles of right and wrong. But he has tended to look outside of himself, outside of mankind to a god, to some sort of sacred book perhaps, or to a ruling class. What I am doing is to explore the theory that you can find the values by which mankind must live, and for which man has always sought, by digging into the best people in depth. I believe, in other words, that I can find ultimate values which are right for mankind by observing the best of mankind. If under the best conditions and in a scientific way what these human values are, I find values that are the old values of truth, goodness, and beauty, and some additional ones as well — for instance, gaiety, justice, and joy.' They are intrinsic in human nature, a part of man's biological nature, instinctual rather than acquired (pp. 87-88, *The Third Force*).¹²⁶

4. Early in the last century Alice Ann Bailey wrote the book, *Education in the New Age*.¹²⁷
 5. "Randall Baer, once a New Age insider states: Personally, I recall quite a few conversations with teachers who would boast of how they were using their position to insert various enlightened New Age ideas into their curriculum, and how easy they found this task to be in many cases."¹²⁸
 6. "Elementary school children may learn to meditate on an inner light, while teens devour science fiction parables about interplanetary prophets and amoral aliens."¹²⁹
 7. Global Education promotes the New Age agenda in public school systems.¹³⁰
- E. New Age ideas are spread through reports of UFOs.
1. "'Would you believe that more than 75 percent of New Agers hold a completely unshakeable belief in the reality of UFOs?'"¹³¹
 2. John Denver claimed to have come from near the Lyra nebula.
 3. "Randall Baer convinced himself that his celestial home was Orion (before he left New Ageism)."¹³²
 4. Marshall Herff Applewhite convinced his Heaven's Gate cult to commit suicide so they could meet with a UFO which was said to be trailing the Hale-Bopp comet.

F. New Age ideas are spread through the media.

1. How much money has the Psychic Hotline generated?
2. "To millions of people in America, the most powerful influences on their thinking processes are the authors of secular books and magazines; editors and journalists of our daily print press; radio disc jockeys and news interpreters; movie producers and screenwriters; and, perhaps heading the list, television program producers, news anchorpersons, and other opinion molders of television."¹³³
3. "Today, Americans watch television and aren't jarred by commercials claiming that pickup trucks are 'a spiritual thing' that help drivers feel good inside . . . spirits and goddesses frolic in Saturday cartoons."¹³⁴

G. New Age ideas are spread through politicians. "We learned in 1988 through Donald Regan, former secretary of the Treasury and White House chief of staff, that 'Nancy Reagan, had been consulting an astrologer and actually influencing the chief executive's decisions on the basis of astral predictions. The first lady had been dabbling in the occult as early as 1967, when her husband was governor of California, by relying upon the advice of prophetess Jeanne Dixon'...Donald Regan writes, 'Virtually every major move or decision the Reagans made during my time as White House chief of staff was cleared in advance with a woman in San Francisco who drew up horoscopes to make certain that the planets were in a favorable alignment for the enterprise.'"¹³⁵

H. New Age ideas are spread through monuments. Approximately seven miles outside Elberton, Georgia stands a 20 feet high monument consisting of 951 cubic feet of granite and weighing an estimated 245,000 pounds. This monument is dedicated to an "Age of Reason." On this monument are carved the ten commandments of the New Age of Reason. These commandments promote New Age teachings.

I. New Age ideas are spread through religion. "In the mid-1980s, a few Christians began experimenting with Wicca and other forms of witchcraft and natural religion ... Now, discussions of the goddess Gaia, or the spirit of the earth, are filtering into environmental programs. Many seminaries and a few national church groups have embraced rituals praising the goddess Sophia or 'wisdom.'"¹³⁶

V. THE APPEAL OF THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT.

A. Some people will believe anything as long as it is not in the Bible!

B. Gary Summers lists three appeals of New Ageism.¹³⁷

1. The so-called appeal to freedom, which is the way many characterize the absence of restraints (or self-control).
2. The inner peace that it promises.

3. The promise of power.

VI. THE ANSWERS TO THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT.

A. God has the answer to this and all other false doctrines.

B. The answer to Monism and Pantheism.

1. Genesis 1:26. God created us in his “image” but not in his “essence.”
2. Numbers 23:19.
3. Psalm 8:5-8.
4. Isaiah 55:8,9.
5. Job 38-41.
6. Romans 9:20,21.
7. 1 Corinthians 15:39-41. Everything is not one. Things were created to fill a separate role in the Universe.

C. The answer to evolution.

1. Genesis 1.
2. “New Age thought is simply another attempt to make evolution seem like it will work – and a desperate try at that! Up until New Age thought, physics, and all of the sciences were operating in Newton’s world where there is an objective reality because there is a transcendent Creator. Evolution cannot be made to work in such a world. But the New Age world, redefined by New Age physics, is said to make evolution work. This is the primary appeal for those who deal in New Age physics. Of course this imagined gain has a cost. The assumption of objective reality, which made modern science possible, is replaced in New Age physics with a subjective reality.”¹³⁸

D. The answer to reincarnation and karma.

1. Genesis 1,2. Man has not always existed, but was created by God.
2. Job 7:9; 16:22. Man only lives once and does not return to the earth after death.
3. Ecclesiastes 9:5,6; 12:7. The spirit does not enter into another body and there is a distinction between the material and the spiritual realm.

4. 2 Samuel 12:23. David knew this baby would not be coming back to earth.
5. 2 Corinthians 5:10. Notice “body,” not “bodies.” We only have one lifetime in which to determine our eternal destiny.
6. Acts 17:31.
7. John 5:27-29.
8. Luke 16:19-31. These souls did not enter into other bodies.
9. Hebrews 9:27.
 - a. Man dies but once, not many times.
 - b. Man is judged but once, not many times with each new life being a judgment on conduct in a past life.

E. The answer to spiritism.

1. God condemned it in the Old Testament.
 - a. Leviticus 19:31; 20:6.
 - b. Deuteronomy 18:10-12.
 - c. Isaiah 8:19.
 - d. “It is interesting to note that the term ‘familiar spirit,’ as employed in the Old Testament, was, in the Septuagint (Greek Version of O.T.) rendered by the term *eggastromuthos*, meaning ‘to prophesy from the belly,’ thus suggesting ventriloquism rather than actual conversation from the dead.”¹³⁹
2. God condemned it in the New Testament.
 - a. Galatians 5:19-21.
 - b. Revelation 9:21; 18:23; 21:8.
 - c. “The terms “sorcerer” and “sorcery” come from *pharmakia*, which “primarily signified the use of medicine, drugs, spells; then, poisoning; then, sorcery...In sorcery, the use of drugs, whether simple or potent, was generally accompanied by incantations and appeals to occult powers, with the provision of various charms, amulets, etc., professedly designed to keep the applicant or patient from the attention and power of demons, but actually to impress the ap-

plicant with the mysterious resources and powers of the sorcerer.”¹⁴⁰

d. Luke 16:19-31. One was not allowed to go back from the dead nor communicate to his brothers.

3. “World famous magician Harry Houdini had a standing challenge to spiritists. He claimed that there was no feat which a medium could perpetrate which he could not duplicate by innocent magic.”¹⁴¹

F. The answer to the self-centeredness of the entire movement.

1. Matthew 16:24; 23:12.
2. “Despite the claim of originality these movements have always made, man’s self-idolatry is as old as Eden.”¹⁴²
3. Jeremiah 10:23.
4. Ezekiel 28:1-10.
5. Acts 12:21-23; 14:8-18.
6. Romans 1:18-25. “In the end New Age ‘science’ ends up bowing to the creation rather than to the Creator.”¹⁴³
7. “The idea of self-deification effectively eliminates the entire scheme of redemption, and negates 4,000 years of Heaven’s interaction in men’s lives. It denies the role of Jesus in creation (John 1:1-3), the amazing prophetic accuracy of the Old and New Testaments (1 Peter 1:10-12), the providential preservation of the messianic seed (Galatians 3:16), the miraculous birth of Christ (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:21-23), the significance of His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15), and the hope of His second coming (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). When man decides to declare his own deity, he foment rebellion against the legitimate Inhabitant of heaven’s throne. And he will bear the consequences of that rebellion, just as angels of old did (Jude 6).”¹⁴⁴
8. Martin Gardner suggested the following: “Perhaps if someone...would pin MacLaine’s neck to a tree, between two prongs of a pitchfork, and leave her there for a few days, it might persuade her that she didn’t create the universe.”¹⁴⁵

G. The answer to the stress on Eastern thought patterns of the brain.

1. Isaiah 1:18. The Bible stresses rational thought processes and logical argumentation.
2. 1 Thessalonians 5:21. One must be able to “prove all things.”

3. 1 Peter 3:15. One must be able to give a defense of his hope.
- H. The answer to idolatry (1 John 5:21).
- I. We must be aware that the New Age Movement is willing to accept anyone but Christians.
1. “An occult writer, Alice Bailey, predicted the only sin in the New Age would be the ‘sin of separateness’ (my term). In her book, *The Reappearance of the Christ*, she stated, ‘To hate, to be separate, and to be exclusive will come to be regarded as the only sin...’ (p. 112). In other words, the narrow-minded, dogmatic people will be the only ‘sinners’ in the New Age.”¹⁴⁶
 2. Christians would be considered the only sinners in the New Age.
 - a. Christians are separatists.
 - 1) Matthew 7:13,14.
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1.
 - b. Christians are considered narrow-minded and dogmatic by the world.
 - 1) Acts 17:6.
 - 2) 1 Peter 4:3,4.
- J. “Occultism and its modernized forms – higher consciousness, holistic and psychic healing, astrology, eastern mysticism, life readings, the New Age Movement, channeling, fire walking, pyramid power, crystals, extra-terrestrial hunting, and outright Satanism – emerge when the prevailing Christian worldview fails to impact people’s lives.”¹⁴⁷
- K. Claims of the New Age mystics have proven false.
1. Some groups of people began to “anticipate that the present order would come to an end and the New Age be established at the end of 1967. In Denmark one group followed channeled instruction to build a lead-lined bomb shelter to protect them during the ‘nuclear evolution’ event that would mark the transition.”¹⁴⁸
 2. One group claimed that a vault buried in the Bruton Parish churchyard in Williamsburg, Virginia, contained “the original Constitution and Declaration of Independence and some of the work of 16th-century British philosopher Sir Francis Bacon, which is supposed to bring about world peace, love and happiness. Without the papers, they say, there will be world destruction by the year 2000.”¹⁴⁹ At

the time this outline was written, they had missed it by at least 15 months!

3. Some of Ruth Montgomery's "messages from beyond" promised "that the earth will shift on its axis some time before the year 2000. Beings in flying saucers will rescue some enlightened people from the resultant catastrophes, educate them, and finally place them back on earth to begin the New Age after the environment settles down. (Those who are not rescued will simply have their next incarnation elsewhere.)"¹⁵⁰
4. A "Psychic Faire" was held at the Marin County Civic Center in August of 1989. A desk clerk at a sheriff's department substation at the civic center, who had been asked repeatedly for directions to the fair remarked: "'We've been joking about that all day,' she said. 'If you really were psychic, you'd know where to go.'"¹⁵¹

CONCLUSION

- A. The New Age Movement advances false ideas and promises false hope. "It is merely a new cloak over Satan's same old lies."¹⁵²
- B. One must turn to God and His Word in order to live happily here and hereafter.
- C. In order to be saved from sin one must hear the Word of the Christ (Romans 10:17), believe in the deity of the Christ (John 8:24), repent of sins (Acts 17:30), confess faith in the deity of the Christ (Acts 8:37) and be baptized unto the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
- D. In order to live in heaven eternally one must live faithfully (Revelation 2:10).

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POSTMODERNISM

INTRODUCTION

The subject that I have been assigned for this lectureship program is “Postmodernism.” Postmodernism is a term that is perhaps relatively new to many Bible-believing people. In fact I would suspect that if you were to announce that you would be preaching on the subject of postmodernism, few if any would have an idea of what you would be discussing. Yet the topic of postmodernism is an important subject that Christians need to become more familiar with, because the term is descriptive of the way more and more people are reasoning today, even within the religious world.

What is postmodernism? Postmodernism is a term that can be somewhat hard to define in a nutshell. In fact in obtaining an understanding of postmodernism, it is important first to know that the term does not describe any particular doctrine, so much as it describes a mindset of a particular era. Historians, philosophers, theologians, and many others use the terms pre-modern, modern and postmodern to help them navigate through large blocks of time and thought. The postmodern era represents the block of time and thought that we are now living in today. Illogical thinking, relativism, and obsession with tolerance are some of the characteristics of those who could be described as postmodern. Although our lecture will focus pre-dominantly on the postmodernist era, it is helpful in this study to briefly introduce the basic tenets of each of these three time periods to gain a complete understanding of our subject at hand.

Life in the pre-modern period was dominated by a belief in the supernatural realm, by a belief in God, and His activity in human affairs. Since this period of time covered a span prior to the invention of the printing press, ending sometime in the fifteenth or sixteenth century, commonly held truths about the universe, the contents of the world, and even theological teachings were handed down by a handwritten copies of precious books. Additionally, oral instruction was a significant form of teaching provided by those who were in positions of authority. During this time frame, the traditions of the Catholic Church were passed down to church members who blindly accepted what they were taught as God’s truth. So called truths were rarely questioned by the average man. The pre-modern period is often characterized by today’s man as an era in which the world was backward and somewhat inferior to modern society. Thus modern man saw the movement from the pre-modern period into the modern era as a refreshing step into greater enlightenment in his quest for knowledge and truth.

The modern period began sometime in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The newly invented printing press became a valuable tool for reproducing materials and making information more readily available to the masses. New inventions and discoveries were commonplace during that time. Better telescopes and microscopes allowed men to “unlock the secrets” of the universe. In the eighteenth century the progress of science accelerated so rapidly that it appeared as if science would soon be able to explain everything. Many believed that there were no limits to the power of human reason, operating with the data of sense perception. In contrast to the basis for receiving truth in the pre-modern era, the modern period differed in that truth was labeled as such only if it could be proven to be true. Many of the philosophers and

theologians of the modern period sought to devise a religion that could incorporate all of the considerations and discoveries of the modern age. A main tenet of modernism was that human reason, armed with scientific method, was the only reliable means of attaining truth and knowledge about religion and the universe. Though modern man believed that he had found the source of determining truth through the five senses and scientific methodology, in reality modernism gave birth to much unbelief and skepticism regarding the claims of the Bible. Many spiritual battles were fought against the modernists during the modern age due to their affirmation that truth could only be ascertained through the five senses or by scientific methodology. Attacks on the inspiration of the Bible, the miraculous element of biblical teaching, and even the deity of Christ Himself became a few of the battlegrounds for modernists and Bible believers. Many brethren within the church such as Alexander Campbell, J. W. McGarvey and other stalwarts of the Faith fought off the attempts of the modernists to lead astray the body of Christ during their lifetimes. Although there were certainly some casualties along the way, for the most part the church was able to overcome the fiery darts of modernists and the modern era.

Yet Satan has never been content with the capture of a few souls of fallen comrades; and with the diminishing influence of modernism in the twentieth century came a new wave of attacks that are as serious, if not more serious than the assaults of the modern era. What Satan was unable to do with some through the deception of modernism, he has been able to accomplish with others via postmodernism. Keen observers have witnessed a gradual shift within religious thought that mirrors the shift of secular society itself. Religious bodies that once were once known for their modernist positions are now moving toward a postmodernist disposition. What is especially alarming is that members of the Lord's church who once fought tooth and nail against modernism are now seemingly falling head over heels for the postmodernist agenda, which is nothing more than an agenda to deny a standard of absolute truth for all men. Whereas the agenda of the modernist was to affirm that truth could be known, but that truth could not be determined apart from scientific methodology, the agenda of the postmodernist is to deny the very premise of absolute truth itself.

The shift from the modern era to the postmodern era, according to many postmodernists, was due to the "erroneous assumption" that there is such a thing as "objective truth." Gene Veith in *Postmodern Times* writes,

Modernists would argue in various ways that Christianity is not true. One hardly hears this objection anymore. Today the most common critique is that "Christians think they have the only truth." The claims of Christianity are not denied; they are rejected because they purport to be true. Those who believe "there are no absolutes" will dismiss those who reject relativism as "intolerant," as trying to force their beliefs on other people. Postmodernists reject Christianity on the same grounds they reject modernism, with its scientific rationalism. Both Christians and modernists believe in truth. Postmodernists do not.¹

Another writer by the name of Kappelman has well illustrated the evil influence of postmodernism that we are facing today. He recounts a bizarre conversation with a college student at Bucknell University in Pennsylvania. The female student said that she believed that

truth was a matter of how one looked at things. She then affirmed that two people could look at the same given situation or object and arrive at different truthful conclusions. Kappelman notes,

When she was pressed on her beliefs concerning reality, the inconsistencies of her philosophy were evident. She stated that everything was a matter of opinion or one's personal perspective. When asked if this belief extended to physical reality, she said it did. She said that a person could look at something in such a way as to alter reality.

The example of the existence or nonexistence of her car was raised. She said that if she believed that her car was not in the parking lot and if another person believed that it was, it could be possible that it actually existed for one person and not for the other. When one first hears something like this, it sounds as if the person who maintains this position is joking, and could not possibly mean for us to take him or her seriously. However, the sad and frightening truth is that this individual is very serious.

This young woman is representative of a large part of our Western culture, men and women who tend to think unsystematically. The result of this way of thinking is that people often hold ideas that are logically inconsistent and contradict each other. The result is that persons professing to be Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, or even atheists are given equal degrees of credibility. Truth has become a function of personal preference, not correspondence to objective reality.²

Unfortunately this young college woman does not represent an isolated number of people today. We are seeing this ideology of relativism growing in popularity within and without religious circles. Sadly, the same contradictory thinking that prompted the young woman to affirm that her car could exist and yet not exist at the same time is also surfacing in the religious thinking of people across this country as well. Certainly we are seeing such illogical reasoning flowing into the body of Christ that has long stood firm on the reality of objective truth and every man's amenability to it. The spiritual consequences of such contradictory thinking are devastating. Kari Kwok has written,

A direct consequence of the postmodern objection is to deny the existence of any objective and universal moral law or value. Any claim to such universal moral laws or values is social construction that causes oppression. Therefore, if there exists any moral law, it can only be found within a local community throughout its own narratives...³

A number of years ago brother Thomas Warren debated Dr. Anthony Flew regarding the existence of God. One of brother Warren's strong arguments was that if there is no absolute lawgiver, there can be no absolute law. If there is no absolute law, then the European world owed Hitler and his thugs an apology for forcing their moral position on him and his regime, when he began to exterminate Jews living in Germany. Brother Warren argued that Hitler was simply observing the moral law found within his local community.

Anthony Flew, who had fought for Britain against Hitler in the war, could not refute brother Warren's fine logic. Yet if what postmodernists today affirm is true, the denial of objective and universal moral law, then truly the European world does owe Hitler an apology for their "oppressive attempt at social construction" within the community of Germany. This example of the ludicrous and illogical position that postmodernists must assume to be consistent with their agenda presents them with an undesirable possibility. On the one hand, postmodernists are uncomfortable with the Holocaust, yet on the other hand they have a hard time making any moral judgments about it. If they do, they are abandoning their god of relativism and tolerance, and the affirmation of every person's right to possess "his own" truth.

From a religious perspective, perhaps this phenomenon was most recently illustrated following the 9/11 attacks on the Trade Center in New York. All over this country we began to see people from all theological persuasions preaching and practicing tenants of postmodernism in the name Almighty God. Thousands of people who claimed to follow Jehovah participated in joint prayer and worship services with people who believed in and followed after gods other than the one true God Jehovah. I shall never forget the picture that I saw of Rubel Shelly taken from a Nashville newspaper where he and others huddled together with an Islamic religious leader while having a group hug and prayer. Keep in mind that the Islamic leader denies the deity of Christ and considers Jesus a mere man who was inferior to Mohammed. My questions are, "Was Rubel praying to Jehovah or Allah?" and "Was the Islamic leader praying to Allah or Jehovah?" Postmodernism affirms that the prayer of Rubel Shelly and of the Islamic leader were both valid and of truth. If Rubel Shelly is not the poster child of postmodernism in the church today, I do not know who else could be, for advocates of postmodernism have no problem with one affirming that Jesus can be "a way" so long as He is not "the only way." He can be described as a great teacher so long as His teachings are not imposed on those who prefer or believe something else.⁴ In fact the greatest taboo for the postmodernist is to affirm that someone else is wrong. Postmodernists pride themselves in their tolerance of others. Indeed they are very tolerant, as Rubel Shelly demonstrated in his joint prayer service with the Islamic infidel. They are tolerant of practically every position and belief, except one. They are intolerant of dogmatism. To the postmodernist, dogmatism is an evil and oppressive mindset that must be combated.

ITS ORIGIN

Where did postmodernism originate? The Bible teaches us that Satan is the father of all lies (John 8:44). The postmodernist agenda is built upon deception; therefore, Satan surely is the father of postmodernism. As the father of this ungodly philosophy of thought, he must naturally have sons and daughters under its influence. When one looks around at our world today, it is easy to see those children who carry the family traits of their father, the devil.

We have already noticed that the growing acceptance of postmodernism grew out of the modernist period within the last fifty years or so. Yet it would be false to conclude that postmodernism is a brand new concept foreign to man prior to the twentieth century. For example, even though modernism is often associated with a certain time period within the past few hundred years, forms of modernism certainly existed prior to the seventeenth century. Even in New Testament times we find that there were those who *"say that there is no resurrection,*

neither angel, nor spirit..." (Acts 23:8). The Sadducees held to a form of modernism, and thus modernism itself is not a new concept. Solomon has rightly noted that there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9-10).

The same is true of postmodernism. A close examination of the Bible demonstrates that the roots of postmodernism extend back into man's early history. The Jews again serve as an example of leanings towards postmodernism. As noted, postmodernism is basically a denial that truth is universal and binding upon every person. It is a concept that preaches tolerance for every position except dogmatism. It gives permission for the affirmation of so called truths that are contradictory and illogical. The Jews often fell prey to these false premises.

Consider that God instructed the Israelites to be dogmatic in the observance of His Law (Deuteronomy 12:30-32), which by the way demonstrates that God is not a postmodernist, since postmodernism opposes dogmatism. The Jews were instructed by God that they were not at liberty to alter His absolute commandments (Leviticus 18:3-5; Deuteronomy 28:14-15; 4:2). Yet despite God's clear mandate for allegiance to His absolute truth, Israel often adopted an eclectic approach to faith and worship in drawing from the practices of the people in the land in which they dwelt (Judges 2:10-13, 17). Furthermore, God demanded that they be intolerant and destroy the people in the land they possessed (Deuteronomy 7:1-6; 20:16-18), yet they were content to live in an integrated society of tolerance and allowed their pagan neighbors to exist within their communities. Their failure to be dogmatic in their practice of faith, and their adoption of practices that were totally contrary to and inconsistent with the teaching of Jehovah reveals the early roots of what we today describe as postmodernism.

ITS EFFECT ON CHRISTIAN FAITH

Postmodernism truly has a negative effect on Christianity. It robs the Christian of that which is essential to pleasing God – saving faith (Hebrews 11:6). Saving faith is an objective response rooted in absolute truth that is binding upon every person from every culture and every time. Saving faith is presented in Scripture as that which comes from hearing, and hearing from the word of God (Romans 10:17). When one hears the word of God, faith is generated (John 20:30-31). One recognizes the power and authority of God in one's life, and one brings himself under the subjection and rule of Christ.

To the postmodernist, faith is the byproduct of a subjective standard – self. Every man essentially becomes a standard of truth to himself, and he should not seek to impose his "version" of truth upon others. Rather, he should seek to be inclusive and non-judgmental, since postmodernism affirms the validity of all beliefs equally, despite what sound reason and logic suggest. Like the idolatry of the Old Testament, postmodernism has become a god to modern men and women. Jehovah is dismissed with a wave of the hand, and His explicit teachings are presented as non-binding and unessential. Man becomes a standard of truth to himself (Judges 21:25). Man bows to himself. He worships himself, and as Sanders notes, he therefore has the same religion as the idolaters, only his idol isn't crafted out of wood.⁵

Postmodernism has already had a tremendous influence upon societal thinking. We can clearly see it in many venues. We are told that we must not be judgmental in the area of

homosexuality, abortion, gambling, adultery, and other social evils. We are told that we must be sensitive to those who engage in such behaviors, and not be dogmatic in our theological beliefs. We are instructed by postmodernists that it is all right to affirm life, just don't force a pro-life position on a woman who believes abortion is moral. It is alright to affirm the marriage of a man and woman, just don't disaffirm the right of two men to enter into that same arrangement. Truly we can see the negative influence of postmodernism upon our society. Yet, it is clearly evident that the church, too, has not remained unspotted from this plague of unbelief. Sanders has noted,

We were not happy with who we were, so it became necessary – at least in the minds of some – to reinvent ourselves to be more appealing to the world. We did not want to be embarrassed any longer in front of our denominational friends. We began experimenting with our worship, looking for emotional experiences. We began thinking that a new name would allow us to create a new image for our communities. We began loosening up with a more inclusive posture, unwilling to make judgments on the pious unimmersed or those who played the instruments. We relegated the controversial to opinion, taking the view that we could not be certain of Bible teachings. We did not want to be seen as people who made narrow judgments...We became ashamed of what we were and became like the spiritual nations around us.⁶

What a sad, but true observation he has made. Postmodernism is alive and growing within the body of Christ. The desire to be accepted by those around us, coupled with a fervor to be like those around us is destroying the distinctiveness that is to be present in the Lord's precious body (Matthew 5:13-16). Many are willing to sacrifice the absolute and universal truths of the Lord in order to hold hands with those who will not bend their knee in subjection to the Lord's teachings. More and more preachers, elders and congregations are clamoring for doctrinal change, tolerance, unity in diversity, and other ungodly responses to a world that is hardened and has been greatly influenced by postmodernist thinking.

HOW CHRISTIANS CAN DEAL WITH IT

Christians can not ignore postmodernism. It will not go away by our silence. It must be fought, as the evil of modernism was by our forefathers in previous generations. Every concerned church member needs to take a sober look at what the postmodernist movement has done to the precious body of Christ. Soldiers of Christ need to arise and put their armor on and prepare to fight with every bit of spiritual fortitude they can muster for the battle that is now before us. The souls of our children and future generations are at stake! Every faithful Christian has a responsibility in this regard.

Christians must first be informed. We must gain an understanding of the postmodernist agenda in order to counteract its effects upon mankind. We must be educated regarding the change agent movement that is helping to promote the tenets of this mindset. We must study our Bibles (2 Timothy 2:15), be grounded in the truth (Colossians 1:23), and not be spiritual babes (1 Corinthians 3:1; 1 Peter 2:2) who are easily deceived by Satan's devices (2 Timothy 3:13; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Peter 5:8). Understanding, education, and biblical study are essential to being victorious over postmodernism.

Secondly, we must speak out (Ecclesiastes 3:7). Modernism would have overcome the church in previous generations had members of the church failed to speak out. If the Lord were walking the face of the earth today, he would surely speak out against this evil. We are the mouthpieces of Jehovah today. We must carry His message of salvation and be set for the defense of His Gospel (Philippians 1:17). If we do not speak out against this wishy-washy and ungodly philosophy, who will? We must speak and we must do it now!

Lastly, we can fulfill our duties in the kingdom. Elders have a duty to fulfill. Elders are to shepherd, protect (Acts 20:28-32.), watch (Hebrews 13:17) and rule (1 Timothy 5:17). They need to take hold of the reins of leadership and not give Godspeed to those in the church that would lead us into postmodernism. The church needs men of courage and conviction who will not approach leadership as a politician seeking re-election, who seeks to please everybody every time (Galatians 1:10). Elders must rule well (1 Timothy 5:17) and blaze the trails for truth down God's narrow path (Matthew 7:14) for others to follow.

Preachers must seek to counter the postmodernist agenda. Preachers must not be swayed by postmodernistic thinking. Evangelists need to assume the position given by God as herald of the Good News. They need to help people see the ugly scars of sin and preach a distinctive message based on God's absolute truths. They must resist the temptation to be tolerant and affirming of error. Love for the Lord and the souls of men demand that Gospel preachers stand in the gap (Ezekial 22:30) and reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering (2 Timothy 4:2).

Christians in general have a responsibility to stand against postmodernism. We are to follow the Old Paths (Jeremiah 6:16), and insist that our leaders lead us in them. We must resist the change agents who would have us to become contradictory in our reasoning (Isaiah 1:18), illogical in our conclusions, accepting everyone, and every belief, and giving credibility to every conviction of man in order to fit the tolerant mold of the postmodern world (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 6:17). Yes, Christians must be like Christ; and despite what our postmodernist friends might affirm, the Lord was dogmatic (Matthew 5:18), uncompromising (Luke 16:18), and intolerant of every false way (Matthew 23:33). So must we who follow in His steps hate every false way (Psalm 119:104).

CONCLUSION

Though postmodernism is probably a relatively new term for most Christians today, it will surely within the near future become as familiar as the term modernism was to the former generation. And just as in the former generation, the way in which we deal with it will surely determine the extent of damage that Satan will be able to bring upon the body of Christ. May we learn from the battles that were fought in the past, and may we with fervor and conviction face the great enemy Satan with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Gospel of saving truth.

ENDNOTES

¹ Gene Edward Veith, Jr., Postmodern Times, (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1994) pp. 19-20.

² Todd Kappelman; <http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/breakdwn.html>

³ Kari Kwock; <http://www.vlsi.uwaterloo.ca/~khkwok/postmodernism/postmodernism.html>

⁴ Phil Sanders; Adrift, (Nashville, Tn.: Gospel Advocate Company, 2000).

⁵ Sanders, 55.

⁶ Sanders, 113.

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PREMILLENNIALISM

INTRODUCTION

Often and unfortunately error is more easily believed than truth. And it seems the more outrageous the claim, the more people are willing to accept it. Such is the case with the doctrine known as Premillennialism.

This doctrine is not taught in the Bible, yet many people believe it. In fact, one estimate suggests that 70 percent of “Christendom” believes this doctrine. However, because of its many tenets, it is unlikely that many of that number could even explain it.

Popular preachers and writers in the denominational world help this. One popular series is Left Behind, novels about the “end times,” by Tim LaHaye. And there are other popular proponents of Premillennialism.

It has spawned its own vocabulary. Exciting words and phrases are used to describe it. Some appear in scripture but are taken out of context and given new meanings. Others never appear in scripture, let alone the doctrines taught by them.

Many questions need to be asked and answered. What is the Rapture spoken of by so many today? When is the Great Tribulation or has it passed? When will the Kingdom be established or has it been already? Is the Church the kingdom? Who is the Antichrist or is there more than one? Will Jesus come back to the earth and reign for 1000 years, or is He reigning now?

Far too many people have committed a cardinal sin when approaching the Bible. They have taken the words of others concerning what the Bible teaches as truth without studying for themselves. This is a grave mistake. Your soul hangs in the balance.

A great example of the proper attitude towards the word of God occurs in Acts 17:11. Comparing the Jews in Berea with those in Thessalonica Luke records:

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

It is hoped that each one will investigate God’s word to see if the things believed are so.

Premillennialism is false, and there are several reasons why. Our effort will be to explain the doctrine, expose the error of the doctrine, and set forth the Bible teaching of the things discussed.

DISCUSSION

I. WHAT IS PREMILLENNIALISM?

- A. The word is made up of two words: “mille,” meaning “thousand”; and “annum,” meaning “year.”
- B. “Pre” = before; “millennial” = 1000 years; “ism” = a system of doctrine.
- C. Hence, PREMILLENNIALISM is that system of doctrine that teaches that Jesus will return to this earth just prior (before or pre) a 1000-year reign, at which time He will set up His kingdom here upon the earth. This doctrine is not believed by all who hold to a millennial view.
- D. Other forms of millennialism include:
 - 1. **Postmillennialism**: This is the belief that things are getting better and better as a result of the preaching of the gospel. This will eventuate in an age of peace and prosperity on earth (the millennium). The second coming of Christ will occur at the end of the millennium.
 - 2. **A-millennialism**: As in Theist and Atheist, the “A” in front of this word negates it. Therefore this is the belief that there is no millennium. This belief rejects the notion of a worldwide peace or righteousness.
 - 3. Even among those who espouse Pre-millennialism there are differences.
 - a. Historic premillennialism (no rapture, etc.)
 - b. Dispensational Premillennialism (Today’s most sensational and popular view). This is the view that we will study in this lesson.
- E. Dispensational Premillennialism divides the history of the world into 7 dispensations.
 - 1. **Innocence**: Creation of Adam to the Fall.
 - 2. **Conscience**: The Fall until the Flood.
 - 3. **Human Government**: The Flood until the call of Abraham.
 - 4. **Promise**: The call of Abraham to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai.
 - 5. **Law**: The giving of the law through most of Jesus’ public ministry.
 - 6. **Grace** (or Church Age): Closing days of Christ’s public ministry until the second coming of Christ.

7. **Kingdom:** The Millennium (the 1000-year reign of Christ on earth).

F. It is taught that we are living in the 6th dispensation, and Christ is on the verge of coming (SOON)!

1. This has been said for years.

2. Since the 1800's people have been saying Jesus is coming soon.

3. Some have set dates, sold possessions, and waited on rooftops waiting for His coming, only to be disappointed.

II. WHAT IS THE ORDER OF EVENTS ACCORDING TO THE PREMILLENNIAL THEORY?

A. Jesus will come secretly.

B. Dead saints (only) will be raised. Living saints meet them and Christ in the air.

C. This is the rapture. It is for a period of 7 years. During the first 3 ½ years, the Jews return to their homeland.

D. The Old Testament Temple will be rebuilt.

E. A great charismatic world leader arises and appears to care about the world, but turns out to be the Antichrist.

F. Anyone who refuses to worship him will be put to death.

G. During the last 3 ½ years, there will be a dark period of hardship and suffering.

H. This time is known as The Great Tribulation.

I. Just when it appears the Antichrist is victorious, Christ will descend again from heaven, this time with His saints.

J. When Christ returns, the literal battle of Armageddon will take place, at which Christ will defeat the Antichrist.

K. Christ will then set up His earthly kingdom in Jerusalem and reign 1000 years.

L. During this time there will be a great peace (utopia) on the earth.

1. Peace will prevail throughout the world.

2. Paradise will be restored.

3. People will live extremely long lives.
4. A person of 100 years will be considered a child due to the length of the lives of people.

M. At the end of the 1000 years (the millennium), Satan is loosed for a little season.

1. He will lead a rebellion against the Lord and His righteous rule.
2. Satan will be soundly defeated.

N. The resurrection of the wicked takes place.

1. The "Great White Throne" Judgment will take place.
2. Eternity will follow as the righteous are made immortal and are given a new heaven and a new earth.

O. This is the most common premillennial approach, but the number and sequence of the events may vary from person to person and group to group.

III. WHAT ARE SOME PRESUMPTIONS OF PREMILLENNIALISM?

A. From the very beginning of this doctrine there are unproven assumptions.

1. Where in the Bible did God tell us to divide the world into seven dispensations?
2. How does anyone know these are the proper divisions?
3. No one in Scripture speaks of these dispensations.
4. From the very beginning this doctrine and its tenets are built upon a faulty foundation.

B. Premillennialism demands that the following teachings be true. They include but are not limited to the following.

1. The land promise made to Abraham is yet unfulfilled.
2. The Kingdom of our Lord is physical not spiritual.
3. The church of our Lord and for which He died was an afterthought (a spiritual contingency).
4. The prophets and their prophecies concerning the kingdom are yet unfulfilled.

5. Jesus failed when He came to earth the first time.
6. Judaism and the Law of Moses are God's ultimate plan for mankind.
7. The Law of Moses will be restored.
8. God lied (He changed His mind when He said He wouldn't).
9. God's forethought is suspect.
10. God failed (He didn't know the right time to send Jesus).
11. The Jews have a place with God based on their heritage.
12. There is Jew and Greek yet in Christ.
13. When Jesus returns He will establish His kingdom.
14. There is a resurrection for the wicked and a separate resurrection for the righteous.
15. The earth will remain intact upon the Lord's return.
16. Revelation chapter 20 teaches a literal reign of Christ on earth for 1000 years.
17. Jesus is not now reigning over His kingdom.
18. There are two more returns of Jesus.
19. When the Lord returns only a few will know it.

C. If any of these things can be shown to be false, the entire doctrine falls.

D. Space will prevent a detailed discussion of each of these things.

E. However, enough will be discussed to provide ample proof to demonstrate the error of this doctrine.

IV. WHAT IS THE BIBLE TEACHING OF THE THINGS DISCUSSED?

A. The Land Promise To Israel.

This is a major tenet of Premillennialism. Its proponents contend that Israel will one day be restored to her land. This is foundational in the scheme of this doctrine. If the land promise has not been given, then it is yet future.

If the land promise has already been fulfilled, the doctrine fails before it really begins. This means there is no land from God to which they are destined to return. The only question that must be asked and answered is, “What does the Bible say?”

The Bible is clear on this matter. In Genesis 12:1-3, God made three promises to Abraham. One of the promises was that God would give Abraham’s descendants land. Hence we refer to it as the Promised Land.

The promise was not fulfilled in the life of Abraham. It was fulfilled in the life of Joshua, the leader after Moses. Note the following passages that make this point crystal clear.

And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing, which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass (Joshua 21:43-45).

And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat (Joshua 24:13).

If this were all we had on the subject it would be enough. God gave to Israel all the land He sware unto their fathers. But we do have more! God gave them a sign so that they would know when they had received all the land.

Deuteronomy 19:1-9: In these passages Israel is told of refuge cities for the man who kills someone accidentally. They are to provide three cities to which he can flee and be saved. As you read the text, note that God said if He gives them all the land He would appoint them three more cities. If therefore they ever received those other three cities, that was clear evidence that God had given them all the land He had promised.

They were given three more cities (six cities in all). And the Bible tells us their names and in which tribe they were (Joshua 20:1-9). The point is unmistakable; God gave Israel all the land He ever promised them. There is no land from God to which Israel can return.

The error of the Premillennialist is to take the prophecies of the prophets before captivity such as Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel and apply them to something yet future. When God sent Israel and Judah into captivity, He promised them they would return to the land He had already given.

As one reads the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and every prophet after the Babylonian captivity, they all say they did return, and there is no future promise of another return. This is one of the errors of Premillennialism that shows it to be false. The land promise was fulfilled.

B. The Kingdom Of Christ Is Spiritual Not Physical.

It was never God's intention to set up a physical kingdom on the earth. The prophets spoke of a spiritual kingdom in which peace ruled. Our Lord said in very clear language that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36). His point can't be missed. He did not come to set up a kingdom of this world.

The kingdom over which Christ rules is made up of people, not brick and mortar. We are this building (1 Corinthians 3:9,16). We are the stones of the building (1 Peter 2:5,9). Christ rules in our hearts and minds through faith. He did not come to set up an earthly kingdom upon this earth – and He never will.

It is a flat-out contradiction of the Lord to say that He will one day come and set up an earthly kingdom. Such a kingdom would certainly be of this world. Shouldn't the king of the kingdom know what kind of kingdom He has?

C. The Kingdom Is Already Here - It Is Not Future!

One of the errors of Premillennialism that stands out above the others is this one. The doctrine demands that the kingdom be yet future. If this doctrine were true, it would be impossible for anyone to be in the kingdom already. For the doctrine teaches that when Christ comes, He will set up the kingdom.

Christ came to establish His kingdom. Did He fail in His mission to do that? Did the Jews' rejection of Christ cause God to alter His plans? Or did God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit do exactly what they intended? The latter is the only possible answer.

John came and preached that the kingdom was at hand (Matthew 3:1-2). Soon after, Jesus began to preach that the kingdom was at hand (Matthew 4:17). Were these statements true when they said them? Or are we to understand that "at hand" somehow means 2000 years and counting?

Jesus also said that some of His disciples who heard Him speak would be alive when the kingdom came (Mark 9:1). If this statement is true, then "at hand" meant within the lifetime of those in His audience. If the kingdom is yet future, at least some of those who heard Jesus speak must yet be alive. That would mean that someone must be at least 2000 years old and continue to live until Christ comes. Such is absurd on the face of it. But this must be true if the kingdom is yet future.

Paul said he was in the kingdom (Colossians 1:13). Here is a clear statement of fact. It can't both be true and not true. Either Paul is correct when he writes through inspiration, or the modern proponent of Premillennialism is correct. Paul said that he and the Colossian brethren were translated out of darkness and into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Which one should we believe?

John also said he was in the kingdom (Revelation 1:9). Again one must either accept plain Bible teaching or the doctrines of man. Was John in the kingdom? Was he their brother

and companion? Was he in the tribulation with them? If so, the kingdom is not future as some falsely suppose, but is present and has been since the first century. The kingdom of Christ is not future (note also Acts 1:9-11; Daniel 7:13-14).

D. What Happens When Christ Returns?

What does the Bible say will happen when Christ returns? He will bring his saints with Him (1 Thessalonians 3:13). He will judge the world (John 5:21-25; 12:48). All the dead will be raised at the same time (John 5:29-30; 1 Corinthians 15:23-27). There is no place in scripture for several resurrections. "The hour is coming," John wrote.

Those who are alive will be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51-55). Those who are alive will not precede those who are dead and in need of being raised. One passage that is misunderstood concerning the coming of Christ is 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. The verses in question discuss the righteous living and righteous dead.

The wicked are never discussed in that section of scripture. The teaching is simply that the righteous dead lack nothing, as compared to the living when Christ returns. Paul makes it clear that the living will not precede the dead. The dead will be raised, and the living will be changed, and together they will meet the Lord in the air.

When Christ returns He will put down all rule and all authority. He ceases to reign. So clear is the Bible teaching on this point that it is as if the Holy Spirit anticipated the error men would espouse on this subject. I am inclined to believe He did.

Notice Paul's words to the Corinthians as he discusses the resurrection and Christ's return:

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:21-28).

Please note what the passages say. 1) By one man (Adam) came death. 2) By one man (Christ) all shall be made alive (resurrected). 3) Christ is called the first fruits. 4) Afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. 5) Then cometh the end.

Please note what Paul says happens when Christ comes at the end. 1) Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father. 2) He (Christ) shall put down all rule and all authority. 3)

Christ must have all authority to put it down when He comes. After His resurrection, that is exactly what Jesus said (Matthew 28:18).

Note that Christ will deliver up the kingdom when He comes. He will not set it up; He will deliver it up to the Father. He began His reign when He ascended on high (Acts 1:9-11; Daniel 7: 13-14). He will end His reign when He returns.

Attention should also be paid to the word “till.” The verse says He must reign “till.” Without doubt, that means He is now reigning, and at some time He will cease to reign. But we aren’t left to guess when that is. The verses tell us. When He delivers up the kingdom, He ceases to reign.

But, according to Premillennialism, He does not now reign. Over what then is He a king? According to Premillennialism, when He returns, He begins His reign. Then what is it that He will deliver up to the Father? Were it not for the preconceived ideas and the doctrines of men, everyone could understand and accept such plain Bible teaching.

E. The Great Tribulation Has Already Passed

Another tenet of Premillennialism is “The Great Tribulation.” The teaching is that, prior to the Lord’s return, there will be intense tribulation on the earth, a dark period of hardship like the world has never known before. Is this true? Should we be worried?

The answer is, “No.” The passages used or misused to teach this doctrine are found in Matthew 24. In this chapter the Lord is answering questions from His disciples. The Lord begins to speak about the destruction of Jerusalem that was to occur in AD 70. The Lord describes the siege of Jerusalem and gives the disciples signs for it.

It is interesting that the first thing the Lord says is, “...*take heed that no man deceive you*” (Matthew 24:4-5). When the disciples heard of wars and rumors of wars they would know that the trouble had begun (vv. 6-8). All these are the beginning of sorrows. Please note that in their lifetime when they heard and saw these things, the sorrow had begun.

The saints would be delivered up and persecuted (v. 9). False prophets would arise (vv. 10-11). This is exactly what happened in the book of Acts. The saints were persecuted (Acts 4, 5, 8, 9). The gospel of the kingdom would be preached and then the end of Judaism would come (v 13-14). This happened. The gospel went all over the world. It began in Jerusalem, Samaria, and went to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). All nations under heaven heard it.

Verse 15 is extremely important. The saints were told that when they saw the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel, they should flee to the mountains. In Luke’s record of these events he says the armies would surround the city of Jerusalem (Luke 21:20-24). Please notice that when they saw it, they were to flee. The sign was that when they saw these things and heard of wars and rumors of wars, they would know the tribulation had begun.

Some questions: What would fleeing to the mountains do to aid one when the Lord returned (vv. 16-18)? Why would a woe be pronounced upon any who are with child when the Lord returned (v. 19)? Why are they told to pray that their flight was not in winter (v. 20)? These things make no sense if this is the Lord's return. But they are great warnings and signs to save one's life in the destruction of Jerusalem.

The next verse is the clincher. Verse 20 says, "*For then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*" When would this be? When the things listed above happened. When His disciples heard of wars and rumors of wars. When His disciples saw the abomination of desolation (armies compassing the city). "Flee to the mountains," they were told. "Pray your flight is not in the winter"; it would be difficult to live in those mountains. "Pray your flight is not on the Sabbath"; the gates would be closed. "Woe to those with child"; it would be more difficult to flee.

There was a time of great tribulation. But according to Matthew 24, it is not some future event. It happened in the lives of those to whom the Lord gave the warnings. In fact in the same chapter, that tribulation was shown to have a beginning and an end.

Verse 8 tells us, "*all these are the beginning of sorrows.*" Verse 29 tells us "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days...*" The days began and ended in the life of those who heard our Lord.

When the city of Jerusalem was destroyed this was an evident token to his disciples that Jesus was the Christ. It would prove to them and the world once and for all that Christ is king. He reigns and rules the world (v. 29-30).

All Christians will suffer persecution for the godly lives they live (2 Timothy 3:12). This is nothing new to servants of God. The faithful suffer because of the light they cast on ungodly men. Abel suffered being righteous. Daniel and Joseph suffered at the hands of others. Read Hebrews 11 and see the faithful who suffered. We count them happy which endure the suffering (James 5:10-12).

But there is no "Great Tribulation" coming. This was it, and it passed. Since we don't know when our Lord will come, we all need to be ready. That is the second half of Matthew 24 and the entirety of chapter 25.

F. There Won't Be An Earth From Which To Rule.

I have never read in the Premillennial plan that God the Father is ever on the earth. Does the Father remain in heaven while Christ comes, leaves, and comes again? Jesus said He was going to a place and would come and get us and take us to where He was (John 14:1-3). According to the doctrine, Jesus comes, goes, and comes again to be where we are.

One of the many problems of this false doctrine is that there won't be an earth here from which to rule. The Bible is to be understood literally unless something in the context demands

otherwise. This is a basic rule in Bible interpretation. Without it we would be left to our own imaginations - a result of which many seem very fond.

As one reads the Bible, this rule needs to be practiced. When this is done passages like 2 Peter 3 cannot be missed. If the Holy Spirit intended to give us a picture of anything other than total destruction, He failed. He made a mistake. He chose the wrong words. Though such is totally impossible, it would have to be the conclusion.

Peter, discussing the world of Noah, says it was overflowed with water (v. 6). Then he says, "*But (a contrast) the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are...reserved unto fire*" (v. 7). He speaks of the certainty of God's promises, not the way God counts time (vv. 8-9). God doesn't count time. Not even one day is like a thousand years to God. He doesn't count time!

He continues discussing the Lord's coming and the destruction of the world. Note the phrases employed. 1) "The heavens shall pass away." 2) "The elements shall melt with fervent heat." 3) "The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 4) "All these things shall be dissolved."

Take any Greek Lexicon or Greek Dictionary and look up those words. They do not mean purified. They do not mean reinvented. They do not mean renovated. The earth will be destroyed.

The same Spirit revealed the words found in 1 Thessalonians 4:17: "*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.*"

Caught up to meet them: the Lord and His Saints (1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:14). And we shall ever be with the Lord. Nowhere in Scripture is the Lord said to ever again touch the earth. The reason is that when He returns there will not be one here!

G. Revelation 20.

Amazingly, a book called Revelation seems so difficult to understand. The false teachers and teachings that surround the book aid this difficulty. The book of Revelation, like all other books of the Bible, must be studied in its context.

These pertinent questions should always be asked: Who is speaking? To whom is he speaking? What is he speaking about? What is the historical context of the book? Why is the book being written? Understanding these and other things about the author, his audience, and writing, will aid greatly in one's understanding of the things studied.

Revelation is no different. Sometimes the author himself tells us. John does just that in the first chapter of the Revelation. One need only begin to read the book to understand some very important things.

1. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." It is a revelation (v. 1). This means that God intended for this book to be understood.
2. "Things which must shortly come to pass" (v 1). This means that the events were about to take place. To have meaning, this can't be short to God, for what would be long to God? It must have meaning to the people to whom it was written. Shortly can't mean 2000 years and counting, can it?
3. "He sent and signified it." The book is written in apocalyptic language. This is highly figurative language. The Revelation is not the first book in the Bible to be written this way. Parts of Ezekiel and Daniel are also written in this highly figurative style. God tells us through John that the book is written in signs and symbols. The signs stand for something, but we are not to take the signs as the thing meant. Flying horses, dragons that pull stars out of heaven, creatures with four faces, etc. These images represent something. God tells us that in the first verse of the book.
4. "To the seven churches of Asia." We must then try to understand the book in its historical setting. Ask the question, "How would those first century saints have understood the book?"

With this in mind as one reads, the book will be much easier to understand. The book is about the victory of God and His Saints. Jesus the Lamb defeats the Devil and delivers mankind. This sense of victory is replayed again and again in the book. Several different images are used to paint the same ultimate victory. The persecuted saints could be faithful unto death because they will win.

Chapter 20 is just another in a series of such images of ultimate victory. Satan is defeated. His power is limited. Those who remained faithful will be rewarded. In chapter six, the souls under the altar cry, "How long, Lord?" Now they have the victory and live and reign with Christ.

We may never know the meaning of every image. This is due to the fact that God doesn't tell us the meaning to every image. We can certainly know the things that are revealed (Deuteronomy 29:29).

Things not mentioned in Revelation 20:

1. There is no mention of a kingdom on earth.
2. The Lord's second coming is not mentioned.
3. The return of Jews to Palestine is not mentioned.
4. The "1000-year reign of Christ" is not mentioned.

5. We are not mentioned. They lived and reigned (the souls of them that were beheaded; v. 4).

These things are not there, yet Premillennialism needs them all to be there to fit their doctrine.

V. Other Points To Consider.

A. Premillennialism Makes God A Liar.

In order for Premillennialism to be true, God's promises could not have been fulfilled.

David's throne must be occupied by his Seed while David is asleep with his fathers (2 Samuel 7:12-13; Psalm 89:34-37). God said He would not lie about this.

1. But according to Premillennialism, David's throne is not yet occupied.
2. His seed will not occupy it until He returns, but then David will be raised.
3. He will no longer be asleep with his fathers.
4. If it happened before David slept, it was too early.
5. If it happens after David is raised, it is too late.
6. Otherwise God "altered the thing that went forth from his lips."
7. He "lied to David."
8. He broke his Covenant.
9. Premillennialism postpones God's fulfillment of His prophecy and by so doing makes God a liar.

B. Premillennialism Makes Christ A Failure.

It is amazing to me to read the ease with which Premillennialists say God failed.

Because of the Jews' rejection of Jesus, they say, "He was not able to establish His kingdom at His first coming."

Therefore God postponed His kingdom – Christ changed His teaching – and God gave us the church as a contingency plan.

1. This makes the first coming of Christ a failure.

2. This casts reflection upon the omnipotence of God, suggesting that He was not able to do that which He intended. Alas, we have found that which is too difficult for the Lord.
3. This casts reflection on the omniscience of God – Didn't He know what the Jews would do? Didn't He know the right time to send Jesus (Galatians 4:4-5)?
4. It makes the church of Christ a mere "afterthought," though Scripture says it was the eternal purpose of God (Ephesians 3:10-11).

C. Premillennialism Seeks A Return To Judaism.

Given the teachings of the Bible, it is beyond my understanding how anyone could espouse a doctrine that demands a return to Judaism. The Law given by Moses was not the end of God's plan of salvation. In fact, it was added to the promises God gave to Abraham until the seed should come (Galatians 3:1-29).

The Law was never intended to last forever. It was a shadow of the good things to come. The entire book of Hebrews exalts the New Covenant of Christ over the covenant made with Israel. Christ's covenant is built upon better promises. It is established upon a better sacrifice. Under it we have a better mediator. By it we have complete remission. In fact we have no more remembrance of sins.

All of this being true, why would anyone seek a time when we leave the New Covenant and return to the Old? This is especially so, considering that this is expressly forbidden in the books of Galatians and Hebrews (see Galatians 5:4). It is also mentioned in some way in many others.

Additionally, one should note that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin (Hebrews 10:1-4). Yet the Premillennialist looks forward to a time when supposedly Christ returns and re-establishes the Law of Moses - a Law coincidentally never made with the Gentiles (Deuteronomy 5:1-3; Ephesians 2:10-12). Why?

In that light it should also be noted that such would be impossible even if Christ wanted to. Jesus the Christ is from the tribe of Judah. Yet one must be from the tribe of Levi to serve at the altar under the law (Hebrews 7:11-22). The Bible is clear that Christ cannot be a priest under the Law of Moses. *"For the priesthood being changed, there is of necessity a change also of the Law."* Yet Christ would be a priest and king on His throne (Zechariah 6:12-13).

CONCLUSION

In light of all we have discussed, the truth is we have just touched the hem of the garment of this destructive doctrine. Entire books have been written to refute this doctrine. I refer you to The Millennial Mania by Rod Rutherford. One could also read the 1998 lectureship book of the Duluth church of Christ entitled, Millennium Mania.

The hope is that enough material has been covered to show the error of this doctrine. From its beginning to its end it is shown to be false. We do not wait for a kingdom. God's kingdom is His church. Christ is the king of the kingdom. Christ is the head of the body. Christ is the husband of His wife (the church). Christ is glorified right now and will be to the end of time in His church (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Premillennialism is false. Please study your Bible to see if the things believed are so.

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THE BAPTIST CHURCH IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION

- A. Appreciation is expressed to the Duluth congregation for this timely lectureship, to the eldership, and to all who helped to make it a success. Appreciation is also expressed for your presence. It is an indication of interest in things of eternal import, and in particular, the topic under consideration this evening.
- B. As we begin the discussion of this topic, *The Baptist Church in the Light of the Bible*, a few preliminary remarks are in order.
1. A broad diversity of beliefs and practices come under the Baptist umbrella.
 2. Statistics from the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) for the year 2000 indicate that their alliance represents over 165,000 churches worldwide with a combined membership of just over 44,000,000. The US boasts about 100,000 churches and just over 33,000,000 members. The Southern Baptist Convention is the largest single convention/association in the US claiming about 41,600 thousand churches and 16,000,000 members.¹
 3. These numbers do not include some Baptist groups such as Primitive Baptists, Berean Baptists, and others that differ in certain doctrinal positions and refuse to be identified with recognized associations or conventions.
 4. By Baptist, I do not mean merely those who practice baptism by immersion. I do include all who wear the name "Baptist" and the myriads of diverse doctrinal positions that they hold, individually and collectively.
 5. I have many, many friends who are of the Baptist persuasion. It is impossible to represent every view, doctrinal and otherwise, that is held under the name of Baptist. Therefore, I only pledge to represent those views that are commonly held and might be considered "mainstream," though that term is itself ambiguous. I also pledge to misrepresent no one intentionally and to treat all genuinely-held beliefs with the utmost dignity and respect.
 6. Personal feelings and emotions do not determine matters of truth.
 - a. If feelings were a safe guide, Mormons and Pentecostals would be on an equal par since both groups rely upon subjective feelings as confirmation of their conflicting doctrines.
 - b. Jacob's feelings of loss over Joseph were based on deceit orchestrated by Joseph's brothers, but Jacob's loss seemed absolutely real. *"Then Jacob tore his clothes, put*

sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, 'For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning.' Thus his father wept for him" (Genesis 37:34-35).

- c. Rather than rely on feelings, our watchword will be – *"Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your tabernacle"* (Psalm 43:3).
- 7. Tonight's lecture will consist of three major points of discussion followed by a concluding point. The three points of discussion are: The "Light of the Bible" in the Light of the Bible, The Light of the Bible Shines Favorably on Some Baptist Doctrines, and The Light of the Bible Reveals the Deficiency of Some Baptist Doctrines. The closing point and call to action is: The Light of the Bible Shows the Way to True Religious Unity.
- 8. Scripture quotations are from the New King James version unless otherwise stated.

DISCUSSION

I. THE "LIGHT OF THE BIBLE" IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE.

- A. *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"* (Psalm 119:105).
- B. A brief excursion into Peter's writings (2 Peter 1:16-21) reveals the apostolic view of the scriptures: their source, their reliability, their authority and their power.
 - 1. Verses 16 and 17 declare that God is the source of the apostles' doctrine and that it did not come from man (not *"cunningly devised fables"*).
 - 2. Verse 18 declares that the apostles were eyewitness of the revelatory process, especially in the mountain of transfiguration and that their testimony was not merely hearsay evidence.
 - 3. Verse 19 refers to the *"prophetic word confirmed,"* an idiom, or formula, for the entirety of the scriptures. So, not only had the apostles witnessed God's stamp of approval on the Son, they also had been part and party to the confirmatory process by *"...signs and wonders, with various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His [God's] own will"* (Hebrews 2:3).
 - 4. In logic, the "A form proposition" and the "E form proposition" are the strongest premises from which any argument may be developed. Peter gets them both in 2 Peter 1:20 and 21. The scriptures are vouchsafed by these statements.

- II. Verses 20 and 21a state a double-barreled universal negative: “...*knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man...*”
- III. Verse 21b states the universal affirmative: “...*but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*”
 - C. “*If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God*” (1 Peter 4:11). The implications of this text are far-reaching. If the oracles of God do not exist, then the statement is nonsensical. However, Paul used this same expression in referring to the Old Testament scriptures delivered to the Patriarchs and Fathers of the previous eras (Romans 3:2). If the oracles of God do exist (and they do in the body of the 66 books of the Bible), then this text places a weighty responsibility on all who would speak in any and all matters religious.
 - D. Concerning the nature of truth, the Bible teaches that:
 - 1. Truth may be known.
 - 2. Truth is absolute
 - 3. Truth is required.
 - 4. Truth is consistent with itself. Contradictions do not exist where truth prevails.
 - a. Illustration: Truth is like two parallel lines; extend them to infinity and they do not vary one way or the other. This principle is also illustrated with railroad tracks.
 - b. The biblical principle is stated by Paul at Galatians 2:18 - “*For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.*” When two positions contradict one another, both cannot be true. One may be false; both may be false; but at least one is false!

II. THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE SHINES FAVORABLY ON SOME BAPTIST DOCTRINES.

- A. The Inspiration and Authority of the Scriptures as contained in the Southern Baptist Convention’s, *The Baptist Faith and Message* (BF&M, sometimes called a Confession of Faith):

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God

*judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.*²

- B. The Godhead (or Trinity) is professed scripturally to exist as three divine personalities each possessing all the attributes of God, "... but without division of nature, essence, or being."²
- C. An implicit distinction in the covenants is evident in the language of the BF&M although it is not explicitly discussed. Numerous references are made to Christ and to the New Testament church. To that extent, the New Testament church is at least recognized as an entity of the New Covenant. Of course the scriptures explicitly teach that the New Covenant of Christ fulfilled the Old Law (2 Corinthians 3; Galatians 3 and 4; Colossians 2:13,14; Hebrews 1-10).
- D. The "mode" of Baptism is explicitly defined by the Baptist church at large as being via immersion (excluding other "forms" such as sprinkling or pouring). Of course such is the inherent meaning of the word ordinarily translated as baptize in all its forms. From a practical aspect, Romans 6:3,4 speaks of being "...buried with Him by baptism into death..." The only way that this passage can have meaning is to see that baptism is, in fact, a burial.
- E. Some Baptists (but not all) correctly affirm that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit as noted in 1 Corinthians 12-14 have ceased. The Indiana Fundamental Baptist Fellowship clearly states this in article 4 of their Declaration of Faith.³ Others do not so clearly affirm the cessation of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. In practice, mainline Baptist churches do not teach that gifts such as speaking in tongues along with the gift of interpretation and similar spiritual gifts are extant today.

III. THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE REVEALS THE DEFICIENCY IN SOME BAPTIST DOCTRINES.

- A. The Calvinist errors are deeply rooted in Baptist history though the Southern Baptist convention seems to be intent on moving further and further away from these doctrines. Primitive Baptists still, by definition, cling tightly to the "fading tulip" of Calvinistic theories – (T)otal Hereditary Depravity, (U)nconditional Election, (L)imited Atonement, (I)rresistible Grace, and (P)erseverance of the Saints. In as far as they hold to these tenets, they are wrong in every point.
 - 1. Sin is not inherited, it is committed: "*Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness*" (1 John 3:4).
 - 2. God did not choose those to be saved apart from the exercise of their free will. Both the Pentecostians (Acts 2:37) and the Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:30) asked

what they must do to be saved and were told by an inspired apostle. If election is unconditional, there is nothing that anyone can do; one's fate is sealed!

3. Christ's atonement was not and is not limited; it is extended to "whosoever wills."
"And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let him that heareth say, 'Come.' And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17 KJV).
 4. Grace is not irresistible! Jesus wanted Jerusalem of old to submit to His teachings, but they did not. Hear how they resisted the truth. *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"* (Matthew 23:37).
 5. And finally, the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints (also called impossibility of apostasy, or "once saved, always saved") results from scriptures interpreted out of their context. Paul clearly stated that some had fallen from grace – *"You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace"* (Galatians 5:4).
- B. The failure to distinguish between the types of works identified in the New Testament leads to numerous errors. Clearly there are works of God which man is required to do in order to be saved and there are works of merit which cannot effect man's salvation.
1. If works of any and all kinds are without avail towards salvation (including the works of God which man is commanded to do), then faith/belief is excluded. Faith/belief is a work (John 6:28, 29) yet all agree that it is required to be saved. Therefore, the scriptures clearly address at least two types of works. Meritorious works of man are excluded (Ephesians 2:9) but the works of God must be joined with faith for justification to occur; it is not by faith only (James 2:24).
 2. Self-contradictions are inherent in these views and therefore cannot be true. Grace only violates faith only, but both are taught. Yet in practice, inconsistency abounds. If it is faith only, or grace only, then where is the place for the sinner's prayer that is so often promoted as the way to salvation? Or, if it is grace only, or faith only, then where is room for confession with the mouth that Paul says is a condition of salvation (Romans 10:10)?
 3. A harmonious view of grace, faith, and works is possible. It is not grace only or faith only. Furthermore, God has enjoined man to do some works (i.e., God's works) as a condition to salvation.
- C. The Baptist Church treats baptism as an unessential act that merely ushers one into a local congregation. As clearly as can be stated, there simply is no place in the scriptures that command or illustrate by practice this to be the case. The baptized believers were added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:47). The Ethiopian

Nobleman was baptized by Philip in a deserted place without so much as a mention of a church and hundreds of miles away from his home to which he was traveling. Baptism is as the scriptures say: “*For the remission of sins*” (Acts 2:38) and it is the means by which one comes to be “*in Christ*” (Romans 6:3,4; Galatians 3:27).

- D. Regarding the pastor system, i.e. a solitary pastor having a scriptural charge over a congregation and that by “democratic process”² there is simply no authority for it. Every place in the scriptures where one finds pastor, elder, bishop, or overseer in reference to the local congregation, they are plural in number. Furthermore, the Bible certainly says nothing about a democratic process in ordaining and removing the highest congregational officers that serve in the Lord’s church.
- E. God, by definition, demands worship. It is at His pleasure that we come before Him, not of our own. Since worship is at His bidding, He has specified the means to acceptable worship. Yet, there are several departures from the scriptures observed in worship activities of the Baptist churches.
 - 1. In the matter of giving, Paul specified that we are to give as we are prospered (1 Corinthians 16:2) and that each should give “*as he purposes in his heart*” (2 Corinthians 9:7). While a person may well determine to give ten percent or more, the Bible is a silent as a tomb when it comes to specifying an amount that the New Testament Christian must give. This was borrowed from the Old Testament!
 - 2. The apostles of my Lord expected to observe the Lord’s Supper on a particular day of the week following the establishment of the kingdom (Mark 14:25), but like many other things, the details were hidden from them until after the coming of the Holy Spirit (John 16:12,13). However, as the details of the Church were unfolded to the disciples, it is evident that they were instructed to observe the Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Their example is adequate authority by which to bind the first day of the week observance of the Supper today.
 - 3. Singing is commanded of God, not playing (Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16). The Primitive Baptists had it right and still maintain that distinction. Just as was done with tithing, the Baptist Church borrowed instruments of music from the Old Testament. No authority exists for the use of any instrument other than the heart of man in worship to God today.
- F. The Lord has a Church (Matthew 16:18) and it ought to bear His name.
 - 1. Why choose a name that merely reflects one act commanded by the Lord, and that according to Baptist doctrine, an unessential one? There is no exclusive name for the Lord’s church, but if a name must be chosen why not choose a scriptural designation?

2. In a sermon delivered on the evening of May 27, 1855, Charles H. Spurgeon, arguably the brightest candle to shine in the Baptist house, said:

*I say of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ's name last for ever. I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone.*⁴

CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION

A. The Light of the Bible Shows the Way to True Religious Unity.

1. We call upon readers and hearers to reason and act upon the scriptures.
 - a. Isaiah 8:20 states, *"To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."*
 - b. Again Isaiah stated, *"'Come now, and let us reason together,' Says the LORD, 'Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool'"* (Isaiah 1:18).
2. The call to action that we make is the call of the New Testament.
3. The parable of the sower defines how Christians are produced in any generation and in any culture.
 - a. Jesus gave the key to understanding when He said, *"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God"* (Luke 8:11). God's timeless law of sowing and reaping applies in the spiritual world as well as the physical.
 - b. The seed, i.e., God's word, when planted in its purity will always produce Christians, nothing more and nothing less. It cannot produce Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans or any other "ism" or "ite." It cannot produce nor sustain any human denomination (and all denominations are of human origin).
4. Now another brief excursion into Peter's teachings – *"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because 'All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever.'* Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you" (1 Peter 1:22-25).
 - a. They purified their souls when they obeyed the truth (gospel).
 - b. They were born again through the incorruptible word of God.
 - c. That word of the Lord endures forever, even to this very moment in time.

- d. That word is that which was preached by the gospel.
- B. We call men to obey the gospel of Christ just as the first believers did when the Resurrected Lord was preached for the very first time on Pentecost (Acts 2).
 - 1. By doing what they did, we become what they became, merely Christians.
 - 2. When we do what they did, God does what He did, and adds those that are saved to the church (Acts 2:47), not to a denomination, Baptist or otherwise.
- C. What could be simpler and what appeal could be more valid?

ENDNOTES

¹ Baptist World Alliance. *BWA Statistics* 5 April 2002 Available [Online]:
<<http://www.bwanet.org/fellowship/member-bodies/member-stats.htm>> [9 April 2002].

² Southern Baptist Convention. *Baptist Faith and Message* Adopted 14 June 2002 Available [Online] <<http://www.sbc.net>> [9 April 2002]

³ Indiana Fundamental Baptist Fellowship. *Declaration of Faith, Article 4* Available [Online] <<http://members.iquest.net/~grace/ifbf.htm>> [9 April 2002]

⁴ Spurgeon, Charles H. *300+ Sermons from the New Park Street Pulpit*; Sermon # 27 entitled, *The Eternal Name*. Available [Online] <<http://www.bible.net/books/0008/0027.htm>> [12 April 2002]

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CATHOLICISM

ORIGIN, HISTORY AND INFLUENCE

INTRODUCTION

A. I want to begin by saying that my research and study for this lesson has been about Catholic *doctrine* - **not** about Catholic *people*.

1. When Jesus spoke against the sect of the Pharisees, He did not speak of their person - He spoke of their actions, attitude (or heart) and their doctrine.
 - a. When Jesus referred to them as *hypocrites* and *blind guides* He was speaking of specific deeds they had done to show their hypocrisy and stiff-necked blindness.
 - b. When Jesus referred to them as *serpents and the offspring of vipers*, He showed specific acts they had done and would do to indicate that such was the nature to which they ascribed.
2. That there were good and honest people who were Pharisees or who followed Pharisaical doctrine is made obvious by people like **Jairus, Nicodemus, and Saul of Tarsus**.
 - a. While they believed and promoted doctrines not according to the word of God, they did it in all honesty and with good conscience.
 - b. That does not take away from the fact that they were in error - only that they were not evil in their intent.
3. There are many today who hold to Catholic doctrine and practice Catholicism with great passion and fervor.
 - a. Some call themselves Catholics neither knowing or caring if their doctrine and practice is consistent with the Bible or Catholicism.
 - b. Others, however, practice Catholicism devoutly, in all sincerity and honesty and with clear conscience.
 - c. However, if their doctrine and practice are in error, the fact that they practice it devoutly and in all honesty and sincerity takes away neither their error or their guilt.
 - d. While they may be good, even the best of people, as Jesus told the Sadducees, “***Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures ... You are therefore greatly mistaken***” (Mark 12:18, 27).

B. The intent of this lesson and those to follow during this hour over the next two days is to show that the origin of the Catholic church, the leadership of the Catholic church and many of the teachings of the Catholic church are not consistent with the teaching of the Scriptures, specifically the New Testament.

1. In the New Testament book of 2 Peter, the apostle goes into great detail describing false teachers and the fruit of their damnable doctrines.
2. There are false teachers who teach false doctrine because they have misinterpreted a passage due to insufficient study and because they are simply parroting the teaching of some one who lead them in error. Such men, if they are of honest and good heart, can easily be brought to the truth - and must be if they are to enjoy hope of eternal life.
3. On the other hand, there are false teachers, according to Peter, who secretly bring in destructive heresies (2:1); who deny the Lord who bought them (2:1); who blaspheme the way of truth (2:2); who, by covetousness, exploit listeners with deceptive words (2:3).

C. It is with both groups in mind that we present these lessons.

1. We want to bring honest and good hearts who are in error to the truth of God's word that they might enjoy hope of eternal life.
2. We also, for the sake of those who might be deceived by them, want to mark and avoid those false teachers who bring in destructive heresies, deny the Lord who bought them, blaspheme the way of truth, and who exploit listeners with deceptive words.

D. For a few minutes, then, I'd like to discuss with you:

1. How the Catholic church came into being.
2. A few excerpts from history as to the activity of the Catholic church.
3. The influence this church has had on the religion of Christianity.

E. In the time allotted, we will not be able to go into much detail. There are, however, resources that can be made available to you which go into greater detail if you are interested.

DISCUSSION

I. THE ORIGIN OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

A. To understand the origin or the beginnings of the Catholic church, one must be, at least, vaguely familiar with the church described in the New Testament.

1. The Lord's church, though being in the mind of God since before the beginning of

time, had its inception on the day of Pentecost in the year A.D. 33 as penitent believers were added to the church when they were baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2).

2. As the church (the people of God) grew in number, they spread throughout the world establishing congregations of church members.
 3. The Apostle Paul taught, by inspiration, that these churches were to be ruled over by elders; men who met the qualifications laid down by the Holy Spirit of God (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7).
 4. In the New Testament there are three designations given to the men who would serve the church in this way: Bishops, Pastors, and Elders.
 - a. The definitions of these terms essentially sum up their responsibilities to the church.
 - b. They are to be **overseers (Bishops)** that see to the work of the church.
 - c. They are to be **shepherds (Pastors)** which spiritually feed and care for the church.
 - d. They are to be **Elders**, men of sufficient age to use with wisdom the knowledge provided in God's word to benefit the church.
 5. The men appointed to this office in the church are strictly forbidden from using their position for their benefit or to attempt to ***"lord over the flock"*** (1 Peter 5).
 - a. They are instructed that the flock belongs to *God* and that they are to feed it, oversee it, and be examples to it.
 - b. They are instructed to be servants submitting to the needs of the church (much like Jesus submitted to the needs of man).
- B. It was prophesied, however, that men would depart from these instructions causing great strife and division in the church.
1. Paul, speaking to the elders of the church in Ephesus, gave this stern warning: ***"For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, from among yourselves men will rise up speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after themselves"*** (Acts 20:29-30).
 2. Brethren and friends, if one could sum up the activity of the men who have led the Catholic church over the past 2000 years, it could be done no better than Paul's prophecy here.

3. It was from the eldership of the church that men rose up, spoke perverse things and drew away disciples after themselves.
 4. Paul expanded on that prophecy in writing to the church at Thessalonica and to Timothy.
 - a. Note specifically about what he warned Timothy (1 Timothy 4:1-3).
 - b. When discussing the second coming of Christ with the church at Thessalonica Paul prophesied (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).
 5. Time forbids to give a proper and complete discussion of these verses and those to follow.
 6. Paul's prophecy did not wait long before it began to happen.
 7. The apostles were barely cold in their graves before men who were elders in the church began departing from the teachings of those apostles.
- C. Do not misunderstand me to say that I think having an eldership is a bad idea.
1. That the church is to be led and fed in the word of God by elders is the God-ordained method for church maturity.
 2. Men, however, have the freedom of choice to follow God or not.
 3. The very things about which Peter and Paul warned elders are the things which, to many of them, became (become) vices.
 4. This is why it is so vital that men who are appointed to this position in a congregation meet the qualifications laid down by the Spirit of God.
 5. I hope, through the course of these lessons, to prove to you, however, that not all men (elders) fall prey to Satan in these ways.
 6. The church of our Lord, through peril and sword, has successfully continued through the ages - overcoming even the gates of hades by the power and wisdom of God.

II. THE HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

- A. As the church spread throughout the world, some men appointed to the position of elder/bishop began to assume for themselves more authority than God had given them.

1. For the next few minutes, I want to share with you some excerpts from history showing how the Catholic church became the Catholic church and how it progressed as such.
2. No one woke up one day and said, "I want to begin the Catholic church."
 - a. This was not a general movement, but a series of isolated events which Satan used to attempt to destroy the work of Christ and the apostles.
 - b. It was often a matter of well educated men who, in a time when education was not a fundamental right, were forced to the forefront.
 - c. Rather than humbly using their education to further God's purpose, some of them fell to the temptation of furthering themselves.
 - d. Some of the most astounding comments I've read come from a modern Catholic historian - a man who says that he is Catholic and will be Catholic, regardless of the history of the Catholic church. He said:

Those who so far have not been seriously confronted with the facts of history will sometimes be shocked at how human the course of events were everywhere, indeed how many of the institutions and constitutions of the church - especially the central Roman Catholic institution of the papacy - are man made.¹

4. On some matters, this man is closer to the truth than some of my own brethren. He says, further:
 - a. **"The original meaning of *ekklesia*, 'church,' was not a hyperorganization of spiritual functionaries, detached from the concrete assembly. It denoted a community gathering at a particular place at a particular time for a particular action - a local church, though with the other local churches it formed a comprehensive community, the whole church."**

¹ Hans Kung, *The Catholic Church A Short History*, Translated by John Bowden (A Modern Library chronicles book), p. xxv

- b. **“According to the New Testament, every individual local community is given what it needs for human salvation: the gospel to proclaim, baptism ..., the celebration of a meal in grateful remembrance, ... Thus every local church makes the whole church fully present; indeed, it may understand itself - in the language of the New Testament - as people of God, body of Christ, and building of the Spirit. Assembly, house, community, church of Jesus Christ. That means the origin and the name carry with them an obligation: the church has to serve the cause of Jesus Christ. Where the church does not realize the cause of Jesus Christ or distorts it, it sins against its being and loses that being.”²**
 - 1) I am not sure Mr. Kung understands the New Testament concept that I am a part of the church of Christ, even if I am not assembled with the saints.
 - 2) But I am impressed with some of his statements as they seem so contrary to what Catholic doctrine maintains. (We will look at some of those doctrines in our next lesson.)
5. The purpose of Jesus Christ when He came to this earth was to glorify God by seeking and saving the lost. That must be the purpose of the church ... if not, we distort our being.
6. Did (does) the Catholic church throughout history distort that purpose?
 - a. Jesus, in seeking to glorify God, proclaimed on many occasions that He came to do the will of Him that sent Him (John 5:19, 30; 6:38; 8:28).
 - b. God is glorified when we do His will. God is not glorified when we substitute our will for His on any matter.
7. Notice with me some subtle and not so subtle changes and substitutions made to God’s will that resulted in a departure of the church from the faith revealed in the New Testament.
- B. In the second century, some began to make a distinction between the term **“elder”** and **“bishop.”** Remember that no such distinction is made in the New Testament.
 1. **Ignatius of Antioch** (between A.D. 110 and 150) began advocating a single bishop over the elders.
 - a. He divided the offices of the church into three categories: bishop, presbyter and deacons.

² Ibid, p. 5-6

- b. How firm he held this conviction is in question as he, in writing a letter to the church at Rome, did not address a bishop.
- c. Likely, this was a local problem at the church in Antioch. Maybe he was promoting himself as *the* Bishop in *that* congregation.
- d. I like Hans Kung's comment on this - remember, he is a Catholic historian. That fact makes his statement profound. After stating that a certain document upon which the Catholic church relied for years to prove "apostolic succession" has been proven to be a forgery, he says:

Thus the presbyteral-episcopal church constitution is not based on any institution by Jesus Christ and can in no way be seen as absolutely intrinsic to Christianity, if one uses as a measure the words of Jesus himself, the earliest community, and the charismatic constitution of the Pauline churches.³

- e. Unfortunately, in his next statement, he says that since the "presbyteral-episcopal church constitution" became the norm in post-apostolic churches, it is not apostasy.
- f. That's funny isn't it?
 It is not according to the words of Jesus,
 it is against the pattern of New Testament churches
 and it is of absolutely no intrinsic value to the Christianity,
 but it is not apostasy!

2. **Tertullian** lived in the second half of the first century.

- a. He worked to establish the church of Christ at Rome as being the prime example to follow.
- b. I have no doubt that the Roman congregation was a good church. But due to Tertullian's work, this congregation began to be exalted over other churches.
- c. Please excuse my continued references to Kung's work, but that he is Catholic and yet can make some of the admissions he does, to me, is incredible.

³ Ibid, p. 22

In Rome in particular there was initially no monarchical episcopate, and we know hardly more than the names of bishops of the first two centuries (the first date in papal history is thought to be 222, the beginning of the pontificate of Urban 1). The promise to Peter from the gospel of Matthew (16.18), “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church,” which is so central for today’s bishops of Rome ... is not once quoted in full in any of the Christian literature of the first centuries - apart from a text in Tertullian, and this does not quote the passage in connection with Rome but in connection with Peter.⁴

- d. Despite, however, the lack of Biblical evidence or authority for it, by the end of the third century, some bishops were considering themselves successors to the apostles.
 - e. Apostolic succession is a claim the popes still use to substantiate their claim to be pope - yet not one scripture can substantiate that claim!
- C. When **Constantine** became Emperor and relieved much of the persecution the Roman government had placed upon the church, things began to change swiftly in the church.
- 1. The Roman church became more prominent due to the Emperor’s support - which was natural since he lived in Rome.
 - a. While the bishop of Rome was not overly regarded at this time, with the elevation of the Roman church, he would soon come to be.
 - b. The influential Roman church was often regulated in doctrine by the Emperor - thus an attitude of disregard for the Bible as the authority became a plague to the church.
 - 2. The council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) was called by the Emperor Constantine, and held in his home in Nicaea.
 - a. While the Emperor may have been a religious man, his efforts seemed to be more for unity in the Empire than in the church - he used the church as a tool to obtain and maintain imperial unity.
 - b. The Arian doctrine concerning the nature of Christ was causing division in the church, and Constantine wanted that division stopped as a division in the church would cause division in his empire.

⁴ Ibid. p. 41

- c. So he called a council of several bishops of metropolitan churches, a council over which he presided.
 3. By this effort, not only was the idea of “a” bishop in a church fostered, but the idea of Metropolitan churches being more important than smaller country churches was fostered as well.
 4. A result of this council was that, by imperial decree, church provinces were to correspond with imperial provinces - each with a metropolitan and a provincial synod.⁵
 5. Thus the beginning of the Imperial Church.
- D. After Constantine, his sons took over and one of them (Constantius) began a persecution of pagan religions.
1. By the end of the fourth century, Constantine’s form of Christianity became the State religion - which meant it was illegal to practice any other religion.
 2. Now the *persecuted* church became the *persecuting* church.
 3. Not only were pagans persecuted, but any who practiced Christianity outside the decrees of the Emperor’s church were considered a heretic and were punishable by death.
- E. Over the next few centuries, more councils were held implementing more and more new teachings, doctrines and laws.
1. The early “Catholic” church (fourth and fifth centuries) was divided up into 5 patriarchates with Rome evolving to be the most influential.
 2. Any hope of the evolved Catholic church using the Bible as it’s sole authority was quickly vanishing as Papal power was a force that proved to be irresistible to those who held that office.

III. THE INFLUENCE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

- A. The power of the pope came to be such that it was decreed that when He spoke, he was infallible.
1. Listen to the words of pope Gregory VII of the eleventh century. Before becoming pope his name was Hildebrand.

⁵ Ibid, p. 36

- a. He influenced Nicholas II to form the College of Cardinals which took papal election from the people and put it totally into the hands of the church.
- b. Through his influence pope Alexander II was able to make alliances with the Normans of Southern Italy, France, Spain, England and Germany - making the Catholic church the state church in those countries.⁶
- c. Through his puppeteering and manipulation, the position of the papacy was greatly strengthen - at which time he took the position. Upon becoming pope, Hildebrand said:

The Roman Church was founded by God alone; the Roman pope alone can with right be called universal; he alone may use the imperial insignia; his feet alone shall be kissed by all princes; he may depose the Emperor; he himself may be judged by no one; the Roman church has never erred, nor will it err in all eternity.⁷

2. Again, this did not happen over night - but nonetheless it happened.
3. The doctrine of “ex-cathedra” declared in 1870 that when the pope spoke in ex-cathedra, he was literally speaking for God.
4. Being that the Catholic church was the State church, it being a crime to go against said church, you can imagine what influence this had upon religion in general.
5. While, during the dark ages men were not educated (by decree of the Catholic church), men were not stupid.
6. Men could see the corruption taking place - some of them took public stands against the Catholic church, giving their lives in so doing.

B. Think about how the following “Catholicisms” would affect society:

1. **The Interdict.**

- a. If the world in general believed that
 - worship can only take place with a Catholic priest;
 - marriage can be legitimate only if performed by a Catholic priest;

⁶ Tracy Dugger, History of Catholicism, 2000 Houston College of the Bible Lectureship - Roman Catholicism, edited by David P. Brown (Gospel Light Publishing Co.) p. 34

⁷ Winston Walker, A History Of The Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), pp. 192-193

- forgiveness can be given only by a Catholic priest;
- and that funerals can be performed only by a Catholic priest

what would happen in a country where those “blessings” were withheld from religious people?

- The “Christian” world was told that such was the power of the Catholic church.
- If the ruling authority of a particular country was not in favor with the pope, the pope could impose an **interdict** - essentially closing the doors of the church in that country, causing the priests not to fulfill their duties.
- The people would, in turn, revolt causing the king to submit to the pope.
- Do you want to know why
 - we have “church weddings” today?
 - people still go to the preacher to confess sins (rather than confessing faults one to another)?
 - people think the church is the place where people go to worship rather than being the people who go to worship?

It is all because of the influence the Catholic church had during the “dark ages.”

- Excommunication** is when the pope withdraws God’s forgiveness and God’s grace from a person. It was often used as a tool to force submission - not to the will of God, but to the will of the pope.
- The Crusades.**
 - The papal church was so large in number and devotion that often kings would call upon them to help in military efforts.
 - The first crusades were for the purpose of getting the “Holy Lands” back from the Muslims.
 - The Catholic church later used crusades to bring into subjection whole nations.
 - Such was a complete disregard for Jesus’ own teachings concerning the nature of His kingdom.
 - The atrocities that took place “in the name of God” via crusades are unmentionable in polite or impolite society.

- f. Recruitment into the papal army was done by not only providing wages to and pronouncing blessings upon any and all soldiers, but also providing them the opportunity to sin without disfavor through the granting of indulgences (the right to sin).

4. **The Inquisitions.**

- a. Let's suppose that our government has the right to judge your faith and if they find your faith not compliant with their standard, they can then execute you.
 - b. Let's suppose, in such a state, you have no say in your "trial;" anyone can accuse you of heresy and you are not allowed to know your accuser.
 - c. Let's suppose that you have only two choices in your trial - confess guilt or be tortured ... innocence is not an option.
 - d. If those conditions prevailed, how many people do you think would openly object to your country's faith?
 - e. Such was the impact the Catholic church had on society during the dark ages.
- C. Throughout the centuries, there were men and groups of men (congregations) who opposed all that for which the Catholic church and the pope stood.
- 1. We often think of the reformation movement beginning with men like Martin Luther.
 - 2. But throughout the centuries there have been men appealing for the church to return to its New Testament origin.
 - 3. During what we call the reformation, the Catholic church would stop at no means to regain its lost favor in the world.
 - a. The **Jesuit Order** was a military order of priests with the authority to kill any who protested against the Catholic church.
 - b. The Catholic doctrine of "**intentionalism**" states that any means justifies the end of the greater glory of God.
 - c. The doctrine of "**mental reservation**" states that it is okay to not tell the truth if it were for the purpose of promoting the church.
 - d. The object was to establish loyalty to an organization - the Catholic church - loyalty to God was not considered.

4. Time forbids us from going in to a study of the lives of faithful men who withstood these forces throughout the history of the Catholic church - to them, the inspired scriptures they followed, and the grace of God, you and I are indebted today.

CONCLUSION

- A. From history we should learn that the Catholic church of past and present feeds on the ignorance of the people. When enlightenment comes, Catholicism wanes.
- B. If a person couples a love for and desire to be with God with a knowledge of the Bible and a knowledge of the history of the Catholic church, he cannot choose to follow the direction of the Catholic church and still claim to love God and desire to be with Him.

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CATHOLICISM

AUTHORITY AND DOCTRINE

INTRODUCTION

A. Today, it is my responsibility to deal with Catholic doctrine.

1. According to the letter I got from the elders here, I am to deal with the sources of authority of the Catholic church and its doctrines (teachings) concerning man, sin, God, Christ, judgment, salvation, the church, etc.
2. That is quite a difficult task as it depends on in which century one lives as to what the Catholic church held one accountable on these doctrines.
3. Where does one begin in speaking of the doctrine of a nearly 2000 year old church whose primary authority is the men who lead it?
4. In 1952 there was a debate in which the proposition was **“The New Testament Is The Supreme Authority in the Christian Religion”** ... and a Catholic priest opposed that proposition. He said,

What is the supreme authority, the last court of appeal, in the Church founded by Jesus Christ? Mr. Stevens replies, ‘The New Testament and that alone.’ I say, ‘No! The living voice of the living church founded by Jesus Christ and teaching in His name and with his authority all peoples in all ages until He shall come again.

The first and primitive Christians did what I do. They didn’t listen to a book; they listened to the living voice of the living Church.

I believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God. I don’t believe it is to be used in the way that my opponent says. I say that is the reason for all the trouble we’re having today in religion. They are using something that Jesus Christ never intended them to use.

The Church did not come from the scriptures. The scriptures came from the church.

...it is the inspired word of God. What I’m denying is that it is the ultimate court of appeal when we’re to find out what Jesus Christ taught.¹

B. When discussing authority with a potential convert, my first goal is to establish our authority in matters of faith as being the word of God ... the Bible.

1. No church that exists today should be able to step outside of the Bible either to learn or teach

¹ Very Reverend Eric Beevers, Ph.D., Stevens-Beevers Debate on The New Testament and Roman Catholicism, pp 32-38.

their doctrine.

2. As we continue, I hope to show you why that is the case.

C. It is the plea of the churches of Christ that men will return to the Bible to determine what is of faith.

1. The Protestant churches developed in the Reformation years cried out to reform the Catholic Church

2. As we have already discussed, the Apostles prophesied a departure from the faith once delivered.

3. The Roman Catholic Church, after a period of religious evolution, is at least in part the fulfillment of that prophecy.

4. The reformation years produced men who, rather than attempt to bring the church back to the Bible, attempted to reform the church to resemble its original apostate form.

D. It is because of the Catholic church's reliance on the private interpretations of men and their additions to the word of God that, in its nearly 2000 years of existence, it has developed new and strange doctrines that have taken it further and further away from the Bible.

1. In this lesson, I want to deal with three doctrines that I feel have been most influential in aiding and abetting the Roman departure.

2. I don't think that these doctrines are any worse than their other departures, as one sin is no worse than any other.

3. I do believe, however, that the departures we will be discussing have led to the majority, if not all, of the other departures.

E. Before getting to that point I'd like to share with you a list² of departures from the teachings of the Bible and the approximate time in which those departures came about.

1. As I did not research all of these dates, I do not claim that the dates are accurate.

2. However, as these doctrines/practices are taught and/or observed by the Catholic church even today, I would not have you doubt them as true departures.

3. Please notice that none of these doctrines or practices is found in the Bible (See the chart at the end of the lesson).

² John Shannon, Why I Left The Roman Catholic Church, 1992 Shenandoah Lectures - Denominationalism Verses The Bible, edited by Terry M. Hightower (Austine McGary and Company) p. 134.

- F. In my opinion, the greater sin is not so much that they believe some of these things, but that they teach they are essential to having a right relationship with God.
1. If a man, for example, wants to kiss another man's toe - he is more than welcome to do that - but to insist that such is an ordinance of God is to go beyond the teachings of the Bible and therefore sinful.
 2. If a man thinks that touching his forehead, bellybutton, and two shoulders with his fingertips will help him hit a baseball better, have at it - but to think that such an action will invoke the aid of God in his effort is to think outside the sphere of Biblical authority.
 3. If a man wants to be celibate and be a preacher at the same time, there is nothing wrong with that - but for the church to make that a requirement upon him is to take upon itself more authority than God has given.
- G. Before going further, I think it only fair to note that not everything the Catholic church teaches is wrong.
1. From what I can determine, they believe in God as the Creator and that He created the earth in six literal days.
 2. They believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the virgin born Christ of God and, in fact, have for centuries opposed what we know as the doctrine of the Jehovah's Witnesses about Jesus' not being fully deity.
 3. They believe that man is a living soul made in the image of God and that, therefore, abortion, the killing of a human fetus, is a sin.
 4. There are other such doctrines held by the Roman Catholic Church on which we do not disagree - but it would be outside our purposes today to discuss them.
- H. Now, let's deal with some teachings of the Catholic church. Had they not fallen away on these points, they would not have fallen away on these others.

INTRODUCTION

I. THE DOCTRINE OF APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

- A. By apostolic succession the Catholic church means that they can trace the ordination of each successive pope back to the apostles, specifically Peter.
- B. I don't want you to take my word that this is a fundamental doctrine of the Catholic Church. Hear their own sources.

1. The Knights of Columbus is a Catholic organization.
 - a. It was created by a Catholic priest in the 1800's to give Catholic men a civic/fraternal organization on par with and in competition with other such civic/fraternal organizations forbidden to Catholics.
 - b. They are responsible for much good work and many charitable deeds.
 - c. They, being made up of Catholic men, strongly defend the Catholic church, its popes, bishops, priests, and doctrines.
 - d. One way by which they do this is in their publication of "advertisements" in national magazines and newspapers. Some of their titles are:

"Why the Bible Alone Is Not Enough"

"The Bible Is A Catholic Book"

"Yes, The Bible Is a Confusing book!"

"Yes ... A Priest Can Forgive Your Sins

"Yes, Christ Gave Us The Catholic Mass"

2. In one such publication, **The Papacy: Expression of God's Love**, we find the following significant quote.

... The name of Peter, which means the foundation, has become inseparable from his person. He carries and takes about with him his position as a Rock. And as that position is one of those which can never again be absent from the church, any more than the foundation of a building can be taken away, all the indications are that the successors of Peter must inherit his title, his mission, his authority. The whole doctrine of the Catholic Church rests upon this basis.³

- a. Such is the confidence the defenders of the Catholic faith have in the doctrine of apostolic succession.
- b. One would think that, if it can be proven that there is no such thing as apostolic succession, they would be the first to tear down the Catholic Church which rests upon that foundation.

³ The Papacy: Expression of God's Love, Catholic Information Service, (New Haven, CT: Knights of Columbus, n.d.), pp. 22-23.

- c. While it can be proven both Biblically and historically that apostolic succession is both a false doctrine and a fraud, don't get your hopes up that they will crank up their demolition crew.
- C. It is my contention that the idea of a "hierarchy" in the church is far removed from what the Bible teaches as concerns the leadership of the Lord's church.
 - 1. The Lord's church is not an institution over which man has or can have dominion. It is *the Lord's* church!
 - a. Yes, the Eldership is the divinely ordained form of church leadership.
 - 1) The elders are to feed the sheep of God. Such is the work of a *servant*, not a master.
 - 2) The elders are in a position, not so much of authority, but of submission - they are *servants to* the church, not *lords over* the church.
 - 3) The people of God need food - spiritual food. The elders of the church have the authority and obligation to supply that food to the church from the word of God.
 - b. Do the elders have any authority in the church?
 - 1) Of course, they do. If, when the Lord comes, they are going to be held
 - 2) They have the authority to make sure no wolves enter into the flock to devour the sheep.
 - 3) They have the authority to reveal those who are wolves in sheep's clothing.
 - 4) They have the authority to bring wandering sheep back into the fold by means given them in the New Testament.
 - c. The elders/bishops *do not*, however, have the authority to
 - 1) Change the word of God.
 - 2) Tell a congregation outside of the one which they have oversight what they must do.
 - 3) Make one elder more important than another.
 - 2. According to Hans Kung the term "hierarchy" was not introduced into the church until some 500 years after Christ, and then by **"an unknown theologian who hid**

behind the mask of Paul's disciple, Dionysius.”⁴

- a. He further states that the term “priest” was never used in New Testament times **“for those who serve in the Christian communities. Here, rather, the word ‘presbyter,’ or ‘elder,’ is used.”**⁵
- b. He goes on to state that each Christian community (church) had its own set of elders and **“we cannot establish historically whether there was a distinctive constitution of elders in Jerusalem which claimed to have jurisdiction over the local church and then the church as a whole.”**⁶
- c. While it *can* be determined that there was an eldership in Jerusalem (Acts 15:4, 6, 22), Kung’s point was to prove that *James* was the church leader and *not Peter* ... so, Kung asks, how/when did Peter take charge?
- d. He further states that the term “priest” was never used in New Testament times **“for those who serve in the Christian communities. Here, rather, the word ‘presbyter,’ or ‘elder,’ is used.”**⁷
- e. He goes on to state that each Christian community (church) had its own set of elders and **“we cannot establish historically whether there was a distinctive constitution of elders in Jerusalem which claimed to have jurisdiction over the local church and then the church as a whole.”**⁸
- f. While it *can* be determined that there was an eldership in Jerusalem (Acts 15:4, 6, 22), Kung’s point was to prove that *James* was the church leader and *not Peter* ... so, Kung asks, how/when did Peter take charge?
- g. One of Kung’s conclusions was this:

Peter was undoubtedly the leader of the earliest Jerusalem community - not, however (and this is decisive) alone, but only together with the group of Twelve ... In the earliest church Peter doubtless had a special authority; however, he did not possess it

⁴ Hans Kung, *The Catholic Church A Short History*, Translated by John Bowden (A Modern Library chronicles book), p. 9.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

alone, but always collegially with others.⁹

3. Concerning Peter's position in the church at Rome, Kung says **"Catholic theologians concede that there is no reliable evidence that Peter was ever in charge of the church of Rome as supreme head or bishop."**¹⁰
4. Then there is this powerful quote from Kung:

Bishops of the Catholic church ... are fond of calling themselves 'successors of the apostles.' The presbyteral-episcopal constitution of the church is said to have been instituted by Jesus Christ, even to be a divine institution and therefore unchangeable divine law. However, it is not as simple as that. A careful investigation of the New Testament sources in the last hundred years has shown that this church constitution, centered on the bishop, is by no means directly willed by God or given by Christ, but is the result of long and problematical historical development. It is human work and therefore in principle can be changed ... Any reader of the Bible can see ... that there is not a word ... about a legal institution of the church.¹¹

- a. His remarks are true as concerns the placing of a bishop as the legal head of the church or group of churches. There is no Biblical authority of the concept of "a bishop."
 - b. His remarks are true about it being a human work. The humanity of it is seen in the battles that have taken place for the position of leader of the church.
 - c. If their ordination is of divine or apostolic authority, then why have some, over the years, fought over the position to the point of blood and death?
 - d. If their ordination is of divine or apostolic authority, then how could it possibly be that men full of sins such as polygamy, fornication, murder, etc. could be appointed to that position?
 - e. In 1377 there were two popes. In 1409 there were three popes ... it was never determined which, if any was the true successor to Peter!
5. Believe it or not, the Catholic church has an answer ... and it's a real good one (not!).

⁹ Ibid, p. 10.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 11-12.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 19-20.

- a. Kung states that some historians give the title of pope to Leo I “the Great” (440-461).
- b. Leo argued for the Biblical, historical and legal elements of the Roman idea of primacy.
 - 1) His Biblical argument actually contains no Bible reference.
 - 2) His historical argument, says Kung, was based on a forged letter from “Pope” Clement to James the brother of the Lord concerning Peter’s last words.
 - 3) His legal argument is stated as such:

The successor might not inherit the personal characteristics and merits of Peter, but he did inherit the official authority and function handed on by Christ, so that even an unworthy pope was a completely legitimate successor and held the office as such ... (this still holds today).¹² [Emphasis mine, mru]

6. The Bible cannot be used to support this claim of the Catholic church and their own history shows it to be fraudulent.

II. THE LACK OF RESPECT FOR THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

- A. According to the Catholic Church, in lieu of the doctrine of apostolic succession, the pope, bishop, and priest are the ultimate authority.
 1. If, therefore, there is contradiction between the Bible and Catholic authorities, we must defer to the Catholic authorities.
 2. In that light, let me enlighten you as to the “wisdom” of some of those authorities.
 3. From the *Manual of Moral Theology* this quote is taken:

If I (a priest) know that someone has made up his mind to commit sin and there is no other way of preventing him, I may lawfully induce him to be satisfied with some less offence of God than he was bent on committing. And so, if a man was determined to commit adultery, I do nothing morally wrong, but rather to the contrary, by persuading him to commit fornication instead.¹³

¹² Ibid. pp. 57-58.

¹³ O. C. Lambert, *Roman Catholicism Against Itself* Vol. 2, p. 253.

4. Here's a quote from the Fourth Lateran Council concerning those crusaders who took up arms to fight for the Catholic Church:

We therefore, by the mercy of the omnipotent God, trusting in the authority of the Blessed Apostle Peter and Paul in virtue of that power of binding and loosing which God has conferred on us. Though unworthily, grant to all who aid in this work (Crusades) personally and at their own expense, a full remission of their sins.
(sic)¹⁴

- a. A reading of the events of the Crusades reveals not only killing in the name of the Roman Church (Christ) but looting, rape, pillaging and claiming as your own the properties that you captured.
 - b. According to that reasoning, if you are a big man - a mighty man of valor - with no moral scruples, and you know that neither law of man nor God forbids you from doing what ever you want or need to do win the battle and to the victor go the spoils - what would you do?
- B. I've already noted Mr. Beevers' opposition to the proposition that the New Testament is the sole authority for the church.
1. This priest in the Catholic church claims:

There is no religion on this earth, past or present, that has split, and split, and split, and split like Christianity.... What caused the split? Making the written word the supreme rule.¹⁵

2. Now, I ask you, how can one argue with such wisdom?
- C. The argument of the Catholic church is that, via the pope, they have (are) the living word of the living church.
1. By that they mean that the church throughout the ages is forever growing into a mature man.
 2. What a baby needs is not what a man needs. Thus, as you would not give steak and potatoes to a baby, you would not give baby formula or breast milk to a man.
 3. We need a *living* word, they say, thus indicating that the Bible is not "*living and*

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 247.

¹⁵ Ibid. Beevers, p. 61.

active” (Hebrews 4:12) as it claims for itself.

4. Hear their priest’s own words on this matter:

When you go home, I want you to take out that baby photo of you when you were two or three weeks old, and look in the mirror! It’s you, isn’t it? It’s you! But you don’t look like that picture. Why? Because life is growth. You can no more go back to first century Christianity in the sense of acting the way they did than I can go back to being that little baby. Life! Growth! Whenever a thing stops growing, it is dying! We are not first Century Christians; we are not primitive Christians; we are twentieth century Christians.... I do believe it [the Bible, mru] is the inspired word of God, but I do *not* [emphasis his] believe that Jesus Christ ever intended it to be the *supreme court* [emphasis his]. The living voice of the living Church! ‘My Church!’ He didn’t say, ‘my written word’ or ‘my book’, he said, ‘my Church.’...the living voice of the living Church is the supreme authority ...¹⁶

- D. Time will not allow here for a complete refutation of such. I will deal with this more thoroughly in my next lesson. But for now consider the following.

1. To the apostles Jesus said,

... the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things I said to you (John 14:26).

- a. **“*All things,*”** not some things, not things just for the first century infancy of the church, but **“*all things.*”**
- b. What **“*all things*”** are we talking about? Jesus explains:

When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; ... He will tell you things to come” (John 16:13) [emphasis mine, mru]

2. Paul declared to the elders in Ephesus, **“*I have kept back nothing ... declaring to you the whole counsel of God*”** (Acts 20:20-27). [emphasis mine, mru] Now I ask you, what part of the counsel of God is not considered in **“*the whole counsel of God*”**?

¹⁶ Ibid. Beevers, pp 58-61

- a. Now, I ask you, what part of the counsel of God is not considered in “*the whole counsel of God*”?
3. Poor Peter didn’t know about the living word of the living church when he proclaimed that “*His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness*” (2 Peter 1:3). [emphasis mine, mru]
4. And what about Paul teaching Timothy that “*All scripture is inspired of God ... that the man of God may be perfect [complete]*” (2Timothy 3:16-17). Didn’t Paul know that it is the living word of the living church, not the scriptures, that make the man of God or the church to mature?

II. THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN.

- A. Another doctrine that has had a major effect on the apostasy of the Catholic church is that of Original Sin.
- B. This departure is due to the former two that we’ve discussed.
 1. Had the error of apostolic succession and supremacy of the pope and his word over the New Testament not been made, this heresy would not have come to its fruition.
 2. This heresy came about early in church history and had the elders of the early congregations fulfilled their responsibility, the mouth of the false teacher(s) would have been stopped in the church.
- C. The implications of this doctrine are far reaching in that it affects the teaching of the Bible as to how salvation is achieved.
 1. Further, it impugns the justice of God taught throughout the scriptures.
 2. The doctrine apparently originated from Aurelius Augustine (354-430; there is some indication that Tertullian of the second century had such leanings).
 3. Kung says that Augustine ...

attempted to explain the sin of every human being from the biblical story of the fall of Adam, ‘in whom [instead of *after whose example*] all human beings sin.’ That is a downright mistranslation of Romans 5:12. In this way Augustine historicized, psychologized, indeed sexualized Adam’s primal sin.

For him, in complete contrast to Paul, it became original sin, which was determined sexually. For according to Augustine this original sin was transmitted to every new human being through the sexual act

and the fleshly, that is, self-centered desire (concupiscence) connected with it. Therefore, according to this theology every infant has already fallen victim to eternal death - unless it has been baptized.¹⁷

4. As the High Priest said, *“What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?”* (Mark 14:63-64).
5. This foolish doctrine brought about the doctrines of:
 - a. The immaculate conception.
 - b. The baptism of babies.
 - c. Godparents being able to take the sins of the baby upon themselves and be forgiven by the priest.
 - d. And others.

D. Simply put:

1. Sin is the transgression of God’s law (1John 3:4). Transgression is a willful act of which a baby is not capable.
 - a. John teaches that *“he who sins is of the devil”* (1John 3:8).
 - b. If God can hold as accountable a baby who has no ability to either repent of sin (assuming the baby could even commit sin) or confess faith (trust) in Christ, then there is no justice in God!
 - c. If there is no justice in God, then the One we worship as God is not God for the Bible declares that justice is a part of His very nature.
2. It was God who said through the prophet Ezekiel

Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine; the soul who sins shall die (Ezekiel 18:4).
3. In Ezekiel chapters 3 and 33 God further explains that it is deeds of wickedness, iniquity and unrighteousness for which He will punish man.
4. He states that it is the wicked man who refuses to turn from wickedness whom He will hold accountable.

¹⁷ Ibid. Kung, p. 48-49.

5. I ask you, what deed of wickedness, iniquity and unrighteousness can a baby willfully commit?

CONCLUSION

- A. If one can read the Bible and hold to any of these doctrines, he has rejected the doctrine of Christ.
- B. If a person or a church rejects the doctrine of Christ, I cannot, yea will not, have any fellowship with him, nor will I or can I receive him (accept him) into my house (2John 9-11).
- C. The decision is yours - but it is not without eternal consequence.

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DEPARTURES FROM THE APOSTOLIC WAY

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>YEAR</u>
Prayers for the Dead	AD 300
Making the Sign of the Cross	AD 300
Wax Candles	AD 300
Veneration of Angels and Dead Saints, Use of Images	AD 375
The Mass as a Daily Celebration	AD 394
Beginning of Exaltation of Mary, the Term Mother of God	AD 431
Priests Began to Dress Differently from Laymen	AD 500
The Doctrine of Purgatory, Established by Gregory I	AD 593
Latin as the Official Language of worship Imposed by Gregory I	AD 600
Prayers Directed to Mary, Dead Saints, and Angels	AD 600
Instrumental Music Introduced in Worship	AD 600
Title of Pope or Universal Bishop, Given to Boniface III	AD 606
Kissing of the Pope's Foot	AD 709
Temporal Power of Popes Given by Pepin, King of France	AD 750
Worship of the Cross, Images, and Relics Authorized	AD 786
Holy Water, Mixed with Salt, and Blessed by Priest	AD 850
College of Cardinals Established	AD 927
Canonization of Dead Saints, by Pope John XV	AD 995
Fasting on Fridays and During Lent	AD 998
Celibacy of the Priesthood Decreed by Pope Gregory VII	AD 1079
The Rosary Begun by Peter the Hermit	AD 1090
Sale of Indulgences	AD 1190
Transubstantiation Proclaimed by Pope Innocent III	AD 1215
Auricular Confession of Sins to the Priest Instituted by Pope Innocent III	AD 1215
Bible Forbidden to Laymen, Placed on the Index of Forbidden Books	AD 1229
Pouring Officially Substituted for Baptism	AD 1311
Cup Forbidden to the People at Communion by Council of Constance	AD 1414
Purgatory Proclaimed as a Dogma	AD 1438
Tradition Declared to be Equal in Authority to the Bible	AD 1545
Apocryphal Books Added to the Catholic Bible	AD 1546
Immaculate Conception of Mary	AD 1854
Infallibility of the Pope	AD 1870

CATHOLICISM VERSUS THE BIBLE

DISCUSSION

- A. Our lesson today will not deal specifically with the Catholic church.
 - 1. We have noted errors of the Catholic church over the past two days.
 - 2. In compliance with the desire of the elders here, I want to show the nature, origin, authority and beliefs of the church as described in the Bible.
 - 3. Again, time nor space will allow for a full discussion of these matters.
- B. The church has been in the mind of God since before the foundation of the world.
 - 1. The central focal point of the Bible is to show how that through God's power demonstrated in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ; all men can be saved from the guilt of their sins.
 - 2. When Jesus, God's Christ, came to earth, He came to do the will of the Father - to seek and save the lost - to gather the saved unto Himself.
 - 3. That gathering of the saved is the church.
 - 4. Thus - as Jesus Christ is the focal point of the Bible and as the church is a part of Jesus and His work, the church (the saved of God) are a part of the theme of the entire Bible.
 - 5. I cannot, obviously, in one lesson, in one hour show all that God has designed as concerns the church.
- C. It will be my effort, then, to show what the Bible says about the church as it has bearing on false teachings of the Catholic church.

DISCUSSION

- I. THE NATURE OF GOD, MAN, AND THE EFFECTS OF SIN.
 - A. The Bible teaches concerning **God**.
 - 1. *"He is and He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him"* (Hebrews 11:6).
 - 2. He is eternal: *"From everlasting to everlasting, You are God"* (Psalm 90:1-2).

3. He is everywhere.

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall fall on me,' even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You (Psalm 139:7-12).

4. He is all powerful:

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead (Romans 1:21).

5. He is all knowing:

And there is no creature hidden from his sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account (Hebrews 4:13).

6. He is love:

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him (1John 4:16).

7. He is just (fair - righteous) and merciful:

Justice [equity] and judgment [law] are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face (Psalm 89:14).

- a. Now, I ask you, what kind of justice is it if Adam sinned and I am held accountable or guilty because of his sin?
- 1) That is Catholic doctrine.
 - 2) Adam sinned, and I go to hell for it if I do not receive God's forgiveness through the pope.
- b. The Hebrew term translated "**justice**" means equity, impartiality, fairness. How is it equitable, impartial or fair that I am held accountable for the sins of another?

c. The Hebrew term translated “*judgment*” means law.

1) Divine law and divine fairness are the foundation of God’s throne.

2) Find a divine law that says I am guilty because of another’s sin - it can’t be done.

3) Divine law says I’m guilty because of my own sin.

d. Mercy goes before His face - and if it didn’t, Jesus would not have come to take my guilt upon Himself and I therefore would have no hope.

8. He is holy (pure): “*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts*” (Isaiah 6:3).

9. He grieves in His heart when man sins (Genesis 6:1-6).

10. He wants all men to be in heaven (2 Peter 3:9).

C. The Bible teaches concerning **Satan**.

1. He is a liar - the father of all liars (Genesis 3:1-5, John 8:44).

2. He blinds men to the truth (2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Acts 26:15-18)

3. He tempts (entices) men to sin and is cunning and crafty in the doing of it (Matthew 4:3; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1Thessalonians 3:5).

C. The Bible teaches concerning **Jesus**.

1. He is God’s “*beloved Son, in whom I [God] am well pleased*” (Matthew 3:17).

2. He is God in a man’s flesh (John 1:1-14; Colossians 1:15-16).

3. He died (paid the debt) for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 2:24).

4. He is the “*Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” (John1:29).

D. The Bible teaches concerning **sin**.

1. It separates man from God (Isaiah 59:1-2).

2. It is transgression of God’s law (1 John 3:4).

3. All men who are capable of transgressing God’s law are guilty (Romans 3:23).

- a. Note that it does not say that “*all are guilty because of Adam’s sin*” and therefore have fallen short of God’s glory.
 - b. Nor does it say that “*all have sin*” (Adam’s sin) and therefore are fallen short of God’s glory.
 - c. The text (contrary to Catholic teaching) says that “*all have sinned.*”
 - 4. The guilty must die (Romans 6:23; John 8:24) but through faith in God’s work in Christ Jesus man can have the gift of eternal life.
 - 5. Those defiled by sin cannot be where God is (Revelation 21:22-27).
- E. The Bible teaches concerning the **Bible**.
- 1. It came from God (2 Timothy 3:16).
 - 2. Man cannot be made perfect without it (2 Timothy 3:17).
 - 3. Its words apply to all men - those who reject it will be condemned by it (John 12:48).
 - 4. False teachers will attempt to pervert it’s teaching, but the word of God will endure forever (1 Timothy 4:1-2; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 4:3-4; 2 Peter 2:1-2).
 - 5. Keeping the commandments of Jesus in the Bible is a demonstration of our love for God (John 14:15).
- F. The Bible teaches concerning the nature of man and the effects of sin upon his relationship to God.
- 1. Man is a spirit made in the image (after the likeness) of God and that one day that spirit will return to God who gave it (Genesis 1:26-27; John 4:24; Job 32:8; Proverbs 20:27; Ecclesiastes 12:7).
 - 2. Man is separated from God by man’s own acts of willful sin (Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 3:23).
 - 3. In that separated state, man is without hope and without God in this world (Ephesians 2:12).
 - 4. That man can not make his own way back to God (Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 10:23).

II. GOD’S PLAN FOR SAVING MAN.

- A. If we are saved, it is by the grace of God that we are saved - nothing we do or are

commanded to do can change that fact.

1. We are not, yea cannot be, saved by a priest, a pope, or a godfather.
 2. No extreme unction, prayer or payment for those in hell, no amount of candle lighting, no last right can save man. These utensils used by the Catholic church have absolutely no Bible authority.
 3. God's gift (grace) to man is salvation - it is a covering of man's sinfulness with His (God's) own righteousness found in Christ.
 4. Listen to the Apostle Paul:
 - a. *... now the righteousness of God ... is revealed, being witnessed [testified to] by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God ... to all and on all who believe ... for all [Jew and Gentile] have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely [without any cost] by His grace ...* (Romans 3:21-24).
 - b. *...the grace [gift] of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men* (Timothy 2:11).
 - c. *... having been justified by His grace we should become the heirs according to the hope of eternal life* (Titus. 3:7).
- B. If man is saved, it is because God loved man.
- But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus* (Ephesians 2:4-5).
1. As an act of God's grace and as a manifestation of His love, we can be covered with the righteousness of Jesus.
 2. When God looks at the Christian, he does not see the man stained with sin - he sees the righteousness of Christ.
 3. If man is saved it is because God extended to man salvation as a gift.
 4. Can you think of any better news from God than that?
- C. If man is saved it is because of the good news of God's grace revealed in the gospel.

1. Remember, the Catholics believe the Bible is from God - but they do not believe it is our guide for the church today.
2. They believe that the word of the pope supercedes the Bible.
3. Now listen to what Paul said:

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you; unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

4. Poor Paul didn't know we should hang onto the word he preached which he received from God.
5. Folks, it is plain and clear from the scriptures that we are saved by the good news of God's grace.
6. We must trust the power and promise of God extended to us by an act of God's grace and found in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ - if we do not, we are still in our sins (1 Corinthians 15:17).
7. The word of God is incorruptible and it lives and abides forever (1 Peter 1:23).
 - a. It, as the seed of God, will produce after its kind.
 - b. Satan told Eve that she would become like God if she disobeyed.
 - c. The New Testament tells us we will become like God only if we obey.
8. If you pervert the word of God with your own teaching, you will be accursed by God (Galatians 1:8-9; Revelation 22:18-19).
9. If you do not obey the gospel (God's word), you will face a certain fate (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
- D. If you are saved it is because of the work of the Son of God; or we might say because of the work of God through His Son (John 14:6).
- E. If you are saved it is because of the blood God's Son shed upon the cross of Calvary (Ephesians 1:7; Revelation 1:5b,6; Romans 5:9).

1. The blood of Christ shed in his death is that which makes us right before God.
 2. We must be covered in it. We must make contact with it. How?
- F. If you are saved it is because God has placed you into His church. The Lord adds to His church daily those who are being saved (Acts 2:47).
1. What is His church?
 - a. The church is His called out.
 - b. Those who hear the call of the gospel and answer it come to Him for sanctification and cleansing.
 2. Those who are in (among) the church are saved; those who are not are lost.
 3. Those who are in the church are a part of the body of Christ - they are a part of God.
 4. One cannot be a part of God and at the same time remain in his sins. Sanctification must take place.
 - a. This is not done by holy water.
 - b. This is not done by an ordained priest.
 - c. This is not done for you by any man.
- G. How does sanctification take place?
1. One must first hear the gospel in order to answer its call to God.
 - a. Jesus taught that those who come to God must be drawn to God - they are drawn to God by the teaching/hearing of His word (John 6:44-45).
 - b. Paul taught that faith (trust in God for salvation) comes when we hear the words of God (Romans 10:17).
 2. To be saved by God, we must, upon hearing His word, trust that He is God, that He exists and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).
 3. The word of God reminds us that we are in sin and that we must turn from sinfulness if we are to be with God (Luke 13:3, 5).
 - a. God desires that all men repent and has called all men to repent (2Pt. 3:9; Acts

17:30).

- b. How foolish is the man who thinks he can remain in his sins and expect God to sanctify him.
 - c. Maybe if God could, He would - I can't say. But God cannot violate His holy nature.
 - d. He cannot receive something that is impure into His holiness or glory.
4. Those who are a part of God's holy people, the church, are those who have confessed Jesus of Nazareth as God's Son and their Lord (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10).
- a. The rule of Satan, self, and the world over one's life must be given up and the rule of Christ must begin and remain.
 - b. However, just claiming Jesus as Lord is not sufficient - it must be a matter of fact - something proven by obedience to the Father's will (Matthew 7:21).
5. Jesus' blood is the sanctifying element given by the grace of God to those who will hear, trust, repent, and confess Jesus as their Lord.
- a. That blood is reached in baptism in water for the remission of sins.
 - b. The blood was shed in His death (Revelation 1:5).
 - c. It is reached in the re-enactment of His death as we are baptized (not sprinkled) for the remission of our sin (Romans 6:3-5; Acts 22:16).
 - d. As baptism is a reenactment of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ -it is not done by means of sprinkling, but by immersion or a burial (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12).
 - e. As baptism is for penitent sinners - it is not for babies.

III. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

- A. The prophet Daniel once prophesied of the coming of God's kingdom (Daniel 2:28-45).
- 1. He told us of many kingdoms: Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome (among others).
 - 2. The text shows us that God would set up a kingdom in the days of the Roman rulers

that would overcome all earthly kingdoms (Daniel 2:44).

B. Isaiah told us that the days in which God's kingdom would be set up will be the last days (Isaiah 2:2-3).

1. The Hebrew writer and Peter taught that they (and we) lived in the last days (Hebrews 1:1-2; Acts 2:14-17).
2. In the last days, says Isaiah, the word of the Lord would go out from Jerusalem.
3. The record of Acts 1-2 shows the fulfillment of that prophecy.
4. Isaiah said that the kingdom would not be Jewish, but would be made up of all nations. Acts 10:34-35 shows the beginning of the fulfillment of that prophecy.

C. The kingdom, according to Jesus, would be established in the days of the apostles and those who heard Jesus' words (Mark 9:1).

1. By the time Paul wrote the Colossian brethren, the kingdom was well established.
2. On the first Pentecost feast after the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus our Savior, in fulfillment of prophecy:
 - a. The kingdom (the church) of God came (was established) in Jerusalem.
 - b. It came with power.
 - c. And salvation was given to those who called upon the name of the Lord (Isaiah 2; Daniel 2; Joel 2; Acts 2).
3. Any church having its beginning after that point is not God's kingdom.
4. Any church which does not continue in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship is not God's kingdom (Acts 2:42).

D. The guide - the authority for the church which belongs to God is God. Now listen to what God did:

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days [the last days in which we still live] spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things... (Hebrews 1:1-2).

1. God gave all authority and headship over the church, not to a pope, but to Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:22).
2. Jesus told the apostles to go and teach the world what Jesus had taught them (Matthew 28:19-20)
3. He told them that the Holy Spirit would give them all knowledge of what Jesus had told them - they (not the pope) would be His ambassadors (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13).
4. We are not left to use personal feelings, human philosophy, family traditions, or human religious leaders as our authority.
5. It is the doctrine of Christ revealed by the Spirit to the apostles that we are to use as our guide.
6. It is the word of God which is living and powerful (Hebrews 4:12).
7. In contrast to many of the vile men who've held the position of pope, Paul makes these remarks in 1 Thessalonians 2:3-13.

CONCLUSION

A. Further study would show the pattern of worship and living ordained by God in the New Testament.

1. A pattern that through the centuries has been violated over and over again by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church.
2. Paul, before he died, made it known that the church would be attacked by such elements. He warned us. **READ 2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-7.**

B. My advice: Heed the warning.

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THE COMMUNITY CHURCH MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the greatest internal threat facing the Lord's Church today can be summed up in one word - CHANGE. Instead of being content with our plea to restore distinctive New Testament Christianity, some want to change the Church to become more like the denominational world around us. Such proposed changes are seen in the role of women, music in worship, the style and emphasis in preaching, attitudes toward Bible authority, the place of baptism for the remission of sins and the work of the Holy Spirit.

During the days of the judges, Israel wanted a king to be "like all the nations" (I Samuel 8:5). God told Samuel that their proposed change was not a rejection of him, but a rejection of the ruling authority of God (v. 7). In like manner, many of the changes being advocated today represent a repudiation of the authority of God seen in the distinctive nature of the New Testament Church.

"Change agents" today have three options, according to Alan Highers, writing in The Spiritual Sword (2). First, they can leave the church. When it is clear that the leadership in a given congregation will not allow their proposed changes, they can identify with an established denomination where such changes are already accepted. Second, they can stay and continue to undermine the church. This is the insidious "termite" approach which eats away at the fabric and foundation of the church until it crumbles into denominationalism. Or, third, they can leave and form a "Community Church," which is "loosely affiliated with the Church of Christ," where they can institute their change agenda.

This lesson will explore the third option - the establishment of Community Churches, or what has been called "The Community Church Movement".

I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOVEMENT.

A. Descriptions of the Community Church.

1. John Ellas is quoted in The Christian Chronicle as saying that indicators such as "being less tradition-laden, freer in using new methods, not having a typical schedule of three services a week and often meeting in multi-purpose facilities" characterize Churches of Christ moving toward a community church model (Adams, 20).
2. In the same article, Mac Lynn said that churches following the trend demonstrate "a desire to distance themselves from the stereotype generally recognized as 'Church of Christ'. They will be less rigid on the points of doctrine which have been defining marks of Churches of Christ - worship style, preaching style, cooperative work with denominational bodies. They are a new generation of church just in the stages of birth" (20).

3. E. Claude Gardner, in the December, 1977 issue of the Gospel Advocate quotes J. Ralph Shotwell, who said, "A Community Church is one that seeks to be inclusive rather than exclusive." Gardner adds, "The members come from any and all denominations, and a person is free to believe whatever he chooses. Biblical authority is not the standard. A belief in the special influence of the Holy Spirit does exist" (26).
4. "The cardinal rule among them [Community Churches] is to appear non-traditional. They are characterized by a casual dress code, 'contemporary' music, non-distinctive public speech which endeavors to focus the attention of the assembly on a celebration-type atmosphere, interdenominational acceptance, small group orientation, personal testimonies, praise teams, and in their beginning stages a brazen acceptance of financial support from the churches they intend to take over" (McDade 81).

B. Features of the Community Church.

1. Alan Highers lists the following as features common to most Community Churches:
 - a. Contemporary music and what might be called "upbeat worship."
 - b. Eliminating or diminishing the name "Church of Christ."
 - c. Casual emphasis in worship, both in style and dress.
 - d. Different kind of leadership model than "authoritarian" elders.
 - e. Praise teams and entertainment orientation in worship.
 - f. A greater emphasis on "self," including one's own feelings and emotions.
 - g. De-emphasis on doctrine and the restoration plea.
 - h. Less contact and fellowship with mainline churches of Christ.
 - i. Division of existing congregations in order to implement the "community" model.
 - j. A market-driven program, i.e., striving to provide what people want or what they are seeking (Highers, 2-3).
2. Not all of these features are found in every "Community Church," but these are generally seen throughout this movement.

II. THE CREATION OF THE MOVEMENT.

A. The movement began in the 1800's and continues today.

1. Some Community Churches existed in the 1800's and there were more than 1,000 in the early 1900's.
2. They were first organized into a national organization in 1923, called the Community Church Workers of America, and became the International Council of Community Churches in 1950.
3. Today, the movement includes about 400 churches with a membership of between 250,000 to 500,000. About one-third are outside the United States, primarily in Africa (Gardner, 26).

B. Various reasons can be given for the creation of this movement.

1. These churches were in response to a variety of needs: "over-churching, particularly in rural America, with its attendant and economic staff problems; also restrictive denominational machinery that fed the desire for self-determination; laity activism; women's concerns; and a hunger for a relevant and unifying religion" (Gardner, 26).
2. However, from the outset, these churches came under criticism. Roy Lanier, Jr., quotes a statement from a 1928 issue of the Gospel Herald: "If there is any organization which wears the name 'church' without deserving it, it must be the community church. It stands for anything or nothing, just as the likes and dislikes of the people may happen to be. The big idea of the movement is to get together. There is no thought of pleasing God, but every effort is made to please the people to get them to stick together" (Lanier, 28).
3. Today, any congregation may affiliate with the national organization by subscribing to its principles and making an offering of \$365. "The Council welcomes all ecumenically-minded and freedom-affirming communities of faith" (Gardner 9).

C. Current Community Churches.

1. Willow Creek Community Church.
 - a. Began in 1975 in a rented theater in Palatine, Illinois with 125 people.
 - b. Today is located on 120 acres in South Barrington, Illinois, a northwest suburb of Chicago, with some 20,000 in attendance.
 - c. Began following a neighborhood survey by its minister, Bill Hybels, to assess the felt needs in the community and determine why people did not "do church".

- d. The Willow Creek Association was formed in 1992 to help form mega churches attracted to the Willow Creek model.
 - e. Even members of our own fellowship have endorsed this model. Gary Holloway and Michael Weed presented a paper in May, 1995, in which Willow Creek was offered as a viable alternative to the New Testament pattern (Choate, 15-16).
2. Saddleback Valley Community Church.
- a. Began in 1980 in Lake Forest, California by Rick Warren and his family.
 - b. Today, it has 16,000 in weekend worship services and lists 11,200 as active members.
 - c. Warren's book, The Purpose Driven Church, has become the textbook for the movement.
 - d. Membership requirements at Saddleback: 1) A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, 2) baptism by immersion as a testimony of salvation, 3) completion of Church's membership class, and 4) a commitment to abide by the membership covenant (Ferguson, 4).
3. Cordova Community Church.
- a. The Commercial Appeal (Memphis, Tennessee) states that the Cordova Community Church "describes itself as a self-governing, Bible-believing and teaching church, loosely affiliated with the Church of Christ" (Hixson, 1).
 - b. The newspaper article continues to say that this is "a new group, with a new vision, and a new horizon." It features "a contemporary, informal worship style" designed to attract more of the younger generation (1).
4. Community Church of Christ.
- a. Founded in Hendersonville, Tennessee, in 1991.
 - b. Ray Waddle, in The Nashville Tennessean, reported that this church caused waves in the church community by using recorded instrumental music in its Easter Sunday service (Waddle,1).
 - c. Waddle said that most of their members considered the music issue to be a "non-issue," while some left over the issue and are attending other congregations (Waddle, 7A).

III. THE CHANGES IN THE MOVEMENT.

A. Changes in the Name to Appear Non-denominational.

1. The greatest church growth in recent years has been in independent churches, that is churches without any denominational affiliation. So, many churches are dropping any names that tie them to mainline groups.
2. In The Nashville Tennessean, editor Ray Waddle quotes Mark Norris of River Oaks Community Church: "We surveyed folks all over Rutherford County about what they liked and didn't like about church. Something that came back crystal clear was that people have preconceptions about two church groups - Baptists and Church of Christ" (Waddle, 1A).
3. The same article quoted Joseph Walker: "Denominations tend to put people in a box and people of the millennium want to experience God without restraints."
4. Clearly, such is a marketing tool used to connect with a new wave of believers turned off by the church of their parents' generation.
5. It is true that "church of Christ" is not the only biblical designation that could be used. However, there is no Scripture for "community." And, how does one improve on a designation that says "the church that belongs to Christ"?
6. Someone says, "Yes, but as soon as you put the name 'Church of Christ' in the Yellow Pages it becomes denominational." That is possible. But it is just as possible with "Community Church."

B. Changes in the Worship to Appear Contemporary.

1. The Willow Creek Community Church has replaced the choir with a pop singer, and the organ with a 10-piece rock band. The music ranges from "rock to jazz to country to classical" (Ferguson, 5).
2. For some Community Churches the lively contemporary worship clashes with the contemplative observance of the Lord's Supper. So, in order not to disturb the Sunday "celebration," the Lord's Supper is observed on a weekday.
3. Most of these churches use dramatic skits, special lighting, mood music, etc., in an effort to appeal to the emotions of the crowd.
4. The "sermons" are light on theology but rich in love, mercy and compassion. Lessons are designed to make you feel good, not to convict you of sin.
5. Their advertising promotes this contemporary worship style (North River Community Church/Saddleback examples).

C. Changes in the Mission to Appear Purpose Driven.

1. Rick Warren in The Purpose Driven Church stresses that the Community Church model places a priority on missions (reaching the lost) rather than on maintenance (serving the saved).
2. But, most of these churches have a very limited missions focus: the younger generation of the Baby Boomers (1955-1961) and the whole Generation X, called Baby Busters (1962-1982; McDade, 79).
3. Their advertising is clearly targeting a limited audience (the Bridge Community Church example).

IV. THE CHALLENGES OF THE MOVEMENT.

A. Howard Norton maintains that there are some specific questions which must be asked about the Community Church trend.

1. “Does this trend add to the unity for which Jesus Christ prayed?”
 - a. John 17:20-21.
 - b. Norton concludes that changing over to a Community Church model “almost always creates wrenching division within the local congregation, strains spiritual relationships between brothers and sisters in Christ and foment a loosening of ties with other Churches of Christ.”
2. “Does the trend to downplay or do away with the name ‘Church of Christ’ honor the name of the Savior or detract from it?”
 - a. He argues that there is “no better way to refer to the corporate body of Jesus’ disciples than simply to call it by the name of its Founder and Head.”
 - b. Acts 4:12.
3. “What biblical evidence exists to support the idea that our worship services should primarily serve those outside the church?”
 - a. Norton suggests that the Bible never says that public worship should be designed primarily to please or reach the unsaved.
 - b. The only reference in the New Testament to outsiders in worship is I Corinthians 14. The context is first century tongue speaking and says that the languages used in worship should be understood by all, including outsiders.

- c. “What will be the role of the preacher in these new Community Churches?”
 - d. In most of these churches the preacher has become the pastor and “runs the show.”
 - e. If this happens what will be the role of elders? (Norton, 19).
4. Gary McDade offers the following suggestions as to how to defeat the Community Church movement.
- a. “Expose the error of the Community Church and those favorable to it.”
 - 1) Be “set for the defense of the gospel” (Philippians 1:17).
 - 2) Stop the mouths of the gainsayers, and rebuke them sharply (Titus 1:5-13).
 - b. “Refuse to fund the Community Church by withdrawing personal and financial support from those congregations and schools promoting the Community Church.”
 - 1) We are in fellowship with those whom we support financially (cf. Philippians 1:5; 4:15).
 - 2) In many places the Community Church is a parasite feeding off the living organism of the Lord’s Church.
 - c. “Evangelize the lost.”
 - d. “Edify those who are Christians.”
 - 1) It is children (those young in the faith) who are most easily caught up in false doctrine (cf. Ephesians 4:14).
 - 2) The edified Christian dons the “whole armor of God” in which he can stand against the methods of the devil (Ephesians 6:11; McDade, 82-83).

CONCLUSION

The Community Church movement is predicated on man’s seemingly insatiable appetite for change. But, God has given man a pattern for righteousness today (I Timothy 1:16; Titus 2:7). Like Moses, we should not let the desire for change override the need to adhere to the divine pattern (Hebrews 8:5).

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JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

In 1852 a boy was born who would introduce one of the leading cults of our time. His name was Charles Taze Russell. But his doctrine, like many others, was not truly new. His primary doctrine of Christ not being deity can be traced back to the second century and Ebionism, which advanced to Arianism.

Jehovah's Witnesses have not always been known by this name. They were known as Millennial Dawnist, International Bible Students, and Russellites (James Meadows, A Study of Different Religions and Religious Error, Nahsville, TN, 21st Century Christian, 1974, p. 17). They did not adopt the name Jehovah's Witnesses until 1931.

Charles Russell can not only be seen to be a false teacher, but the evidence shows him to be an immoral man as well. Regarding the first charge of a false teacher, we need only one example to prove this charge (although there are many). He predicted Jesus would return in 1914, but when He did not, Russell claimed Jesus came invisibly. The Bible, however, shows no one, except the Father (not even Jesus Himself) knows when the day of His return will be.

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be (Matthew 24:36-39).

Further, the Bible declares at the return of Jesus, every eye will behold Him.

Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen (Revelation 1:7).

As to the charge of Mr. Russell's immorality, we turn to the statement of the first Mrs. Russell when she sued him for divorce on the grounds of his "*conceit, egotism, domination, and improper conduct in relation to other women*" (Bruce M. Meztger, **The Jehovah's Witnesses and Jesus Christ**, Theology Today, April 1953, pp. 65-66).

In 1916, Russell died while in California. The next year, Joseph Franklin Rutherford took Russell's place as leader of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Rutherford did much to reorganize the Witnesses into a cohesive unit, thus making them more effective in their evangelistic efforts.

These two men, Russell and Rutherford, set the stage, and were the driving force, for the Jehovah's Witnesses religion. But it should be pointed out, they came along too late to be the founders of a true religion. Jesus said He would build His church. **He did not say**, "Russell and

Rutherford will build My church.” Jesus did not say He would give Russell and Rutherford the keys of the kingdom.

Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not reveled it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:17-19).

All Scriptural evidence shows the church/kingdom was established shortly after Jesus’ death and resurrection (Daniel 2:44; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 4:17; John 3:5; Matthew 16:18-19; 18:3; Mark 9:1; Luke 22:18; 24:49; Mark 15:43; Acts 1:6,8; 2:1-4; 8:13; 28:31; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9).

Before looking at some of their doctrines, we need to notice what Bible the Witnesses use. Their Bible is called the “New World Translation.” Conveniently, the “translators” of this Bible asked to remain anonymous even after their deaths (Jehovah’s Witnesses in the Divine Purpose, p. 258). In his book, Hoekema accurately states, “*This translation is by no means an objective rendering of the Bible into English; it incorporates many features which support Jehovah-Witness doctrine*” (Anthony A Hoekema, The Four Major Cults, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1974, p. 233). In other words, they did not develop their doctrines based on what the Bible says; instead they changed the Bible to fit their doctrines. How dishonest can one be?

THE GODHEAD

Jehovah’s Witnesses believe there is only one GOD, and insist He (Jehovah) was all alone in the distant past (Let God Be True, Watchtower, 1946, p. 26). If this were true, it would mean Christ and the Holy Spirit were created by Jehovah, like the angels, mankind, etc. In fact, they teach that Christ is actually Michael the archangel (Reasoning from the Scriptures, p. 218). Regarding Jesus, they say He was nothing more than a perfect man. Question: How can He be an archangel and a man? Regarding the Holy Spirit, they teach He is not a person, but simply the active force of GOD.

Was GOD alone in existence at some point in eternity? The Bible tells us “*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Romans 10:17). If we believe something in the realm of religion, it must be founded upon the word of GOD in order for that thing to be true. All the evidence we have in the Bible indicates the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have always been in existence. There was never a time when they did not all exist. From the very beginning of the Bible, we read “*let us make man in Our image*” (Genesis 1:26). “*The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*” (Genesis 1:2). Our Lord was also there, and it was through Him all things were created (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2).

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 any thing made that was made (John 1:1-3).

Was Jesus Christ simply an angel? The book of Hebrews shows His superiority to angels. In fact, the angels were to worship Him (Hebrews 1:6). Further, the angels are said to be inferior to Him because He sits on a throne, and they are simply ministers (Hebrews 1:7-8).

Is the Holy Spirit only the active force of GOD, i.e., not really a person? A look at Acts 5:3-4, shows He is a distinct person, and further He is called GOD.

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 (Acts 5:3-4).

Note: Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit (v. 3), who is called GOD (v. 4)..

Indeed there is only one GOD, as taught by the Bible. But the Bible also tells us of three distinct individuals who are GOD. Rabbi Simeon ben Joachi is quoted in Clarkes's Commentary, Vol. 1, p. 28, as saying, "*Come see the mystery of the world Elohim; there are three **degrees**, and each degree by itself **alone**, and yet notwithstanding the are all **one**, and **joined together in one**, and are not divided from each other.*" The three members of the GODHEAD are perfectly united in character, attributes, and purpose. They are **all** omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, and eternal. They are one in perfect unity.

THE KINGDOM

The Jehovah's Witnesses teach the kingdom of GOD came into power in 1914. According to them, those who make up the kingdom are divided into two groups. "*The little flock*" consists of one hundred and forty-four thousand, who have eternity in heaven. The "*other sheep*" will live in a paradise on earth after Armageddon.

Does the Bible confirm this doctrine of the kingdom as advanced by Jehovah's Witnesses? The Bible does foretell a coming kingdom in the Old Testament.

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 (Daniel 2:44).

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 2:2-3).

The question is, did the kingdom come into existence, and if so, when? Further, the question must also be asked, what kind of kingdom would it be? The Witnesses claim the kingdom came in 1914, and like all millennialists, they claim it is a physical kingdom. What does the Bible teach on this subject?

Both John and Jesus taught the kingdom was at hand, i.e., was about to come into existence.

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:1-2).

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 4:17).

This brings me to my favorite passage for those who teach the kingdom has not yet come, or those who teach it has come hundreds of years after Christ died, arose, and returned to heaven. Remember, Jesus said the kingdom was near at hand; now notice Mark 9:1. Jesus said,

Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

Question: Where were the people who were alive from the time of Christ until 1914, or until the present? As much as human beings dwell on old age, would not people have been aware of someone who was over nineteen hundred years old? Such people would have been under constant scrutiny, constantly bombarded with questions such as, “*To what do you attribute your longevity?*” Of course, their answer would have been ridiculous and publicized to an even greater extent when they proclaimed they were promised to live until the Lord’s kingdom came into existence.

Does the Bible show us when the kingdom Jesus said was near at hand came into existence? We have noticed that the Old Testament predicted a coming kingdom which would never be destroyed and which would accept people of all nations unto it, and would arrive with power. We have also noticed that Jesus said the kingdom was near at hand, and there were some living at that time who would not die until they saw the kingdom come with power. After His resurrection, Jesus told His disciples:

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).

Repentance and remission of sins would begin at Jerusalem. The witnesses of those things would be those disciples who listened to Him; none of whom lived into the nineteen

hundreds. These events would take place when the disciples were endued with “**power from on high.**” Did such a time come when all of the things spoken of in Luke 24 took place?

When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).

When the crowds on this Pentecost were amazed by the events surrounding this power, Peter told them,

This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:16-21).

Just as the Bible said, they were gathered in Jerusalem (Acts 1:12), and the disciples witnessed the power that came from on high. From this time on, the kingdom was never spoken of in the future tense, but only in the present. In fact, Paul gave “*thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son*” (Colossians 1:12-13). The plural pronoun “us” should be observed. To whom was Paul speaking? “*The saints and faithful brethren in Christ*” (Colossians 1:2). He included himself with them, and proclaimed they had been “*translated,*” moved from one place or position to another place or position. Where were they moved from? The “power of darkness,” a euphemism for the kingdom of Satan. Where had they been moved to? The kingdom of GOD’S Son, Jesus Christ.

Anyone who says the kingdom has not come is not basing his teaching on Biblical faith, for we remind ourselves the Bible says faith comes from hearing the word of GOD (Romans 10:17). Such people may believe the kingdom has not come, but their faith is not based upon GOD’S word. And if their faith is not based upon GOD’S word, then their faith is a false faith, and a false faith will cause one to be lost. Further, those who claim the kingdom came at a time other than the Pentecost of Acts 2 also have a false faith. **Who do you suppose is the father of false faith?**

For more detailed information on the Jehovah's Witnesses, we would recommend you read the excellent lectureship book: 2002 Spring Bible Institute Lectureship, Jehovah's Witnesses, edited by David Brown.

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WHY I LEFT THE METHODIST CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

As a child I was sprinkled into the denomination of the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E) church. In 1979 I was privileged to hear several radio gospel lessons presented by the Duluth Church of Christ. The radio program was called, "Let The Bible Speak" and hosted by brother Charles Pledge, who then served as the local preacher. I came to realize that what I was practicing as a Methodist and what the Bible taught, as presented on the radio program, did not agree. Therefore, I had to make a decision about my future and my relationship to God. Will I leave behind the religion of my youth for truths or remain behind hoping it really wouldn't matter in the end?

The experiences and deeds of Richard Allen, founder of the AME Church, are moving and inspiring. As a black man, he recognized the value of every soul to God and that there should be no respect of persons among men. Armed with what he knew, he set out to change at least this one aspect of the denomination of the Wesley brothers. Yet he did not go far enough to restore the church built by Jesus on Pentecost. Before I state the reasons why I left the Methodist Church, we should examine the history of these two denominations.

DISCUSSION

I. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH (CHURCH OF ENGLAND)



Henry VIII



Catherine of Aragon

- A. The first certain historical note about the Church of England, also called the Established or Anglican Church, dates from A.D. 314, when three British Bishops attended the Council of Arles.
- B. From 664 until the reign of Henry VIII, England recognized the pope's spiritual authority.
- C. King Henry VIII wished to obtain a divorce from Queen Catherine of Aragon for not producing a male heir. The Pope would not grant it.
- D. In 1534 the King proclaimed himself Supreme Head of the Church of England and began its separate existence from Rome.
- E. It claims to teach and uphold the doctrines of the apostles and to be a branch of the one universal Church of Christ.
- F. Its doctrines are stated in the Book of Common Prayer. They include the Apostle's and Nicene creeds, the historic sacraments, and the apostolic ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons. The church includes both Roman Catholic and Protestant teachings.

- G. The Anglican Communion includes the Church of Wales, the Church of Ireland, the Episcopal Church in Scotland, the Anglican Church in Canada, and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. (Sources: The World Book Encyclopedia, copyright 1966, Volume 3, and www.cofe.anglican.org).

II. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE METHODIST CHURCH.

- A. Methodists are members of a Protestant denomination, which grew out of the preaching and organizing of John Wesley.
- B. John (1703-1791) and Charles (1707-1788) Wesley were born into the large family of Samuel Wesley, Rector of Epworth in Lincolnshire, and his wife Susanna. John Wesley was an ordained minister of the Church of England.
- C. In 1729, John Wesley, his brother Charles, George Whitfield, and other students organized the Holy Club at Oxford University, a small group of students who met for Bible study and prayer.
- D. Their attempt to lead a Christian life through method (discipline) led more worldly fellow students to deride their methodical schedules of spiritual exercises and charitable duties and call them Methodists.
- E. Between 1735 and 1738, John Wesley went as a chaplain on a mission to the colony of Georgia. For 10 years, John Wesley tried unsuccessfully to find religious satisfaction by following strictly the rules and ordinances of the Church of England.
- F. After long searching, Wesley was given “saving faith” on May 24, 1738, during a Moravian meeting in Aldersgate Street, London. John wrote in his diary “my heart was strangely warmed,” as he listened to a reading of Martin Luther’s preface to the Epistle to Romans.
- G. Wesley’s belief that salvation is free to all men, not to just a selected few and that God’s grace is equal to every need, appealed to many persons. Wesley preached a number of years in England, Ireland, and Scotland.
- H. He formed the societies that eventually became known as the Methodist Church. He trained, appointed, and supervised lay preachers and organized them into a conference in 1744.
- I. In later life, Wesley realized that the Methodists could not work in the framework of the Church of England. Wesley did not intend to create a new church apart from the Anglican Church. But the evangelistic vigor of his preaching, his doctrinal emphasis, and the rigorous discipline he urged made him unwelcome in Anglican pulpits. He then made formal provision for the society to carry on as an independent church.

- J. The assurance of the free grace of God was the experience of the early Methodists, emphasizing within human freewill the need for holy living as an outcome of faith leading towards 'Christian perfection' (www.methodist.org, and The World Book Encyclopedia, copyright 1966, Volumes 13 and 20).

III. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AFRICAN METHODIST CHURCH (A.M.E.).



- A. The African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.) was founded by Richard Allen (1760-1831), and is an offspring of the Methodist, which was founded by John Wesley in England and America in the eighteenth century.
- B. The Church is **African** because its founders were African. It advocates human dignity and religious freedom for all people. The Church is **Methodist** because its founders considered the Methodist doctrine, with its orderly form of worship, to be well suited to the needs of the African-American people. The Church is **Episcopal** because it is governed by a council of bishops.
- C. Wesley ordained Dr. Thomas Coke, an Anglican priest, and sent him to organize the Church in America. Dr. Coke arrived and called a General Conference in Baltimore, Maryland in December 1784.
- D. Richard Allen, founder of the American Methodist Episcopal Church, was present as an observer only, and was not a delegate or a voter. Methodism grew as the Methodist riders went from point to point, from settlement to settlement and from plantation to plantation.
- E. The AME Church is unique in that it is the first major religious denomination in the Western world that had its origin over sociological rather than theological beliefs and differences. The immediate cause of the organization of the A.M.E. Church was the fact that members of the St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia Pennsylvania in 1787 segregated its colored members from its white communicants. The Blacks were sent to the gallery of the Church, to use the venerable Richard Allen's own words.
- F. One Sunday as the Africans, as they were called, knelt to pray outside of their segregated area they were actually pulled from their knees and told to go to a place which had been designated for them. This added insult to injury and upon completing their prayer, they went out and formed the Free African Society, and from this Society came two groups: The Episcopalians and the Methodists.

- G. The leader of the Methodist group was Richard Allen. Richard Allen desired to implement his conception of freedom of worship and desired to be rid of the humiliation of segregation, especially in church.
- H. Richard Allen learned that other groups were suffering under the same conditions. After study and consultation, five churches came together in a General Convention, which met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 9-11, 1816, and formed the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The name African Methodist came naturally, as Negroes at that time were called Africans and they followed the teaching of the Methodist Church as founded by John Wesley. The young Church accepted the Methodist doctrine and Discipline almost in its entirety (www.bethelameannarbor.org).

Now that we have seen in brief the history of the two denominations, I would like to explain why I left the Methodist Church.

IV. I LEFT THE METHODIST CHURCH BECAUSE:

- A. It was founded by the wrong person. In Matthew 16:18 and I Corinthians 3:11, we are told the true Church is built by and founded on Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God. It was built on the fact that he is the Son of God. No man can or should assume so much power and authority. Richard Allen founded the AME church (Jesus or Richard Allen?).
- B. It was founded in the wrong place. In Acts 1:4 and Acts 2:5, the disciples were waiting in the city of Jerusalem. The church was established in that very city according to Acts 2:47. The AME church was established in Philadelphia (Jerusalem or Philadelphia?).
- C. It was founded at the wrong time. In Acts 2:1, we are told the disciples were together on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus, approximately the year AD 29. The AME church was founded on April 11, 1816 (AD 29 or April 11, 1816?).
- D. It does not wear the right name. In Romans 16:16, one of the many descriptive names worn by God's people is "Churches of Christ." This name is beautiful in its relation to the groom, because the church is the bride of Christ. Denominational names do not honor Jesus who is the groom (Church of Christ or AME?).
- E. Its followers do not wear the right names. In Acts 11:26 and I Peter 4:16, we are told that followers of Christ would wear the name "Christian." The name means to belong to, to follow, and to be of Christ. When men add unauthorized handles to the name Christian, it leaves the world confused about whom we are to follow (Christian or Methodist?).
- F. It does not follow the New Testament plan of Salvation. In Mark 16:15-16, Jesus commanded the apostles to go and preach the good news of salvation to every

creature. Then He said those who believe the message concerning Him and will submit to baptism will be saved, but those who do not believe will be damned. Every convert in the New Testament followed this pattern for conversion. Compare Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:12,35-38; 10:44-48; 16:14-15,30-34; 22:16; etc. We learn therefore that God's plan to save man includes hearing, believing, repentance, confession, and baptism for the remission of sins. The AME Discipline book, 1976 edition, page 24, section 9, titled, "Of the Justification of Man," states, **"We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works and deserving; wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort."** Therefore the doctrine taught by Methodist might make you a Methodist but it won't make you a Christian. James wrote in James 2:24, *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only"* (New Testament or AME Discipline?).

- G. I left because it contradicts Jesus' teaching on unity. In John 17: 20-21, Jesus prayed that all His followers might be one to the end that the world might believe that the Father had sent Him. The unity of all believers is taught in several other places in the New Testament. Paul taught in I Corinthians 1:10-13 that there should be no divisions among God's people. Paul also taught in Ephesians 4:1-6 that we must strive to keep the unity of the Spirit. But Methodism with all the other "isms" in religion says unity can be sacrificed to allow each man and woman to find peace in their own way (Methodism or Unity?).
- H. I left because it teaches the baptism of infants. When Jesus gave the great commission recorded in Matthew 28:19-20, He told the apostles to go and teach all nations, before baptizing them. In Acts 8:30, Philip asked the Eunuch whether he understood what he was reading. The Eunuch replied he needed guidance. It is God's plan that all subjects for baptism first be taught. In the AME Discipline, page 157, under section 1, titled, "Baptism," we read, **"Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized, but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth. The baptism of young children is to be retained in the church"** (New Testament vs. AME Discipline?).
- I. I left because it was the right thing to do. James 4:17 teaches that the nature of truth demands one change when finding it. In Proverbs 4:23, we are told to buy the truth and sell it not. In Acts 23:1-4, we learn from the life of the apostle Paul that sincerity alone will not save. And in Proverbs 14:12, we are taught by the wise man that the ways of man can indeed lead to death. Therefore the only sure, safe, reliable guide is the word of God and not the creeds, disciplines and manuals of men.

CONCLUSION

There are many other doctrinal reasons why I left the Methodist Church. We must have authority for all that we do in religion and be prepared to answer for what we believe in a loving spirit. All Christians should welcome and invite questions regarding the faith once delivered

(Colossians 3:17; I Peter 3:15; Jude 3). In a book titled, Letters To A Young Methodist Preacher, by Ashley S. Johnson, written 1897, on page 9, he writes the following words: "What is true of your creed is true of every other creed. Each creed is born of a factional spirit and marks the bounds of a party or sect. Sects are built on creeds. The creed and the sect go hand in hand, and they must live or die together."

I would like to think that if Richard Allen had a little more time and could hear this lesson, he would be persuaded to renounce anything man-made in religion. But you have this point in time to change your relationship to God.

To God be the glory.

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MORMONS

WORLD RELIGIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION

- A. The Mormon Church, called by them “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,” is an American cult.
- B. The Mormons have grown from 6 members in 1830 to over 10,000,000 in 1999.
- C. Since the publication of *The Book of Mormon* (1830), over fifty different groups have started from the teaching of this book, the largest group being headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah. This is the group that we shall examine in this lecture.
- D. We will be using the 1961 edition of *The Book of Mormon*, the 1973 edition of *The Articles of Faith*, and the 1971 editions of the *Doctrine and Covenants* and *Pearl of Great Price* unless otherwise noted.

DISCUSSION

I. HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN AND FOUNDER OF THE MORMONS.

- A. Joseph Smith, Jr., is the founder and the first prophet of the Mormon church. He was born December 23, 1805, in Sharon, Vermont, to Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith. The family moved to a farm south of Palmyra, New York, in 1816.
 - 1. It is a difficult task to separate the truth from myth concerning Smith’s early life. Most of the existing documents were written years after Smith founded the Mormon church.
 - 2. To have an understanding of Smith and the Mormon church one must become familiar with the religious and social atmosphere of the day.
 - 3. During the early 1800s an interest in the occult and superstition swept the country. This was coupled with the belief in buried treasure of gold and silver and the attempt to discover the alleged treasure using so-called occult aids such as “St. John’s rod” and seer stones (Daniel Dorchester, *Christianity in the United States*, p. 538).
 - 4. Revivals also swept the country with Palmyra at the center of what circuit riders called the “burnt over” district. It was during this time that Smith claimed to have his first vision come about as he sought which church to join (*The Pearl of Great Price: Joseph Smith-History*, 2:5-19. pp. 46-48, 1971).

5. The Mormon church claims that Smith was not educated, but this is not so. He attended school in Palmyra for a few years, and his parents taught school occasionally. Smith belonged to a debating society in Palmyra, and he had access to the libraries of Manchester and Canandaigua (Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, p. 465; Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, pp. 12-15).
- B. The Mormon church finds its foundation in a vision that Joseph Smith, Jr., claimed to have in 1820. This vision was not written by Smith until 1838 and was published in *Times and Seasons* in 1842. According to this account, Smith is perplexed by the “controversies” among the churches of his day and seeks God’s wisdom about which church to join after reading James 1:5. Smith was told not to join any of them. (*The Pearl of Great Price: Joseph Smith-History*, 2:14-19. p. 48, 1971). There are several problems and inconsistencies with this vision.
1. The vision was experienced only by Smith.
 2. The earliest version was handwritten by Smith in 1830 and he states that he was 15 years old and mentions only “the Lord.” In the 1835 version, Smith says he was 14 years old and saw two Personages plus many angels (Dean C. Jesse, *Brigham Young University Studies: Brigham Young University*, Spring 1969 p. 283 and Summer 1971 p. 462).
 3. No Mormon publication mentions the first vision until Smith published it in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842. Even Oliver Cowdery in his series of letters published in the “Messenger and Advocate” from October 1834 to February 1835 as the “full history of the rise” of the Mormon church makes no reference to any vision occurring in 1820.
 4. Joseph’s brother, William, says that George Lane, a Methodist preacher, was the one who suggested James 1:5 to Joseph, but Lane served in Palmyra area from July 1824 to January 1825 (Wesley Walters, “New Light,” *Dialogue 4: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1969, p. 63).
 5. Smith claimed that his desire to seek God’s wisdom came as a result of a revival in “the place where we lived” (*The Pearl of Great Price: Joseph Smith-History* 2:5, 1971). But according to history, there is no evidence of revivals being held in the Palmyra area neither in 1819 nor 1820. There were revivals in 1816-17 and 1824-25 (Walters, “New Light,” pp. 66-67).
 6. Also it is interesting that Joseph’s brother, William, says that one of the revival preachers was a man by the name of Stockton who had preached Alvin Smith’s funeral. Alvin died on November 19, 1823.

7. Therefore, the conclusion is that Smith's "first vision" could not have occurred before the spring of 1825.
- C. Smith claims that his second vision occurred on the night of September 21, 1823, in his bedroom (*The Pearl of Great Price*, 2:30, 33-35, 53, 1971). Finally Smith was allowed to take the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate on September 22, 1827. But there are some difficulties with these claims.
 1. The official account was written by Smith on May 2, 1838, 14 years after the vision. But remember his family knew about the story of the gold plates as early as 1827.
 2. Smith's money-digging activities during this time are well established by an 1826 court record and other sources. Note that in 1826, Smith's failure to find any treasure for Josiah Stowell led to his arrest on the charge of being a disorderly person, a "glass looker." He was fined \$2.68 on this misdemeanor charge on March 20, 1826, in Bainbridge, New York. The court record also states that Smith had used a stone placed in his hat to find treasures or lost property for three years prior to 1826 (Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *The Changing World of Mormonism*, 1980, pp. 67-69, 75; Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, pp. 427-429, gives a transcript of the court record).
 3. Different versions of the second vision were told during the early years after it allegedly occurred. Fawn M. Brodie gives a discussion of this in the book *No Man Knows My History*, pp. 430-435. It is stated here that the *Palmyra Reflector* reported that Smith's father declared that the spirit was a "little old man with a long beard" in its February 14, 1831, issue but at another time, Smith's father said his son "saw in the box something like a toad, which soon assumed the appearance of a man."
 4. According to Jan Shipp's book entitled, *Mormonism: The Story of A New Religious Tradition*, 1985, pp. 10-11, a man by the name of Hosea Stout wrote in 1856 that Brigham Young "exhibited the Seer's stone with which Smith discovered the plates of the *Book of Mormon*." Smith discovered his "seer stone," a smooth stone "the size but not the shape of a hen's egg..." while helping his brother Alvin dig a well for one Willard Chase in 1822.
- D. Smith takes the gold plates home but soon moved to a house owned by his father-in-law, Isaac Hale, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, where Smith began translating the plates, and his wife, Emma, served as the first scribe.
 1. A man by the name of Martin Harris, a wealthy farmer from Palmyra, agreed to pay Smith's debts and help with the translation.
 2. According to Mormon 9:32, the plates were written in altered or "reformed Egyptian" hieroglyphics.

3. Martin Harris, in February of 1828, took characters copied by Smith from the plates to show Samuel Mitchell at Rutgers. Mitchell said he could not read the characters. These characters were also carried to Charles Anthon at Columbia College. Anthon asked to see the plates rather than the copied characters. Harris told Anthon that this was impossible.
 4. Harris claimed, "Professor Anthon stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen from the Egyptian" (Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *The Changing World of Mormonism*, 1980, p. 142). But in a letter dated February 17, 1834, Anthon denied the truthfulness of Harris' story.
 5. By June 14, 1828, Smith had dictated 116 manuscript pages to Harris from behind a curtain erected to isolate Smith, the plates, and Urim and Thummim from Harris. Harris takes the 116 manuscript pages to Palmyra to show his wife, who was suspicious of Smith's claim. The manuscript disappeared, and its fate has never been determined.
 6. Smith knew that he would be unable to duplicate the missing pages, so he used an alternative account of the same historical material. On April 5, 1829, Oliver Cowdery began recording Smith's dictation from behind the curtain. Between April and June, 1829, Cowdery recorded the bulk of the 275,000 words. After the translation was completed, the alleged gold plates were returned to the angel Moroni. Harris provided \$3000 for the first edition of 5000 copies of the *Book of Mormon*.
 7. According to the testimony of Emma Smith, Martin Harris, David Whitmer, and others present during the translation the *Book of Mormon*, most, if not all, of it was translated using the same method Smith used when he looked for buried treasure: with the seer stone in his hat over his face.
- E. Beginning in 1831, Smith's followers began settling in two locations: Kirtland, Ohio, and Independence, Missouri.
1. At Kirtland, Ohio, Smith continued a revision of the Bible, which he had begun in June 1830. The first temple was dedicated March 27, 1836. The first group of 12 apostles was appointed. Jesus, Moses, and Elijah are said to have appeared to Smith and Cowdery in the Kirtland temple. Elijah's appearance on March 3, 1836, is said to have been a fulfillment of Malachi 4:5. The *Book of Commandments* (later called the *Doctrine and Covenants*) was published.
 2. At Independence, Missouri, Smith dedicated a temple site. Caldwell County was created in 1836 for Smith's followers after they were forced to leave Independence to separate them from their non-Mormon neighbors. Far West was made the county seat.

F. “The Mormon War.”

1. Some of the Mormons had settled in Davies County, and they were prevented from voting in Gallatin on August 6, 1838. The state militia intervened after anti-Mormon governor Lilburn Boggs issued his “extermination order.”
2. Outnumbered five-to-one by the state militia and surrounded at Far West, Smith agreed to the state’s harsh terms: The leaders were to be tried for treason; all property was to be confiscated; all Mormons were to leave the state.
3. Smith and four other leaders were held in the Liberty, Missouri, jail from November 10, 1838 to April 16, 1839, when they were allowed to escape and join their followers who fled to Quincy, Illinois.

G. In Illinois, Smith began to purchase land in Iowa and Illinois, including the town of Commerce, Illinois, which he renamed Nauvoo. Smith became the major and lieutenant general of the Nauvoo Legion.

1. Baptism for the dead was introduced in January 1841.
2. The Nauvoo temple was begun, but not completed until after Smith’s death. Arsonists and a tornado destroyed the temple.
3. Charges of polygamy among Mormon leaders began to circulate. Some of those who were excommunicated from the Mormon church published *The Nauvoo Expositor*. After only one issue Smith ordered the Nauvoo Legion to destroy the printing press.
4. Smith was arrested and placed in the Carthage, Illinois, jail. A mob from the Warsaw militia charged the jail and killed Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Both of the bodies were taken to Nauvoo and buried.

H. A struggle for leadership of the Mormon church arose upon Smith’s death. On August 7, 1844, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, which by earlier revelation was “equal in authority and power” to the First Presidency, was given the reins of power.

1. Brigham Young became president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. On July 24, 1847, Brigham Young looked down into the Salt Lake Valley and announced, “This is the place.” Young became the second president and prophet of the Mormon church on December 27, 1847.
2. Other individuals arose to claim the right to lead the Mormons, including Sidney Rigdon, James J. String, and Lyman Wight.

3. In 1860, 28-year-old Joseph Smith III accepted the call to head the Reorganized Mormon church. Now headquartered in Independence, Missouri, they have about 250,000 members in 36 countries.

I. Some important events in the Mormon history are as follows.

1. On August 28, 1852, the doctrine of plural marriage was publicly announced. This was suspended on September 24, 1890 due to the efforts of the U.S. government to arrest polygamists and the desire for Utah for statehood. Utah became a state in 1896.
2. In June of 1978, President Kimball announced that he had received a revelation that would allow all worthy members of the church to be ordained “to the priesthood without regard for race and color.”
3. In April of 1990, significant alterations were made in the Mormon temples’ rituals without prior notice to church members.

II. THE MORMONS’ SOURCES OF AUTHORITY.

- A. Articles 8 and 9 of the Mormons Articles of Faith are the scriptural foundation for the Mormon view of authority.

8 We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

9 We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

- B. The Mormon view of authority is that God continues to reveal new teachings through his latter-day prophets and that a latter revelation supersedes an earlier revelation.

- C. The Mormons’ sources of authority are: *The Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, *Pearl of Great Price*, the *King James Bible*, and *Church Leadership*.

- D. The *King James Bible* is the official translation used by the Mormon Church. It should be noted that most of Smith’s translation was added to the footnotes or appendices of the 1979 Mormon edition of the King James Version.

1. In June of 1830 Smith began to translate the Bible and continued to modify and revise it until his death. He made hundreds of additions, deletions, and changes to the Biblical text through “inspiration,” including removing the Song of Solomon from the new translation.

2. The eighth Article of Faith (p. 236) states, "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly." Therefore, they imply that the Bible is not trustworthy. The *Book of Mormon* plainly states in 1 Nephi 13:28 (p. 23) "any plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God."
 3. We know that the Bible is the all-sufficient and authoritative Word of God. Men inspired by the Holy Spirit wrote the Bible (Deuteronomy 4:1-2; Psalm 119:11, 89,105,140; Luke 21:33; Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:3, 19-21; Jude 3; Galatians 1:6-9).
- E. The *Book of Mormon* is the means by which one is introduced to Mormonism. It should be noted that if *The Book of Mormon* is true, it is one of the most important documents in the world. If it is false, and it is, the foundation of the Mormon Church collapses.
1. *The Book of Mormon* is available in over 75 languages.
 2. *The Book of Mormon* contains 15 books with chapters and numbered verses, which were added in 1879 by Orson Pratt.
 3. The theology of *The Book of Mormon* is monotheistic. See Alma 11:44 (p. 224); 3 Nephi 11:27, 36 (pp. 422, 423); Mosiah 15:2-5 (p. 163).
 4. The Mormons will often repeat the statement, "I bear witness that *The Book of Mormon* is the word of God." Showing therefore that they believe in the authenticity of their book. Joseph Smith said, "I told the brethren that *The Book of Mormon* was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 194, 1977). Then on page 71 he states, "Take away *The Book of Mormon* and the revelations and where is our religion? We have none."
 5. Reputable scholars and authorities in every scientific field including history, Biblical studies, archaeology, and anthropology ignore *The Book of Mormon* as a historical work.
 6. The Smithsonian institution denies that it uses *The Book of Mormon* for archaeological exploration and research. They stated that the Smithsonian archeologists see no direct connection between the archeology of the New World and the subject matter of the book.
 7. Hal Hougey in his 20 years of archeological research states in his work, "*Archaeology and the Book of Mormon*," the following:
 - No *Book of Mormon* cities have been located.

- No *Book of Mormon* names have been found in New World inscriptions.
- No genuine inscriptions have been found in Egyptian or anything similar to Egyptian, which could correspond to Smith's "Reformed Egyptian."
- No ancient copies of the *Book of Mormon* scriptures have been found.
- No ancient inscriptions of any kind have been found that indicate that ancient inhabitants had held Hebrew or Christian beliefs – all are pagan.
- No mention of *Book of Mormon* people, nations, or places have been found.
- No artifact that demonstrates that the *Book of Mormon* is true has been found.

8. The Bible versus the *Book of Mormon*.

Bible – Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Luke 2:4-7.

Book of Mormon – Jesus was born in Jerusalem, Alma 7:10.

Bible – Jesus speaks of Peter's death, John 21:19.

Book of Mormon – Peter would not taste death, 3 Nephi 28:8,9,12.

Bible – Scriptures furnish to all good works, 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Book of Mormon – "Thou fool, that shall say..we need no more Bible." 2 Nephi 29:6, 10.

Bible – Adam's sin brought condemnation, Romans 5:16-18.

Book of Mormon – Adam sinned that we might joy, 2 Nephi 2:23-25.

Bible – Three hours of darkness at the death of Christ, Luke 23:44.

Book of Mormon – Three days of darkness, 1 Nephi 19:10.

Bible – None other than the order of Aaron were priests, Hebrews 7:11-14.

Book of Mormon – Jacob and Joseph were made priests, 2 Nephi 5:26.

Bible – Languages were confounded at the tower of Babel, Genesis 11:9.

Book of Mormon – Says, "there were not confounded" in Ether 1:25-37.

Bible – All Christians are priests, 1 Peter 2:5-9; Revelation 5:9-10.

Book of Mormon – Those appointed "over all the churches" were priests, Alma 45:22.

Bible – John 21:25.

Book of Mormon – Plates of Nephi contain the "more part," 3 Nephi 26:7.

Bible – Written by inspiration of God, 2 Timothy 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:21.

Book of Mormon – Written from the writer's own memory, Ether 5:1.

According to the best of my knowledge, Jacob 7:26.
The things which I considered to be most precious, Jacob 1:2.

F. The *Doctrine and Covenants* (D & C) is more important doctrinally than the *Book of Mormon*.

1. In D & C 89, we find the teaching of the Word of Wisdom.
2. In D & C 124, 128, we find the teaching about the baptism for the dead.
3. In D & C 84, 107, we find the teaching about the priesthood.
4. In D & C 132, we find the teaching about polygamy.
5. D & C contains 138, revelations and two declarations.

G. The *Pearl of Great Price* was accepted as scripture by the Mormon Church in 1880 after it was edited and rearranged by Orson Pratt. Its contents are:

1. Selections from the *Book of Moses*. This is actually Smith's translation of Genesis 1-8. Among Smith's teachings are that God created "worlds without number" (Moses 1:33); all things were created spiritually first (Moses 3:5-7); Satan fell because he desired to redeem everyone by destroying man's free will (Moses 4:1-3); Adam's fall was beneficial (Moses 5:10-11); and Adam was baptized by immersion (Moses 6:64, 65).
2. The *Book of Abraham* was allegedly written by Abraham while in Egypt. The teachings of this book include that God lives near a star named Kolob (Abraham 3:2-3, 16); the preexistence of soul (Abraham 3:19-28); and the plurality of Gods (Abraham 4-5).

H. According to D & C 107:92, the Church Leadership, primarily the prophet, official title is "a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet."

1. This prophet is seen as "a direct successor to Isaiah, Malachi, Peter, James, and John. He is the chief Apostle of Jesus Christ on the earth" (W. Grant Bangerter, *The Ensign*, p. 11, November 1979).
2. With this thought in mind note what President Ezra Taft Benson stated while still in the Quorum of Twelve Apostles at Brigham Young University February 26, 1980 (*Church News*, March 1, 1980).
 - "The prophet is the only man who speaks for the Lord in everything."
 - "The living prophet is more vital to us than the standard works."
 - "The living prophet is more important to us than a dead prophet."
 - "The prophet will never lead the church astray."

- “The prophet is not required to have any particular earthly training or credentials to speak on any subject or act on any matter at any time.”
 - “The prophet does not have to say, ‘Thus saith the Lord’ to give us scripture.” (Note that Benson then quotes Brigham Young as saying, “I have never yet preached a sermon and sent it out to the children of men, that they may not call scripture.”)
 - “The prophet tells us what we need to know, not always what we want to know.”
 - “The prophet is not limited by men’s reasoning.”
 - “The prophet can receive revelation on any matter – temporal or scriptural.”
 - “The prophet may be involved in civic matters...Those who would remove prophets from politics would take God out of government.”
 - Those “who have the greatest difficulty in following the prophet are the proud who are unlearned and the proud who are rich.”
 - “The prophet will not necessarily be popular with the world or the worldly.”
 - “The prophet and his counselors make up the First Presidency.”
 - “The prophet and the First Presidency are always surrounded by this promise – follow them and be blessed, reject them and suffer.”
- 3. The test of a true prophet is seen in Deuteronomy 18:20-22. The Mormon leadership has historically issued contradictory revelations and made erroneous predictions.

III. THE MORMONS’ DOCTRINES REFUTED.

- A. The thirteen Articles of Faith do not summarize all the basic doctrines of the Mormon church.
- B. Mormon teaching about the Godhead.
 - 1. Article 1 – “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit.” In the *King James Version of the Bible* by the Mormons in the “Bible Dictionary” it is stated on p. 681 that, “We learn from the revelations that have been given that there are three separate persons in the Godhead. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. From latter-day revelation we learn that the Father and the Son have tangible bodies of flesh and bone, and that the Holy Spirit is a personage of spirit without flesh and bone.” See also D & C 130-22-23 p. 238. Bruce McConkie states in his book *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (p. 51) that, “Christ is God; he alone is the Savior. The Holy Ghost is God; he is one with the Father and the Son. But these two are the second and third members of the Godhead. The Father is God above all, and is, in fact, the God of the Son.” On p. 76 of the same book it is stated, “One Godhead! Three persons processing the same mind, power, and glory! Three individuals actuated by the same spirit, knowing all things, and working together in perfect unity.”

2. It is interesting to note that the original *Book of Mormon* taught the Bible doctrine of the Trinity in 2 Nephi 31:21; Alma 11:26-29, 44 (pp. 223, 224) and in the concluding sentence of the “Testimony Of The Three Witnesses” in the *Book of Mormon*. But Smith preached on June 16, 1844 a sermon entitled “The Christian Godhead – Plurality of God.” In this sermon he called the doctrine of the Trinity “sectarianism.” Is the *Book of Mormon* the “most correct of any book on earth” as Smith declared? Was Smith a true prophet? He contradicts his *Book of Mormon* with his inspired/prophetic sermon!
3. The Bible teaches that the one God is made up of three distinct personalities (John 17:3; Ephesians 4:4-6; Mark 12:29; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Philippians 2:6; John 1:1-3, 14; John 8:17; Colossians 2:9; Acts 17:29; Genesis 1:2, 26; Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19).

C. Mormon teaching about the Plurality of gods versus the Oneness of the Biblical God.

1. In 1842 Smith published the *Book of Abraham* and made the creation story to read “And they (the Gods)” and “And the Gods.” See *Pearl of Great Price*, Abraham 4, pp. 38ff. But in the creation story in Moses 2 (pp 4ff) it is repeatedly stated “And I, God.”
2. Again in his sermon, “The Christian Godhead – Plurality of God,” Smith boldly proclaimed his belief in a plurality of Gods. Later Pratt wrote in *The Seer*, Volume 1, p. 37, “In the heaven where our spirits were born, there are many gods, each one of whom has his own wife or wives which were given to him previous to his redemption while yet in his mortal state.”
3. The Bible teaches that the OT and NT rejected polytheism. God’s people are commanded to recognize and worship only the one, true God (Genesis 35:1-7; Exodus 20:1-6; Deuteronomy 4:39; 5:7-8; Joshua 24:23; Romans 1:19-25; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6).

D. Mormon teaching that God was once a man.

1. Lorenzo Snow, the fifth president of the Mormon church, said, “As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become.” Orson Hyde said in *Journal of Discourses*, Volume 1, p. 123, the following: “Remember that God our heavenly Father, was perhaps once a child, and mortal like we ourselves, and rose step by step in the scale of progress, in the school of advancement; has moved forward and overcome, until He has arrived at the point where He now is.” Smith taught that, “it is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the character of God...he was once a man like us...God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 345-346). In the book *Doctrines of Salvation*, on page 12, it is stated, “we have to pass through mortality and receive the resurrection and then go on to perfection just as our Father did before us.” And then on page 19, “In short, man is a god in embryo.”

2. It should be noted that the *Book of Mormon* fails to support the teaching that God was once a man. See Mormon 9:9-10 (p. 476); Moroni 8:18 (p. 517); D & C 20:17, 28 (pp. 30, 31).

3. There is no change in God (Numbers 23:19; Psalm 102:27; Isaiah 43:10-11; 44:6; 45:21-22; James 1:17).

E. Mormon teaching that God is a Personage of Flesh and Bone.

1. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 318, states, "False creeds teach that God is a spirit essence that fills the immensity of space and is everywhere and nowhere in particular present." And on p. 319, it is stated that, "God the Father is glorified and perfected Man, a Personage of flesh and bones (D & C 130:22 [p. 238]), in which tangible body and eternal spirit is housed." *The Articles of Faith*, p. 48, states, "We affirm that to deny the materiality of God's person is to deny God...an immaterial body cannot exist."
2. In *The Articles of Faith*, pp. 50-51, there is given a list of Bible passages under the heading "God is a Being of Parts and Passions." It should be noted that the *Book of Mormon* does not support the Mormon teaching about God as a Personage of flesh and bones.
3. McConkie's, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, p. 61, states, "Perhaps no single verse of scripture has spread greater spiritual confusion or led more people to build their houses of worship on the sands of false doctrine than John 4:24. It contains the words 'God is a Spirit,' which are interpreted by the Christian world to mean that God is a spirit essence that fills all space, has no form or substance, and dwells in human hearts...But the fact is that John 4:24 is mistranslated. It is part of a passage in which Jesus is teaching that the Father seeks true worshippers who will worship him in spirit and truth. 'For unto such, 'hath God promised his Spirit' (JST, John 4:26)."
4. The physical description of God in the Bible is called "anthropomorphism." This word is a figure of speech in which an act or attribute of God is described in terms of human activity or qualities, e.g., the "hand" of God (Psalm 119:73). If verses like Exodus 33:11 teach that God has a physical body, does Psalm 91:4 teach that God has wings? Isaiah 40:12-26 says that God cannot be likened to anyone or anything on earth. Isaiah 31:3 teaches that God is Spirit, as does John 4:24. John 1:18 says no one has ever seen God.

F. Mormon teaching about a Heavenly Mother/Mother God.

1. When this doctrine started is in question, but Smith taught the doctrine as early as 1839 (Linda Wilcox, "The Mormon Concept of a Mother in Heaven." *Sunstone*, September-October 1980, p. 10). In *Achieving a Celestial Marriage*, a LDS publication, p. 129, it is stated, "By definition, exaltation includes the ability to procreate the family unit throughout eternity. This our Father in heaven has power

to do. His marriage partner is our Mother in heaven. We are their spirit children, born to them in the bonds of celestial marriage.” Joseph Fielding Smith stated in *Answers to Gospel Questions*, volume 3, p. 142, “The fact that there is no reference to a mother in heaven in either the Bible, *Book of Mormon* or *Doctrine of Covenants*, is not sufficient proof that no such thing as a mother did exist there.” Orson Pratt taught that Mormons were not to worship nor pray to the Mother God in *The Seer*, October 1853, vol. 1, p. 159.

2. As Joseph Fielding Smith said, there is “no reference to a mother in heaven in...the Bible...” Jesus helps us with this in Matthew 22:30; Mark 12:25. Marriage will not be practiced in heaven.

G. Mormon teaching about the Holy Spirit.

1. McConkie explains the Mormon view in *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 752. He states: “Three separate and distinct meanings of the title, Spirit of the Lord, are found in the revelations: 1) It has reference to the spirit body of Christ our Lord. 2) It is used to mean the spirit of Jesus Christ, or light of truth, or light of Christ – the Spirit which is impersonal and fills the immensity of space, the Spirit which is the agency by means of which God governs and controls in all things. 3) It is also a synonym for the Holy Ghost, that Spirit entity or personage of spirit who is a member of the Godhead.” The Mormons make a difference between the Spirit and the Holy Ghost; that He has a male spirit body instead of an actual physical body; since they believe he has a male spirit body, He cannot be everywhere at once; He is referred to as “it” in Mormon writings, and the Spirit of the Lord is seen as an impersonal force found everywhere. Therefore according to their doctrine, the Spirit dwells in all good men, but the Holy Ghost guides only those who have obeyed the Mormon gospel and have had hands laid upon them.
2. First, the terms “the Spirit” and “the Holy Ghost” are used interchangeably in John 7:39. See also Luke 4:1; Acts 2:4; 1 Corinthians 12:3.
3. Second, one must remember that the Mormons believe in three distinct and separate Gods. Joseph F. Smith in *Discourses on the Holy Ghost*, p. 59 stated that the Comforter in John 14:16,17 is not the Holy Ghost and has no reference to the Holy Ghost, but refers to the Spirit of Truth. This is refuted in John 14:26.

H. Mormon teaching about the Birth of Christ.

1. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, states:
 - “Our Blessed Lord is the firstborn spirit child of the Father of Spirits; all others are junior to him” (p. 66).
 - “The mortal Jesus, as a man among men, had both a father and a mother. God was his Father and Mary was his mother” (pp. 67 & 75).

- “For Christ to be the Son of God means that God was his Father in the literal and true sense of the word; for our Lord to be the Only Begotten in the flesh means that he was begotten by God, who is a Holy man” (p. 111).
2. The Mormon obsession with a literal conception of Jesus in Mary by God the Father strongly suggests a sexual relationship of Mary with God the Father, a man of flesh and bone. The Bible plainly teaches that Mary was a virgin and was found with child “by the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 1:18). This Mormon doctrine disagrees with the *Book of Mormon*, which teaches that Jesus was conceived of the Holy Ghost in Alma 7:10 (p. 211, 212).
- I. Mormon teaching about Christ’s Polygamous Marriages.
1. Listen to Orson Hyde in *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, p. 210. “Jesus Christ was married at Cana of Galilee, that Mary, Martha, and others were his wives, and that he begat children.” In volume 4 and on page 259 Hyde stated that Jesus was married in Cana of Galilee. His reasoning is that if Jesus was not married at this time, then “his intimacy with Mary and Martha, and the other Mary also whom Jesus loved, must have been highly unbecoming and improper to say the best of it.” In the book *Brigham Young and His Wives*, it is stated, “plural marriage was a common practice among God’s chosen people...” (p. 26).
 2. Mormon teaching on this is not on any Biblical evidence. Their use of the marriage at Cana of Galilee in John 2:2-11 is an assertion. One needs to remember the words of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 5:25,31,32.
- J. Mormon teaching about Creation.
1. From *Doctrine and Covenants*, 93:33 (p. 160), and Smith’s book, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 350-352, one sees that the Mormons teach that God did not create the world, but organized it, since matter is eternal. *Doctrine and Covenants* 77:6 (p. 128) teaches that the earth will have “seven thousand years of its continuance, or its temporal existence.”
 2. Genesis 1:1. The Hebrew word “bara” to create, shape, form; (Qal) to shape, fashion, create (always with God as subject) according to *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc 1995). In Genesis this word is never applied to anyone except God. It is an exclusive activity of God. The verb is never used with the accusative of the materials employed; so it certainly refers to creation from nothing (*ex nihilo*).
See also Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 33:6; Acts 17:24; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:2; Psalm 8:3; 19:1; 89:11,12; 102:25; 121:2; 136:5; Isaiah 42:5; 45:6,7,12; Jeremiah 32:17; Acts 4:24; 14:15; Romans 1:20.
- K. Mormon teaching about Angels.

1. According to McConkie's books, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 37, and *Angels*, pp. 4-5, "Men and angels are the offspring of God. They were born to him in a pre-earth existence. God, angels, and men are the same race. The angels are children of the Father in heaven...Angels are in form like man." It is interesting to note that Mormons consider Michael as the pre-existent Adam. According to *Doctrine and Covenant* 76:25 (p. 122) and 2 Nephi 2:17 (p. 54), Satan was also "a spirit of God who was born in the morning of pre-earth. He too was an angel of God." See further *Doctrine and Covenant* 29:36-41 (pp. 45-46).
2. Angels are spirit beings created by God (Psalm 148:1-6; Colossians 1:16). Angels are ministering spirits and not to be worshipped or accept worship (Romans 1:24,25; Colossians 2:18; Hebrews 12:13,14; Revelation 19:10).

L. Mormon teaching about the Pre-existence of Man.

1. Moses 6:51 (p. 18) states, "And he called upon our father Adam by his own voice, saying: I made the world, and men before they were in the flesh." See also Moses 3:5 (p. 17).
2. McConkie in *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, p. 45 states, "All men are spirit children of God the Eternal Father. In the pre-mortal life we all dwelt in his presence, saw his face, and heard his voice."
3. Genesis 1 and 2 records that Adam, the first man, 1 Corinthians 15:45, was created ("bara") by God, received the breath of life and became a living soul (Genesis 2:7). The Bible clearly teaches that all men are of one race, made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26,27; 3:20; Acts 17:26).

M. Mormon teaching about Adam and the Fall.

1. Mormons teach that Adam and Eve were among God's noblest children. In the Spirit world, Adam was called Michael the Archangel (*Doctrine and Covenant* 27:11, p. 41). Adam and Eve were foreordained to become the parents of the human race (*Doctrine and Covenant* 107:55, p. 195). In the "Bible Dictionary" of Smith's translation of the KJV on p. 604, it is stated that Adam's "fall, was necessary to the advancement and spiritual progress of humanity on the earth, and Adam rightly should be honored, not denigrated." It also states that Adam is "the Ancient of Days and is also known as Michael. He is the archangel and will come again to the earth in power and glory as the patriarch of the human family, preparatory to the second coming of Christ." Also see 2 Nephi 2:22-25, p. 54 and Moses 5:10-11, p. 11, and 6:64-68, p. 19.
2. Their identifying Adam as Michael is not found in the Bible. Adam was the first man created by God (Genesis 2; 4:1-2, 25; 1 Corinthians 15:45; 1 Timothy 2:13). The Mormon doctrine of Adam as a "fall upwards" conflicts with the Bible. Adam's sin brought to man sin, death, suffering and separation from God. (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-17; 1 Corinthians 15:22).

N. The Mormon 12-step formula for Salvation.

1. Faith – *The Articles of Faith*, p. 96.
2. Repentance – Ibid, p. 109.
3. Baptism by Immersion – Ibid, p. 128.
4. Laying on of Hands to receive the Holy Ghost – Ibid, pp. 166-167.
5. Ordination as a Melchizedek Priest for all males – McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 480.
6. Receiving the Temple Endowments – McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 227; see also D & C 95:8-9, p. 163, and 124:25-41, pp. 220-222.
7. Celestial Marriage - McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 117; see also D & C 131:1-4, pp. 238-239.
8. Observing the Word of Wisdom – D & C 89, pp. 154-155.
9. Sustaining the Prophet by “Common Consent” - McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 149-150.
10. Tithing - McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 796-798.
11. Sacrament Meetings - McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 660.
12. Obedience - McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 539.

O. Mormon Teaching about Exaltation.

1. The reward of complete obedience is “exaltation” or “godhood,” an inheritance in the highest of three heavens within the celestial kingdom. See D & C 131:1-4, pp. 238-239.
The family unit will continue, the couple will have spirit children and inherit “the fullness of the glory of the Father.” McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 117. By reading D & C 132:20, p. 241; 64:7, p. 64 one concludes that those who reach “godhood” will become gods and will have all power, glory, dominion, and knowledge and are redeemed from spiritual death.
2. This doctrine is not found in the Bible. The Bible teaches that the faithful will abide forever in heaven (Matthew 25:21,34).

P. The Mormons teach that salvation is through Joseph Smith.

1. “Mormonism, as it is called, must stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith. He was either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly appointed and commissioned, or he was one of the biggest frauds this world has ever seen. There is no middle ground.” If Joseph Smith was a deceiver...then he should be exposed; his claims should be refuted, and his doctrines shown to be false, for the doctrines of an imposter...will not stand the test when tried by the accepted standards of measurements, the scripture.” (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 188).
2. Listen to McConkie in his book *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*.

- “If Joseph Smith received power from on high, then the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the kingdom of God on earth and the one place where salvation is found” (p. 13).
 - “Joseph Smith was foreordained in the councils of eternity, before the foundations of the earth were laid, to be a prophet of God in the last days and to preside over the dispensation of the fullness of time. This call...came because of his valiance and devotion in the pre-mortal first estate.” (p. 3).
 - “Salvation is available to men today because of Joseph Smith.” (p. 1).
- 3. Mormons are correct when they assert that Mormonism stands or falls on Joseph Smith. By studying Mormonism one sees that Joseph Smith was not a true prophet. Why? Because one can see the distorted, unbiblical nature of Smith’s theology, the inconsistencies and contradictions of his testimonies, his failed prophecies and his questionable moral character (Deuteronomy 18:20-22; Matthew 7:15-23; Mark 12:21,22; 1 Corinthians 3:11; Galatians 1:6-9; 1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 9-11).

Q. The Mormons’ teaching on baptism for the dead.

1. See *Doctrines and Covenants* 124:36, p. 221; 127:6, p.231; 128:16, p. 234.
2. Any interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:29 must be within its context of the resurrection. In baptism we declare the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:1-6). It seems to me that Paul is trying to impress upon the Corinthians that their baptism was utterly meaningless if there be no resurrection of the dead. The word dead (*nekros*) is plural and refers to the dead in general as well as Christ; not only that He rose, but that all will rise.

R. The Mormons teaching on the Eschatology.

1. The following is a basic outline on their view of last things.
 - They believe in the first coming of Christ.
 - They believe in the universal apostasy.
 - That the Mormon church is the restored church as of April 6, 1830.
 - That the gospel is to be preached to the entire world.
 - That Elijah came on April 3, 1836.
 - That there are signs of the times to be fulfilled. Some of these are:
 - Establishment of the USA as a nation – 3 Nephi 21:4.
 - Establishment of the US Constitution – D & C 101:76-80.
 - The Book of Mormon and latter day revelation – 2 Nephi 29.
 - Restoration of keys and priesthood – D & C 13, 27, 128.
 - Building of latter-day temples – D & C 124:25-42.
 - Genealogical research for the salvation of the dead – D & C 127, 128.
 - Disease, plague, famine, etc – Joseph Smith – *Matthew in Pearl of Great Price*.

False churches will arise – MT 1:22 in Pearl of Great Price.

- Christ will return secretly to Adam-ondi-Ahman in NW Missouri – D & C 116.
- 144,000 high priests will be missionaries – D & C 133:17-18.
- Armageddon will take place when Christ returns.
- Christ will return during the Battle of Armageddon – D & C 133:20-21.
- Resurrection of the righteous [Mormons] from Spirit Paradise – D & C 63:49.
- Judgment of the wicked.
- Millennium – this will begin 6,000 years after Adam's fall.
- Satan released for a time at the end of the millennium.
- The final judgment.
- Earth renewed as a Celestial Body.
- Men in the Celestial Kingdom to become gods.

2. Jesus is coming! When? Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32.
Kingdom has already been established – Isaiah 2; Daniel 2; Acts 2.
Kingdom will be delivered to the Father – 1 Corinthians 15:24.
Judgment scene in Matthew 25:1-46.

S. The Mormons' teaching about the Priesthood.

1. The priesthood is divided into two parts, the Melchizedek Priesthood and the Aaronic Priesthood. See D & C 107:1. The greater priesthood is the Melchizedek Priesthood consisting of elders, the seventy, a high priest, the patriarchs, the apostles and the prophet. The Aaronic priesthood consists of deacons, teachers, priests, and bishops.
2. Aaron's descendants, who were of the tribe of Levi, were the priests of the Mosaic age (Numbers 3:1-10; 8:5-22; Exodus 38:21). Mormons claim to be from the tribe of Ephraim. The age to be a Biblical priest was 25, not 12 as the Mormons teach.
On Melchizedek one needs to read Psalm 110:4 where a promise is given that Melchizedek's priesthood would be forever, and this was fulfilled in Jesus Christ according to Hebrews 5:6-10; 6:20; 7:1-21.
Today, Christians are priests according to 1 Peter 2:5, 9.

T. The Mormons' doctrine of the church.

1. According to D & C 1:30, Joseph Smith was raised up by God to bring the only and living church out of obscurity and darkness.
In Alma 46:13-16 the Mormons have the "church of God" composed of Christians 73 years before Christ was born.
2. The NT church was established on the first Pentecost, ten days after the ascension of Christ to Heaven (Matthew 16:18; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:18; 2:4, 47).
The "disciples" were called Christians "first (*protos*—first in time or place) in Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

U. The Mormons' teaching about the two sticks of Ezekiel 37:15-23.

1. From the Ezekiel passage the Mormons conclude that the "stick of Judah" is the Bible, because it was written by Judah's descendants, the Jews and that the "stick of Ephraim" is the Book of Mormon, written by the Nephites who were descended from Ephraim."
Isaiah 29:1-4, 10-11 and 2 Colossians 13:1 are other passages that Mormons use to show a Biblical foreshadowing for the coming of the Book of Mormon.
2. What is the meaning of the passage? Ezekiel interprets the vision in 37:21-22. He also further develops the theme of the united kingdom in chapter 48 where he mentions each of the 12 tribes and states that they will dwell in the land. This prophecy was fulfilled when God allowed His people to return home from captivity. They returned under Zerrubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah.

V. The Mormons' teaching about Miracles.

1. See the 7th Article of Faith. See also D & C 84:65-72, p. 139.
2. The purpose of miracles was to confirm the Word of God according to Mark 16:20 and Hebrews 2:1-4. According to the Holy Spirit in Jude 3 it has been confirmed and not even an angel can change it according to Galatians 1:6-9.

W. The Mormons' teaching about Apostles.

1. The Mormons are consistent in their error. They claim that if any of the miraculous gifts are available today, the gift of apostleship is available (1 Corinthians 12:28-29; Ephesians 4:1,11). They maintain that a true restoration of the NT church must include the apostles of Christ, the other gifts, and continuous revelation, which means that we must have inspired writings in addition to the Bible.
2. We have no living apostles of Christ today because no one today has the qualifications.
The apostles of Christ accomplished their work. In Ephesians 4:11-16, three things are spoken of: 1) The perfecting of the saints, 2) The work of ministering, 3) The building up of the body of Christ so that Christians can mature. The apostles are in the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20-22).

CONCLUSION

- A. Since the Mormon church stands or falls upon Joseph Smith's revelations, by the criterion of Deuteronomy 18:21, 22, Smith was a false prophet. Why?

1. He prophesied the Civil War would be so intense that it would be “poured out upon all nations,” D & C 87:1-3. This did not happen.
 2. On February 14, 1835, Joseph foretold concerning “the coming of the Lord” that “fifty-six years should wind up the scene.” This did not happen.
 3. In D & C 132:3,4, Joseph suggested that the Mormon Temple would be erected in Independence, Missouri. This did not happen.
 4. Therefore, according to Deuteronomy 18:21,22, Joseph Smith was a false prophet.
- B. The Bible is God’s all-sufficient Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Jude 3).
- C. It is God’s Word and God’s Word only that will judge us. John 12:48.

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SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISM IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE

Adventism is defined as that belief or doctrine that the expected Second Coming of Christ is near at hand. When the designation “Seventh Day” is added to the term “Adventism,” that definition then is expanded to include the theological theory that the seventh day or the Sabbath as set forth in the Ten Commandments must be kept until that Advent occurs. It is this theology that we wish to examine in this study.

Our examination is not one that will focus upon present personalities. Neither is it our intent to deal derogatorily, disparagingly, or in a belittling way about the folks that make up the membership of this organization. Though we intend to forcefully and clearly show that their doctrines have run afoul of the all-sufficient Scriptures, we believe them to be, for the most part, a people of high moral standing and integrity and worthy of our respect in that regard.

Our lone intent in this presentation will be to equitably, fairly, and honestly examine some of their major tenets by searching the Scriptures whether these things be so (Acts 17:11).

The roots of the present-day Seventh Day Adventist church can rightly be traced back to the middle of the nineteenth century to a self-proclaimed prophet by the name of William Miller. This gentleman founded a group known as the Second Adventists whose total focus was on the Second Coming of Christ. Neither he nor his group believed in, practiced, or taught the errant doctrine of Sabbath-keeping, even though he and his followers claimed him to be a spokesman and prophet of God. The doctrine of present day Sabbath-keeping had not yet been developed or originated. At that time, they were simply “Adventists.” They would later come to be called “Seventh Day Adventists.”

William Miller, using Daniel’s 2300 days (Daniel 8:14) and the day-year approach as a basis, prophesied that Christ would return in 1843. God, the Son, the originating author of the book of Daniel, undoubtedly being fully familiar with what He had authored said, *“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father”* (Mark 13:32). That didn’t stop the Adventist Miller. By implication He said, “Maybe Christ the author of the book didn’t know what He had written, but I will tell Him and all others what He wrote, because I am a prophet with greater comprehension ability than He!” Mr. Miller, though a false prophet, was a convincing preacher and converted literally thousands of hopeful people to the Adventist position that Christ’s return was imminent and but days away! Many of Miller’s followers gave away all of their possessions, dressed themselves in self-made white robes, climbed trees, hilltops, and the tallest buildings in preparation for their ascension to meet the Lord in the air. The time came and went, and Christ did not return. Mr. Miller then said he had made a mistake in his calculations; recalculated, and said Christ would indeed return the following year (in 1844). The result was the same, with many people being left disappointed, penniless, destitute, and without hope. Mr. Miller, being an honest man and realizing he had prophesied falsely, left the pulpit in humiliation to lead a life of relative obscurity.

Ellen G. White, one of William Miller's followers, supported by her husband, James White, moved in to reassemble the failed movement, during which time she developed and added the idea and doctrine of present day Sabbath-keeping to the beliefs of the Adventists. The Seventh Day Adventist name was adopted in 1860 and officially recognized in 1863 in Battle Creek, Michigan. Ellen White, while a young lady, was nearly killed when hit in the face with a brick and lay in a semi-conscious stupor for three weeks. She writes of her frailty, being reduced to nearly a skeleton, with health hopelessly impaired and her nervous system prostrated. While in this state of near hysteria and thought to be near death, she listened to and accepted Miller's false prophecies about the nearness of Christ's Second Coming. Adding to her hysteria was her perception of hell that caused her imagination to run wild to the point of fear and perspiration, undoubtedly leading to the Adventist's theory of no eternal hell and total annihilation of the souls of those who are not Seventh Day Adventists. It was while sick, believing she was near death and in a state of hysteria, that she first began talking to angels and having "visions." Dr. William Russell, a Seventh Day Adventist and chief physician in their sanitarium at Battle Creek, Michigan, wrote on July 12, 1869, "that Mrs. White's visions were the result of a diseased organization or condition of the brain or nervous system."¹ Other physicians of that same sanitarium and also Adventists of that day, such as Dr. Fairfield, attested to the cause of Mrs. White's visions. He writes on December 28, 1887, "You are undoubtedly right in ascribing Mrs. E.G. White's so-called visions to disease. It has been my opportunity to observe her case a good deal, covering quite a period of years, which, with a full knowledge of her history from the beginning, gave me no chance to doubt her attacks to be simply hysterical trances."² Following one of these alleged "visions," Mrs. White claimed she had been taken to heaven and escorted into the holy place in the very presence of the Son of God, who opened up the Ark of the Covenant just for her. Inside, she claims was the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of stone, which folded together like a book. Jesus then, according to Ellen, opened the book so that she could see the Ten Commandments and especially the fourth commandment, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy," around which was a "halo of glory." She then, on the basis of that so-called "vision," writes, "I saw that the Sabbath was not nailed to the cross,"³ which Adventists did not believe prior to that time. Thus, we have the reason, and the only reason, why Seventh Day Adventists claim that all are to keep the fourth commandment of Moses today! Mrs. White did not go to the Scriptures to learn that all today are to keep the fourth commandment, but rather she relied on a so-called "vision" to form her belief, after which she and her followers have turned to the wresting of the Scriptures in a failed attempt to support that hallucinatory trip to heaven! This is the total basis for Seventh Day Adventism. All of their theories and doctrines hang upon a sick woman's alleged dreams and unproven claims that stand in direct opposition to the inspired Word of God.

Neither time, nor space, will allow us an investigation of all of their claims, but we do want to look into some of their major doctrines in the light of Scripture, spending most of our time on the Sabbath question, upon which their organization stands or falls. First of all, however, let's consider briefly the claim "divinely illuminate" to a greater degree than the inspired writing

¹ D. M. Canright, *Seventh Day Adventism renounced* (Faith and Facts Press, P.O. Box 681275, Indianapolis, Indiana 46268), pg. 157.

² Canright, *op. cit.*, pg. 157.

³ Foy E. Wallace, Jr., *God's Prophetic Word* (Oklahoma City: Foy E. Wallace, Jr., Publications, 1946), pg. 310.

of the New Testament.⁴ In the preface of one of her allegedly inspired books, The Great Controversy, we find the following: “We believe she (Ellen) has been empowered by a divine illumination to speak of past events which have been brought to her attention with a greater minuteness than is set forth in any existing records, and to read the future with more than human foresight.” Of her own words she says: “It is God, and not an erring mortal, that has spoken.”⁵ The claim is absurd! It is clear that Mr. Miller’s calculations and prophecy as to when Christ would return the second time, and supported totally by the so-called “inspired” Ellen White, and based on the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14, was foolishly incorrect. Christ did not come! In a failed attempt to be consistent in his interpretation of Daniel 8:14, Mr. Miller, using the latter part of the verse, “*then shall the sanctuary be cleansed,*” also falsely prophesied that Christ, following His Second Coming, would enter into the Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary to offer His blood “only” for sins past, and that following October of 1844, the door of the sanctuary would be closed and, after that date, salvation would no longer be offered or available to mankind!⁶ The door of the sanctuary and of salvation would be finally and permanently closed at that time. That Ellen White, the alleged inspired prophetess of God, believed and taught such is clearly stated in one of her writings entitled, A Word to the Little Flock, pages 11 and 12. The Seventh Day Adventist church subsequently abandoned the inspiration of Ellen White about the sanctuary, later believing that only those who could be saved were those who “knew” about the change which Christ made in the Holy Place in Heaven in October of 1844. But today they have even rejected this re-correction and now hold that the door of the sanctuary was not really closed, that people can still be saved by the blood of Christ by keeping the Sabbath Day, if they recognize that worshipping on the first day of the week is the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:11-18), and also recognize the interpretation of the Scriptures in the light of Ellen G. White’s alleged “illumination.” Not only does their change in position relative to the sanctuary prove that Mrs. White’s inspiration and illumination is nothing but fantasy, but clearly the inspired writers of the Bible express their opposition to her writings, as well as to her lofty position in the Seventh Day Adventist church! Mrs. White claimed that Christ entered the Holy Place in October of 1844, but the inspired Hebrew writer says that at the time he wrote (approximately AD 63), 1800 years before Ellen G. White, that Christ “*by His own blood He entered (past tense) once into the Holy Place, having obtained (past tense) eternal redemption for us*” (Hebrews 9:12). The inspired Hebrew writer says that Christ entered the Holy Place before AD 63, undoubtedly on His return to Heaven at His ascension. Ellen G. White’s inspiration says, “Not so, He didn’t enter it until October of 1844!” I submit, on this basis alone that Ellen G. White was not a prophet of the God of the inspired Hebrew writer, neither are her writings inspired in any sense or to any degree! She taught a doctrine that was not of the same Gospel that the apostle Paul preached. He said, “*I marvel that you 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 would trouble you and pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we (i.e., inspired men), or an angel from heaven (and I would suggest even those who allege they have visited heaven), preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we (inspired men) 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 you have received, let him be accursed*” (Galatians 1:6-9). The inspired apostle Paul preached a Gospel that said, “*Let your women keep silent in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are*

⁴ Canright, op. cit., pg. 136.

⁵ Canright, op. cit., pg. 136.

⁶ Canright, op. cit., pg. 143.

commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (I Corinthians 14:34-35). To Timothy, Paul writes, *"Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence"* (I Timothy 2:11-12). The gospel of the Adventists holds to the contrary, that Mrs. Ellen G. White is the final authority in all religious matters, that only her writings can illuminate the Gospel of Christ sufficiently for our understanding! I submit, therefore, that she has stepped over the line and unlawfully usurped the authority that was given to others. The facts: 1) that she supported the Second Coming of Christ in 1844; 2) that today's Adventist rejects her initial support of closing of the sanctuary door in 1844; 3) that eye witnesses attest to the truth that she often inserted the words of her own uninspired husband into her allegedly inspired manuscripts; and 4) that eye witnesses attest to the employment of accomplished writers, because of her very limited formal education, to correct and improve the wording in the manuscripts that she alleged had come directly from God.⁷ There can be no doubt to the unbiased that Ellen G. White was not inspired and, further, that those who follow her writings are following an uninspired usurper of the authority that lies only in the Gospel that the Apostle Paul preached.

It is also evident that Ellen G. White and her followers are not inspired when it comes to Sabbath keeping, since their doctrine regarding this matter can clearly be shown to stand in opposition to God's revealed Word! About this doctrine, they teach that the Sabbath Day commandment is binding upon all today and that it has been binding since the days of creation. This unwarranted and unscriptural position is based primarily on the wresting of Genesis 2:2 where Moses states that God rested from His creative work on the seventh day, after which He, in verse three, says, *"And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all His work."* This passage does not state, imply, or hint as to "when" God blessed and sanctified the Sabbath. In fact, it does not tell us here "to whom" it was blessed and sanctified. It simply states the fact of the action. As to "when" the action took place and "toward whom" it was directed, we must look elsewhere in God's Word. In Nehemiah 9:13-14, the matter of "when" and "whom" is forever settled, *"You (God) came down upon mount Sinai and spoke with 'them' (that is, the children of Israel through Moses) and gave unto 'them' (the children of Israel) right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: and made known unto 'them' (the children of Israel) your holy Sabbath, and commanded 'them' (the children of Israel) precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses your servant."* Clearly, the children of Israel did not know about the holy Sabbath prior to the time that it was made known to them. They therefore, could not have "kept" it before that time! No doubt about it! Listen to Moses again (Deuteronomy 5:2-3); *"The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb (the mountain chain in which Sinai was situated). The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive today."* Clearly, the Sabbath covenant was neither made, nor "kept," prior to Sinai. My friends, the Adventists are wrong about the matter and blasphemously argue against the precisely stated Word of God! Their next argument is to suggest that these and many other such passages should be ignored because the command of Exodus 20:8 is to "Remember" the Sabbath day to keep it holy, and "how can one 'remember' something he never did before?" Such suggestions go far beyond wresting the Scriptures and approach closely the arenas of selected ignorance or intentional deceit, or both. The definition of the word "remember" is not restricted to that assigned to it by the Adventists. In light of the clearly stated

⁷ Canright, op. cit., pg.138-139.

biblical fact that the Sabbath had been unknown to the children of Israel previously, the definition must be recognized as recorded in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary: "To keep in mind for (future) attention or consideration; to retain in the memory." God then, in Exodus 20:8, is effectively saying to the children of Israel, 'Retain in memory (don't forget) the commandment I am now giving you; keep the Sabbath day holy.' I might say to my wife, "Remember to pick me up at the airport." I am not asking her to remember something she has already done, but rather to "remember" or to "keep in mind" that she is to do something in the future. It is so used in Exodus 20:8, evidenced by the fact that it was at that precise time that the Sabbath was first made known to Israel.

Additionally, Adventists who attempt to make Sabbath keeping binding today want others to "keep" it, but only to the extent that they "keep" it! Although they adamantly demand that it must be "kept" (since Ellen G. White allegedly saw a halo around the fourth commandment), they themselves reject the fullness of this commandment that they hold above all others. It is certain and without doubt that they do not "keep" that commandment, as set forth by God through Moses. In order to "keep" the Sabbath day holy, according to the law that God had given Moses, it was necessary to abstain from any kind of labor, to the point of not cooking or not even starting a fire for cooking (Exodus 35:3; Numbers 15:32-34). None could travel more than a Sabbath day's journey (Exodus 16:29), at most about a half mile, which most of today's Adventists violate by simply traveling to their assigned places of worship. None bound by that law were allowed to buy or sell on the Sabbath (Nehemiah 11:31). Further, in "keeping" the Sabbath day holy in response to the fourth commandment, it was necessary not only to sacrifice a lamb as on other Sabbaths, but to double that offering on the seventh day by sacrificing two lambs (Numbers 28:9-10). If two lambs were not sacrificed on the Sabbath; if a person performed even menial labor on the Sabbath; if a person bought or sold on the Sabbath; if a person traveled beyond a half mile on the Sabbath, they were found to be in violation of God's command to "keep" it holy. The punishment for not "keeping" the Sabbath day holy was death (Exodus 31:15) and that by public stoning (Numbers 15:32-36). Has an Adventist ever violated the Sabbath that he is supposed to "keep"? No doubt about it! How many public stonings have taken place? None at all! Why? Clearly the Adventists then do not "keep" the Sabbath holy, but yet would bind it on us to the extent they have decided that we should "keep" it, not on how God said it was to be "kept." What knowledge is it; what logic is it that would suggest that we must "keep" the Sabbath day holy without acknowledging those actions and abstentions that make it holy? And what scriptural sense does it make to say that we can ignore those actions and abstentions with impunity and without fear of the punishment that God said is to be exacted upon all violators? The evidence is insurmountable! The Adventists have wrested the Word of God to suit their own purposes and to be in compliance with the teachings of a proven false prophet.

In order to overcome this evident discrepancy between the Bible and the words of Ellen G. White, the Adventist doctrine holds, without scriptural support and without logic, that God gave two laws in the Old Testament: 1) His law (God's Law), or the Moral Law, and 2) Moses' Law, or the Ceremonial Law. According to them, God's Law is simply the Ten Commandments, while Moses' Law is everything else in the Old Testament, and, further, that God's Law (the Ten Commandments) remains effective today and Moses' Law (everything other than the Ten Commandments) was taken out of the way at the cross of Christ. Therefore, they, without any authority whatsoever, assign all restrictions and punishments relative to the fourth commandment

to Moses' Law, but try to assure us all that, exclusive of those restrictions and punishments appointed by God in the giving of that commandment, we are to only worship upon the seventh day! The entire idea is of man designed to perpetuate a false doctrine. There is nothing in all of God's word that would lead the unbiased to such a conclusion. But to the contrary, the unbiased can but conclude that there is no biblical distinction made between an alleged "Law of God" versus an alleged "Law of Moses." It is but an attempt by the Adventists to retain and bind the fourth commandment upon the unlearned and the unsuspecting of today. The "Law of God" and the "Law of Moses" are clearly one and the same. At the bidding of the people, as recorded in Nehemiah 8:1-3, Ezra brought the "Law of Moses" to be read before them and in verse eight inspiration says, "*So they read in the book in the 'Law of God' distinctly, and gave them the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.*" Nehemiah says by God's inspired direction that there is no difference between the "Law of God" and the "Law of Moses." They are one and the same! The feigned inspiration of Ellen G. White teaches that Nehemiah is wrong and that Ellen is right! Whom should we believe? Ellen also disagrees with the inspiration of the book of Ezra, chapter 7, verses 6 and 12, and also the inspiration of Luke, chapter 2, verses 22 and 23. The differences in "Laws" cited by the Adventists are clearly without biblical support, evidencing the fact that Ellen's inspiration is not of God, but of her own mind.

Throughout God's Word, we are told that the Old Testament, including the Ten Commandments, was taken out of the way at the cross, again disproving Adventist doctrine. Most of what Paul wrote to the various churches was to warn Christians not to go back under the Old Testament; not be brought in bondage again to it (Galatians 5:1-4); not to accept the binding of the old law of circumcision (Galatians 5:6; Galatians 6:15); and not to allow Judaizing teachers to insist that Christians keep the Holy Days (including the Sabbath) of the Old Testament (Colossians 2:14-17). For example, though the Adventists would have us believe that the Ten Commandments given at Sinai are still binding on all today, consider Galatians 3:17: Paul is discussing the Law that was given 430 years after the promise was made to Abraham. Only the brazen and prejudiced will read this and the related Old Testament passage (Exodus 12:40-41) and deny that it is a discussion of the Law that was given when the "*hosts of Israel went out from the land of Egypt,*" i.e., the Ten Commandment Law. In Galatians 3:19, Paul says that "the" Law that was given at that time was added "till" (an adverb of time) the seed, which is Christ (verse 16), should come. It was added only "till" that time. The Law under discussion, the one given when the "*host of Israel went out from the land of Egypt,*" was a schoolmaster, necessary to bring us unto Christ (verse 24), "*But after that faith* (the system of faith introduced by Christ) *is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster!*" It does not say, as the Adventists insist, that we are still under the schoolmaster, but we are just not condemned by it when we break it! The notion is inconceivable and irrational. If the breaking of the Ten Commandment Law, or any Law, brings no penalty at all, it is no law at all! The passage is precise and clear: We are no longer under the Law that was added at the time the children of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt, 430 years after the promise was made to Abraham. This can refer to no other Law than that which was given at Sinai! This is precisely why the very God of Heaven would effectively say by necessary implication on the Mount of Transfiguration, "Don't hear Moses (the Law) any longer; don't hear Elijah (the prophets) any longer; you hear my Son" (Matthew 17:1-5, paraphrased, DA), and by further implication, He says, "Don't hear anyone, except My Son," including Ellen G. White!

Again, Hebrews 8:1-13, in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34, distinctively and clearly teaches that the Old Law, the first covenant, including the Ten Commandments, was replaced by a second and better law. In reading verse five, there can be no doubt that the writer is discussing "the pattern shown you in the mount," i.e., "*the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt*" (verse 9). Obviously reference is to the Ten Commandment law! The writer then states precisely, that it was necessary that a second law (a better covenant) be instituted, because the first covenant was with fault. The New Covenant or Testament that was without fault (James 1:25) would, upon installation, constitute a "change" in laws (Hebrews 7:12) that would 'not be in accordance with the Old Covenant or Testament under discussion,' i.e., the one given "in the mount" when the children of Israel were led up out of the land of Egypt! There is no doubt that this New Covenant replaced the Old Covenant as noted in verse 13, "*In that He sayeth, A New Covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to **vanish away**,*" not only as a spiritual law at the cross (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14), but also as Jewish civil law at the destruction of Jerusalem! The Greek for "vanish" here is *aphanismos*, which is defined as "disappearance" or "abrogation"! The law given "in the mount" disappeared and was abrogated in spiritual effectiveness at the cross of Jesus Christ!

Paul taught it in the New Testament and Jeremiah taught it in the Old Testament, as did Amos and Zechariah. Hear the inspiration of Amos 8:1-10. In verse two, God says, "The end is come upon my people of Israel: I will not again pass by them any more," a definite and precise statement! Then in verse five, the question is asked, "When will the New Moon (religious holy day) and the Sabbath be gone?" The answer to this question is given in verse eight of the same chapter: "*And it shall come to pass **in that day**, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in a clear day.*" So, from this passage, we learn that the Sabbath would be no more in the day that God would cause the sun to go down at noon! When did that happen? It happened on the day our Lord was crucified (Luke 23:44), beginning with the sixth hour. The Jewish day started at six o'clock (six hours) in the morning, therefore, the sun went down precisely at noon, as prophesied in the book of Amos, and at that precise time the Sabbath was gone! This is exactly what the New Testament teaches in Ephesians 2:13-16 and Colossians 2:14, i.e., the Old Testament, including the Sabbath, was taken out of the way at the Cross!

Zechariah, in chapter 11, verses 10-14, prophesied the same truth. In verse five, God says, "*I will break my covenant (Deuteronomy 5:2) which I had made with all the people.*" Another definite and precise statement! When would it be broken? Verses 12 and 13: In that day when, "*they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver*" (Matthew 26:14-15 and Matthew 27:1-6), clearly an occurrence at the death of our Lord. The covenant that God had made with all the people in Horeb was the Ten Commandments!

Remember finally in this regard Romans 7:1-7. Paul also tells us very clearly in this passage that we are no longer under the Ten Commandments. He states that Christians are "dead to the law" (verse 4) and that they are "delivered (discharged) from the law" (verse 6). In verse seven, he tells us that the law we are "dead to" and "delivered from" is the law that says, "Thou shalt not covet!" The law that says, "Thou shalt not covet" clearly indicates the Ten Commandments! In fact, "Thou shalt not covet" is the tenth Commandment (Exodus 20:17)!

Therefore, it follows that one cannot “die” to the law that says, “Thou shalt not covet” without also dying to the law that says, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,” because both are contained in the same, identical Ten Commandment law! Further, we must recognize that neither the “Ten Commandment Law,” nor any other “Law” was reinstated under the New Testament. The New Testament is a totally “new” law, having replaced totally the “old” law (Hebrews 7:12)! Nonetheless, it is true that the New Testament encompasses and includes the moral principles inherent in “nine” of the “ten” Commandments. However, these principles are applicable to Christians today because they are a part of the New Testament, not because they were a part of the Old Testament! It is very significant that the fourth of the Ten Commandments, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,” is strikingly omitted from the New Testament!

Paul encourages people of all time and for all time since the cross to worship on the first day of the week by his example (Acts 20:7) and by commandment (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). Some questions need to be asked. Why did these inspired men on a missionary journey (Acts 20:6) wait for seven days to meet and commune on the first day (Acts 20:7) if that was not the appointed day? Why did they not simply abide six days and worship on the Sabbath if that was the appointed day? Why did the apostle Paul direct the Corinthian Christians to lay by in store on the first day of the week if the seventh day was the appointed day of assembling? It is interesting to note that in the original Greek the word “kata” is used here (verse two), which means “every” first day of the week. Can any suggest that the early Christians engaged in all items of worship except “giving” on Saturday, and then reassembled on the first day for the purpose of engaging in that particular act of worship? Surely not! But why the first day? Simply, because that was the day on which our Lord conquered death by His resurrection, and it was on that day that He established His church, only in which may He be worshipped in spirit and truth!

Not only does the Bible show that we are to meet on the first day, but it is interesting to note that such was the practice on the basis of secular history. In the writings of Justin Martyr (AD 100–167) who was a pupil of Polycarp who, in turn, was a pupil of the apostle John, we can read these words: “On Sunday a meeting is held of all who live in the cities and villages, and a section is read from the memoirs of the Apostles and the writings of the Prophets, as long as time permits. When the reading is finished the president, in a discourse, gives the admonition and exhortation to imitate these noble things. After this we all rise and offer a common prayer. At the close of the prayer, as we have before described, bread and wine and thanks for them according to his ability . . .” The writing goes on to talk about the distribution of the bread and wine to the homes of the sick and about the contribution. Clearly then, both the Bible and secular history evidences the fact that worship of the New Testament church was on the first day and not the seventh! The Adventists claim that the Pope of Rome changed the day of worship from the seventh day to the first day is fully denied by the above facts, as well as by all officials of the Roman Catholic Church! Their teaching is that they worship on Sunday because of apostolic tradition as set forth in the Bible! Again, the Adventists have wrested, not only the Scripture, but also even selected documents of the Roman Catholic Church.

Seventh Day Adventists also forbid the eating of certain foods, a doctrine that violates 1 Timothy 4:1-5! They also falsely deny the biblical doctrine of eternal punishment (Matthew 3:12; 25:46; Revelation 14:11). They teach in error that worship on the first day is the “mark of

the beast” (Revelation 13:11-18). To even suggest that John in writing to the seven churches of Asia two thousand years ago was in reality telling them that the “mark of the beast” did not apply to them, but to Christians two centuries from that time is absurd on the face of it! Many other anti-scriptural positions are held and taught by this man-made organization that time and space do not allow us to deal with at this time.

However, we can but conclude without doubt that Jesus Christ established *the church of the Bible* (Matthew 16:18), not Ellen G. White! The church of the Bible was established in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4,8), not in Battle Creek, Michigan! *The church of the Bible* was established in AD 33 (Acts 2:1), not in AD 1863! *The church of the Bible* is biblically designated "churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16), not the "Seventh Day Adventist Church"! To which church then should one belong? Can there be any doubt? There were multitudes of Christians in the church of the Bible (both living and dead) during the many centuries before the sickly Ellen G. White allegedly was taken by Jesus Christ into the Holy Place in Heaven to see a “halo” around the Sabbath day commandment. They had become Christians simply according to the New Testament pattern! It is more than evident that since people were being saved in the church of Christ before Ellen and her “halo” were ever heard of, that people by that same initial pattern are saved today without her, by a God who is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Salvation then is gained simply by following the New Testament pattern in likeness of the three thousand that were saved on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37-47)! Those so saved on that day, as those saved today, were and are added to that one same church, that is, the church of Christ, not the Seventh Day Adventist church that would be unheard of for nearly the next twenty centuries!

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BUDDHISM

It is a privilege to have a part in this lectureship dealing with the major religions in the world. My thanks to the elders of the Duluth church for arranging this program and also making it available in book form and on cassette tape. This lectureship was also broadcast "live" over the internet.

There are two ways to approach the subject of Buddhism. One approach is to look at Buddhism as it has existed in Asia. It is a very important part of the culture there. It is "engrained" in the habits and lifestyle of millions of Asian people. The other way is to study it as practiced by people in the western world. Many who practice Buddhism in the west have first rejected the Bible and so-called "Christianity." When they do not see what they like in this area, they turn to eastern religions. Unfortunately, most of these have never been exposed to true New Testament Christianity, and therefore do not make a true comparison between what the Bible teaches and what Buddhism teaches. We will do that in this lesson. Because many have already rejected false "Christianity," they have difficulty accepting the truth (Genesis 37:31-34; 45:26-28).¹

A Taiwanese woman, who believed all religions are from God, illustrates this view. Even though all of the different religions teach many contradictory doctrines, she believed that since they all came from God, we should just pick and choose the best of each one and leave the rest alone. She also believed that since all religions came from God, we should not criticize various religious groups. There are many people in this world who share her views (I have several samples of letters in my files illustrating this point). We also know God did not institute contradictory religions because "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:33). There are so many religions or philosophies that claim to be the guide for people in this life. Buddhism makes this claim. There are millions of Buddhists living in the world today and the number continues to grow, especially in the United States.

Because there are many similarities between Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism (pronounced dao-ism), and because various parts of these "paths" are practiced by many Asian people, we will give a brief overview of these views as well. "Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism constitute the essence of the traditional Chinese culture. The relationship among the three has been marked by both contention and complementation in history, with Confucianism playing a more dominant role."² Buddhism is one of many eastern religions that fits into Paul's description of those who "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man...Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (Romans 1:23,25).

ORIGIN AND HISTORY

Buddhism

Buddhism is based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama (563- 483 B.C., ?), also known as Shakyamuni. Gautama was born in what is now Nepal. He was born into a noble family and was raised in wealthy circumstances. He married at the age of sixteen and had a son at the age of twenty-nine. "Legend has been prolifically at work on the scanty facts concerning the childhood of Siddhartha Gautama. Tradition insists that the father hoped his son would become 'a universal monarch,' the emperor of all India. But if this was in actual

fact his expectation, it was doomed to disappointment.”³

It was after the birth of his son that he began his search for enlightenment. After trying the ascetic way of life, he turned to meditation. It is claimed that through meditation he realized enlightenment and began to teach his beliefs. “Deep in meditation, he reached the highest degree of God-consciousness, known as nirvana. He supposedly stayed under the fig tree for seven days, after that the fig tree was called the bodhi, or the bo tree (the tree of wisdom). The truths he learned he would now impart to the world, no longer as Siddhartha Gautama, but as the Buddha, the enlightened one.”⁴

For the next forty-five years he worked in the preaching and teaching of those things he had learned. Buddhism was born in India, the home of Hinduism. Since Gautama came out of the Hindu background, there are a number of similarities between Hinduism and Buddhism (such as, teachings regarding reincarnation and karma). It is said he died at the age of 80 after eating spoiled food.

The greatest early growth of Buddhism was in India. It spread into the other Asian nations (such as Thailand, China, and Japan). Several forms of Buddhism have been developed through the years. We will discuss that when we talk about “Authority and Doctrine” later in this chapter.

Taoism

The claimed founder of Taoism (pronounced daoism) is Lao-tzu. The word “tao” means “path.” Concerning him, McDowell and Stewart said:

Many scholars feel that Lao-tzu never existed at all. His date of birth is uncertain, being put variously between 604 and 570 B.C. One legend said that he was never young but rather was born old with white hair, a long white beard and wrinkled skin...However, he was known to the people as Lao-tzu, meaning “the old philosopher.”⁵

Chuang-tzu, a disciple of Lao-tzu, popularized Taoism by his many teachings on the subject of the “path.” Tao-ism provides us with “yin” and “yang,” which literally means “feminine” and “masculine.” It carries many additional meanings in Taoism.

Taoism still has a large following in Taiwan and has a growing following in the United States. Those who practice Taoism in Taiwan also mix it with Buddhism and Confucianism.

Confucianism

The name **Confucius** is the romanized version of his Chinese name, **Kung Fu Tzu**. He was born about 550 B.C. in China. He lived at about the same time as Buddha. He was an official in local government, holding minor posts until about the age of fifty. It was at that time he became a high official, but because of a disagreement with his superiors, resigned, and spent the next thirteen years traveling and spreading his teachings. After spending the last five years of his life writing, he died in Shantung Province in 479 B.C.⁶

Rod Rutherford gives a concise account of the origin and history of Confucianism in his book on world religions. He says in the introduction:

Confucianism has been described as a “religion of optimistic humanism.” Confucianism is not a religion in the sense of man worshiping a god or gods, but is mainly an ethical system dealing with getting along with one’s fellow man.⁷

It was Confucius’ purpose to try to bring reform to the society at that time because of the corruption among government leaders. “Confucius believed that the solution to this chaos was to return to the kinder, gentler ways of their ancestors. He was basically a humanist, believing that man was essentially good, and just needed to be called back to his better instincts. He sought to reform society by reforming government and education according to his principles of behavior.”⁸

One of his students, born about two hundred years later, was Mencius. Like his teacher, he spent much of his time in traveling, spreading the message of reform. He was mostly responsible for the teachings of Confucius becoming well known and popular throughout China.

It may be the case that Confucius had no intention of establishing a new religion, but through the centuries steps were taken to “deify” Confucius. Today, there are Confucius temples throughout China. In Taiwan, sunrise services are conducted each year on September 28 to remember him.

AUTHORITY AND DOCTRINE

Buddhism

Buddhism is divided into three main branches. The oldest branch is **Theravada**, the “Way of the Elders.” Theravada is predominately found in southern Asia (Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia). By far the largest branch of Buddhism is **Mahayana** or “Great Vehicle.” It is predominant in northern Asia (China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam). “**Zen Buddhism** is a form of Mahayana Buddhism that has become very popular in Western nations in recent years. Zen developed about a thousand years after the death of Buddha. Adherents of Zen say their beliefs do not need to be explained, but are directly transmitted from one mind to another...A statement of Buddha frequently repeated by advocates of Zen is: ‘Look within; you are the Buddha.’”⁹ The third branch of Buddhism is the **Vajrayana** or “Diamond” tradition. It is dominant in Tibet. The Dalai Lama is the leading figure of this branch.

Though there are different branches of Buddhism, there are some basic teachings accepted by all. These include: The Three Marks of Existence, The Four Noble Truths, The Five Skandhas, The Six Realms, The Eightfold Path, and the Ten Perfections.¹⁰

“Theravada Buddhism has three groups of scriptures. Together, they are referred to as ‘Tripitaka’ which means ‘Three Baskets.’ The Tripitaka is about eleven times the size of the Bible. It includes the sayings of Buddha, lectures on discipline, and philosophy. Mahayana Buddhism has no fixed canon of scripture. They have more than 5,000 volumes and the

number continues to grow. Some sects choose one portion to follow, some another.”¹¹

Some of the main doctrines of Buddhism are karma, reincarnation, and nirvana.

The Meaning of Karma

Buddhism teaches that happiness or suffering in this life is the result of our deeds (karma) in past lives, or past actions in our present lives. Karma is “intentional action, that is, a deed done deliberately through body, speech, or mind.” The effects of karma may be evident either in short term or in the long term. Karma can either manifest its effects in this very life or in the next life or only after several lives.

“A man does wrong and suffers for it. But he may suffer when he has done no apparent wrong. Hence his wrong was done in a former life, and if he does wrong and apparently receives no retribution, he will be punished for his sin in another birth.”¹² The Buddha said, “According to the seed that is sown, So is the fruit you reap. The door of good will gather good result. The door of evil reaps evil result. If you plant a good seed well, Then you will enjoy the good fruits.”¹³

According to the idea of karma in Buddhism, an individual has freewill, but he carries the baggage of deeds done in previous lives.

Reincarnation or Rebirth

The idea of reincarnation permeates our society. In the early 1980's, almost one in four Americans believed in reincarnation.¹⁴ There have been a number of books written, television shows and movies produced that promote this teaching. Many famous people in history believed they were someone else in another life. In some forms of Buddhism, all creatures (including animals) have a soul, so it would be cannibalism to kill and eat animals. Many who believe in reincarnation are vegetarians. Buddhists are not the only animists in the world (**Animism** is the belief that all sorts of motionless objects...have souls or spirits in them¹⁵).

Nirvana

In Sanskrit, nirvana literally means, "extinction, blowing out." Nirvana is the ultimate goal of spiritual practice in Buddhism. It is the liberation from the cycle of rebirth and suffering. Nirvana is the total, absolute and permanent cessation of suffering. Buddha says, "one without attachment realizes nirvana." Buddha also says, "end of craving is nirvana." The Buddha described nirvana as supreme happiness, peace and immortality. It is the merging of the individual into being one with the universe. Nirvana means "never having to be reborn."¹⁶

View of God

As in Hinduism, there are many Buddhists who believe there are many gods, or no gods. “Zen holds that there is no god outside the universe who has created it and created man.... Each of us is but a cell as it were, in the body of the great Self, a cell that comes into being, performs its functions, and passes away, transformed into another manifestation.”¹⁷ “In

Chinese style polytheism, the pantheon of gods is open...In China...religions are viewed as inclusive, and a person may commonly be a combination of Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucianist, with some other elements thrown in as well. Chinese tend to look for a 'god' that can solve a specific problem at an immediate time, and to fill a particular need. They visit a variety of temples and shrines to give offerings. When the westerner inquires as to which idols or images in the temple are representative of which religion(s), it is most likely none of the Chinese in attendance knows."¹⁸

Buddhism is a religion that "offers the chance to be an atheist without having to dispense with religion."¹⁹ So in Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, you can be a polytheist or an atheist. It does not affect their final outcome or goals. The Psalmist said, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 14:1).

Taoism

The *Tao Te Ching* is the main source of the authority of Taoism. It accepts unquestionably the theory that when things are allowed to take their natural course, they move with a wonderful perfection and harmony.²⁰ Yin-Yang represent elements in the universe that are contrary to each other, such as life and death, light and darkness, good and evil. The Yang represents the positive elements, the Yin the negative elements.²¹ It also teaches one can get his life in harmony with the Tao and live as he is meant to live. This is called "the concept of inaction."²²

The practice of ancestor worship comes from Taoism as well. Confucianism also advocates this practice. It is believed that if the family provides for the needs of its departed loved ones, the departed will continue to bring good luck to the living. However, if the ancestors are neglected, bad luck will come to the family. In the Chinese culture, it falls to the oldest male in the family to lead in the worship of the ancestors.

Confucianism

The doctrines and authority of this view are based upon a number of the writings of Confucius, Mencius, and their followers. These books include: *The Five Classics*, *The Analects*, *The Great Learning*, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, and *The Book of Mencius*.

One of the main things Confucius stressed in his writings was the teaching on **filial piety**. "Confucius taught that an orderly society was based on the stability of the home, but the home was based on respect of children for their parents. He was credited with saying, 'The services of love and reverence to parents when alive, and those of sorrow and grief when dead, these completely discharge the fundamental duty of living men.' Throughout Chinese history, loyalty to the family has been the highest consideration."²³ That is why in many countries where Chinese people live, there is a very low crime rate among the Chinese people. It comes from the respect for the family.

Confucius' statement, "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do unto others" has been used to show Jesus' statement was not original. Unlike Jesus, however, Confucius applied this only to friends, not enemies.²⁴ Also, Confucius looked at it from the negative standpoint, while Jesus stated it positively. "*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets*" (Matthew

Versus The Bible

It is granted there is some good in all religions. Who would be interested in following a religion that did not have anything good about it? However, as we pointed out at the beginning of this lesson, God did not want many different conflicting religions existing in the world. How can we know which one is the one He authorizes?

Just as with many Eastern religions, Buddhism is very idolatrous in nature. The Bible is filled with passages that show the folly and sinfulness of idolatry that has existed in Eastern religions through the years (Psalm 115:4-8; Psalm 135:15-17; Isaiah 40:18-20; Acts 19:24-28; 1 Corinthians 12:2). How can religions that promote idolatry be a religion from God? It is not possible.

Karma Versus The Bible

According to the idea of karma in Buddhism, an individual has free will, but he carries the baggage of deeds done in previous lives. What does the Bible teach? The Bible teaches each individual is responsible for his own life (Ezekiel 18:4,20; Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10). We do not inherit the sins of our ancestors, nor do we inherit sins from previous lives.

Reincarnation Versus The Bible

Some who believe in reincarnation try to use the Bible to uphold their doctrine. In the Old Testament, they refer to the examples of Job (Job 1:20,21) and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:4,5) to try to uphold their doctrine. They also use Psalm 139:13-16 to try to support their teaching. In the New Testament, they try to use passages that speak of Paul (Galatians 1:15,16) and Elijah (Matthew 11:14; 17:10-13; Luke 1:17). None of these passages remotely suggests this teaching.

The Bible does not uphold this doctrine. In fact, the Bible refutes reincarnation. Take, for example, the case of Elijah. Reincarnation teaches that when a person dies, he is born as someone else in another life. But Elijah did not die (2 Kings 2:11; Hebrews 11:5). Also, Elijah appears as himself with Jesus on the mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-5). John came *"in the spirit and power of Elijah"* (Luke 1:17). Reincarnation teaches we die over and over again.²⁵ However, the Bible tells us *"it is appointed unto men once to die"* (Hebrews 9:27). This same verse tells us that after we die, we wait for the judgment.

Nirvana Versus The Bible

Earlier in this lesson we gave the definition and meaning of nirvana. It was to cease from an existence of pain and suffering. The goal of the Christian is also to go to a place where there will be no suffering or pain (Revelation 21:4; 1 Peter 1:3-9). However, a heavenly reward does not mean we cease to exist (John 5:28,29; Matthew 25:31-46). These passages also point out the unrighteous are not reborn, but will be doomed to hell.

Defeating Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism

The Buddhists do not like this phrase, “defeating Buddhism.” It makes it sound like we are at war. We are at “spiritual war” with Satan (Ephesians 6:10-17; 2 Timothy 2:3,4; 1 John 3:8). If these religions did not come from God, they came from Satan. We are not interested in “killing” those in these religions, but instead trying to free them from the captivity of the devil (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16).

The key to succeeding in this effort is to first establish the truth of the Bible. If the Bible is true, then anything that contradicts the Bible must be false. We can prove the truth of the Bible.

What is so special about the Bible that makes us realize it is the greatest book ever written? The Bible claims to be from God (2 Peter 1:20,21; 2 Timothy 3:16,17). Jesus said, “*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32). He then says, “*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*” (John 17:17). The Word of God is our source of truth (2 Timothy 3:16,17). We have proof Jesus is who He said He is.

Many people do not believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. If He is not the Christ, then our faith is of no value. If He is the Son of God, we must obey Him to go to heaven (Matthew 7:21-23). Jesus is a real person. He lived on this earth about 2,000 years ago. Not everybody believes He is the Son of God. Some say, “He was a good man, and a great Teacher, but He was not the Son of God.” This is impossible. Either He is the Son of God, or He was the biggest liar in the world. He said He was the Son of God. Why do we believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? To believe something we must have good reasons. We must be able to prove why we believe Jesus is the Christ (1 Peter 3:15). People must believe that Jesus is the Christ to be saved (John 8:24; John 14:6). We can give many reasons for believing Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 1:1-18; 5:17,18; 8:58; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; 1 Peter 2:21,22; Hebrews 4:14-16; John 3:1,2; 20:30,31; Matthew 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:16-18; 1 John 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 1:4).

There are no contradictions in the Bible. The Bible was written by about forty different writers over a period of about 1600 years. The writers of the Bible were men who lived in different periods of time, having different occupations, living in different places. In many cases, the writers did not know each other. In spite of this, there are no contradictions in the Bible. This could not have happened by accident. Buddhism does not even try to claim there are no contradictions in their sacred writings.

We can also consider the scientific facts found in the Bible. The Bible is not a science book, but it has scientific facts in it. Columbus and Magellan proved the earth is round. That was just about five hundred years ago. The Bible told us the earth was round thousands of years before anybody ever heard of Columbus or Magellan (Isaiah 40:22; Proverbs 8:27).

The Bible also tells us we are not able to number the stars. In 1940, astronomers finally came to this conclusion. Almost 2,500 years ago, Jeremiah recorded: “*As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me*” (Jeremiah 33:22). Almighty God cannot only count the stars, He can call them by name (Psalm 147:4).

There are more than one thousand prophecies in the Bible. The fact that every

prophecy is fulfilled is further proof that the Bible is true. More than three hundred of these prophecies are concerning the Messiah. Jesus fulfilled every one.

The Bible teaches there is only one right way (John 14:6). We will be judged by the words of Christ (John 12:48). There are only two choices in life - the narrow way or the broad way (Matthew 7:13,14). If we want to go to heaven, we have to obey the will of God (Matthew 7:21-23; Romans 6:17,18; Hebrews 5:8,9). The Bible is the proven guide for the lives of all people.

The Bible teaches there is only one true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6; 1 Corinthians 8:6). The Bible also emphasizes the existence of God (Genesis 1:1; Daniel 2:28; Acts 17:23-29). Buddhism teaches there is either no God or many gods - your choice. The Bible is right! Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism contradict the Bible; therefore, they cannot be right!

The Bible teaches it is our guide in life and it reveals all truth (Psalm 119:105; John 14:26; John 16:13; 2 Peter 1:3). Buddhism teaches the writings of Gautama and one's own feelings are the guide in this life (Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 10:23).

The Bible proclaims Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God (Romans 1:4; John 20:30,31). The Bible teaches that Jesus rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3,4). Buddhism denies Jesus rose from the dead and denies Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Since Buddhism contradicts these plain passages, Buddhism cannot be true!

The Bible reveals God's eternal plan to save mankind through the church (Ephesians 3:8-11; Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22,23; 5:23). Buddhism denies this is the path of salvation. According to Buddhism, a person is to follow the Eightfold Path that will lead to Nirvana. Since this contradicts the Bible, it cannot be right!

The Bible teaches that our soul is eternal and we will be judged according to our works, by the word of God (Matthew 10:28; 1 Corinthians 15:45; Romans 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:10). The difference between humans and animals is humans have an eternal soul, animals do not. Yet Buddhism teaches all life, human and animal, is of the same value. Buddhism also teaches reincarnation, which is a continual rebirth. These views are in conflict with the Bible. The Bible is true; therefore these doctrines of Buddhism are false.

CONCLUSION

Buddhism stresses self-dependence and self-salvation. It cannot be true because it is a religion from man (Matthew 15:8,9,13-15). Christianity is far superior to any other religion in the world. It offers forgiveness of sins through our obedience to Christ (Hebrews 5:8,9). The only hope this world has is through Christ (Ephesians 2:12; John 14:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:9). Those who established these Eastern religions have died and are still dead. Jesus died and rose from the dead never to die again (Romans 1:4).

May God help each of us to use every opportunity to preach the gospel of Christ to those who practice and follow Buddhism, and give those who have good and honest hearts the opportunity to believe and obey the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Romans 1:16).²⁶

the opportunity to believe and obey the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Romans 1:16).²⁶

ENDNOTES

¹ All Quotations are taken from the King James Version. Jacob had a genuine reaction to false information. When he learned the truth, at first, he refused to believe it.

² <http://chineseculture.about.com/library/weekly/aa030400a.html>

³ David S. Noss and John B. Noss, **Man's Religions** (New York, NY; Macmillan Publishing Company, 1984), p. 106.

⁴ Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, **Understanding Non-Christian Religions** (San Bernardino, California: Here's Life Publishers, Inc., 1982), p. 49.

⁵ Ibid., p. 97.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 77,78.

⁷ Rod Rutherford, **Survey of World Religions** (Memphis, Tennessee: Rutherford Publications, n.d.), p. 38. Brother Rutherford's book has twenty lessons dealing with all of the major religions in the world. It would be an excellent study book for Bible classes.

⁸ Ibid., p. 41.

⁹ Rutherford, p. 32.

¹⁰ <http://www.ncf.carleton.ca/dharma/introduction/overview.html> and

<http://www.easternreligions.com/buddhacom.html>.

¹¹ Rutherford, p. 32.

¹² Edward J. Thomas, **The Life of Buddha** (London: Broadway House, 1949), p. 174.

¹³ <http://home.earthlink.net/~srama/>

¹⁴ Norman L. Geisler and J. Yutaka Amano, **The Reincarnation Sensation** (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1986), p. 7.

¹⁵ Noss and Noss, p. 15.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 122.

¹⁷ Ruth Fuller Sasaki, "Zen: a Method for Religious Awakening," **The World of Zen: an East-West Anthology**, edited by Nancy Wilson Ross (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 18.

¹⁸ Richard W. Hartzell, **Harmony in Conflict** (Taipei: Cave Books, 1988), p. 565.

¹⁹ Wulf Metz, "The Appeal of Buddhism in the West," in **The World's Religions** (Herts, England: Lion Publishing, 1982), p. 242.

²⁰ Noss and Noss, p. 247.

²¹ McDowell and Stewart, p. 109.

²² Ibid., p. 109.

²³ Rutherford, p. 41.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 41.

²⁵ Geisler and Amano, p. 170.

²⁶ Additional Websites for further study on Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism:

<http://www.omsakthi.org/religions.html>; <http://www.friesian.com/confuci.htm>;

<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursby/taoism/>;

<http://www.askasia.org/frclasrm/readings/r000005.htm>;

<http://www-ee.eng.hawaii.edu/~chiao/ghost.htm>;

<http://www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-Buddhism.html>.

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HINDUISM

INTRODUCTION

- A. At a period of about twenty-five hundred years before Jesus Christ was born, there roamed on the grassy plateaus and steppes of Central or Eastern Europe or Western Asia tribes of nomadic peoples seeking pastures for their flocks and herds.
1. They were white men, they spoke a common language, and apparently had boundless energy.
 2. For some unknown reason groups of these restless nomads would start off to find a more congenial home for their cattle and themselves, until in the end they were scattered far to the east and south and west, far from cold and misty Ireland and Scotland to the plains of India under a blazing topical sun.
 3. The Aryan branch of these scattered peoples came into Persia (Iran, the Persian for Aryan) and into India.
- B. Those who came to India settled first on the banks of the Indus, which means “river” or “flood,” so they called their new home “the land of the Indus” from which comes the name “India.”
1. They did not come at any one time but, in all probability, came in various sized groups during hundreds of years.
 2. Some believe they were still arriving in the land fifteen hundred years before Christ.
 3. After settling northern India they spread out over the Punjab, or region of the “five rivers,” and then, through the years, slowly extended their settlements to the south and east, taking possession of the rich Ganges Valley in their advancement.
 4. *“They were then soldier-farmers, equally used to the plow and the sword. They were constantly at war with the aborigines around them; and they looked eagerly for sunshine and rain to mature their crops and give them fodder for their cattle and herds. They were still a primitive people, living in simple villages, with but few of the arts of civilization, and untrammelled by the bonds of caste. They had no writing and no coinage. They ate beef and drank intoxicating drink. The tribes lived each under its own chieftain, and now and then quarrels led to war among them. The family was still in a healthy condition. Their women had a great deal of freedom throughout their lives. There was no child-marriage among them, no seclusion in the zenana (house for women), no widow-burning, and no law against the remarriage of widows. Like most primitive peoples, they practiced the exposure of girl children and old people.”*

DISCUSSION

I. THE RELIGION OF THE VEDAS.

- A. India has some great literature, very largely religious in nature.
- B. However, the absence of works of history makes it very difficult in tracing certain courses of events.
 - 1. During the first part of the twentieth century, archaeology made some surprising revelations.
 - 2. As quoted above from A Primer of Hinduism, Mr. J. N. Farquhar, and others, thought that civilization in India began with the coming of the Aryan peoples.
 - 3. Archaeology has revealed a culture which existed in the Indus Valley at least fifteen hundred years before their arrival.
 - 4. At Mehengo-daro and at Harappa the remains of a civilization as far advanced as that of Mesopotamia were exposed.
 - 5. It was a culture very different from the Aryans in most respects and yet it is believed to *"contain the germs of much that was to play a great part in the life of the people of India."*
- C. This discovery has brought about significant changes in thinking as to the sources of Hinduism.
 - 1. Before this time it was believed that Hinduism had its origin in the faith which was brought into India and developed by the Aryans and then imposed upon the native peoples there.
 - 2. But it is now believed that the Aryans may have blended their religion with that of the native peoples which were called Dravidians by the Aryans.
- D. The Aryans brought with them a religion which was similar to that of the Persian peoples (to whom they were closely related), but soon they began to develop features quite different and very much their own.
- E. This knowledge is based in a collection of hymns known as the Rig-Veda.
 - 1. These hymns, or "praises," were composed during long periods and were committed to memory and used at sacrifices.
 - 2. There are over a thousand of them and they were finally written down in Sanskrit and preserved as a single collection.

3. All the gods whose praises are sung are nature deities and are divided into three groups with eleven gods in each group.
 4. They are gods of celestial regions, those of the earth, and those of the space between the earth and sky.
- F. Of the gods of the high heavens, three will be mentioned.
1. Mitra, who as Mithras was well known in Persia and also in the Roman Empire.
 2. Vishnu, who in a later day assumed an importance in Indian religion which he had not known in the earlier period.
 3. And Varuna, who is the god of the vast luminous heavens, viewed as embracing all things, and as the primary source of all life and every blessing.
 - a. Hinduism may have reached a far nobler level had Varuna and the things for which he stood been attained.
 - b. Not only was this god sublime in his majesty and power, but was the judge of men's hearts and the pattern of nobility, truth, and righteousness who expected the same from his followers.
 - c. However, modern Hinduism has discarded Varuna and adopted other gods which are far different in ideals.
- G. There were three important gods of the earth; Agni, Soma, and Yama.
1. Agni was fire, that of lightning, the sun, and the sacrificial flame, as well as the fire which was used on a daily basis.
 - a. As the flame ascends and seems to be traveling toward the purified home of the gods, fire was early looked upon as a priest conveying sacrifices to the other deities.
 - b. Many high functions in human life and even in creation have been delegated to this god but in all various forms Agni has always remained just the material fire with which we are familiar.
 2. Soma was the name of an Indian plant, still unidentified, and the fermented juice which was extracted from it.
 - a. It was intoxicating and therefore divine to the early Aryans.

- b. They were possessed of a spirit not their own when they were intoxicated and their only explanation was that it must come from the gods.
 - c. Suggested here is the origin of the term “ardent spirits” which literally takes possession of the man who has imbibed freely.
 - d. Soma also had a celestial reference and was supposed to flow in the invisible world as well as on earth.
 - e. The gods themselves attained immortality by drinking the Soma and so would men when they drank the life-giving potion with Yama in the land of the blessed.
 - f. Again, as in the case of Agni, the physical character of the god was never lost.
 - g. Soma remained until the end, and in spite of the idealizing process, the juice of the Soma plant.
3. Yama was a god who might have lived on immortal but he chose to die.
- a. He thus was the first to cross the dreaded flood from which none return.
 - b. The dead who lived nobly went to him.
 - c. Nothing much was written about the wicked who perished or continued to exist “in dark and dismal pits” with demons and other spirits.
- H. Of all the gods of the Rig-Veda, Indra took first place as the national god of the Aryans.
- 1. He was the greatest of the atmospheric gods, the king of heaven, the warrior who gave the victory to his people, and at the same time was the giver of good and the author and preserver of life.
 - 2. Indra not only fought with the people when they were engaged in war, but fought for them with his faithful companions, the Maruts (“the bright ones”), the gods of storm and lightning.
 - 3. Intoxicated with Soma, he rode among the clouds, striking his enemies with thunderbolts.
 - 4. When it is remembered that it is to the atmosphere the people of India must look not only for prosperity but for life itself, it can be seen quite readily how Indra, the god who defeated the enemies who would have prevented the breaking of the monsoon with its copious rains, would be lifted up and idealized until he became their great champion and protector.

- I. When one reads the hymns of the Rig-Veda, he is confused by the manner in which the qualities of one god are ascribed to another and still another god so the lines of demarcation between them become hazy and indistinct.
 - 1. This tendency to fuse and assimilate the gods and their functions was the beginning of a long process which continued until it led into the monism which is so characteristic of feature of later Indian thought.
 - 2. The Indian mind even at the this early date was beginning to feel out after a unity in which there should be no distinctions, and, though the fully developed theory was not completed for many centuries, the tendency began to make itself evident very early.
- J. One can also see in these hymns by the ascriptions of praise to one and then another of these divine beings that at the time of the praise given, that particular god was considered the sole god of the universe.
 - 1. Many gods were worshiped but each at times in a more or less exclusive manner.
 - 2. The theology oscillates between polytheism and an approach toward monotheism.
 - 3. It is one form of henotheism (also called monolatry) or the worship of one god without rejecting other gods who may be worshiped at other times as needs and occasions may require, but only one god at a time.
 - 4. The worshiper was uneasy with this because he had inherited many gods with various functions to provide him with needed care and protection but he was not satisfied.
 - 5. The desire for some kind of unity was beginning to assert itself making the worship of a variety of gods seem to lack harmony or agreement.
 - 6. With this desire, and by a very natural process, the conception changed and developed until in the final outcome all these gods came to be looked upon as manifestations only, manifestations of a primal essence behind and inclusive of them all.
- K. The worship of the gods was largely sacrificial and animals were offered in increasing numbers as the centuries passed.
 - 1. There were elaborate rites connected with the offering of the soma and of the ghi (clarified butter).

2. There were no temples and no images in the earliest days and the worship was conducted outside in the open air.
 3. There were priests in the early days and as the sacrifices became more elaborate they increased their hold until their grip on the people of India was complete.
 4. The theory was very simple.
 - a. Sacrifice was looked upon as an absolute necessity.
 - b. Life could not be preserved or prosperity continued without it.
 - c. The result of the sacrifice did not depend upon the moral fitness or sincerity of the worshiper nor the will of the gods.
 - d. It depended solely upon the correctness with which the ritual of sacrifice was performed.
 - e. This was believed implicitly by all the people, both high and low.
 5. In the earliest days, the father of the family was the priest of his family but as the theory of the sacrifice developed it became increasingly difficult for him to master the ritual on which the fortunes of the family depended.
 6. Professional priests took the father's place and performed the ceremonies for him.
 7. They made themselves experts in religion, masters of ceremony and ritual, and thus became indispensable to the people to the point that nothing in religion could be done without them.
 8. They dominated life and exercised their sway with more and more severity until they came to occupy a unique position in the lives of the people.
 9. The Brahmins, as they came to be called, wielded the mightiest power in the land, and, jealous of their position, they separated themselves more and more from the other classes and were looked upon and treated as superior beings, veritable gods on earth.
- L. The theory of the efficacy of sacrifice was carried so far that sacrifice was looked upon as irresistible and so the whole system became saturated with magic.
1. The carrying out of the ritual with minute exactness would bring about the desired end with little reference to the will of the god who was addressed.

2. This, of course, did not exalt the gods but further elevated the authority of the divine priesthood which could perform such wonders.
 3. It was said that the gods themselves had attained their present positions by sacrifice and so it logically followed that it was not beyond the range of mortal man to reach the position of a god.
- M. The Rig-Veda was the earliest literature of the Indian mind but it was only one of four and was by far the most important.
1. But Vedic literature became much more extensive and influential in the later development of the Hindu religion.
 2. All four of the Vedas had attached to them one or more Brahmanas which were voluminous priestly writings which explained the sacrifices and gave direction to the various schools of priests concerning the conduct of the ritual.
- N. Closely connected with the individual Brahmanas was another series of writings called Aranyakas (which means "Forest Treaties") which are the musings of certain thoughtful men who were not satisfied by the monotony of sacrifices - though they did not repudiate them - and went off alone in the forest to think more deeply on the meaning of life and religion.
1. But of greater importance than the Aranyakas was another group of writings which were embedded in them and are difficult to distinguish from them.
 2. These are the famous Upanishads, one of the chief foundation-heads of Hindu philosophy.
- O. All these writings which have been mentioned are called sruti, which means "hearing," the things which were heard by the inspired Rishis of a day long past as they listened to divine revelation.
- P. All other writings, no matter how important and sacred, are called smriti, "what is remembered," traditional knowledge but not inspired as are the Vedas.

II. THE PHILOSOPHIC DEVELOPMENT OF HINDUISM.

- A. When the Aryans came into India, they possessed no belief in the doctrine of transmigration and yet it is one of the basic doctrines of Hinduism. From where did it come?
1. The idea was suggested by contact with the aboriginal population into the midst of which they were thrown.

2. While the Aryans came more and more to dominate the religious life of the country, they unconsciously absorbed many of the ideas of the primitive Dravidians.
 3. One of these was transmigration.
 - a. The theory is when a man dies his soul leaves the dying body and enters the body of some animal or human being as it comes into the world to begin its life.
 - b. The process is repeated generation after generation time and time again without end.
- B. The theory came to the Aryans in a very crude form but apparently the keen minds of the thinkers among them would not allow it to rest but worked it out to its logical conclusion and made it a part of their growing philosophical system.
1. The force which determined the operation of transmigration was karma.
 - a. Karma means “action” or “deed,” actions or deeds in one life which work out their results in the next life, and the next, and so on through unlimited time.
 - b. According to karma we are born into a new life well and strong, good or bad, rich or poor.
 - c. It is a kind of reward or retribution as the case may be, working itself out automatically and inevitably in existence after existence.
 - d. There is absolutely no escape from the clutches of this inexorable law.
 2. The best that can be hoped for is not to add to our karma so that when what we have inherited is finally exhausted there will be no more to keep the fire going.
 - a. The fuel consists of all deeds - good or bad - which stimulate life.
 - b. To live, then - just to live within itself, whether nobly or dishonorably, it makes very little difference - is an evil with a most unfortunate entail for the future.
- C. The importance of the doctrine of transmigration must not be overestimated.
1. To the Hindus it is this doctrine of transmigration on which all the philosophies of their lives are based.
 2. The law of karma (as a man sows so shall he reap) is the keystone of the arch over which the vast edifice of Hinduism has been built through the ages.

3. To be saved from the endless succession of births and deaths is what religion means to the Hindus.
 4. It seems almost hopeless and so deathlike is the grip of this doctrine on the mind of the people, but in one way or another they continue on with the high hope of breaking the heavy chain at some time in a distant future.
- D. Hindus, in their earnestly seeking to liberate themselves from the necessity of rebirth time after time, have worked out three ways of salvation.
1. Salvation for a Hindu means the liberation from samsara, the endless repetition of births to which they are bound.
 2. The first way of salvation is karmamarga, the way of works.
 - a. This means that one must keep caste regulations scrupulously, perform all the religious rites in the family and temple, and do the hundred other things which are laid down in manuals and have come down traditionally from one generation to another.
 - b. But even by the most scrupulous observance of these regulations a man cannot hope to escape being born again; what he may look forward to in another life is a happier lot than that which is his in the present life.
 3. The second way of salvation is called bhaktimarga, or the way of loving devotion to one or another of the divine beings he has chosen to worship.
 4. The third and final way of deliverance is jnanamarga, or salvation by knowledge.
 - a. This is a method of release by philosophical insight and intuition.
 - b. This is the only way by which one is able to secure release from transmigration, so that he will never be born again, but enters into the bliss of Nirvana.
 - c. This attitude toward the way of salvation by knowledge raises philosophy to the supreme place in the minds of Hindus.
 - d. In India all philosophy is religious philosophy with the ultimate object being to secure the release from transmigration.
 - e. It is a very practical matter and enters into the thinking of the people far more pervasively than philosophy in the Western world.

- E. The early results of the Indian philosophic mind are found in the Upanishads.
1. They are obscure, probably intentionally so, and embody esoteric teaching and secret doctrine for only those who can go to a teacher for interpretation.
 2. The Upanishads do not present a definite system because they are anticipations rather than completions of doctrines and they are inspirational rather than dogmatic.
 3. The Upanishads do show however that life had become more difficult and complex since the joyous and free days of the Rig-Veda.
 - a. The zest of life is gone and there is a sadder and more wistful mood displayed.
 - b. It is expressed in a refrain found in one of the Upanishads, "Lead me from darkness into light, from the unreal to the Real."
- F. In these writings the gods are not eternal but only the temporary manifestations of one absolute being back of and responsible for all that exists.
1. The souls of men are "sparks from the central fire, drops from the ocean of divinity," to be incarnated times without number, according to the law of karma, but in the end to find release and drop back into the boundless ocean from which they came.
 2. The only eternal, unquestionable fact in the universe is Brahman, the world-soul, and the conclusion was reached that the atman, or the individual human soul, was identical with it.
 3. "Myself is the infinite self," and "The soul of the universe, whole and undivided, dwells in me," are two of the many ways in which this identity was expressed with the most used phrase being "Thou are That."
 4. The object of life for these thinkers is to realize the truth of this startling affirmation.
 5. Salvation is attained by jnanamarga, knowledge, intuition, a sudden flash of insight, which will drive away the darkness and leave the man possessed of the liberating thought.
 6. Should he achieve this insight by the power of meditation, concentrating his whole mind on this one thought, he was free; he would not be born again; the release was complete.

- G. As we look more closely at the absolute being of Brahman we find the word "Brahman" is a neuter noun which expresses the common thought of the time that the world-soul is an impersonal essence present in all things.
1. So enthusiastic were these thinkers over their find of Brahman they could not refrain themselves in their rapture.
 2. Brahman was to them everything good and desirable, the aim of all their longings.
 3. But when an attempt is made to describe Brahman and to state the qualities and attributes involved in the conception, the result is most disappointing.
 4. Nothing positive can be found, it must all be in negatives.
 5. He is, in fact, attribute-less.
 6. Of each positive characteristic that one may mention the response is neti, neti, "not that, not that."
 7. It is only by accommodation that Brahman is called "he" at all for Brahman is impersonal and therefore the appropriate term must be "it."
 8. But even more serious is the impossibility of thinking of Brahman as holy or righteous because he is presented as a being beyond the distinction between right and wrong.
 9. To present him as knowing the distinction of right and wrong would lower him to the level of human frailty and finiteness.
 10. But the fact is that to uphold any being and claim that for him no ethical distinctions exist is to bring that being down to a level lower than the human being for we are moral beings - and thus one of the major fallacies of Hinduism.
- H. This philosophical development was not completed for centuries after the writing of the Upanishads, which were finished about 500 B.C.
1. Very little is known during the long period after that but what we find is that six systems of philosophy arose, three of which scarcely deserve the name of philosophy, and yet all claiming to deliver mankind from the cycle of rebirth.
 2. Only two of these are important enough for our discussion and will be described.
- I. The oldest is that of the Sankhya which is fundamentally a dualism far different from what we have mentioned thus far.

1. There is a primary substance called prakriti which pervades the universe and is accountable for all there is in it.
 2. There are also separate individual souls, called purusha, which are eternal and distinct entities.
 3. The release from rebirth is secured by knowledge, the flash of insight in which a man realizes that his soul is essentially and eternally distinct from the active substance of the universe about him.
 4. Sankhya is atheistic and contains less hope and help than the Brahman system which has outrivaled it in securing the allegiance of Indian thinkers.
 5. One will find no two systems so antagonistic to one another except in the important fact that both secure deliverance from the cycle of rebirth in the same manner - through knowledge.
- J. The second and more important system is that of Vedanta.
1. The word "Vedanta" means the "end" or "aim" of the Veda, that to which the ancient Vedas point and in which they have their consummation.
 2. Three great exponents of the Vedanta have arisen, differing widely from one another, and yet each claiming to be the correct interpreter of the inner meanings of the ancient writings.
 3. They all teach that salvation is to be secured by knowledge though two of them make a most important addition by declaring that devotion to a personal god is also necessary.
- K. The first and greatest of the acharyas, or men worthy to be followed, was Shankara, whose dates are A. D. 788 to 828.
1. He called his system non-dualism and building on the teaching of the Upanishads that there is but one reality in the universe, Shankara was forced to acknowledge the existence of the external world, the people and things which we can see around us on every side.
 2. He could not deny that they had some kind of existence, but did not know what kind of existence it was.
 3. He came to the conclusion that it was only a seeming existence, that in reality they did not exist at all.
 4. But how was the seeming existence to be accounted for?

5. Here he made use of an idea from the Upanishads but which he raised to a new and most important position.
 6. It was the concept of Maya, a subtle but powerful force at work in the universe creating the mistaken notion that there was something in existence besides Brahman the absolute.
 - a. This cosmic force was the power of ignorance which created the erroneous idea that people and external nature had real existence.
 - b. But if maya created the illusion that things exist then what of the origin of maya?
 7. There is no way of avoiding the conclusion that it came from the only real being that exists, that is, from Brahman.
 8. And when seen in this light it looks as though the Absolute was responsible for the delusion which was the cause of the entire misconception that anything really existed besides the All, Brahman itself.
- L. Shankara made full use of the old perception that all were really Brahman if we only could see and understand it.
1. So, to be saved meant getting rid of the illusion caused by maya and realizing that we are Brahman.
 2. This is to be accomplished by a flash of insight after long discipline of both the mind and body.
 3. When this occurs and the insight has become ours, we are free; we will never be born again; we may live a few years, but when our bodies die we have entered the nirvana of bliss.
 4. And this was the contribution of Shankara to Hinduism.
- M. But this teaching was not acceptable to many men of insight and learning.
1. Another man whose name was Ramanuja, who lived from 1050 to 1137, had another philosophy called qualified non-dualism.
 2. His philosophy was in the tradition of the Vedanta because he believed that there was oneness in the universe and that reality did not consist of a plurality of separate and independent factors but of a united whole.

3. He believed that God together with the souls and matter is an organic whole but he also believed the ultimate not to be the impersonal All, Brahman, but a personal God.
 4. He believed the souls of men and the nature around them are real and not destined to be absorbed by and in God.
 5. He believed these things to be permanent and that human beings may look forward to continued conscious life in communion with God once they attained the knowledge that liberates and if they give themselves in loving devotion to God, he comes to them with his grace and gives them the freedom from the fetters of transmigration.
- N. Finally there arose Madhva, 1199 to 1278, the last of the three classical Indian philosophers.
1. His system was called dualism for he did not hold, as did Ramanuja, that the universe formed one organic unity or whole, in which God was in a way embodied in individual souls and matter - he thought God to be too transcendent for that!
 2. God was essentially different from all else in the universe, from souls and nature, but he is the only independent being, existing in his own right.
 3. On the other hand, God is the creator of souls and things and these things are dependent upon him.
 4. Madhva called himself a Vedantist and believed in the necessity of traveling the way of knowledge, but he believed in a God who could be counted on to save men through his grace, and this grace was the crowning cause of salvation.
 5. But India has gone with Shankara and his influence still has a tremendous pull on Hinduism.

III. THE CASTE SYSTEM.

- A. Hinduism is the most amorphous of all religions which means that almost anything can be said of it with assurance that it is true, and at the same time almost anything which is said may be denied, and that with good reason.
1. What is it then that makes one a Hindu and what is the standard of authority which may be applied to determine a man's standing in the Hindu community?

2. One of Hindu's own adherents states that it cannot be defined for the reason that Hinduism is absolutely indefinite and as an anthropological process to which, by a strange irony of fate, the name of 'religion' has been given.
 3. It is all comprehensive, all absorbing, all tolerant, all complacent, all compliant.
 4. One may believe or deny what he likes, do as he pleases, and follow any ritual or custom he chooses and still be a Hindu.
 5. It comes down to this - a Hindu is one who does not repudiate that designation, or one who says he is a Hindu and accepts any of the many beliefs and follows any of the many practices that are regarded everywhere as Hindu.
 6. But among all this there is one standard which is so important and so inclusive that it must be accepted as valid criterion.
 7. This is the caste system or the form of organization obtaining wherever Hinduism exists.
 8. To be a Hindu means to belong to one of these castes and to obey caste regulations.
 9. Orthodoxy in Hinduism is then conformity to custom petrified in social organization.
- B. A caste is a group of people kept apart from other caste groups by regulations touching marriage, food, in some cases occupation, and also residence.
1. Looking at these in reverse order, conformity with reference to residence, which is the least important, means that a Hindu shall not travel or reside outside of India.
 - a. Just one look at the roles of the world's universities shows that this rule is taken lightly by many Hindus.
 - b. However, among stricter families, a ceremony of purification is necessary on the return from a foreign country to wash away the taint which has been incurred by travel and association with foreigners.
 2. Occupation helps to determine caste in many situations.
 - a. The Ahirs are by tradition herdsmen; the Chamars are workers in leather; the Chuhars and one or two others are scavengers; the Goalas are milkmen; the Kayasths are writers or penmen; the Kumhars are potters; and so on.

- b. But even in these cases not all the members of the caste follow the traditional occupation.
 - c. Likewise, the Brahmins constitute the priestly caste but are found widely scattered among the professions and occupations, and so of many others.
3. In respect of food conformity is more significant.
- a. One must not eat with a man of another caste and, frequently among the higher castes, the food he eats must be prepared by a servant who belongs to the same caste.
 - b. But even with respect to this regulation many Hindus pay little attention at times.
4. It is at the point of marriage that the caste system retains its most tenacious grip upon the social lives of Hindus.
- a. Hindu parents find themselves between the proverbial rock and a hard place - it is a disgrace to have daughters who remain unmarried after their teens and yet husbands must be found with the caste or sub caste.
 - b. For many years this regulation was absolute and unbending.
 - c. A Hindu could be lax in respect of food, eating with others, and living outside of India but he must not marry his children to outsiders and thus break caste.
5. Marriage within the caste system brought about many problems and some still exists today.
- a. Child marriage is almost inevitable because of the necessity of finding desirable husbands and wives for all the boys and girls in the community.
 - b. Untold numbers of marriages are consummated before the children reach their teens which results in many physical and moral problems.
 - c. This custom, in a land of high mortality, has produced thousands of little widows and widowers.
 - d. The boys marry again but the girls suffer greatly.
 - e. According to tradition the girl is held responsible for the death of her husband and, as a criminal, her hair is shaved off, her ornaments are taken away and she is dressed in a coarse garment and becomes the drudge of the family.

- f. She may not remarry but remains until the end of her life a poor and miserable soul unless she is the mother of sons which lifts her to a position of honor from which she cannot be displaced.
 - g. The most commendable thing for a widow to do until comparatively recent times was to mount the pyre and be burned to death with the body of her husband, and, willingly or unwillingly, this horrible custom, called sati or suttee, was carried out many thousand times over before the practice was stopped in 1829.
- C. Measures of reform have been enacted against the caste system in recent years and much good has been achieved in this area.
- 1. The primary thrust of this was the raising of the age of marriage and the relief of widows by allowing them to remarry.
 - 2. However, no matter what the reformers may say, many of the people still cling to the old customs and many folks, women in particular, still suffer from the disability of inferiority.
- D. There is no completely satisfactory theory of the origin of the caste system.
- 1. No one knows for certain how many castes and sub castes there are but over two thousand are known.
 - 2. The word for caste in Sanskrit is varna which means "color."
 - 3. This would indicate that the Aryan as he came into India from the north was originally fair skinned in contrast to the darker Dravidian.
 - 4. In their endeavor to preserve the purity of their blood and the fairness of their skin the Aryans hedged themselves around with restrictions touching their relations with the Dravidians.
 - 5. The earliest division on record separates into distinct groups the priests (Brahmins), the warriors (Kshatriyas), the agriculturalists (Vaisyas), and the menial laborers (Sudras).
 - 6. The priests, the warriors, and the agriculturalists constitute the twice born people or those who had the right to be initiated or be born again into the religious community.
 - 7. The Sudras, who are supposed to have been largely of Dravidian blood, at least in the beginning, were outsiders so far as the ceremonial and worship of the twice born were concerned.

8. According to the theory found in the Institutes of Manu, one of the ancient books of laws and customs, the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and the Vaisyas were born from the mouth, the arms, and the thighs, respectively, of the supreme soul of the universe, while the poor Sudras proceeded from the feet and were looked upon as the menial, doing their work at the bidding of the three others.
 9. The tendency of the present time is to put less stress on the differences of race and color as the explanation of the origin of the caste system and more on occupation and division of functions.
 10. But the complexity of the caste system and its multiple divisions and subdivisions is so confusing that most authorities give up the attempt to give an adequate account of its origin and development.
- E. However, the most evident fact in the whole caste system is the preeminence of the Brahmin priest.
1. He is the vitalizing force in the caste system and dominates it completely.
 2. He looks upon himself as inherently superior to all others, created differently, and as to have demonstrated that he is not to be classified with the common run of men.
 3. The caste system is his way of preserving his position inviolate, and he clings to it with the most serious concern.
 4. At many points he may deserve well of the people because he is rightfully recognized as the gifted leader in the higher life of the community.
 5. But on the other hand, the Brahmin has little or no sympathy with those in a subordinate position and, filled with unfathomable pride, the Brahmin lords it over the consciences and wills of men and exercises a tyranny unsurpassed anywhere else in the world.
- F. There are some good things to be said about the caste system.
1. It does engender a certain solidarity which is of great value in the precarious conditions in which most of the people in India live.
 2. In times of distress caste acts as a kind of labor union, or a trade guild, or as a relief association in giving assistance to those who otherwise would have no sense of security.
 3. And, there is a mutual helpfulness exercised which is good and beneficial to those in the caste.

4. However, it is fundamentally divisive and stands as a bar against the unity in Hinduism.

IV. HINDUISM SINCE THE RISE OF BUDDHISM.

- A. During the sixth century Buddhism arose in northern India and the result of the example and teachings of Gautama Buddha greatly changed the whole complexion of things religious.
 1. Eventually Buddhism waned, and Hinduism asserted itself anew; it was a veritable renaissance, which in the end established the supremacy of the old faith all over India.
 2. But the Hinduism which raised its head after the centuries of strong Buddhistic influence was not the same.
 3. The caste system remained intact and even developed, though it was not encouraged, to say the least, by Buddha and his followers.
 4. The sacrificial system of Hinduism was more seriously modified.
 5. The theory remained the same, but the form was changed.
 6. Bloody sacrifices almost ceased to be offered, and their place was taken in large part by cereals and flowers.
 7. There were exceptions to this rule but the remarkable change is not to be minimized by the relatively few instances of animal sacrifice which continued to exist.
 8. And, finally, the Hinduism which emerged presents a very different organization of the pantheon; it even worships a different set of gods.
 9. The same names occur, but gods who were once prominent have given place to others who held a subordinate position or to those whose names do not even occur in the ancient records.
- B. Back in the period of the Gupta dynasty, A. D. 320-650, a strong movement came to light to look upon Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva as the threefold manifestation of the Supreme, the Absolute Brahman we have met before.
 1. This triad, or Hindu Trimurti, has never entered deeply into the thinking of the people, though it is frequently mentioned in the religious literature and is at times represented in sculpture in the form of a triple head on one pair of shoulders.

2. Brahma, the first member of this trio, is the creator, the more or less personal source of the universe and the life which it contains.
3. He has no popular following, only one temple in all India being devoted solely to his worship.
4. But the fact that he is looked upon as personal calls attention to the theistic tendency which has expressed itself in various forms throughout the course of Indian religious history.

C. The stories of Vishnu and Siva are very different.

1. Their worship constitutes the sectarianism of modern Hinduism, the people being roughly divided between the worshipers of Vishnu and the worshipers of Siva.
2. Vishnu was one of the celestial gods in the Rig-Veda and was associated with Indra, with whom, however, he could not compare in importance.
3. During the centuries Vishnu increased in dignity and greatness, and took to himself some of the qualities of the great Indra himself, until in the end he easily overtopped the national god of the Aryans of a bygone era.
4. The most marked characteristic of the worship of Vishnu is that he is not worshiped in his own person but in that of one or another his manifestations, or avatars, in Sanskrit.
5. Through one of these manifestations the worship of Vishnu absorbed many stray beliefs, even the Buddha being acknowledged as one of the avatars.
6. An avatar is the descent or appearance of deity among men, more or less temporary, to accomplish some special task.
7. It is more of a disguise than a revelation of what the god is really like, so it differs from the Christian idea of incarnation, which does not change and is the “very image” of the invisible God.
8. Vishnu himself was lifted higher and higher until he was finally declared to be one with the Universal Spirit, the great Preserver, and as such fills the place of the sole god of the universe.

D. The most prominent of the incarnations of this great god are Rama and Krishna, heroes of the great epic poems, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

1. Krishna is an avatar with a very striking history.

2. How much of it is legendary and how much sober fact it is exceedingly difficult to determine.
 3. He is, like Rama, a great hero, "an exterminator of monsters, a victorious warrior," but unfortunately his record is not consistent.
 4. In the Bhagavad-Gita he is pictured as a noble counselor, but in the puranas he is far from that.
 5. Much of his time is spent in impure frolic with the gopis, shepherdesses, on the hills, and even in adulterous relations with Radha, who becomes his beloved mistress.
 6. Spiritualize the account as many high minded Hindus do, the dangerous journey through such mire to reach the heights beyond is likely to stain the soul of the purest minded devotee.
 7. This is the plight in which popular Hinduism finds itself with its most exalted avatar.
 8. And, if the great God above is anything like that, well so much for any level of honor and purity among his followers.
- E. In contrast with Vishnu the Preserver, Siva is known as the Destroyer and represents the dark, cruel aspects of life.
1. He also represents the powers of reproduction and is always symbolized in his temples by the lingam instead of by an image.
 2. This idea is strongly emphasized in Siva worship, Nandi the bull being represented as an attendant of the god, a striking example of power and passion and generative power.
 3. Yet in South India there are sung to Siva hymns that for warmth of feeling have not often been excelled.... The god seems so unlovable, yet the Saivite saints are intoxicated with love for him, and call him Grace itself.
 4. With all his other attributes Siva becomes to them all that any of the gods stand for, and even ravishes their gaze as they see in him the god of love.
 5. For both the philosopher and the peasant Siva is the paragon of all excellence; for one, the basis of an all embracing world vies for, and for the other, the friendly god who will be with him in trouble.
- F. Unlike Vishnu, Siva has no incarnations, but he is not alone in the world of gods.

1. He has his consorts, or wives, and is very frequently worshiped in their person rather than his own.
 2. Among these wives are Devi, "the goddess"; Durga, "the inaccessible"; Karala, "the horrible one"; and Kali, "the black one."
 3. This terrible nest of harpies accentuates the tragic feature of Siva worship and illustrates to what lengths these poor people, on whom the struggle of life has laid its heavy hand, are compelled to go to find solace and relief.
 4. To show but one example, Kali, the goddess after whom the city of Calcutta is named, is depicted as a cruel woman who with devilish glee dances on the body of her husband, holding aloft a human head she has just cut off.
 5. She can be satisfied only with blood, and at her temple goats are killed in order to spatter her protruding tongue with the bloody sacrifice.
 6. And yet women all over India cry out to "Mother Kale" as their only hope in distress and suffering.
 7. Closely connected with the worship of Siva is that of Ganesa, his son, the elephant headed god of wisdom and "the embodiment of success in life," whose unique images are to be seen in all parts of the country.
 8. The Saivites are numbered by the million, and by their devotion and earnestness attest the inalienable religiousness of the Indian people, who seek God even in the grotesque and repulsive forms in which Siva and his company are so frequently represented.
- G. Intimately connected with the growth of sectarian Hinduism, another most significant development was taking place.
1. The worship of Vishnu and later the worship of Siva took a form which became the most characteristic feature of Hinduism and which retains a powerful influence on the religious life of India.
 2. It is called bhakti, a word which means, as clearly as we can translate it, loving devotion.
 3. It is akin to the Christian idea of faith, though bhakti is more deeply impregnated with fervent emotion, emotion of the exuberant type of excessive physical and mental agitation.
 4. Slight traces of this attitude are found in the Upanishads, but it was in the Bhagavad-Gita - commonly called the Gita - that it began to exercise a powerful influence.

5. The Gita is the most influential book in Hinduism.
 6. Coming to its present form in about A. D. 200, it has had its ups and downs in popularity, but is now at a new peak in esteem.
 7. It has been called the "New Testament of Modern Hinduism," and it is well known Gandhi went to it for comfort and to be uplifted more than to any other religious classic.
- H. It is impossible here to go into a description of the Gita except to call attention to the emphasis found in it on the attitude of utter devotion to Krishna.
1. All three of the great philosophers - Shankara, Ramanuja, and Madhwa - wrote commentaries of the Gita, but it was Ramanuja who emphasized the feature of devotion to Krishna and thought to make it the key to unlock its secret.
 2. Since his time a long succession of Bhaktas has always been at war with the monistic philosophy of Shankara and his followers, who have little or no place for a personal God and or a conscious and permanent relation between him and his worshipers.
- I. Another movement that developed was that of the Shaktas becoming the worshipers of Kali.
1. A Shakti is the wife of a god thought of as energy, the sexual energy of her husband, so the whole movement is erotic in nature.
 2. Yet even here there is a distinction.
 3. One group of Shaktas, those of the "right hand," are respectable, reading mystic meaning into sexuality as the symbol of creativity in the universe.
 4. Another group however, those on the "left hand," include sexual immorality as an essential element in their worship.
 5. Very fortunately this form of worship is frowned upon by most of the Hindu community, and it is doubtful if it continues to be practiced.
 6. But the very fact that these erotic forms of worship have been practiced and that a whole literature, the Tantras, exists and is popular attests that Hinduism always runs the danger of being contaminated by practices which are entirely unworthy of high-minded men and women.
- J. Besides these forms of religious life India has many others.

1. When one considers that 90 per cent of all the people of India are demon worshipers, one asks how that can be when the people have been roughly divided between these two great sects.
2. The fact is, the lines are loosely drawn and are stepped over with ease.
3. Millions who may at times worship at the shrines of Krishna or Siva are also devotees of lesser gods and village divinities who are little better than malignant demons.
4. These people see no incongruity or inconsistency in so doing this.
5. They are in want and are fearful as they look into the future - why should they not have access to any and all gods who may possibly avert the dangers which beset them?
6. And so the worship extends out to include the worship of heroes and saints, demons and spirits, guardian and village deities, the family ancestors, and even animals and plants and stones and other inanimate objects.
7. There is no end to the list of sacred objects held in reverence and worshiped by the people of India.
8. The cow is holy and inviolable, and is to be treated with reverence.
9. Even monkeys are sacred, with temples erected in their honor, in whose courts troops of chattering fortunates are fed and treated like spoiled children.
10. India is ineradicably religious and finds divinity everywhere.
11. All the way from the lofty conception of the Supreme Creator down to the depths of India has run the gamut of religious experience and doctrine.
12. This god-intoxicated land will not be restrained in her quest for a satisfying conception of God and for an experience which will bring the people into vital touch with him.

V. REFORM MOVEMENTS IN INDIA AND THE CURRENT SITUATION.

- A. On August 15, 1947, India achieved her independence from Great Britain and this independence had a great effect on the religious life of the Indian people.
 1. Outwardly the most marked result was the partition of land between India and Pakistan.

2. This was a religious move from top to bottom, the Mohammedan minority being convinced that they could not expect to be treated justly and to take the part which they felt they should have in the conduct of public affairs.
 3. They felt that they could not trust the Hindu fellow countrymen who formed the vast majority in the land as a whole.
 4. So India was torn in two; a new government was set up in Pakistan; hundreds of thousands of people, both Hindus and Muslims, were killed, and great hoards of refugees, Hindus from Pakistan and Muslims from India, fled from their homes and remain for the most part today displaced people cared for from public funds.
 5. The whole series of events provides terrible evidence of what bitter religious intolerance can do when animosities of long standing are unleashed.
- B. As we look at Hinduism and the effect of the coming of independence on the thinking and inner life of the Hindu community, we see the most marked effect is a new self-confidence which is naturally accompanied by tremendous patriotic fervor which the coming of independence engenders.
1. After independence, on every hand was evidenced what the Indian scholars called "the Renaissance of Hinduism."
 2. A sense of self-sufficiency and even of complacent self-satisfaction was abroad throughout India, and Hinduism was being proclaimed with renewed confidence as the crown of the world's religions.
- C. Contact with the Western world influenced the religious life of India to some extent as well.
1. The coming of Western education, the teaching of the Christian missionaries, and their benevolent work through hospitals, schools, and orphanages together with the work of the Western scholars in studying and revealing to the astonishment, even of Indian religious thinkers themselves, the beauties and profound insights in the ancient religious classics of Sanskrit literature - all of these play their part in changing the religious face of Hinduism.
 2. As a result of these and other influences a number of important movements of social and religious reforms mark the history of Hinduism.
- D. India is a Hindu country.
1. Although there is a tremendous amount of mission work taking place in India, Indians do not fear that Hinduism may be overpowered by Christianity or Western civilization.

2. A Hindu scholar, Mr. D. S. Sarma, stated, "It (Hinduism) has outlived the Christian propaganda of modern times as it outlived the Muslim oppression of the Middle Ages and the Buddhist schism of ancient days. It is now able to meet any of the world religions on equal terms as their friend and ally in a common cause."
3. Unlike Islam, which with intolerant zeal has so often used coercion in its expansion and has repressed and restricted other faiths which are in a minority, Hinduism, at least in the mind of many of its past and present leaders, can live at peace with other religions and actually look at them as allies in a common cause.
4. One of the most insistent notes of Hinduism today is "The Essential Unity of all religions."
5. And yet, this liberality and tolerance is vaunted because the one thing which Hindus will not tolerate is the winning of converts from one religion to another.
6. They excuse this intolerance by proclaiming, "After all, why should such an attempt be made when all religions are true and lead to the same goal?"

CONCLUSION

A. Hinduism is a religion without definite form; it is shapeless.

1. Almost anything can be said of it with the assurance that it is true, and at the same time almost anything can be denied, and that with good reason to the Hindu.
2. The standard orthodoxy in the Hindu religion cannot be defined.
3. A Hindu is one who does not repudiate that designation, who says he is a Hindu, and accepts any of many beliefs, and follows any of the many practices that are regarded everywhere as Hindu.

B. Some may say this concerning true Christianity but such is not the case.

C. While it is true concerning denominationalism, true Christianity has a definite pattern, definite doctrine, and a definite destination.

1. While Hinduism is a religion of many gods, true Christianity only has the One God, Jehovah.
 - a. The supreme being of Hinduism is an impersonal principle called Brahman that pervades the universe and has nothing to do with the people.
 - b. But Jehovah God is a living Person who created the universe and all that is therein and loves the people and knows them as a Father and interacts with them by seeking

only man's good even though man does not deserve His grace (Genesis 1:1; 1 John 3:16; 4:10).

2. While Hinduism is a religion of many written standards, true Christianity recognizes only the New Testament of its Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as the only standard of authority in faith and practice.
 - a. Hinduism recognizes many standards such as the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita, and the writings of certain Hindu philosophers.
 - b. It does not recognize a saviour from their sins because sin is only thought of as ignorance and so one must save himself through knowledge which dispels the ignorance.
 - c. Christianity recognizes sin as a transgression of God's law which separates man from God (1 John 3:4).
 - d. Jesus Christ is the Saviour who reconciles man to God through His sacrifice on the cross.
 - e. Salvation to the Hindu is a breaking of the life cycle (incarnation) and a merging of one's consciousness with the Great and Divine Nothingness.
 - f. But Christianity offers the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ and an eternal home in heaven with Christ and the Father (John 3:16; 14:1-3).
 3. While Hinduism is a religion of countless inconsistencies and opposing thoughts, true Christianity is perfect, consistent, and logical in every way.
- D. Jehovah God wants all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9) and has provided one way for all men today to be saved (John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5).
- E. Christianity is the only religion of the One and Only True and Living God.

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ISLAM IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD

ORIGIN AND HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

- A. Islam is one of the most powerful social, political, economic and religious forces in the world today!
 - 1. It claims one billion adherents worldwide.
 - 2. It is the fastest growing religion in the world.
 - 3. Because the world's richest deposits of oil are found in Islamic nations, adherents of Islam control a huge percentage of the world's economy.
- B. Islam is becoming more aggressive and militant every year!
 - 1. Oil rich governments lavishly support efforts to make converts.
 - 2. Wealthy businessmen and governments sponsor Islamic terrorism.
- C. The number of terrorist attacks by Islamic extremists is growing:
 - 1. They are no longer confined to the Middle East and the effort to annihilate Israel, although these also continue.
 - 2. The September 11, 2001, attack on the US shows the boldness and daring of radical Moslems who believe they are doing service to their god by murdering innocent people.
- D. Wars with Islamic forces are being fought in Afghanistan, India, and the Philippines.
- E. Believers in Christ are often the targets of Islamic sponsored violence.
 - 1. The government of Sudan has carried out a systematic war of extermination of believers in Christ for nearly twenty years.
 - 2. Christians have been attacked and killed in Nigeria and Ghana.
 - 3. Moslems in Indonesia have killed thousands and burned their homes.
- F. In order to face this threat to our nation and our faith, we must know our enemy.

DISCUSSION

- I. MOHAMMED, FOUNDER OF ISLAM, WAS BORN IN ARABIA IN 570.
 - A. Mohammed's father died shortly before he was born.
 1. Mohammed's mother died when he was six years old.
 2. His uncle, Abu Talib, took him into his home and raised him.
 - B. Mohammed found employment as a camel driver for a rich widow named Khadijah.
 1. He traveled from his home in Mecca to Syria where he came in contact with both Christians and Jews.
 2. When Mohammed was 25, Khadijah, who was 40, proposed marriage to him.
 3. She bore him three sons who died in infancy, and four daughters; only one daughter, Fatima, survived Mohammed and had children.
- II. WHEN HE WAS ABOUT THE AGE OF FORTY, MOHAMMED BECAME INTERESTED IN RELIGION.
 - A. Mecca was a center of idolatrous worship.
 1. A pagan god named Allah was worshipped there along with 360 others.
 2. The Ka'aba, a shrine reputed to have been built by Abraham and Ishmael, housed a black stone which was worshipped.
 3. A powerful tribe, the Quar'ish, controlled the rich trade of Mecca and profited from pilgrims coming to worship.
 - B. Mohammed was distraught with paganism, corruption, and the arrogance of the powerful and wealthy leaders of Mecca.
 1. He began going to a cave in the desert to meditate and pray.
 2. During one such time, he claimed the angel Gabriel came to him, gave him a book, and told him to read.
 3. Mohammed thought he was possessed by a demon and even contemplated suicide to be rid of it.
 4. He was prevented when he saw the form of a man who told him, "O Mohammed, you are the apostle of Allah and I am Gabriel."

5. Further visits from Gabriel convinced him that Allah was the one true god and he had been chosen to be Allah's prophet.
- C. Mohammed began to preach his new faith in Mecca.
1. His first converts were his wife, Khadijah; Ali, a cousin and later son-in-law; Zayd, a former slave; and Abu Bakr, a wealthy friend.
 2. Mohammed was opposed by the leaders of the Quar'ish who called him a "liar" and a "poet."
 3. Mohammed and his followers were persecuted, but he continued preaching and making converts.
 4. According to Islamic tradition, one night Mohammed was taken by Gabriel from Mecca to Jerusalem where he ascended to Paradise; he journeyed through the seven heavens where he visited with prophets such as Adam, Noah, Joseph, Moses, Abraham, John the Baptist, and Jesus; finally, he came within God's presence who told him he was the greatest man on earth.
- D. Khadijah died, and soon thereafter his uncle, Abu Talib, who had protected him, also passed away.
1. In 622, Mohammed and his followers fled Mecca by night to go to the city of Yathrib (later named Medina – "the city of the prophet").
 2. This flight is known as the "Hejira" and marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar.
 3. In Medina, Mohammed became the leader of the city and continued to develop his new religion.
 4. He was sympathetic to Jews and Christians at first, because they also believed in one God; he also accepted their Scriptures as being from God, but when they criticized his continuing "revelations," he turned against them.
- E. Mohammed became a bandit; he supplied his needs and those of his followers by robbing the rich caravans that passed by Medina on the way to Mecca.
1. On one occasion, his band of 300 men defeated an army of 1,000 Meccans who had come out to capture or kill him.
 2. This victory was taken by the Moslems as a sign that Allah was with them.

3. Many joined Mohammed in order to share in the rich booty to be taken from the caravans.
4. Mohammed taught them they would go immediately to Paradise if killed in battle.
5. Eventually, Mohammed had an army of 10,000 men which he used to capture Mecca, and later, all Arabia.

III. WHEN MOHAMMED DIED IN 632, HIS FOLLOWERS DIVIDED.

A. Mohammed did not leave a male heir, nor had he chosen a successor.

1. For several centuries, Moslems were led by men known as "Caliphs" which means "successor."
2. The first four caliphs were murdered and the Islamic Empire was racked with rebellions and civil wars.
3. The Shi'ite sect arose at this time; they believed Mohammed's son-in-law, Ali, who was married to Fatima, and their sons should succeed Mohammed; the murder of Ali and his sons by other Moslems is still a major issue with Shi'ites today.

B. In spite of their internal problems, Moslems began a war of conquest that went on for over a century.

1. They conquered the Persian and Byzantine empires.
2. They conquered Egypt and all of North Africa.
3. They crossed the Mediterranean and conquered Spain.
4. They would have taken Western Europe had they not been defeated at the Battle of Tours in 732.
5. At its greatest height, the Islamic Empire exceeded that of Rome extending from Spain in the West to China in the East.

C. Moslems were ruthless conquerors; one historian wrote: "Its primal wrong to humanity was in its method of missionary enterprise through the sword, promoting hate instead of love. Whenever a city resisted their conquest, its men were put to death, the women were placed in the harems of the victors, and the children were brought up in the Moslem faith" (Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, The Story of the Christian Church, p. 92).

CONCLUSION

- A. For five centuries (from about 800 to 1300) Islamic civilization flourished.
 - 1. Islamic scholars built upon the learning of the Greeks.
 - 2. They excelled in mathematics, philosophy, art, literature, medicine and science.
 - 3. We are indebted to them today for Arabic numerals and higher mathematics.
- B. In our next lesson, we shall look at the major doctrines of Islam and examine their claims for the source of their authority, the Koran (Qu'ran).

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- A. On August 15, 1947, India achieved her independence from Great Britain and this independence had a great effect on the religious life of the Indian people.
 1. Outwardly the most marked result was the partition of land between India and Pakistan.

ISLAM IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD

DOCTRINES AND AUTHORITY

INTRODUCTION

- A. The late Andrew Connally, longtime missionary to Africa, wrote: "Islam is a force to be reckoned with both politically and religiously in our world today. Unless Islam is stopped, millions will turn to her and her error. She is militant, aggressive, and evil. She cannot be ignored; she will not go away. She is strong and becoming stronger every day. We, as Christians, must learn her doctrines and meet her advocates. The Bible has the answer and we must stand for the truth and oppose this great error" (Some Modern Cults, Sects, Movements; and World Religions, p. 247)!
- B. Islam, founded by Mohammed in Arabia in the seventh century, is today the world's second largest, fastest growing, and most militant faith.
 - 1. Its radical adherents will stop at nothing to achieve their aims.
 - 2. The religion is known as "Islam" which means "submission;" its members are called Moslems (or Muslims), "those who submit."
- C. Because Islam has borrowed heavily from Judaism and Christianity, many think it is the same or very similar; this is far from the truth!
- D. Many also think Islam is by its very nature a peaceful religion; this too is very far from the truth!
- E. In this lesson, we shall look at the major beliefs and practices of Islam and examine the standards of authority for Islam.

DISCUSSION

- I. THE GOD OF ISLAM IS CALLED "ALLAH."
 - A. Originally, Allah was the chief god who was worshipped at the Ka'aba, along with its three hundred and sixty idols.
 - 1. Moslems are strict monotheists; they oppose idolatry, and vehemently reject the idea of "the Trinity" (Godhead).
 - 2. The Koran says: "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Say: God is One, the Eternal God. He begot none, nor was He begotten. None is equal to Him" (Surah 112:1,4).

- B. In order for one to become and remain a Moslem, he must confess: “There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet.”

II. THE SACRED BOOK OF ISLAM IS THE KORAN.

- A. It is about four fifths the size of the New Testament and is divided into 114 chapters called “surahs ”which are arranged in order of size with the longest being first.
 - 1. These are various revelations allegedly received by Mohammed during his lifetime.
 - 2. Some of them were memorized by his followers and repeated during his lifetime.
 - 3. Others were written down on whatever was available at the time Mohammed delivered them.
 - 4. They were collected together following Mohammed’s death.
 - 5. Caliph Uthman then had all other copies of Mohammed’s revelations collected and destroyed so there would be a single, authoritative book.
- B. Besides the Koran, there are other sources of authority.
 - 1. The Hadith (traditions) are also known as “sunna” (behavior).
 - a. Sayings attributed to Mohammed by his associates, which are not written in the Koran, are part of the Hadith.
 - b. Mohammed’s actions and examples as remembered by his associates are also included in the Hadith.
 - c. One writer said the Hadith covers everything from how to deal with crime, to how to use a toothpick.
 - 2. The Ijima is the concensus of the Moslem community; this is made up of interpretations of Islamic laws which have been handed down by Moslem scholars.
 - 3. The Qiyas are analogies drawn from the principles contained in the Koran; this includes legal decisions by Islamic jurists based on precedents.
 - 4. Moslems claim to accept the Law of Moses (Pentateuch), the Psalms and prophets of the Old Testament, and the Gospels.
 - a. Any time the Scriptures disagree with the Koran, Moslems will say the Scriptures have been corrupted.

- b. They really don't believe in the Bible as we know it, despite their claims to the contrary.

III. ISLAM HAS FIVE ARTICLES OF FAITH (FACTS WHICH MUST BE BELIEVED TO BECOME AND REMAIN A MOSLEM).

A. There is one God and his name is Allah.

- 1. Allah is not a personal god, but he is all knowing.
- 2. Allah's justice and power are emphasized, but not mercy and grace.
- 3. Allah is the source of both good and evil; nothing happens apart from him.

B. There are many angels who are the messengers of Allah.

- 1. Mohammed claimed Gabriel revealed Allah's will to him.
- 2. Al Shaytan, the Devil, is a fallen angel.
- 3. Jinn (Geni) are creatures between angels and men.
 - a. Jinn can take the form of humans, marry, and have children.
 - b. They can be either good or bad; when bad, they are to be equated with demons.

C. There are authoritative Scriptures revealed by Allah.

- 1. Allah's perfect revelation, which supercedes all other revelations, is the Koran.
- 2. The Pentateuch, Psalms, Prophets, and the Gospels are accepted as inspired, but are discounted and considered corrupted when they disagree with the Koran.

D. There are many prophets whom Allah has sent.

- 1. There may be as many as 124,000 of them.
- 2. They include Adam, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, John the Baptist, and Jesus; but Mohammed is said to be the last and greatest of all.

E. There will be a last day upon which all will be judged.

- 1. Each person has two angels who keep a record of his activities, one for the good and one for the bad.

2. On judgment day, Allah will place one's good deeds on one side of a scale and his bad deeds on the other; if the good outweighs the bad, he will enter Paradise; if the bad outweighs the good, he will be confined to Hell.

F. Kismet (fate) is a sixth article which is sometimes added.

1. It is the belief that Allah has already predestined everything that is going to happen, whether good or evil.
2. The result of this is fatalism which retards progress.

IV. THERE ARE FIVE PILLARS OF FAITH (DEEDS TO BE DONE TO REMAIN AMONG THE FAITHFUL).

A. The creed, "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet" must be confessed to become and remain a Moslem.

B. Prayers must be made five times a day.

1. The muezzin from the minaret of the mosque calls the faithful to prayers at the appropriate times.
2. Prayer rugs are carried so the faithful can prostrate themselves wherever they happen to be at the time of prayer.
3. The worshipper must bow toward Mecca.
4. Friday is a special day of worship with the faithful gathering at mosques to pray and to hear a sermon by an imam.

C. Almsgiving must be practiced.

1. The faithful are required to give one fortieth of their income to the poor.
2. The recipients are not necessarily grateful for the gift; the giver is grateful he had the opportunity to give and thus earn favor with Allah.

D. Fasting is required during the month of Ramadan.

1. This is the month Mohammed was called to be a prophet; therefore it is considered the holiest month of all.
2. No food or drink must be consumed from sunrise to sunset; sexual relations are also forbidden during this time.

3. However, the nights are given to feasting and celebration.
- E. A pilgrimage to Mecca is required at least once in one's lifetime.
1. One must array himself in a seamless, white robe, run around the Ka'aba seven times, kiss the black stone, and drink from the well called Zimzam.
 2. Other running and walking exercises are required as well.
 3. If one is too old or too weak physically to make a pilgrimage, he can finance someone to go in his place.
- F. A sixth duty is often added to this: Jihad or holy war.
1. Men are required to go to war to spread Islam or to defend it against its enemies whenever called upon to do so.
 2. If one loses his life in Jihad, he is guaranteed entrance into Paradise.
 3. This explains why suicide bombers are so willing to die for their faith.

CONCLUSION

- A. There are other duties expected of the faithful as well.
1. Every Moslem is required to marry; there is no choice in the matter.
 2. A man may have up to four wives if he can support them.
 3. Divorce is common and men may divorce their wives at any time for almost any reason.
 4. Men may also have concubines for an agreed number of years.
- B. Women have few rights in orthodox Islam.
1. They are considered inferior to men and must be subservient to them.
 2. The Koran says: "Men have authority over women because God has made the one superior to the other, and because they (men) spend their wealth to maintain them. Good women are obedient. They guard their unseen parts because Allah has guarded them. As for those from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them and send them to beds apart and beat them. Then if they obey you, take no further action against them. Surely Allah is high, supreme" (Surah 4:34).
- C. In our next lesson, we will compare the major teachings of Islam to the Christianity of the New Testament.

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ISLAM IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD VERSUS THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION

- A. A long list of atrocities committed by Islamic extremists has created great interest in this major world religion.
 - 1. The September 11, 2001, attacks on the Twin Trade Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC, will not soon be forgotten.
 - 2. Suicide bombers in Israel and other places keep Moslems in the news.
 - 3. Such evil and irrational behavior can only be understood in the context of the Islamic faith.
 - 4. Contrary to what some think, such deeds are not isolated acts of misguided zealots, but of Moslems being true to their faith.
- B. Islam presents the single greatest challenge to the Christian faith in our world today.
- C. In this lesson, we shall contrast the Christianity of the New Testament with the Islam of Mohammed and the Koran.
- D. We shall do this under three main headings:
 - 1. Allah, god of Islam, compared to Jehovah, the God of the Bible.
 - 2. The Koran, holy book of Islam, compared to the Bible.
 - 3. Mohammed, founder and prophet of Islam, compared to Jesus Christ.

DISCUSSION

- I. ALLAH COMPARED TO JEHOVAH.
 - A. Allah was the high god who was worshipped by pagans at Mecca.
 - 1. He was one among 360 others worshipped at the Ka'aba.
 - 2. Mohammed proclaimed Allah to be the one true god, the creator and ruler of the earth.
 - B. Moslems are strict monotheists – they believe in one supreme being.

1. Allah is not only the god of all Moslems, he is the god of all.
 2. He was not created, and has not begotten other gods.
 3. He is the sustainer of man.
 4. He is the judge of man and is strict in justice.
 5. One Moslem author wrote: "Allah is the essence of existence...He is the first and the last. He is unique and nothing resembles Him in any respect. He is One and the One. He is self-sustained, does not need anything, but everything needs Him" (Answering Islam by Geisler and Saleeb, p. 19).
 6. Allah wills all things and knows all things; nothing happens apart from his will.
 7. Mohammed said: "There are ninety-nine names of Allah and whoever recites them will enter Paradise."
 - a. The lists of these names vary greatly.
 - b. Twenty-six of these names are not found in the Koran.
- C. Since Allah causes everything that happens, he is the author of both good and evil.
1. Moslems do not see the inconsistency in this; they simply say the divine will is beyond the comprehension of man.
 2. According to one source: "...Allah is the One who leads astray, as well as the One who guides. He is the One who brings damage, as also does Satan. He is described by terms like the Bringer-down, the Compeller, or Tyrant, the Haughty – all of which, when used of men have an evil sense. In the Unity of the single will, however, these descriptions co-exist with those that relate to mercy, compassion, and glory" (Answering Islam, p. 26).
- D. The Bible presents Jehovah as the creator and ruler of all things and the judge of all the earth (Genesis 1:1; 18:25; Psalm 66:7).
1. He is omniscient {all knowing} (Proverbs 15:3; Matthew 10:29, 30; 1 John 3:20).
 2. He is omnipresent {everywhere} (Psalm 139:7-10; Jeremiah 23:24; Acts 17:27, 28).
 3. He is omnipotent {all powerful} (Jeremiah 32:27; Matthew 19:26; Revelation 19:6).

4. He is infinitely just, holy, and righteous and cannot abide the presence of evil (Leviticus 11:45; 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalm 5:4; Habakkuk 1:13; James 1:13).
 5. He is also loving, compassionate, merciful and forgiving (Exodus 34:6,7; Deuteronomy 4:31; Psalm 107:1; 145:8; Micah 7:18; John 3:16).
- E. The Bible teaches the doctrine of the Godhead {"Trinity"} (Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).
1. There is one God {Theos – Divine Nature} (Deuteronomy 6:4; James 2:19).
 2. There are three Persons Who Possess the Divine Nature:
 - a. The Father (Ephesians 4:6).
 - b. The Son (John 1:1-3, 14; 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:16).
 - c. The Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3,4).
 3. Moslems angrily deny the doctrine of the Godhead: "People of the Book, do not transgress the bounds of your religion. Speak nothing but the truth about God. The Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, was no more than God's apostle and His Word which He cast to Mary: a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His apostles and do not say: 'Three.' Forbear, and it shall be better for you. God is but one God. God forbid that He should have a son! His is all that the heaven and the earth contain" (Sura 4:171).

II. THE KORAN COMPARED TO THE BIBLE.

- A. Moslems believe the Koran has been preserved free from error.
1. The perfect original is in Heaven and the ones on earth are perfect copies, according to Moslems.
 2. The truth is that the Koran was not written until after Mohammed's death; it was collected from sayings of the prophet which had been memorized by some of his followers, and from scraps of paper, skin, cloth, and wood on which others had written them down.
 3. Caliph Uthman had an official copy made; then he had the other fragments destroyed.
 4. Since the eighth century, the Koran has been generally kept true to the eighth century model, but there are textual variants among older manuscripts.

5. Uthman's copy no longer exists; all we have are copies of copies.
- B. Moslems ridicule the Bible and distort textual variants in an effort to show the Bible is unreliable.
1. The Bible is the best attested book of antiquity.
 - a. Instead of a few manuscripts from the eighth century, we have 5,300 manuscripts of the New Testament dating as early as the second century.
 - b. The variants affect less than one percent of the text, do not affect any vital area of doctrine, and mostly have to do with such minor things as variation in spelling, punctuation, etc.
 2. The Koran itself called the Bible the Word of God and urged Moslems to believe it (Sura 5:46,47, 65-70,78).

III. MOHAMMED COMPARED TO JESUS CHRIST:

- A. Mohammed claimed to be the last and greatest of the prophets, yet he admitted he was only a man and a sinner.
1. "Say, 'I do not tell you that I possess God's treasures or know what is hidden, nor do I claim to be an angel. I follow only what is revealed to me'" (Sura 6:50).
 2. Jesus never harmed anyone nor could a charge of sin rightly be sustained against him, but Mohammed was a man of lust (he had more than a dozen wives with one being only a child of 7 to 9 years), and he was also a man of violence and plunder as seen by his looting and wars of aggression (John 8:46; Luke 23:4, 41, 47; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 1:19; 2:22).
- B. Moslems deny Jesus was the Son of God.
1. "They say: 'God has begotten a son.' God forbid! Self sufficient is He. His is all that the heavens and the earth contain. Surely for this you have no sanction. Would you say of God what you know not?" (Sura 10:68).
 2. The Bible teaches that Jesus was the Son of God Who was conceived in the womb of Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-35; John 3:16).
- C. Moslems deny Jesus was crucified on the cross.
1. "They denied the truth and uttered a monstrous falsehood against Mary. They declared: 'We have put to death the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary,

the apostle of God.’ They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but they thought they did” (Sura 4:157).

2. Many Moslems believe Judas was crucified in the place of Jesus.
3. The Bible teaches Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world (Isaiah 53; Matthew 16:21; John 1:29; Acts 2: 22, 23; 8:32-35; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; Revelation 1:5).

D. Moslems deny Jesus is the only Savior of the world.

1. They do not understand how God can be just and the Justifier of the sinner (Romans 3:26).
2. They do not understand that a price must be paid for sin (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Matthew 20:28).

CONCLUSION

A. The goal of Moslems is to conquer the world for their faith and to bring all in submission to it.

1. Omar Abdel Rahman, the blind Moslem cleric convicted of the attempt to blow up the Trade Center in New York in 1991 called on his fellow Moslems to “conquer the land of the infidels.”
2. Siraj Wahaj, the first Moslem imam to offer a prayer at the US House of Representatives, urged his fellow Moslems to unite to elect a Moslem president: “Take my word, if six to eight million Moslems unite in America, the country will come to us.”
3. Farouk Kaddoumi, chief of the PLO Political Department, said: “Attack US interests. Conflict with the US is the only way to reach our goals.”
4. Jihad is commanded in the Koran: “Believers, make war on the infidels who dwell around you. Deal firmly with them. Know that Allah is with the righteous”(Sura 9:123).

B. Moslems are lost in sin along with all other evildoers and false religionists.

1. The Gospel must be preached to them (Mark 16:15,16).
2. They must obey it from the heart in order to be saved (Romans 6:16-18).

C. Even though Islam is the world’s fastest growing religion, we must remember that growth is not to be equated with truth!

D. Some helpful works on Islam are:

1. The Koran, translated by N. J. Dawood, published by Penguin Books.
2. Answering Islam by Norman Geisler & Abdul Saleeb, published by Baker.
3. Christ or the Qur'an? by Evertt L. Huffard published by Hester Pub.
4. Man's Religions by John B. and David S. Noss, published by Macmillian.
5. Understanding Non-Christian Religions by Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, published by Campus Crusade for Christ.
6. Early Islam by Desmond Steward, published by Time-Life Books.

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JUDAISM

A HISTORY OF THE JEWISH NATION AND FAITH

INTRODUCTION

- A. Judaism has a legitimate beginning. It was from God.
- B. It plays a major role in the salvation of mankind. It was the seed by which the Christ would be born.
- C. Judaism was not to always exist. It had a purpose. Once that purpose was fulfilled, Judaism would come to an end.
- D. Just as Judaism has a legitimate beginning, so too does it have a legitimate ending—a stopping point determined by God.

DISCUSSION

I. THE WORLD BEFORE JUDAISM.

- A. Before Moses there was no law separating Hebrew from Gentile.
- B. There was however a law - the law of Patriarchy. It was from God and all were under it.
- C. There was a problem. Man sinned and where was the solution to bring man back to God?
- D. In Genesis 3:16 there is a promise made that the Seed of woman would defeat Satan and sin. The Seed is referred to as He; thus the solution would be a man.
- E. In Genesis 12 Abraham is separated from his people and in Genesis 12:3 he is given the promise, *"I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* The solution would be through Abraham's seed and would solve the problem for all the world.
- F. The promise then goes to the following generations: Isaac (Genesis 26:4), Jacob (Genesis 28:14), and Judah (Genesis 49:10).
- G. A people would be separated from the rest of the world. Patriarchy would not bring in the Messiah. There would be a separate law for a special people. The Messiah, the solution to sin, would be born under a different law. He would be from a people who would have the prophets of God and a people close to God.

II. THE BEGINNING OF JUDAISM.

- A. Judaism begins with Moses in Exodus.
- B. Moses is given the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) at Mount Sinai and the children of Israel are given a new covenant. This separates them from the rest of the world.
- C. They were to be a holy people before God.
- D. They were to be examples before the Gentile world. Romans 2:24 says, *“For ‘the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,’ as it is written.”*
- E. They were not called to bring Gentiles under the law of Moses. The Gentiles were still under Patriarchy and were to continue under the law of Patriarchy.
- F. The Law of Moses was not the solution because salvation and freedom from sin are not found under its law.
 - 1. Hebrews 10:4, *“For it is not possible that the blood of bull and goats could take away sins.”*
 - 2. 2 Corinthians 3:7, *“But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?”*
- E. The Hebrew nation would bring in the Savior.
- F. Under Moses Israel escapes slavery in Egypt, receives a covenant from God, and spends 40 years in the wilderness because of a lack of faith in God.
- G. During this time Moses receives inspiration from God to write the first five books of the Bible (Genesis-Deuteronomy). These books are called the Torah by Jews today and are considered the most important books by any prophet.

II. THE LAW OF MOSES.

- A. The law of Moses consisted of the Ten Commandments, but there were far more laws and regulations than that.
 - 1. There was to be a priesthood consisting of Levites only.
 - 2. There must be animal sacrifices, and all sacrifices had regulations.

3. There were dietary laws—what could be eaten and what could not.
 4. There were regulations concerning dress.
 5. There were laws regarding ceremonial cleanness.
 6. There were places specified by God where they were to go to observe feasts.
 7. There were laws concerning farming.
 8. There were laws explaining what was to be done to blasphemers, adulterers, false prophets, thieves, murderers, sorcerers, witches, diviners, homosexuals, and other perverted people.
- C. The law was given by God, written by Moses, and was very specific and unmistakable. To be a faithful Jew one had to live by the whole law or he would be in sin and rebellion against God.
- D. Deuteronomy 5:32,33, *"Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess."*

IV. JOSHUA TO JESUS OF NAZARETH.

- A. After the death of Moses, Joshua is allowed to take Israel over the Jordan and into the land promised by God (Israel was never more faithful than at this time in history). The land promise was fulfilled in Joshua's day. Joshua 21:43, *"So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it."*
- B. After Joshua, came the years of the Judges. In this time Israel would have periods of obedience followed by rebellion, punishment, repentance and then rescue by God.
- C. The Judges were replaced by a king. The age of the kings starts with Saul, David, and Solomon (each having 40 year reigns). This was the period of a united kingdom lasting 120 years. Solomon built the temple and also became a burden on the people and was turned toward idolatry.
- D. The divided kingdoms begin with Rehoboam (in Judah, south) and Jeroboam (in Israel, north). The Southern Kingdom had some good kings; the Northern Kingdom never did.
- E. The Northern Kingdom went into Assyrian captivity in about 721 BC because of their

- idolatry and rebellion against God.
- F. The Southern Kingdom went into Babylonian captivity in about 606 BC because of their idolatry and rebellion against God.
 - G. After 606 BC, there were 70 years of captivity. Then all Jews were allowed to return back home.
 - H. There were three waves of Israelites returning back home. In this time the temple was rebuilt, as well as the wall of Jerusalem.
 - I. Through the history of Israel there was always a remnant who obeyed God even when most did not. Prophets came and went. They spoke of the Messiah who was to come. The prophecies from God became more and more detailed.
 - 1. They told of His place of birth. Micah 5:2 says, *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting."*
 - 2. They pinpointed the time in world history when He would be born.
 - 3. They told of His nature and mission (Isaiah 61:1-2).
 - 4. They told how He would be treated (Psalm 22, Isaiah 53:7).
 - 5. They told who He would be. Isaiah 9:6 says, *"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*
 - J. There comes a point of silence after Malachi had finished his work.
 - 1. There is a silence of 400 years. There are no prophets prophesying.
 - 2. God reveals nothing. The last message is to wait for the coming of Elijah who would prepare a people.
 - 3. It at this point that Israel falls under Greek and then Roman rule. This is a time of rebellion and battles against foreign rulers. It is also a time when three major groups appeared in Jewish history: the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes.
 - a. The Pharisees were strict in observing the law, believing it came from God; but they believed the law could be reinterpreted by rabbis who had sufficient

education. They also held traditions handed down from generations to be binding.

- b. The Sadducees were a sect influenced by the Greeks who had ruled them. They did not believe in spirits, angels or the resurrection (Acts 23:8). They were made up of priests and aristocrats. Socially they adopted the ways of the Greeks.
 - c. The Essenes were an ascetic group (shutting themselves off from society) and were steeped in mysticism. They lived in isolated communities separated from the rest of society. They believed in strict adherence to their version of the law. In Matthew 12:11 Jesus asks a question to the Pharisees: *Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."* The Essenes would have claimed that a man should not rescue one of his sheep on the Sabbath.
- K. Four hundred years pass, and "Elijah" steps onto the scene. He is John the Baptist (Luke 1:17; Matthew 17:11-13). He prepares the people with his message, "*The kingdom of God is at hand*" (Matthew 3:2). He is there to identify the Messiah (John 1:29-30). The Messiah is Jesus of Nazareth.
- L. Jesus is the Christ who was promised from Genesis 3:15. Through Him all the families of the earth will be blessed. He is the solution to the problem of sin.

V. THEN JESUS BRINGS A NEW COVENANT.

- A. Jesus begins to teach "*the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Matthew 4:17).
- B. This kingdom would not be under the old covenant.
- C. When Jesus was sacrificed on the cross, the old covenant came to an end.
- D. He fulfilled the law and the prophets as He said He would. Matthew 5:17,18 says, "*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*"
- E. When the law is fulfilled there is no need for it.
 - 1. It has been completed.
 - 2. It has accomplished what it was set designed to do.
- F. If the old law (the law of Moses) is taken away then it would no longer be accepted by

God. Colossians 2:14 says, *“Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”*

- G. After the old law is taken away God allows 40 years before He completely devastates Judaism.
 - 1. He will no longer be worshiped through the Levitical priests.
 - 2. He will no longer be worshiped in the temple of Jerusalem.
 - 3. Since Judaism is no longer needed, it came to an end; and God made it impossible for anyone to practice biblical Judaism.

VI. GOD DESTROYS JERUSALEM.

- A. In the year AD 70, the Roman General Titus completely destroyed Jerusalem.
- B. This was done by the plan and will of God - He will not be worshiped by Old Testament standards. They have been done away.
- C. This was done as it was prophesied by Christ (Matthew 24) and Moses (Deuteronomy 28).
- D. This had a tremendous effect on Judaism and how it was to be practiced.
 - 1. The Pharisees are the only sect that continued after AD 70.
 - 2. The Sadducees needed a temple to continue as a sect. There was none.
 - 3. The Essenes were probably killed off by the Romans. It was easy to find and attack their settlements.
- F. The law of Moses was put to an end at the cross. God gave Israel 40 years to follow the Messiah about Whom they were taught throughout the Old Testament.

VII. JUDAISM AFTER AD 70 AND THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

- A. Jews were scattered about the world—Mideast, Europe, North Africa, Russia, etc.
- B. From the time of Moses to the time of Christ there were no changes in Judaism. Everything remained constant. Man made changes but God’s word did not change. God’s idea of Judaism remained the same. His laws remained the same.

- C. After AD 70 new ideas had to be adopted or else one would have to stop claiming Judaism.
- D. There were great influences on Judaism and its development.
 - 1. Destruction of Jerusalem.
 - a. No temple.
 - b. No priests nor high priest.
 - c. No genealogy--what tribes still exist?
 - d. No land in Israel.
 - e. No promise that any of this would return.
 - 2. Enslavement of Jews.
 - 3. There was a continual movement into other countries and cultures and Judaism developed itself to fit (Ashkenazic--Germany and eastern Europe, Sephartic--Spain and the Mideast, Falashas--Ethiopia, India 1000 AD and China 1163 AD).
 - 4. Philosophies which attempted to explain why this happened to the Jewish people.
 - 5. Persecution of Jews at various times in history (i.e. France 1306, France and Germany 1349 {expelled for causing the Black Plague}, Spain 1394, Portugal 1497). This hardened many.
 - 6. Development of the Talmud in its different forms (writings of the rabbis and their commentary of the law): the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmud.
 - 7. The development of Rabbinic Judaism--opinions, comments and laws of the rabbis over the written Torah (since the Torah could not be followed). [Karaism was a movement against rabbinic Judaism. They wished to take the written Torah only and leave opinions. This reached its height in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Iran.]
 - 8. Islam opened the door to Jewish migration as it spread through the Mideast, North Africa, and Spain. Mohammed had guaranteed protection for the Jews since they were "people of the book." The Jews lived in Moslem controlled areas under certain conditions: special taxes, clothes, and places of worship could not stand out.

E. New Elements to Judaism

1. New view of the Messiah.

- a. Prophecy is de-emphasized. The prophecy that there would be a Messiah is generally accepted, but those identifying Him are ignored or changed.
- b. Any generation could bring the Messiah.
- c. Any person could become the Messiah.
- d. Manacham Mendle Schneerson who died in 1994 was considered the Messiah by some.

2. Mysticism is brought in.

- a. This is a step taken when there is no guidance accepted from God.
- b. The Kabbalah is a book of Jewish Mysticism.
- c. This may have connections back to the Essenes.
- d. Jewish Mysticism is known to be well in place by Medieval Europe (France and Spain) having developed in other places as well.
- e. Jewish Mysticism is in part the following: the practice of magic, deciphering the meaning of numbers and symbols, adapting philosophies taken in through time (such as Gnosticism), bizarre reinterpretation of scripture, acceptance of various non-biblical writers as inspired, and asceticism.
 - 1) The doctrine of creation (Haggai 2:1).
 - 2) The doctrine of the divine chariot (Ezekiel 1).
- f. It was believed that if one lived the Torah exactly and understood it he would have access to the powers of God.
 - 2) It was claimed that there were those who could create a three year old calf every week for the Sabbath. The power of the creator could be reflected in the one who obeyed the Torah and understood its power.
 - 2) There was to be power found in the very Hebrew letters.

VIII. CURRENT JEWISH MOVEMENTS IN THE U.S.

- A. There are four Jewish sects (or movements) in the U.S. today: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist (which is the smallest of the movements). Orthodox and sometimes Conservative are described as traditional movements. Reform, Reconstructionist and sometimes Conservative are described as liberal or modern movements. The Conservative movement spans the gap between traditional and modern having elements and synagogues in both camps.

1. Orthodox Judaism.

- a. Orthodox Jews believe God gave the “whole” Torah at Mount Sinai.
 - 1) The “whole” Torah contains the written part - the five books of Moses.
 - 2) It also contains the oral part—oral tradition which interprets and explains the written Torah. It is at best a commentary. [Why would God give the books and not include His commentary in the books themselves? The oral tradition is the problem.]
- b. They believe the Torah is unchanged and complete.
- c. They believe the Torah has 613 laws (mitzvot) which are binding on all Jews but not to Gentiles.
- d. They also believe the laws of the rabbis are binding.
- e. About 7% of Jews in the U.S. identify themselves as Orthodox (1990 National Jewish Population Survey by the Council of Jewish Federation)
- f. Orthodox Judaism is made up of different groups.
 - 1) Modern Orthodox: They have integrated into society while holding their version of Jewish law.
 - 2) Chasidim (Hasidic Jews): They dress in distinctive ways and try to separate themselves from society. They are often referred to as ultra-orthodox, but many disagree that they are. Examples of the Chasidim are the Chabad Lubavitch who are rather vocal and are in all major cities of the U.S. Jewish Mysticism is part of the Chasidim (Hasidic) belief.
 - 3) Yeshivish Orthodox.

2. Reform Judaism.

- a. Reform Jews do not believe the Torah was written by God.
- b. They believe there were several different writers (not just Moses) through time who wrote bits and pieces of the Torah. These pieces at some point in time were placed together.
- c. They do not believe that the commandments must be obeyed.
- d. They keep some of the values and ethics of Judaism with some of the practices and culture.
- e. Agnostic Jews identify themselves as Reform since Reform Judaism allows them to question the existence of God.
- f. About 42% of Jews in the U.S. identify themselves as Reform (1990 National Jewish Population Survey by the Council of Jewish Federation).

3. Conservative Judaism.

- a. Conservative Judaism sprang from the tension between Orthodox and Reform.
- b. It takes parts of the two sides and joins them together in a compromise between the two extremes of the time.
- c. They believe the Torah came from God but contains human components. Thus, to them, it is not all from God.
- d. They generally accept the law as binding, but believe it can be changed and should be changed and adapted to fit into the culture of the times while keeping Jewish ties to the past - some of the values should remain.
- e. There is a large swing of faith and practice in the Conservative movement, a great deal of leeway can be found among synagogues. Some Conservative synagogues are identical to Reform Judaism. Others should be considered Orthodox.
- f. About 38 percent of Jews in the U.S. identify themselves as Conservative (1990 National Jewish Population Survey by the Council of Jewish Federation).

4. Reconstructionist Judaism.

- a. This is an offspring of Conservative Judaism. It is a recent movement.

- b. They believe Judaism is an ever changing and evolving religion.
- c. They do not believe there is a God. Therefore He could not have given Moses anything.
- d. They will keep the laws if they want to, but only as a cultural element.
- e. There seem to be Reconstructionist rabbis making their way into the Jewish colleges, student organizations, and community centers.
- f. About 1% of Jews in the U.S. identify themselves as Reconstructionist (1990 National Jewish Population Survey by the Council of Jewish Federation).

CONCLUSION

- A. Judaism had its beginning from God through Moses.
- B. Judaism had its end as designed by God through the promised Messiah.
- C. Judaism only continues today as a completely corrupted form of what it was.
- D. By the design of God true biblical Judaism cannot be practiced today.

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JUDAISM

CURRENT FAITH AND DOCTRINE

INTRODUCTION

- A. Every religion must answer a few basic questions: Who is God? How can we please God? What is God's disposition toward mankind?
- B. Each religion must at least have a claim to God, truth, reality and be able to answer pertinent questions of life and humanity definitively. A religion which would not claim or answer these things becomes a pointless waste of time. In some current movements of modern Judaism it is important to have such claims or answers, and irrelevant to search for them.
- C. Judaism has changed through the centuries to account for the fact that one cannot practice biblical Judaism today. Therefore to remain a Jew, one must remove much of the teaching and requirements of the Old Testament and replace them with ideas and teachings that are alien to those of the prophets, since it is now impossible to practice Judaism as described and demanded in the Old Testament. There are two predominate beliefs in Judaism today: the denial that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, and that Judaism (in one form or another) must remain at all costs (i.e., to continue without Old Testament authority). In the minds of many Jews most anything can be changed except those beliefs. The costs include the teaching about the Messiah (since that inevitably leads to Jesus of Nazareth and the end of Judaism), the ten commandments, Moses, Abraham, the prophets and belief in God.
- D. At best the Old Testament is kept as a tradition, as a basis for the existence of Judaism, as a loose history, and as justification for the claim on the land rights of Israel. Though venerated, the Old Testament holds very little authority with them.
- E. The doctrines cited in this lesson come from several sources. Not all movements of Judaism agree on everything. Not all members of the same movement or synagogue agree on everything. There is no one Jewish statement of faith. Therefore the things discussed here do not represent all forms of Judaism.
- F. Wherever there are two Jews you will find three opinions.

DISCUSSION

- I. WHO IS GOD?
 - A. The Orthodox view is that, without question, Jehovah is God. He is the God described in the Old Testament.

- B. The Conservative view is that Jehovah is God, but there is the possibility among some in the conservative movement that scripture may be wrong on that point.
- C. The Reform view is that there may be a God, but there is leeway given to the agnostic who says he cannot know if there is a God or not.
- D. The Reconstructionist view is that there is no God.

II. DOCTRINE OF SALVATION.

A. What must a Jew do to be saved?

- 1. He must keep the 613 laws (also called mitzvot) which are binding upon all Jews (but not Gentiles).
- 2. The 613 laws are found in the written Torah (the five books of Moses) and expanded upon in the oral Torah (traditions handed down by the rabbis).
- 3. There is an emphasis, however, that these things must be done, but not necessarily in faith. They could be done out of tradition without any real link to God or belief in scripture.
 - a. Following the 613 laws is enough, it is more of action than belief.
 - b. It is to be done. Intent or motive may not count for much.
- 3. The Reconstructionists would claim that the laws in the Torah could be kept but only as a matter of tradition and culture. To them there is no salvation since there is no God.
- 4. The Conservative idea is that people must be who they were intended to be. They played the part meant for them and did their best. They were themselves as they were meant to be.

B. What must a Gentile do to be saved?

- 1. Jews do not believe Gentiles should become proselytes. They would discourage such except in cases where there is a marriage involved (husband or wife is Gentile).
- 2. They do not believe Gentiles need to be under the 613 laws which are over Jews.
- 3. The Jews understand that there is a different law for the rest of the world.

4. That laws concerning Gentiles are the “Seven Laws of Noah.”
 - a. Do not commit idolatry.
 - b. Do not commit blasphemy.
 - c. Do not commit murder.
 - d. Do not have forbidden sexual relations.
 - e. Do not commit theft.
 - f. Do not eat flesh cut from a living animal.
 - g. Establish courts of justice to punish violators of the other six laws.
5. They would not ask a Gentile to leave 7 laws in favor of keeping 613.
6. There is in this a basic understanding of Patriarchy—there were separate laws for Jew and Gentile.
7. If a Christian has never broken any of these 7 laws, will he be saved? No. Claiming Christ to be Deity is idolatry. A Christian would have to denounce Christ. (This would also hold true for Hindu, Buddhist, Shinto, etc.)
8. If a Moslem has never broken any of these 7 laws will he be saved? No. They do not accept that the written Torah (belonging to the Jews today) as the original Torah handed down by God. Nor do they accept the Seven Laws of Noah as binding on them.
9. There is a bit of inconsistency in this. If the Torah is to be done, but not in faith, then why do the Gentiles have to fulfill the seven laws of Noah in faith?

III. THE MESSIAH.

- A. Prophecy is accepted – there will be a Messiah.
- B. Prophecy is denied – prophecy of Who He will be is disregarded.
- C. Modern version of the Messiah.
 1. The Messiah can be in any generation.
 2. The earth must be ready for Him. He will come in a time of peace when the world is

at its best.

3. The Messiah can be any person.
4. He will solve all the problems of the Jewish people.
5. Menachem Mendel Schneerson was considered to be the Messiah.
 - a. He was the leader of the Chabad Lubavitch sect.
 - b. The Chabad Lubavitch sect grows from a small group devastated by Nazi Germany to some 200,000 members world-wide.
 - c. He died in New York in June 12, 1994, at the age of 92.
 - d. He was expected to be resurrected. Many came to his funeral ready for him to return to life.
 - e. Compare the prophecies of the Messiah in the O.T. to the life of Schneerson.
 - 1) Conception.
 - a) Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."
 - b) There was never such a claim regarding Schneerson's birth. His father was Rabbi Levi Yitzchock Schneerson, and his mother was Rebbitzin Chana Schneerson, an aristocratic woman from a prestigious rabbinic family.
 - 2) Place of Birth.
 - a) Micah 5:2: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting."
 - b) Schneerson was born in Nikolayev, a town in the southern Ukraine. He is not from old or from everlasting.
 - 3) Time of Birth.
 - a) Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

b) Schneerson was born April 18, 1902.

4) Rejection.

a) Psalms 2:1: “Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*, ‘Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.’”

b) There was no plot or rage against Schneerson. Shortly after his death he was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal.

5) Death.

a) Isaiah 53:7-8: “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.”

b) Schneerson died of old age. He suffered a stroke at age 90 and died two years later.

6) There are other essentials of identifying the Messiah.

a) Part of the Godhead - Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

b) Tribe of Judah - Genesis 49:10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And *to Him shall be* the obedience of the people.

(1) To what tribe does Schneerson belong?

(2) Can it be proven?

c) Throne of David - Isaiah 9:7: “Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

(1) Schneerson was never a king.

(2) There is no kingdom for him to rule.

d) He would start a kingdom - Daniel 2:44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

(1) Schneerson was the seventh in line as leader of the Chabad Lubavitch sect. He became leader after his father-in-law died.

(2) He started nothing.

IV. THE END OF TIME.

A. The Orthodox view concerning the end of time.

1. There will be a resurrection of all the dead.
2. The faithful Jews who kept the 613 laws will be rewarded.
3. The faithful Gentiles who kept the 7 laws of Moses will be rewarded.
4. All others will be punished.

B. Reform.

1. Emphasis is on life, not death.
2. Is there an end of time and judgment? It is not taught.

C. Conservative.

1. 1. There may be an end of time, and there may not be.
2. There may be a final judgment, and there may not be.
3. We will be judged at death, but judged according to what we were to be.

V. IDOLATRY - THERE IS A KIND OF IDOLATRY THAT EXISTS IN JUDAISM TODAY.

A. Veneration of the Torah—the scrolls themselves.

B. Remnants of the past.

1. The Wailing Wall (Western Wall) - What General Titus left of Jerusalem.

2. Jerusalem itself.

VI. JEWISH STATEMENT OF FAITH.

- A. Moses Maimonides (12th century) condensed basic Jewish beliefs into a creed. The tenets of this creed are followed today by traditional movements of Judaism. There are 13 basic beliefs.
 1. **God created everything** - I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, is the Creator and Guide of everything that has been created; and he alone has made, does make and will make all things.
 2. **There is only one God** - I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, is One, and there is no unity in any manner like unto His, and that He alone is our God, who was, and is, and will be.
 3. **God is not subject to physical laws** - I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, is not a body, and that He is free from all the properties of matter, and that He has not any form whatever.
 4. **God is the beginning and end** - I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, is the first and the last.
 5. **We should pray to God and no other** - I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, and to him alone, it is right to pray, and that it is not right to pray to any being besides Him.
 6. **The prophets are true** - I believe with perfect faith that all the words of the prophets are true.
 7. **Moses is the greatest prophet** - I believe with perfect faith that the prophecy of Moses, our teacher, peace be unto him, was true, and that he was the chief of the prophets, both of those who preceded and of those who followed him.
 8. **The Torah was given to Moses** - I believe with perfect faith that the whole Torah, now in our possession, is the same that was given to Moses, our teacher, peace be unto him.
 9. **There is no additional law but the Torah** - I believe with perfect faith that the Torah, will not be changed, and that there will never be any other Law from the Creator, blessed be His Name.
 10. **God knows everything** - I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His

Name, knows every deed of the children of men, and all their thoughts, as it is said. It is He that fashioned the hearts of them all, that gives heed to all their works.

11. **God rewards and punishes** - I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, rewards those that keep His commandments and punishes those who transgress them.
12. **The Messiah is coming** - I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah; and, though he tarry, I will wait daily for his coming.
13. **There is a resurrection** - I believe with perfect faith that there will be a revival of the dead at the time when it shall please the Creator, blessed be His name, and exalted be His Fame for ever and ever.
For Thy salvation I hope, O Lord

- B. There have always been those who have disagreed with this creed, or that there should be a creed.

CONCLUSION

- A. Judaism today has no firm statement of faith. One can accept the 13 basic beliefs of Moses Maimonides, but have alternate opinions which contradict any or all of his 13 basic beliefs. Laws and traditions are everywhere, but opinions are just as valid. If there is no authority from God then one opinion is just as good as the next.
- B. The two beliefs which matter are: Jesus of Nazareth is not the Messiah, and Judaism must continue in one form or another.
- C. Judaism has no foundation today, It had to leave its foundation to continue. Thus it has been the home for all sorts of ideology that are completely foreign to the word of God. Simple questions become complex. Statements of faith are held but contradicted.

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JUDAISM

THE ANSWER AT THE END

INTRODUCTION

- A. Judaism is not the end, nor is it the solution. It is the means to get to the solution.
- B. Judaism was designed with a mission. When that mission was completed Judaism was no longer needed.
- C. Judaism was not designed to last forever, nor was Patriarchy designed to last forever.
 - 1. Jeremiah 31:31: “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.”
 - 2. Acts 17:30: “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”
- D. I will be using the New King James Version (NKJV) and making comparison with the Tanakh (a modern Jewish Bible).

DISCUSSION

I. JUDAISM IS THE TUTOR.

- A. Galatians 3:24: “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”
- B. The word “tutor” (or “schoolmaster”; KJV) is from the Greek word “paidagogos.” It refers to guardians of school age boys. The tutor was not the teacher, but led the boys to the teacher. They were responsible for getting the boys to school safely. They kept them on the right path and out of mischief.
- C. The purpose of Moses and the prophets was to bring people to Christ. Was it capable of doing this in the first century? Yes it was.
 - 1. In Acts 2, Peter quotes Psalms and Joel.
 - 2. In Acts 8, Philip begins with Isaiah 53:7-8 to teach Christ.
 - 3. Jesus uses many Old Testament scriptures to prove who He is.

D. Is the Old Testament capable of bringing people to Christ today? Yes it is.

1. The Bible has not changed. It is as effective as it always has been.
2. Scripture is linked together to make a unified whole. The Old Testament and New Testament complement each other. You will know more about the New from the Old. You will know more of the Old from the New.

E. The Old Testament is the tutor.

1. It is not the teacher, but is the guide to the teacher.
2. It is not the be all, end all.
3. It was never meant to last forever.
4. Jeremiah 31:31-33: "Behold, the days are coming, says 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 that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."
5. Once the tutor has accomplished his job, there is no longer the need for him. Once he has taken the children to the Teacher there is no longer a need for the tutor.
6. You can think of Judaism as the school bus. It delivers the children to the school—that is, Christ. Once it has made it to the school there is no need for the children to stay on the bus.
7. Judaism had a purpose. It is the line that brought in the Christ. Once His mission was completed so, too, was the mission of Judaism.

F. Someone is changing the tutor—it cannot lead to Messiah.

1. The Old Testament brings all to Jesus of Nazareth.
2. Modern Judaism seeks to deny Jesus of Nazareth.
3. Modern Jewish Bibles must be altered the identifying prophecies of the Messiah. If prophecy leads to Jesus then prophecy must be changed.
4. Often the words, "Meaning of Heb. Uncertain," appear in critical verses.

- a. Psalm 22:17 (Tanakh): “Dogs surround me; a pack of evil ones close in on me, like lions [they maul] my hands and feet.”
- b. Psalm 2:12 (Tanakh): “Pay homage in good faith, lest He be angered, and your way be doomed in the mere flash of His anger. Happy are all who take refuge in Him” (Meaning in Heb. uncertain).

II. WHAT DO YOU HAVE IF JUDAISM IS KEPT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT DENIED?

A. What does Judaism offer?

1. The oracles of God (Romans 3:1,2).
2. The oracles of God presented a teaching that leads to Christ.

B. What if the Christ were ignored?

1. Then the oracles are ignored.
2. This would render Judaism pointless.
3. Judaism without the Christ is empty.
4. Judaism where there is no Christ is a dead end.
5. The very purpose of Judaism is ignored.
6. Judaism is not the answer, it leads to the answer.
7. Christ is the answer.

C. The mysteries of the past are never solved.

1. The Old Testament (by itself) is an unresolved book.
2. The mysteries presented in it are not solved.
3. 1 Peter 1:10-12: “Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now

have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven -- things which angels desire to look into.”

4. The Old Testament ends with a promise. It ends waiting for someone who is desperately needed. It ends unresolved. There is the promise of a solution, but not now.
5. Malachi 4:5: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. 6 And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”
6. There are mysteries which cannot be solved except through the New Testament and Christ.
 - a. Zechariah 11:12-13 (NKJV): “Then I said to them, ‘If it is agreeable to you, give *me* my wages; and if not, refrain.’ So they weighed out for my wages thirty *pieces* of silver. And the LORD said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter’ -- that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty *pieces* of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter.”
 - b. Zechariah 11:12-13 (Tanakh): “Then I said to them, ‘if you are satisfied pay me my wages; if not, don’t.’ So they weighed out my wages, thirty shekels of silver--the noble sum that I was worth in their estimation. The LORD said to me, ‘Deposit it in the treasury.’ And I took the thirty shekels and deposited it in the treasury in the House of the Lord.”
 - 1) All reference to the potter is missing.
 - 2) Why would anyone go to the temple to pay the potter?
 - c. Psalm 110:4 (NKJV): “The LORD has sworn And will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.’”
 - d. Psalm 110:4 (Tanakh): “The LORD has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever, a rightful king by My decree.’”
 - 1) What is the meaning of “a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”?
 - 2) You cannot know the meaning of this verse without help from the book of Hebrews, which explains the meaning.
7. The Old Testament prepares the way for understanding the New.

8. The New Testament answers the questions remaining in the Old.

III. CHRIST IS THE BETTER WAY.

- A. Christ is the fulfillment of the law of Moses. It is completed through Him, it ends with Him.
- B. Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."
- C. 2 Corinthians 3:2-16: "You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly *you are* an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, *that is*, of the heart. And we have such trust through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry of death, written *and* engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation *had* glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. For if what is passing away *was* glorious, what remains *is* much more glorious. Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech -- unlike Moses, *who* put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the *veil* is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. 16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away."
- D. Colossians 2:14: "Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross."
- E. Romans 7:1-4: "Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another -- to Him who was raised from the dead, that

we should bear fruit to God.”

- F. Christ is the focus of the law of Moses and Israel. Without Him the purpose of Israel is removed.
- G. Without Jesus of Nazareth there is no sacrifice for sins and all that was planned and purposed comes to nothing. All the promises of God become nothing.
 - 1. Daniel 2:44 is made void.
 - 2. Genesis 3:15 is still unresolved.
 - 3. All prophecies of the Messiah become meaningless.

IV. ILLUSTRATIONS.

- A. A mathematical equation is not the solution, it brings the solution. The solution is the number at the end which is the answer to the problem. After you receive the solution (the final number) the equation is academic. Can you learn from the equation? Yes. Do you still need the equation? Yes, so you can know the answer is correct. If you do not like the number at the end then you will have to go back to the equation and change all the numbers to find a new solution. Changing the numbers in the equation will never produce the correct answer. The original equation produces the same answer, which will always be the correct answer.
- B. A person is traveling in a remote area and becomes terribly sick. On the trail comes a guide. This guide sees the sick traveler and tells the traveler that he knows where there is a doctor. The doctor is very good, can help the traveler, but cannot be found without the guide. The traveler follows the guide and eventually they make it to the doctor's house. Once the traveler makes it to the doctor he no longer needs the guide to help him—he now has the doctor. The guide could only guide, he cannot heal. The doctor is the solution to the problem, the guide takes the traveler to the solution. Once the guide's job is done there is no need for him anymore. If the traveler refuses the doctor he refuses the guide as well, and the work of the guide becomes pointless.

CONCLUSION

- A. The Law of Moses came to an end in Christ.
- B. The Old Testament is the guide to Christ, it is not the final word from God.
- C. Without the New Testament you have an unresolved book, mysteries, locked doors and confusion.

- D. The Old Testament is an equation that demands an answer. Judaism was designed to bring in the Messiah, the answer to sin. Modern Judaism denies the answer—Jesus of Nazareth. Thus it continues to look for another answer by changing the equation by changing prophecy, scripture, and the design and purpose of Judaism.
- E. The answer is Christ, Who brings the perfect law of liberty to all.
- F. Romans 1:16: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”

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