

World Religions, Cults, and the Occult



World Religions, Cults, and Aberrant Beliefs

Lesson 1 – Introduction

Introduction

Over the next several weeks we will be studying the belief and practices of various world religions and cults and comparing and contrasting them to Biblical Christianity. Here is the plan:

Lesson	Topic
1	Introduction
2	Judaism
3	Islam
4	Hinduism, Buddhism, and New Age
5	Roman Catholicism
6	Mormonism
7	Jehovah's Witnesses
8	Seventh Day Adventist
9	Christian Science and Scientology
10	Oneness Pentecostalism
11	Freemasonry
12	Occult

The Scriptures teach that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one (Satan). Therefore, the world's false religious philosophies are Satan's doing. Satan's servants are false teachers that disguise themselves as teachers of the truth and doers of righteousness.

^{19b}and that **the whole world lies in the _____ of the evil one.** 1 John 5:19b

¹³For such men are **false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.**

¹⁴**No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.** ¹⁵Therefore it is not surprising if his **servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness**, whose end will be according to their deeds. 2 Cor 11:13-15

The Scriptures also declare that in the church age (cf. 1 John 2:18; 1 Pet 1:20; Heb 1:2; 9:26) people who profess to follow Jesus will turn away from the truth to follow doctrines of demons.

¹But the Spirit explicitly says that in **later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,** 1 Tim 4:1

The Scriptures also proclaim that we should test what people say to ensure if it is from God or Satan. Whatever is presented as truth must be compared with the Scriptures to see if it is truth.

¹Beloved, do not believe every spirit, **but test the spirits to see whether they are from God,** because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; ³and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the _____ of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. 1 John 4:1-3

¹¹Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, **examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.** Acts 17:11

Status of World Religions and Cults

The number of adherents to the main world religions are declining or remaining stable. The exception is Islam which is experiencing growth due the high birth rate among third world countries and the intense cultural pressure to remain a Muslim.

Christian cults are experiencing _____. This should not be surprising as it is prophesied in 2 Timothy that such would occur.

³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, **they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,** ⁴and **will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.** 2 Tim 4:3-4

... One noted cult researcher observed that the cults are 'the unpaid bills of the church.' The church has failed to doctrinally train its members; it has failed to make a real moral difference in the lives of its members; it has failed to meet people's deepest needs; and it has failed to provide people with a sense of belonging. The failure of the church is wide and deep, and this has made it easy for the cults to flourish.

... But, of course, the growth of the cults is attributable to many other factors as well. Among other things, the cults are multiplying because of the growth of relativism, _____, subjectivism, and mysticism. Further, moral rebellion and the breakdown of families have contributed to the increase in cults worldwide. ...

... Indeed, if the Christian church were more zealous in true evangelism, the world would have less cultic proselytizing. ... All three quotes from Geisler, Norman L. and Rhodes, Ron, *Correcting the Cults – Expert Responses to Their Scripture Twisting*

Is this true? What about 2 Tim 4:3-4? What about God's sovereignty?

²"I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. Job 42:2

³But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. Psa 115:3

¹⁵For He says to Moses, " I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." ¹⁶So then it *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. ¹⁷For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, " FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." ¹⁸So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. Rom 9:15-18

⁴The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil. Prov 16:4

²²What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? ²³And *He did so* to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, Rom 9:22-23

World Religion and Cults Comparison Points with Biblical/Historical Christianity

The important points to focus on in witnessing situations with adherents or cultists are: 1) the source of authority, 2) the nature of God, 3) the person and work of Jesus, 4) the nature of man, and 5) the means of _____. Obviously, there are other areas of comparison in which world religions and cults are in error. However, these are secondary issues which fall into place if the first five are correct. For this class we will compare these five areas for each group we study.

Source of Authority

The Bible, composed of the 39 OT books and the 27 NT books, constitutes God's only written revelation to mankind. It is the inspired, verbal (extending to the very words), plenary (including all of the words), infallible (trustworthy), inerrant in the original manuscripts Word of God.

Inspiration refers to God breathing out Scripture (2 Tim 3:16). God is the source of Scripture and as such Scripture takes on His qualities of inerrancy (without error) and infallibility (trustworthy). God superintended (moved) the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error in the words of the original autographs His only written revelation to man (2 Pet 1:20-21). Inspiration is verbal (extending to the very words) and plenary (including all of the words). This is shown by the Lord Jesus' and Apostle Paul's statements, usage, and arguments (Matt 5:18; 22:31-32; Gal 3:16).

The Scriptures are authoritative and constitute the believer's sole authority for faith and practice (Matt 5:18; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Heb 4:12; 2 Pet 1:20-21). Only Scripture is perfectly adequate for all matters of faith and conduct – for salvation *and* sanctification. It is all-sufficient in regards to the soul of man, in our relationship to God, and in our relationship to others. It is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks. (2 Pet 1:3; Matt 4:4; Heb 4:12; 2 Tim 3:15-17; 1 Pet 2:2; Psa 19:7-13; 119:9, 11; 119:24)

Nature of God

There is one God (Deut. 6:4). He is Creator and Lord of everything that exists (Gen 1-3). He is _____ (1 Kings 8:27; Acts 17:28), transcendent (yet personal), eternal (Gen 21:33; Psa 90:2), unchangeable (James 1:17), omnipresent (Psa 139:7-12), sovereign (Eph 1), omniscient (Matt 11:21), and omnipotent (Rev 19:6). He eternally exists as Triune God: three persons – Father (John 6:27, Eph 4:6), Son (Col 1:16-19; Heb 1:8), Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4) – each equal; having the same attributes; and equally worthy of adoration, worship, and faith.

Person and Work of Jesus

Jesus, the Christ, is the eternal, uncreated second person of the Trinity. He was eternally one with the Father and incarnated supernaturally (John 1:1-12; Matt 1:18-25). He is the eternal God-man. In the incarnation Jesus surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence (Phil 2:5-8; Col 1:16-19).

Jesus' birth, sinless life, death, and resurrection are literal, historical events. Jesus willingly died on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for sin (John 10:15; 3:16; Rom 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Pet 2:24). The resurrection of Jesus confirmed His deity and proved that God had accepted His atoning sacrifice (John 5:26-29; 14:19; Rom 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10). Jesus is the only _____ between God and man (1 Tim 2:5) – the only way to the Father (means of salvation) (John 14:6).

Nature of Man

God created mankind in His image and likeness – sinless, with intelligence, self-consciousness, and self-determination (Gen 2:7; 15:25; 1 Cor 11:7; James 3:9). By their free will, mankind chose to sin against God and are therefore under the condemnation of physical and spiritual death (eternal separation from their creator) (Gen 3; Rom 3:23; Isa 59:1-2). The corruption of sin extends to every aspect of our being (Rom 1:18-3:20) including intellect (2 Cor 4:4), conscience (1 Tim 4:2), will (Rom 1:28), and heart (Eph 4:18). All people are therefore unable to enter into a personal relationship with God on their own initiative (Rom 3:23; 6:23; Eph 2:1-3).

Means of Salvation

Salvation is the work of God whereby he saves individuals from the penalty, power, and one day the very presence of sin. It is completely by God and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Eph 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet 1:18-19). Forgiveness of sins (Col 2:13-14) is a free gift (Eph 2:8-9) that is given to those that repent from their sins (Heb 6:1) and exercise faith (John 3:16) in Jesus as Lord and Savior. No _____ work is required (i.e. baptism, good deeds, obeying commandments, going to church, giving money, praying, doing penance, surrendering to an organization, etc.).

The Scriptures declare that nothing can separate the believer from the Christ (Rom 8:28-39). All true believers once saved are kept by God's power and are always saved (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Cor 1:4-8; Eph 4:30; Heb 7:25; 13:5; 1 Pet 1:5; Jude 24). When a professor of Christ turns away it shows that true salvation never took place (1 John 2:19).

Studying World Religions and Cults

Many people use the illustration of Treasury Department employees studying only real money and not any counterfeit money as the model for not studying world religions and cults. This illustration appears to make sense because it focuses us on the truth. Using this approach alone allows us to discern truth from error and good from evil (Heb 5:14). Clearly, we must be well grounded in the Bible. There is no substitute for handling accurately God's word (2 Tim 2:15) since it is the only thing that will equip us for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17).

¹⁵Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. 2 Tim 2:15

Unfortunately, this approach alone may leave many Christians in a position to be unprepared to defend the truth against the lies of Satan (1 Pet 3:15). In addition, this is not the pattern we see in the NT. The apostle _____ was familiar with the religious customs and writings in the cities he visited (cf Acts 17:23 and Titus 1:12). Paul also understood false religious ideas and was able to teach effectively and directly against them (see Colossians for teaching against Gnosticism, mysticism, and asceticism).

“But as Christians we know that all truth is God's truth and therefore there is nothing to fear from learning anything which is true. The major problem is error masquerading as truth. But unless we expose ourselves to other points of view and learn to analyze arguments, we may never learn to recognize error.

We have more to fear from naiveté with regard to error than we do from clear knowledge of error that we recognize as error. ...” How to Read Slowly – Reading for Comprehension by James Sire

World Religions

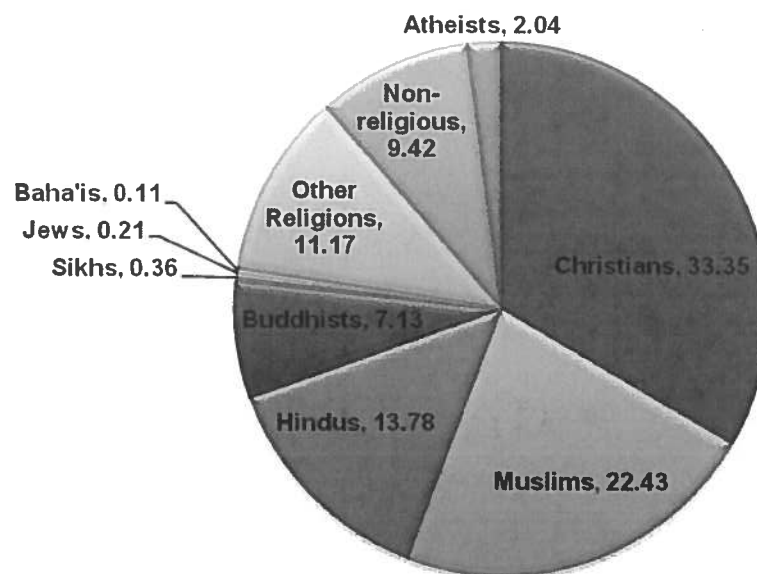
Generally, scholars classify five religions as “world” religions: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, _____, and Buddhism. However, in recent years several other religions have been classified as world religions. These are generally religions with more than 3 million adherents worldwide:

1. Sikhism – A religion, based mostly in the Punjab province of _____, that attempts to blend Hinduism and Islam. The movement is based on a vision and subsequent teachings of founder Nanak in the 15th century AD. Disciples, called Sikhs, follow the one true God named *Sat Nam* (“True Name”). Their main scriptures are contained in the *Granth Sahib* (“The Lord's Book”), compiled by the guru Arjan, and salvation is viewed as a merging with the universal force (as in pantheism). from www.watchman.org/cat95.htm
2. Confucianism – an ancient Chinese ethical and philosophical system originally developed from the teachings of the early Chinese philosopher Confucius. It focuses on human morality and good deeds. Confucianism is a complex system of _____, social, political, philosophical, and quasi-religious thought that has had tremendous influence on the culture and history of East Asia. from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confucianism
3. Taoism – a Chinese philosophy teaching that there is no personal God—all is the impersonal Tao (similar to the impersonal God-force of pantheism in Hinduism). The Tao is composed of conflicting opposites (Yin and Yang) which should be balanced or harmonized through yoga, meditation, etc., to promote spiritual wholeness. According to legend, Taoism founder Lao-tzu wrote *Tao Te Ching* (“The Way and Its Power”) about 550 BC. His teaching was developed and spread in the third century BC by Chuang-Tzu, whose writings inspired the *Tao Tsang*, 1200 volumes of Taoist scripture. from www.watchman.org/cat95.htm

4. Jainism – A world religion begun as a reform movement of Hinduism. Mahavira (b. 599 BC) _____ the existence or worship of a supreme deity and taught enlightenment through strict self-denial and non-violence. Later followers deified Mahavira himself, calling him the 24th Tirthankara (last great savior teacher) who descended from heaven without sin and with all knowledge. from www.watchman.org/cat95.htm
5. Shintoism – Ancient polytheistic religion of Japan that focuses more on Japanese Culture, traditions, attitudes and ideology rather than a system of doctrines or code of ethics. The roots of the movement are obscure, but it eventually developed into the idea that Japan, unlike other countries, was uniquely fathered by the god *Izanami*, whose consort, the goddess *Izanagi*, gave birth to the Japanese islands. Consequently the concept evolved that Japanese people are divine and superior to other humans. In one form of the religion, State Shintoism, the Japanese emperors were seen as infallible descendants of the gods. Today devotion centers around public shrines and home altars dedicated to ancestors and gods. The sun goddess *Amaterasu* is the chief deity worshipped, and a belief in kami, a form of spiritism, is also maintained. from www.watchman.org/cat95.htm
6. Zoroastrianism – Religion thought to be founded about 600 BC in Persia (present day Iran). According to legend, Zoroaster received enlightenment by the Daitya river when, at age 30, he received a vision of Vohu Manah (“Good Thought”) who took him into the presence of lord Ahura-Mazda. Lord Mazda taught Zoroaster the “_____” rejecting magic and idol worship and promoting belief in heaven, hell, a devil (Angra-Mainyu) and one true god. Later followers, however, worshipped Zoroaster in addition to Mazda. Good Lord Mazda and evil Angra Mainyu are seen as equal in power. Teaches enlightenment and salvation by works, including fire worship and partaking of the hallucinogenic *haoma* (*soma* in India). from www.watchman.org/cat95.htm
7. Baha’i Faith – A sect of Islam evolving into a major independent religion with approximately five million believers worldwide. Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, Bahá’u’lláh and others are viewed as a succession of divine messengers. A 19th century Persian teacher, the Báb, (or “Gate”) predicted Bahá’u’lláh’s coming. Bahá’í advocates a new global order of sexual equality, a one-world economic system to eliminate poverty, and a _____ religion. <http://www.watchman.org/cat95.htm>

For this class we will look at Judaism (essentially modern Judaism), Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

The figure below shows the percentage of adherents to the main world religions as a percentage of world population. This information is a 2009 estimate from the CIA World Fact Book. Of note is that the percentage of Christians includes all those who identify themselves with Christianity including Roman Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox, Anglicans, and Christian cults (like Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, etc.).



Cults

The definition of a cult is more difficult as there are many definitions to choose from. The non-Christian definition of a cult usually is focused on sociological, psychological, or behavioral factors. According to these factors, a cult is a religious group that seeks to _____ its members either by a single individual or the organization. The cult is manipulative and demands total commitment and loyalty of the followers. Examples are the Hare Krishnas, Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church (the Moonies), and David Koresh and the Branch Davidians. Even truly Christian groups can be "cult-like" in their use of manipulation and demands of loyalty.

From "Characteristics Associated with Cultic Groups – Revised" by Janja Lalich, Ph.D. & Michael D. Langone, Ph.D. at http://www.csj.org/infoserv_cult101/checklis.htm

- The group displays excessively zealous and _____ commitment to its leader and (whether he is alive or dead) regards his belief system, ideology, and practices as the Truth, as law.
- Questioning, doubt, and dissent are discouraged or even punished.
- Mind-altering practices (such as meditation, chanting, speaking in tongues, denunciation sessions, and debilitating work routines) are used in excess and serve to suppress doubts about the group and its leader(s).
- The leadership dictates, sometimes in great detail, how members should think, act, and feel (for example, members must get permission to date, change jobs, marry—or leaders prescribe what types of clothes to wear, where to live, whether or not to have children, how to discipline children, and so forth).
- The group is _____, claiming a special, exalted status for itself, its leader(s) and members (for example, the leader is considered the Messiah, a special being, an avatar—or the group and/or the leader is on a special mission to save humanity).
- The group has a polarized us-versus-them mentality, which may cause conflict with the wider society.
- The leader is not accountable to any authorities (unlike, for example, teachers, military commanders or ministers, priests, monks, and rabbis of mainstream religious denominations).
- The group teaches or implies that its supposedly exalted ends justify whatever means it deems necessary. This may result in members' participating in behaviors or activities they would have considered reprehensible or unethical before joining the group (for example, lying to family or friends, or collecting money for bogus charities).
- The leadership induces feelings of shame and/or guilt in order to influence and/or _____ members. Often, this is done through peer pressure and subtle forms of persuasion.
- Subservience to the leader or group requires members to cut ties with family and friends, and radically alter the personal goals and activities they had before joining the group.
- The group is preoccupied with bringing in new members.
- The group is preoccupied with making money.
- Members are expected to devote inordinate amounts of time to the group and group-related activities.
- Members are encouraged or required to live and/or socialize only with other group members.
- The most loyal members (the "true believers") feel there can be no life outside the context of the group. They believe there is no other way to be, and often fear reprisals to themselves or others if they leave (or even consider leaving) the group.

Cult-Like Sociological Characteristics

Authoritarian Leadership – The leader exercises _____ control where his/her word is considered ultimate and final. This often involves a legalistic submission to the rules and regulations of the group as established by the leader. Cult members are required to submit, even if they do not agree with the requirements. Unquestioning obedience is mandatory.

The Scriptures are clear that there is organization to a local body of believers with leadership being given by elders. The Scriptures also call believers to submit to and obey their leaders.

⁵For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would **set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city** as I directed you, Titus 1:5

¹²But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate **those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction**, ¹³and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. 1 Thess 5:12-13

¹⁷**Obey your leaders and submit to them**, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. Heb 13:17

⁵You younger men, likewise, **be subject to *your* elders**; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for **GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE**. 1 Pet 5:5

The Scriptures are also clear that everything that is taught by a leader must be compared with _____ and that the leaders must be qualified servants (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9).

¹¹Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, **examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so**. Acts 17:11

Exclusivism – Most cults view themselves as the single means of salvation on earth; to leave the group is to endanger one's soul.

⁵Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test? 2 Cor 13:5

Opposition to Independent Thinking – Independent thought and discovery is discouraged. The cult leadership provides all information; the proper response is to submit.

¹⁵Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. 2 Tim 2:15

The standard evangelical definition of a Christian cult is any group that deviates from Biblical Christianity in fundamental doctrines of the faith: the source of authority, the nature of God including the Trinity, the person and work of Christ, the nature of man, and the means of salvation. In many cases these groups use the same words as true Christians, but radically _____ terms. Classic examples of Christian cults are the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, and the International Church of Christ.

Dealing with Adherents and Cultists

A key passage to understand when dealing with religious adherents and cultists is 1 Pet 3:15.

¹⁵but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; 1 Pet 3:15

“Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts” speaks to the believer _____ to Christ as Lord of their life.

“The Christian, in the deepest part of his or her being, is committed to honoring Christ as Lord--even in the midst of suffering. Submission to Christ as Lord yields courage, boldness, and fortitude in the midst of hostility.” *Christians in a Hostile World – Securities Against a Hostile World* by John MacArthur Tape GC 60-35

“always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you” Here “always” means “always, perpetually, incessantly, at any and every time when according to the circumstances something ought to be done again”. At any moment we should be ready (prepared) to make a defense (apologia – a reasoned statement or argument). Believers should be able to give a rational explanation of their salvation and Christian faith.

“yet with gentleness and reverence” speaks to how we should provide the defense. The answer should be with humility and respect. Other passages speak to not being quarrelsome (2 Tim 2:24-26) and to sharing truth in love (Eph 4:14-15).

²⁴The Lord's bond-servant **must not be quarrelsome**, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵with gentleness _____ those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. 2 Tim 2:24-26

¹⁴As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵but **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, Eph 4:14-15

Practical List

1. Yield your heart to Jesus. Sanctify your heart. (1 Pet 3:15)
2. _____. This is not a battle of wits or a debate of words. This is a spiritual battle for the truth.
³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵*We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor 10:3-5
3. Be ready with a good understanding of the Scriptures. The cultist you generally run across will know the Bible well. However, the cultist will generally use the bible out of context or interpret it based on some other authority from within the cult. You may want to ask the cultist to read the passages out loud themselves to show the context.
4. Do not argue. Do not _____ the person. Do not ridicule the cultist or the cult's founder. (2 Tim 2:24-26)
5. Make sure you define words. Even “God” and “Jesus” need to be defined to clarify differences with the cultist.
6. Do not get off on tangents. The important points are the source of authority, the nature of God, the person and work of Jesus, the nature of man, and the means of salvation.

World Religions, Cults, and Aberrant Beliefs

Lesson 2 – Judaism

History of Judaism

To begin to understand Judaism, it is important to understand how God has communicated with mankind through the ages. As we read through and understand the chronology of the Bible, we see that God did not provide all information about Himself at a single time, but progressively added more revelation concerning Himself and His plan. This is called progressive _____. God's revelation has not gone from error to truth, but from incompleteness to completeness. Truth in the OT is truth, however, it is not complete. For example, the truth about the nature of God in the OT is true – and the fullness is alluded to (Gen 1:1, 26), it just is not complete (Matt 28:19). Truth about the Messiah is given in the OT (Gen 3:15; Isa 53), but it is not complete until the NT. Since God has progressively revealed more truth about Himself and His plan through the ages, it is important to understand that the NT takes priority over the OT as the source of doctrine.

Remember one important thing: Just because the OT was progressive does not mean that it is wrong in any way. There is simply _____. For example, the standards of morality established in the OT were totally refined in Jesus. God gave man a progressive revelation. The distinction is not in the nature of the truth; it's in the amount and time of it. Children are first taught letters; then they worry about the words and the sentences. God gave His revelation in the same way. His spelling book began with types, ceremonies, and prophecies and progressed to final completion in Christ. *The Superiority of Christ*; Introduction to Hebrews by John MacArthur; Hebrews 1:1-2 Tape GC 1600

The worship of Yahweh is the oldest “universe” religion as angels worshiped God before the creation of the world (Job 38:7). Therefore, it is also the oldest world religion and dates to the creation of mankind on the 6th day of the creation week. The worship of Yahweh does not equate to Judaism since others worshiped Him before the beginning of Judaism – for example: Noah and Enoch. .

¹Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, ²“Who is this that darkens counsel By words without knowledge? ³“Now gird up your loins like a man, And I will ask you, and you instruct Me! ⁴“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding, ⁵Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? ⁶“On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷**When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy?** Job 38:1-7

Judaism's beginning is traced to the covenant relationship that God initiated with Abram in ~2091 BC. God's covenant choice continued along Abraham's line through Isaac to Jacob (Israel)

¹Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; ²And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; ³And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." Gen 12:1-3

¹⁹But God said, "No, but _____ your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. Gen 17:19

²⁴So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Ex 2:24

As God progressively revealed more information about Himself and His relationship to His chosen people, He gave the descendants of Abraham the Mosaic covenant through Moses. This covenant provided for the rules that God expected His chosen people to live by (the law) and is the basis for the religion of Judaism. Ultimately, the purpose of the law was to be a tutor to show all that they are sinful and in need of a Savior (Gal 3:15-29).

²³But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. ²⁴Therefore **the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.** ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. ²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. Gal 3:23-27

Who are the Jewish People?

This seems like an easy question to answer, but it is actually complicated. The first easy sub-grouping of the Jewish people are those that are direct _____ of Abraham. In recent years this has been anyone whose mother is Jewish, but most modern Jewish groups will recognize anyone who has one parent as being Jewish as Jewish. These people are referred to as "Jews by birth"

In modern Judaism there are also those who are _____ to Judaism. These are "Jews by choice". The requirements for conversion are different depending on the group within Judaism that one is converting to. In general, the requirements are circumcision for males, immersion (like baptism) for men and women, and to understand and accept the duties of classical Jewish religious law.

So in modern Judaism there can be Jews by birth and Jews by choice.

Modern Judaism

Modern Judaism is somewhat of a hodge-podge of belief and practice.

There's an old saying that goes, "Two Jews, three opinions." Judaism is by no means a monolith; it has changed and will continue to change for years to come. Chances are if you go to a handful of Jewish web sites, you'll find dozens of explanations of what it means to "be Jewish" and "live Jewishly." These days, the Jewish experience varies from extremely religious to atheistic and all points in between and our observances, practices and ways of life often reflect this diversity.
<http://www.jewsforjesus.org/judaica>

In the 12th-century a rabbi named Maimonides developed what he called the "13 Articles of Faith". These articles detail what he believed every Jewish person ought to believe/practice. These articles are widely accepted as a proper expression of the Jewish faith. While it is not necessary to believe all of these articles they serve as a good general summary of religious Judaism.

1. God exists
2. God is _____ and unique
3. God is incorporeal
4. God is eternal
5. Prayer is to God only.
6. The prophets spoke truth.
7. Moses was the greatest of the prophets.
8. The Written and Oral Torah were given to Moses.
9. There will be no other Torah.
10. God knows the thoughts and deeds of men.
11. God will reward the good and punish the wicked.
12. The Messiah will come.
13. The dead will be resurrected.

There is a distinction between the Jewish people and the religion of Judaism. Of the 12.8 million Jewish people in the world, not all consider themselves to be religious or practice Judaism. Many profess to be _____, agnostics, or secular. Still others have embraced New Age and Eastern philosophies. ... it is important to understand that Judaism is a religion of deed, not creed. It is possible to be an atheist and yet an Orthodox Jew because one happens to attend an Orthodox congregation. What an individual believes about God or the afterlife is not nearly as important as how one lives, ... CRI Statement DJ-431, "Understanding Judaism: How to Share the Gospel with Your Jewish Friends", by Richard Robinson, page 1.

Judaism is usually broken down into three broad "denominations" each itself containing a variety of beliefs and practices: Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative. None of the three "denominations" emphasize a personal relationship with God. They are much more interested in living according to _____ than in a personal relationship with their Creator.

Orthodox Judaism adheres to a strict application of the laws and ethics in the Talmud or "Oral Law" and as developed by later Rabbinical teachers. An Orthodox Jew will generally adhere to Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith as stated above and are expected to observe all 613 mitzvot (commandments). However, there are certain core practices considered essential to being Orthodox. These are the minimums to be considered Orthodox:

1. Refraining from murder, idolatry, and certain biblically-prohibited sexual practices.
2. Refraining from activities that violate the Jewish Sabbath and Jewish holidays.
3. Observing the Jewish dietary laws.
4. Observing the laws of family purity.
5. Observing circumcision for males.

Orthodox Judaism, fall into two broad categories: Modern Orthodox and Hasidim. The Modern Orthodox are usually more academic, while the Hasidim are more mystical. Hasidic men usually wear black or dark gray suits and always wear skullcaps

Reform Judaism (not "Reformed" Judaism), has developed in the last centuries as Jewish people have attempted to adapt themselves to _____ society. Reform Judaism has embraced modernity, liberalism, and humanism. This form of Judaism has set aside the belief and practices of Orthodox Judaism. In this form synagogues are called "temples" and doctrines such as the coming of Messiah and bodily resurrection have been spiritualized. What remains in Reform Judaism is a liberal ethical system based on a monotheistic philosophy which generally maintains a more inclusive position regarding ideas like feminism and homosexuality.

Conservative Judaism is an intermediate form of Judaism between Orthodox Judaism and Reform Judaism. This form of Judaism retains the feasts and many of the Jewish traditions, but attempts to make allowances for modern culture, while "conserving," as far as possible, traditional Judaism.

A fourth group of religious Jewish people which does emphasize a personal relationship with God is called _____ Jews. This group contains cultural or ethnic Jewish people who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Throughout the church age, God has maintained a remnant that has the faith of Abraham according to God's progressive (now completed) revelation.

¹I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. ²God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? ³"Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE."
⁴But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL."
⁵In the same way then, **there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.** Rom 11:1-5

Below is a comparison of the three major “denominations” of Judaism (from CRI Statement DJ-431, “Understanding Judaism: How to Share the Gospel with Your Jewish Friends”, by Richard Robinson, www.equip.org).

	Orthodox Judaism	Reform Judaism	Conservative Judaism
U.S. Membership (as of 1992)	6 percent of all American Jews	38 percent of all American Jews	35 percent of all American Jews
View of Scripture	Torah, meaning essentially the teaching of the Five Books of Moses, is truth. They assert that a true Jew believes in revelation and the divine origin of the oral and written Torah. "Oral Torah" refers to various interpretations of the written Torah believed to have been given to Moses along with the written Torah. The Torah is accorded a higher place than the rest of the Hebrew Bible. The Law is the basis of Judaism. It is authoritative and gives structure and meaning to life. The life of total dedication to Halakhah (body of Jewish law) leads to a nearness to God.	The Bible is a human document preserving the history, culture, legends, and hopes of a people. It is valuable for deriving moral and ethical insights. Revelation is an ongoing process. The law is an evolving, ever-dynamic religious code that adapts to every age. It is maintained that if religious observances clash with the just demands of civilized society, they must be dropped.	The Bible, both the Torah and the other books of the Hebrew Bible, is the word of God and man. It is not inspired in the traditional sense but is rather dynamically inspired. Revelation is an ongoing process. Adaptation to contemporary situations is inevitable. The demands of morality are absolute; the specific laws are relative.
View of God	God is spirit rather than form. He is a personal God, who is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal, and compassionate.	Reform Judaism allows a varied interpretation of the "God concept" with wide latitude for naturalists, mystics, supernaturalists, or religious humanists. It holds, "The truth is that we do not know the truth."	The concept of God is non-dogmatic and flexible. There is less atheism in Conservative Judaism than in Reform, but most often God is considered impersonal and ineffable.
View of the Messiah	The Messiah is a human being who is not divine. He will restore the Jewish kingdom and extend his righteous rule over the earth. He will execute judgment and right all wrongs.	Instead of belief in the Messiah as a person or divine being, Reform Jews favor the concept of a Utopian age toward which humankind is progressing, sometimes called the "Messianic Age."	Conservative Jews hold much the same view as the Reform.

All Scripture are from the NASB '95 Update unless noted.

View of Humankind	<p>Humanity is morally neutral with a good and an evil inclination. A person can overcome his or her evil bent and be perfected by his or her own efforts in observance of the Law.</p> <p>Orthodox Jews do not believe in "original sin." Instead, one commits sin by breaking the commandments of the Law.</p>	<p>Humanity's nature is basically good. Through education, encouragement, and evolution a person can actualize the potential already existing within him or her.</p> <p>Reform Jews do not believe in "original sin." Sin is interpreted as the ills of society. Humanity is sometimes held to have a "divine spark" within.</p>	<p>This group tends toward the Reform view, though it is not as likely to espouse humanism. Perfectionism can come through enlightenment. Humanity is "in partnership" with God.</p> <p>Conservative Jews do not believe in "original sin." The individual can sin by committing immoral or antisocial acts.</p>
View of Salvation	<p>Repentance (belief in God's mercy), prayer, and obedience to the Law are necessary for a proper relationship with God. "Salvation" is not considered a Jewish concept, since Jewish people presume a favored standing with God; that is, they do not need salvation.</p>	<p>"Salvation" is obtained through the betterment of self and society. It is social improvement.</p>	<p>Conservative Jews tend toward the Reform view, but include the necessity of maintaining Jewish identity.</p>

Witnessing Strategies to Jewish People

Let's remember some of our general strategies from last week.

1. Sanctify your heart. (1 Pet 3:15)
2. Pray – this is a spiritual battle for the truth. (2 Cor 10:3-5)
3. Be ready with a good understanding of the Scriptures.
4. Do not argue. Do not attack the person. (2 Tim 2:24-26)
5. Make sure you define words.
6. Do not get off on tangents. The important points are the source of authority, the nature of God, the person and work of Jesus, the nature of man, and the means of salvation.

In addition, we should be aware that Jewish people _____ a standing with God. Since they are a member of God's chosen people, they believe they already have a "relationship" with Him and there is no need of salvation. When a Jewish person places his trust in Jesus for salvation, the Jewish community considers that he has turned his back on his people and has become a Gentile. Our goal is not that they become a Gentile, but that they become a completed Jew. Our desire is for them to find personal relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through Jesus Christ.

Some things to avoid:

1. Avoid Christian jargon – it has no meaning for the unchurched.
2. Avoid offensive language – the gospel can be taken as offensive by the unredeemed, there is no need to place an additional stumbling block before a Jewish person by using offensive language. Avoid "the Jews" or "you Jews", better to say "the Jewish people". Jewish is used as an adjective only for people, land, religion, or language.
3. Do not tell jokes about Jewish people or culture.
4. We must understand that the Jewish people are not the "_____". Jesus said, ¹⁷"For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. ¹⁸No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." (John 10:17-18)
5. Avoid the idea of "converting" to Christianity. This implies leaving behind ones Jewishness. In fact they are becoming a _____ Jew.
6. As with all witnessing situations you cannot "love someone into the kingdom". Eventually, if they are to be set free from their bondage to sin and its eternal penalty, you must share the gospel with them (Rom 10:17).

Some things to do:

1. Use a Jewish frame of reference. Remember that Jesus, the disciples, and most of the first Christians were all Jewish people. Jesus and the disciples observed a Passover Seder during the last supper (Luke 22:7-20). The Jewish feasts are a good bridges to the gospel as they point to the Messiah or to pertinent points in the gospel (for example – the Passover, Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement).
2. "Christ" and "Jesus" are OK to use, but better is "Messiah". "Hebrew Scriptures" are better than the "OT".
3. Salvation should be spoken of in terms of "_____" and "atonement" for sin since the idea of salvation is foreign to most Jewish people.

4. Use the Hebrew Scriptures to show how Jesus fulfills prophecy since Jesus Himself spoke of His life being a fulfillment of prophecies (Luke 24:27; John 5:39-40). Most Jewish people will not accept that the Scriptures are _____ and inerrant, but they will accord it respect.

²⁷Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. Luke 24:27

³⁹"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ⁴⁰and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life. John 5:39-40

Some Hebrew Scripture gospel passages:

1. sin (see Psa 14:2-3; 51:5; Eccl 7:20; and Isa 59:1-2)
2. atonement (see Lev 17:11 and Isa 53:5-6)
3. Messiah (see Isa 53; Dan 9:16; and Mic 5:1 [v. 2 in our Bible])
4. faith (see Gen 15:6; Num 21:7-9; and Joel 2:32 [3:5 in our Bible])

Prophecies concerning the Messiah:

1. Born of a virgin (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:20-25)
2. Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matt 2:1)
3. Sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zech 11:12; Matt 26:15)
4. Betrayed by a friend (Psa 41:9; John 13:18)
5. Silent before His accusers (Isa 53:7; Mark 15:3-5)
6. Hands and feet pierced (Psa 22:16; the crucifixion)
7. Garments divided by gambling (Psa 22: 18; John 19: 24)
8. Mocked (Psa 22:7; Matt. 27 :41)
9. Gall and vinegar to drink (Psa 69:21; Matt 27:34)
10. Prayed for His murderers (Isa 53:12; Luke 23:34)
11. Not a bone broken (Psa 34:20; John 19:36)
12. Crucified with thieves (Isa 53:12; Mark 15:27, 28)
13. His forsaken cry (Psa 22: 1; Mark 15:34 12)
14. His side pierced (Zech 12:10; John 19:34-37)
15. Buried with rich man (Isa 53:9; Matt 27:57-60)
16. Looked on Him whom they pierced (Zech 12: 10; John 19:37)
17. People esteemed and received Him not (Isa 53:3; John 1:11)

Jewish people say they will expect a "sign" from God when the Messiah comes – that "sign" has already been given with Jesus' virgin birth.

Point out that the Hebrew Scriptures as well as the NT speak of ____ comings of the Messiah.

¹⁰As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, ¹¹seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and **the glories to follow.** 1 Pet 1:10-11

²⁴"For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. ²⁵"But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. Luke 17:24-25

Responding to Objections

From CRI Statement DJ-431, "Understanding Judaism: How to Share the Gospel with Your Jewish Friends", by Richard Robinson.

Undoubtedly the time will come when a Jewish friend will put up objections to the gospel. Raising objections such as the following might be a reflex action or represent an "official line" rather than a personally held viewpoint.

"Christians believe in three gods but Jews believe in one God." What is meant may be no more than, "Our religion teaches one God. So even though I do not believe in God, if I did, that is the kind of God I would believe in." Jewish people think the Trinity somehow implies multiple gods. You can simply affirm that you believe that God is One and point out that Jesus Himself quoted the *Sh'ma* (the statement of God's oneness in Deut. 6:4, quoted in Mark 12:29). You may also wish to point out that even the Old Testament teaches a plurality within the being of the one God, as when God says, "Let us make man in our image" (Gen. 1:26).

"There's no proof that Jesus was the Messiah." This is typically a _____ response; the person may never have investigated any of the reasons for faith. You might start by asking, "What kind of proof would convince you?"

"If Jesus is the Messiah, why isn't there peace on earth?" One answer is that we first need to have peace with God before there can be peace on earth. Jesus' first coming accomplished the former and, in proper order, His second coming will establish the latter.

"How can you expect me to believe in God after all the persecution we've been through, not to mention the Holocaust? And it was Christians who did it!" People can misuse any good thing. For example, tyrants misuse freedom and justice. Yet that doesn't make freedom and justice any less important to seek after. Likewise, people like Hitler have misused the gospel to oppress the Jewish people. They were certainly not Christians.

"The New Testament is _____." Ask which parts and which passages. Often a person will not be able to point to anything specific. Sometimes a Jewish person will have in mind certain harsh-sounding passages in the Gospel of John and other places, such as John 8:44 or 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16. You can point out that this was the manner of speaking of the prophets of Israel. Isaiah 1 furnishes a good example. Isaiah was a Jew grieved by the sins of his people, and so was Jesus. Furthermore, Jesus is saddened at the sins of all people, not just Jewish people. Point out that you feel similarly about Gentiles who do not turn to God. All have sinned, and God's response to sin is the same for all people.

"Jews don't proselytize." This objection usually means, "I don't think people should push their beliefs on others." You can point out that Isaiah said Israel was to be a light to the nations (Isa. 42:6; 49:6). Moreover, you can say that you don't believe in forcing religion on anyone either, but you have always found that discussion and persuasion are part of any friendship. You might point out that the gospel is your greatest treasure and you naturally want to share it, especially with people you care deeply about.

"I'm happy with my own religion." You can appropriately respond, "It's OK if you don't want to talk about spiritual things, but just remember that the goal of life is not to be happy but to know God. Ultimately, knowing the truth about God is what brings complete and _____ happiness and joy."

"If Jesus was the Messiah, why don't the rabbis believe in him?" The answer is, because they wouldn't be allowed to be rabbis much longer! With the kind of community responsibility and weight that a rabbi has, not many rabbis will allow themselves the freedom to ask if Jesus might be the Messiah.

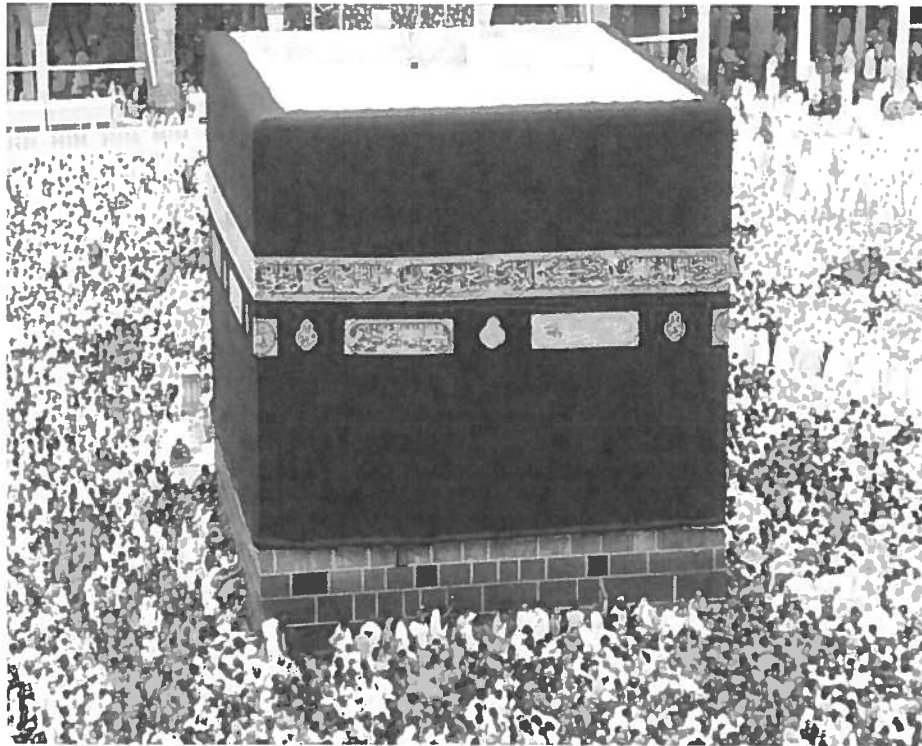
World Religions, Cults, and Aberrant Beliefs

Lesson 3 – Islam

History of Islam

Islam means “_____” and a follower of Islam is called a Muslim or “a submitted one”. Muslims believe in submitting to their one and only god, named Allah. Islam was founded by Muhammad. Muslims believe Muhammad was the last prophet of God, superseding Jesus, the prophet who was before him. Muhammad was born around 570 AD and died in 632. He was a trader from the city of Mecca.

Mecca was the cultural and religious center of Arabia. The area was ruled by tribes with numerous, competing, polytheistic religions. At the heart of Mecca was a shrine about 60 feet cube containing hundreds of idols, and known as the House of Allah. Allah was recognized as the supreme deity, but was worshipped along with other deities. The cube was believed to have been built by Abraham and his son Ishmael on the same spot as the first shrine to God built by Adam.



At forty, Muhammad entered a cave for meditation. It is here that, according to the Qur'an, Muhammad received “revelations” from the angel Gabriel. Muhammad could not read nor write so he was instructed to _____ the words given to him by Gabriel. This complete recitation which Muhammad received over a 23 year period, ending in 632, the year of his death, is known as the Qur'an (meaning recitations).

It became Muhammad's mission to proclaim Islam, allegedly given to him by Allah through Gabriel. Muhammad called people to repent from their idol worship, to do good, and to serve the one true God, Allah. He taught that man is God's slave and it is his duty to submit to God and obey him. He said that the day of judgment was coming and that a man's _____ will be weighed on that day. Those whose good deeds outweigh their bad may, by Allah's grace, be saved and enter Paradise which is full of sensual pleasures. The unsaved go to hell. In his first three years of proclaiming Islam, he had 40 converts.

Muhammad's preaching brought much opposition in Mecca. In 622, the Mecca leaders denounced him and he fled Mecca and moved to Medina where he established the first Islamic community. This event is known as the Hijra (literally meaning "flight"). The Muslim calendar begins on July 16, 622; the first day of the lunar year in which Muhammad's migration took place. In Medina, Muhammad preached about Allah and monotheism and urged all people to return to the true faith of Abraham. Muslims view Muhammad as the restorer of the original, uncorrupted monotheistic faith of Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and other prophets.

After two years in Medina, the Muslims were very poor and persecuted which prompted a revelation to come to Muhammad permitting him to raid passing caravans. Soon afterward, there was a significant _____ at which Muhammad, with 350 men, defeated an army of 1,000. This victory gave confidence to the Muslims and encouraged more converts.

In 627, the ruling tribe of Mecca tried to destroy the Muslims but failed. Muhammad then sought to conquer Mecca. In 630 Muhammad conquered Mecca and destroyed all of the idols. In 632, Muhammad delivers his last sermon, later falls ill, and dies. His father-in-law becomes Caliph, the religious leader of Islam. Islam spread rapidly during the first century after Muhammad's death. It spread, often through military force, across the Middle East, through most of North Africa to Spain, and as far east as India. The Muslim advance into Europe was stopped by Charles "The Hammer" Martel at the Battle of Tours in France in October 732. Charles Martel was the grandfather of Charlemagne who was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 800.

Today, Islam is the _____ largest and the fastest growing religion in the world. According to the 2009 CIA World Fact Book, 22.43% of the world population is Muslim (compared to 33.35% of professing Christians). Although Islam was born in Arabia, today most of Islam's adherents are not of Arab descent. Countries like Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India have large Muslim populations.

Islamic Groups

The two major groups within Islam are the Sunni and Shi'ite. The Sunnis comprise about 85 percent of all Muslims. Shi'ites comprise less than 15 percent with other smaller sects making up the rest. The schism which originally divided these groups began when Muhammad failed to appoint a successor before his death. The Sunnis believe that the successor should be elected, where the Shi'ites believe the successor should come from among Muhammad's blood relatives. The Sunnis stress the authority of written traditions, whereas the Shi'ites stress the authority of _____ leaders. The Sunnis separate the offices of religious and civil authorities, whereas the Shi'ites join the offices of religious and civil authorities.

Shi'ite populations constitute a majority in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, and Azerbaijan. There are also significant Shi'ite populations in Afghanistan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen.

Muslim Beliefs

There are five primary beliefs of Islam delineated in Sura 1:177: "Righteous is he who believes in _____ and the last day and the angels and the scripture and the prophets."

1. Allah: There is one true god (Allah). Many Christians believe that the Muslim Allah is just another name for the God of the Bible. This is not so. The central attributes of Allah include his absolute unity, complete sovereignty, mysterious will, ultimate justice, arbitrary mercy, and his utter unknowability. According to Muslims, humans cannot comprehend Allah's nature or character, but can only know the will and commands of Allah. Many Muslims believe Christians embrace a Trinity that resulted from a sexual union between God the Father and Mary, by which Jesus was born.

2. The last day: The Qur'an says that in the end each person will be resurrected in order to face judgment. This judgment will be based on the good _____ that one has performed during their life and obedience to the five pillars and the Qur'an. The books that the two angels have been writing will be weighed.

“Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy, — They will attain salvation: but those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls; in Hell will they abide” (Sura 23:102–3).

Heaven is a place of everlasting bliss.

“God hath promised to believers, men and women, gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss is the good pleasure of God: That is the supreme felicity.” (Sura 9:72)

Hell will be a place of everlasting torment.

Their scorched skins are constantly exchanged for new ones so that they can taste the torment anew (Sura 4:45). They drink festering water, and though death appears on all sides, they are not able to die (14:16–17). People are linked together in chains of 70 cubits (69:30–32), wearing pitch for clothing and fire on their faces (14:50). Boiling water will be poured over their heads, melting their insides as well as their skins, and hooks of iron will drag them back should they try to escape (22:19–21). CRI Statement: DM809; Understanding and Reaching Muslims by Abdul Saleeb & Norman L. Geisler (Parts One and Two)

3. Angels: Angels were created by Allah and are his _____. Evil spirits are called Jinn. Everyone has two “recording angels” – one angel records our good deeds, the other our bad deeds. Muslims believe in Satan, he rebelled against Allah, and he is the chief deceiver of humankind leading all astray from Allah's will.
4. The scripture: Muslims believe there are four books of Scripture – the Torah, the Psalms of David; the Gospels of Jesus, and the Qur'an of Muhammad. However, they believe that the first three have been corrupted either in manuscripts or interpretation. The Qur'an is God's full and final revelation. It is claimed that the Qur'an was dictated in Arabic by the angel Gabriel to Muhammad and were Allah's precise words. Islam teaches that it contains the total and perfect revelation and will of Allah. The Qur'an is about four-fifths the length of the New Testament and is divided into 114 “surahs” or chapters. While Islam respects the Torah, the psalms of David and the four Gospels, the Qur'an stands alone in its authority and absoluteness. It is believed to be most perfectly understood in Arabic and it is a religious obligation to seek to read and quote it in the original language.
5. The prophets: Islam teaches that there have been 124,000 prophets, one for each nation from the beginning. Six are considered to be the highest rank: Muhammad (the apostle of God), Jesus (the word of God), Moses (the speaker with God), Abraham (the friend of God), Noah (the preacher of God), and Adam (the chosen of God). Of Jesus the Qur'an states:

“Christ the son of Mary was no more than an _____” (Sura 5:75)

“it is not fitting to (the majesty of) God that He should beget a son” (Sura 19:35).

In addition, the idea of sin in Islam is that man is not fallen, but is considered weak and forgetful. The most serious sin that can be ascribed to people is that of considering Allah as more than one. Muslims also have dietary codes that forbid the eating of pork and the use of intoxicating beverages. Other meats may be eaten from animals slaughtered by devout Muslims.

The five pillars of Islam are the framework for the Muslim's life and discipline. Successful adherence to the pillars satisfies the will of Allah. They form the basis for the Muslim's hope for salvation along with faith and belief in Allah's existence, the authority of Muhammad as a prophet, and the finality and perfection of the Qur'an. The five pillars are:

1. The duty to recite the confession of faith (Shahadah): the declaration that "There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the prophet (messenger) of Allah." Sincerity in the _____ of the confession is all that is necessary to become a Muslim. It must be held until death and repudiation of the Shahadah nullifies hope for salvation.
2. The duty to pray (Salat): Muslims are required to say 17 prayers a day and pray five specific times a day, preceded by ceremonial washing. The five times of prayer are before sunrise, noon, midafternoon, sunset, and two hours after sunset. The Muslim is required to pray facing Mecca. Specific formulas, recited from the Qur'an (in Arabic), along with prostrations are included. Prayer is, in this sense, an expression of _____ to the will of Allah. On Friday, Muslims are required to meet in a Mosque to pray.
3. The duty to give alms (Zakat): The Qur'an teaches the giving of one-fortieth (2.5 percent) of one's capital wealth to the poor and/or for the propagation of Islam.
4. The duty to fast (Sawm): During the course of the lunar month of Ramadan, a fast is to be observed by every Muslim from sunrise to sunset. They are expected to refrain from eating during the daylight hours. After sunset, feasting and other celebrations often occur. The daylight hours are set aside for self-purification. The month is used to remember the giving of the Qur'an to Muhammad.
5. The duty to make the pilgrimage (Hajj): All Muslims who are financially and physically able are required to journey as a pilgrim to Mecca at least once in their lifetime. The pilgrim must wear simple white garment which eliminates distinctions of class or status and stresses the notion of equality before God. Another element of the Hajj is the mandatory walk of each pilgrim seven times around the Kaabah—the shrine of the black rock, the holiest site of Islam. Muhammad taught that the Kaabah was the original place of worship for Adam and later for Abraham. The Kaabah is thus venerated as the site of true religion, the absolute monotheism of Islam.

Some Muslims consider there to be a sixth pillar.

6. The holy struggle (jihad): Many Muslims believe jihad is a sixth pillar of their faith. One Hadith (saying of Muhammad) describes it as second only to belief in God. Jihad is the belief that the Muslim should engage in a holy struggle to preserve Islam against non-Muslim beliefs. While orthodox Muslims consider jihad a literal, even military, struggle against unbelievers, some more liberal scholars interpret it as a spiritual struggle. Both the wording of the Qur'an and the militaristic life of Muhammad favor an emphasis on the literal understanding of Jihad.

"Fight against such of those who have been given the Scripture and believe not in Allah nor the last day" (Sura 9:29)

"O ye who believe! Take not Jews and _____ for friends. They are friends of one to another. He among you who takes them for friends is (one) of them. Lo! Allah guideth not wrongdoing folk" (5:51)

"O' Prophet! Exhort the believer to fight. If there be of you twenty steadfast they shall overcome two hundred...who disbelieve, because they are folk without intelligence" (8:65)

"Those who believe do battle for the cause of Allah; and those who disbelieve do battle for the cause of idols. So fight the minions of the devil" (4:76)

Christians are referred as “people of the book”. However, since they do not conform to the confession of Islam they are unbelievers to Muslims. Here is a concise comparison of Islam with Biblical Christianity.

	Islam	Biblical Christianity
Authority	Qur'an is the only source of uncorrupted authority. The Torah, Psalms of David, and the Gospels of Jesus are Scripture, but have been corrupted.	The Bible is the only source of authority. It is the uncorrupted Word of God
God	Absolute unity (one person in one nature); unknowable	Plurality within unity; (three Persons in one nature); personal
Jesus	Merely a prophet; did not die on a cross; Did not rise from the dead	Both God and man; died on the cross for our sins; rose from the dead for our justification
Humanity	Good by nature	Sinful by nature
Salvation	By works – through a good life and accomplishing the five pillars	By grace through faith

Here is a comparison of Jesus and Muhammad from the Qur'an. Jesus is superior to Muhammad even from the Qur'an.

Jesus in the Qur'an	Muhammad in the Qur'an
Sinless	Sinful
Virgin born	Not virgin born
Called “Messiah”	Not called “Messiah”
Called “Word of God”	Not called “Word of God”
Performed miracles	Refused to perform miracles
Bodily ascended to heaven	Did not bodily ascend to heaven

Witnessing Strategies to Muslims

Let's remember some of our general strategies from last week.

1. Sanctify your heart. (1 Pet 3:15)
2. Pray – this is a spiritual battle for the truth. (2 Cor 10:3-5)
3. Be ready with a good understanding of the Scriptures.
4. Do not argue. Do not attack the person. (2 Tim 2:24-26)
5. Make sure you define words.
6. Do not get off on tangents. The important points are the source of authority, the nature of God, the person and work of Jesus, the nature of man, and the means of salvation.
7. Avoid Christian jargon – it has no meaning for the unchurched.

Some things to avoid:

1. Even though it is stated above. Do not _____ with Muslims. Their culture does not permit them to lose face or lose an argument.
2. Do not use a marked Qur'an or marked Bible. This is a sign of _____. Muslims never hold their Qur'an below their waist. They try to hold it high and place it in the highest position on a shelf.
3. Do not speak to Muslims in groups. Peer pressure is a negative factor.

Some things to do:

1. Pray with them. They have a strong belief in prayer, and the Christian's _____ relationship to the heavenly Father is something Muslims do not have.
2. Speak of Jesus, whom they respect as one of the great prophets. Use the parables of Jesus (such as the Lost Son). They love stories. They are often impressed by the Sermon on the Mount, which puts Jesus in strong and loving contrast to the violent life of Muhammad.
3. Respect their dietary restrictions.
4. Be sensitive to male-female relational boundaries, and especially make sure to dress modestly.
5. Show love to them. An act of kindness, such as escorting them to the store would help build bridges.
6. Some Muslims regard Christians as their _____ and in some Muslim lands Christians are persecuted; this provides Christians an opportunity to provide a practical demonstration of the superiority of the gospel of grace (Matt 5:38-47; Rom 12:17-21).

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.’ ³⁹But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. ⁴¹Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴²Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. ⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Matt 5:38-47

¹⁷Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. ¹⁹Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath *of God*, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord. ²⁰“BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.”

²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Rom 12:17-21

7. Provide them with evidence for the Bible's reliability.

In general, Muslims have significant misunderstandings of Christian belief that need to be cleared up. From CRI Statement: DM809; Understanding and Reaching Muslims by Abdul Saleeb & Norman L. Geisler (Parts One and Two)

1. “Christians believe in ____ Gods.”

The oneness of God must be stressed. Verses such as these can be used: Deut 6:4: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one”; Ex 20:3: “You shall have no other gods before me”; Isa 45:18: “I am the Lord, and there is no other”; Mark 12:29: “‘The most important one [command],’ answered Jesus, ‘is this: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one...”’”; 1 Cor 8:4: “We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.”

2. “God cannot have a Son.”

Many Muslims think that Christians believe the Trinity came about through Jesus being born of a sexual union between God and Mary. Such a belief, of course, is blasphemous, and it is clearly not what Christians believe (see Matt 1:21; Luke 2:1–7).

3. “God would not allow his servant to die on a Cross.”

One of the roadblocks in conveying the gospel to Muslims is their belief that God would not allow one of his servants to suffer such an ignominious death as crucifixion. In response, several facts can be pointed out. First, according to Muslims, Allah can do anything He wants. If so, God could allow Jesus to die on a cross. Second, Jesus did not suffer such an ignominious end, for the crucifixion was ____ the end. He experienced a glorious ____.

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World Religions, Cults, and Aberrant Beliefs

Lesson 4 – Hinduism, Buddhism, and New Age

Hinduism

Hinduism began about 2000 BC in its earliest form making it the world's oldest organized religion (Elsewhere in the world: God called Abram out of Haran to journey to Canaan in approximately 2091; Isaac was born 2066; and Jacob was born in 2006). Hinduism has no _____ and is a diverse religion ranging from polytheistic to monotheism. In Hinduism, the forces of nature and human heroes are personified as gods and goddesses and worshiped with prayers and offerings. Hindus believe that the world is an illusion. They believe in reincarnation (an endless cycle of continuous suffering and rebirth) and karma (all is determined by an impersonal law of cause and effect of good and bad deeds). A person's goal is to free the soul from the endless cycle of rebirth and to be absorbed into the ultimate principle (the Hindu idea of god), called Brahman. The accumulation of negative karma leads to reincarnation.

According to Hindus, god (Brahman) is the one impersonal, ultimate, but unknowable, spiritual reality. Among many Hindus, Brahman, is personalized as Brahma (creator, with four heads symbolizing creative energy), Vishnu (preserver, the god of stability and control), and Shiva (destroyer, god of endings). Each of these personalizations has come to earth in various incarnations (or avatars) to aid human beings. Hindus do not have one set of scriptures. Most Hindus daily worship an _____ of their chosen deity, with chants (mantras), flowers, and incense. Worship is primarily individualistic rather than _____.

Nine Beliefs of Hinduism (from www.himalayanacademy.com/basics/nineb/): ... Hindus believe many diverse things, but there are a few bedrock concepts on which most Hindus concur. The following nine beliefs, though not exhaustive, offer a simple summary of Hindu spirituality.

1. Hindus believe in a one, all-pervasive Supreme Being who is both immanent and transcendent, both Creator and Unmanifest Reality.
2. Hindus believe in the divinity of the four Vedas, the world's most ancient scripture, and venerate the Agamas as equally revealed. These primordial hymns are God's word and the bedrock of Sanatana Dharma, the eternal religion.
3. Hindus believe that the universe undergoes endless cycles of creation, preservation and dissolution.
4. Hindus believe in karma, the law of cause and effect by which each individual creates his own destiny by his thoughts, words and deeds.
5. Hindus believe that the soul _____, evolving through many births until all karmas have been resolved, and moksha, liberation from the cycle of rebirth, is attained. Not a single soul will be deprived of this destiny.
6. Hindus believe that divine beings exist in unseen worlds and that temple worship, rituals, sacraments and personal devotionals create a communion with these devas and Gods.
7. Hindus believe that an enlightened master, or satguru, is essential to know the Transcendent Absolute, as are personal discipline, good conduct, purification, pilgrimage, self-inquiry, meditation and surrender in God.
8. Hindus believe that all life is sacred, to be loved and revered, and therefore practice ahimsa, noninjury, in thought, word and deed.
9. Hindus believe that no religion teaches the only way to salvation above all others, but that all genuine paths are facets of God's Light, deserving tolerance and understanding.

Hinduism can be divided into:

1. _____ Hinduism – characterized by the worship of gods, through offerings, rituals, and prayers.
2. _____ Hinduism – a complex belief system developed by studying ancient texts, meditating, and practicing yoga.

Within Hinduism there are three major paths to salvation.

1. Salvation by correct works – ceremonies, sacrifices, pilgrimages, and other good deeds.
2. Salvation by knowledge – by listening to the sages and scriptures and practicing meditation.
3. Salvation by devotion – this is most popular path and is devotion to one of the Hindu gods.

	Hinduism	Biblical Christianity
Authority	A host of sacred writings.	The Bible is only source of authority.
God	Impersonal ultimate reality; or "The absolute" major triad: Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu.	Plurality within unity; (three Persons in one nature); personal
Jesus	For some Hindus, Jesus was an Avatar or incarnation of god – one among many Avatars; a great spiritual teacher, a guru whose teachings can be valuable today.	Both God and man; Died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay the penalty for our sins.
Man	The present existence is an illusion. Man's divine eternal soul is part of god. People are unaware of their oneness with god. Physical body has little worth. The human condition is the endless cycle of reincarnation.	Sinful by nature and therefore separated from their Creator.
Salvation	Goal of life is to gain release (liberation) from the cycle of reincarnation and to pass beyond illusion to become one with the divine (ultimate reality) by following the proper yoga (path or discipline).	By grace through faith.

Witnessing Strategies for Hindus:

Let's remember some of our general strategies:

1. Sanctify your heart. (1 Pet 3:15)
2. Pray – this is a spiritual battle for the truth. (2 Cor 10:3-5)
3. Be ready with a good understanding of the Scriptures.
4. Do not argue. Do not attack the person. (2 Tim 2:24-26)
5. Make sure you define words.
6. Do not get off on tangents. The important points are the source of authority, the nature of God, the person and work of Jesus, the nature of man, and the means of salvation.
7. Avoid Christian jargon – it has no meaning for the unchurched.

Some specifics:

1. A Hindu cannot _____ accept all of their scriptures because there are contradictory. Stress the uniqueness of the Bible as God's written revelation of Himself and His plan for individuals.
2. After settling the source of authority, move on to the nature of God. To the Hindu, God is an impersonal force. The one true God is a personal God who desires an intimate relationship with each of His creatures.
3. An important argument of the Hindu that will probably have to be addressed is the claim that all religions are the same. Stress the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as God's revelation of Himself. Stress the necessity of following Jesus to the exclusion of all other so-called deities. Keep the gospel presentation Christ-centered.

Buddhism

The founder of Buddhism is Siddhartha Gautama. Gautama was born around 560 BC into the ruler/warrior class of Hinduism in Northern India near modern Nepal. His parents provided their son with a life of luxury and intentionally sheltered him from the world's suffering. In his 20s, Gautama grew dissatisfied with his life of luxury, escaped from his life of seclusion, and saw "Four Passing Sights" which made him aware of the world's suffering: 1) an old man; 2) a person suffering from disease (leprosy); 3) a dead man; and 4) an ascetic monk. Gautama rejected the more ancient theistic beliefs of Hinduism because of difficulty he had over _____ the reality of suffering, judgment, and evil with the existence of a good and holy God.

At 29 Gautama renounced his privileged life and began a search for enlightenment through asceticism. After about six years of severe asceticism he came close to death and realized its futility. He then developed the principle of the "Middle Path" between the extremes of asceticism and indulgence. He practiced deep meditation and during one of these meditations under a fig tree in 525 BC, he supposedly reached a state of enlightenment or nirvana and became the Buddha (Enlightened One). He proclaimed his message until he died of food poisoning at age 80.

Buddhism is an _____ religion of self-perfection, the end of which is death (extinction)—not life. The basic beliefs of Buddhism are presented in the "Four Noble Truths" and the "Eightfold Path". The Four Noble Truths are:

1. Life is full of suffering;
2. Suffering is caused by cravings or desire (the desire or thirst for pleasure or prosperity);
3. Suffering can be overcome by eliminating desire; and
4. The stopping of desires (cravings) comes by following the "Middle Path" which is accomplished by following the Eightfold Path.

The Eightfold Path is a system of therapy designed to develop habits which will release people from the cravings which cause suffering. The path is:

Wisdom	1. Right view – an understanding of the Four Noble Truths
	2. Right intention – the decision to follow and observe the Four Noble Truths
Ethical Conduct	3. Right speech
	4. Right action (deeds)
	5. Right livelihood
Mental Development	6. Right effort – to use mental energy to attain wholesome states (i.e. self-discipline, honesty, benevolence, and kindness)
	7. Right mindfulness – to observe and control the way our thoughts go
	8. Right concentration – meditation

Buddha carried over some beliefs from Hinduism, including the idea of karma and reincarnation. The goal of the Buddhist is to break out of the cycle of reincarnation by entering a permanent state of _____. This final liberation is when the Buddhist becomes one with the "Impersonal". All personality and awareness is lost and the Buddhist merges into nothingness. Buddha taught that at this point one is at peace. The goal of life is to achieve this state of Nirvana where desire ceases and suffering is then eliminated.

Furthermore, the Buddha rejected subservience to a supreme God and denied belief in an eternal self. His concept of karma (the transcendental effect in a person's life of actions accomplished in that person's previous existences) has sometimes been misunderstood. Certainly he believed that _____ determines the kind of rebirth a person experiences according to past merit. The Buddha, however, did not believe there is a self or soul that is reborn. Instead, he taught that at birth there is a rearrangement of the elements of a person's identity, which are called the "self" much as a "chariot" is a name for a certain grouping of parts that can be rearranged to be something else while still comprising the same parts.

The Buddha also defined nirvana differently from the Brahmins. Whereas in Brahmanism, nirvana or *moksha* is attained when the individual soul becomes one with the Universal Soul, the Buddha held that nirvana is actually the termination of rebirths that is, the identity of an individual is extinguished. One way to distinguish classical Hindu teaching from Buddhist teaching on this subject is to present the traditional metaphors taught in these two religions. In describing nirvana symbolically in classical Hinduism, the individual self is like the raindrop that falls into the ocean, becoming one with the Universal Soul. In describing nirvana symbolically in Buddhism, the identity of a person is like a candle flame that is blown out. CRI Statement DB-565-1, "THE BUDDHA AND WHAT HE TAUGHT" (Part One in a Four-Part Series on Buddhism in North America) by J. Isamu Yamamoto at www.equip.org

Buddha was an _____. He did not believe in God and felt that the very concept of God or gods was holding people bound to this physical world of karma and suffering. What is so interesting about all this is how idolatry, which Buddha condemned, has become such a major part of Buddhism, with its many shrines and statues of Buddha, the very one who loathed these things. "Fast Facts on False Teachings" by Ron Carlson and Ed Decker – page 25

	Buddhism	Biblical Christianity
Authority	The writings of Buddha and other Buddhist teachers.	The Bible is only source of authority.
God	Southern Buddhism: irrelevant. Northern Buddhism: Buddhahood.	Plurality within unity; (three Persons in one nature); personal
Jesus	A teacher who possessed Buddhahood (Enlightenment). One among many, not unique. Jesus was a great religious teacher whose teachings can be valuable today.	Both God and man; Died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay the penalty for our sins.
Man	One lifetime for each person, composed of skanda (parts), but many lives for the parts. Concept of anatta (no self) denies existence of a self beyond mental and physical attributes. The human condition is suffering, caused by attachment to things and the craving (desire) accompanying this attachment.	Sinful by nature and therefore separated from their Creator.
Salvation	Goal of life is nirvana (negation of suffering) to eliminate all desire, particularly by following the Eightfold Path.	By grace through faith.

Witnessing Strategies for Buddhists:

Let's remember some of our general strategies:

1. Sanctify your heart. (1 Pet 3:15)
2. Pray – this is a spiritual battle for the truth. (2 Cor 10:3-5)
3. Be ready with a good understanding of the Scriptures.
4. Do not argue. Do not attack the person. (2 Tim 2:24-26)
5. Make sure you define words.
6. Do not get off on tangents. The important points are the source of authority, the nature of God, the person and work of Jesus, the nature of man, and the means of salvation.
7. Avoid Christian jargon – it has no meaning for the unchurched.

Some Specifics:

1. You may want to avoid terms such as “_____” “rebirth,” “regeneration,” or “born again.” These terms are Biblical, but are also somewhat Christianese. Use alternatives such as “endless freedom from suffering, guilt, and sin,” “new power for living a holy life,” “promise of eternal good life without suffering,” or “gift of unlimited merit.”
2. Share your own testimony, especially your freedom from guilt, assurance of heaven (no more pain), and personal relationship with Christ.
3. A concept that is important to the Buddhist is suffering. Jesus overcame the cause of suffering – sin. The secret of true success, inner peace, self-control, and lasting salvation is submission to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Those who repent and trust Jesus alone are set free from the power of sin in this life and from the eternal penalty and presence of sin after death in eternity. This is a future hope, a hope that Buddhism does not offer.
4. Extend yourself in love to your Buddhist friend. A true Buddhist knows nothing about caring for other people or being cared for. Buddha taught that, “You are to be an island unto yourself” and “If someone is suffering, that is his karma.” Jesus demonstrated that people have infinite value by loving them so much that He died for them. Love your Buddhist friend.
5. Under karma, there can be no appeal, no mercy, and no escape except through unceasing effort at self-perfection. Buddhists constantly struggle to earn merit by doing good deeds, hoping to collect enough to break free from the life of suffering. Focus on God’s _____ and grace through Jesus.

New Age

The New Age Movement (NAM) is a _____ of many ancient and modern religions and philosophies. It can be described as a Westernized form of Eastern religions’ beliefs combined with occultic practices. The root of New Age thought can be found in the account of the fall where Satan questions God’s word, authority, and benevolent rule (v1); disputes that death results from disobedience (v4); and claims that through the acquisition of secret wisdom man can be enlightened and can be “like God” (v5). Some see the statements by Satan in Gen 3 as showing the New Age tenants: “You will be like God” (pantheism), “You will not surely die” (reincarnation), “Your eyes will be opened” (change of consciousness), and “Did God really say” (moral relativism).

¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’” ²The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’” ⁴The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! ⁵“For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
Gen 3:1-5

Since the NAM is so diverse it is difficult to detail every belief, but below are some of its main tenants.

1. Monism – “all is one” Everything and everyone is interrelated and interdependent. Ultimately there is no real _____ between humans, animals, rocks, or even God. Any differences between these entities are merely apparent, not real.
2. Pantheism – “all is god” All of creation partakes of the divine essence. All of life has a spark of divinity within.
3. Godhood – “we are gods” Each person is ignorant of their divinity. The goal is to discover our own divinity.

4. Discover our _____ by experiencing a change in consciousness – The human race suffers from a collective form of metaphysical amnesia. We have forgotten that our true identity is divine and thus must undergo a change of consciousness to achieve our true human potential.
5. Reincarnation – In its classic form, the cycles of birth, death, and reincarnation are necessary to work off our bad "karma" and to reach perfection. The doctrine of karma says that one's present condition is determined by one's actions in a past life. The Western version of reincarnation held by many New Agers places much less emphasis on bad karma and postulates an upward spiral towards perfection through reincarnation.
6. Moral relativism – New Agers think in terms of gray, rather than black or white and will often believe that two _____ statements can both be true. They will therefore teach that "all religions are true" and "there are many paths to God."

Douglas R. Groothuis, author of *Unmasking the New Age* and *Confronting the New Age*, identifies six distinctives of New Age thinking: (1) all is one; (2) all is God; (3) humanity is God; (4) a change in consciousness; (5) all religions are one; and (6) cosmic evolutionary optimism. Norman Geisler details 14 primary "doctrines" of New Age religions: (1) an impersonal god (force); (2) an eternal universe; (3) an illusory nature of matter; (4) a cyclical nature of life; (5) the necessity of reincarnations; (6) the evolution of man into Godhood; (7) continuing revelations from beings beyond the world; (8) the identity of man with God; (9) the need for meditation (or other consciousness-changing techniques); (10) occult practices (astrology, mediums, etc.); (11) vegetarianism and holistic health; (12) pacifism (or anti-war activities); (13) one world (global) order; and (14) syncretism (unity of all religions).

www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Cults/newage.htm

New Agers employ a mixed bag of an almost infinite number of occult practices; far too many to identify and fully explore in this chapter. There are, however, words and phrases that may serve as warning signs that a particular belief, practice, or group is involved with the New Age movement and incompatible with the Christian faith. These include: Monism, Pantheism, Reincarnation, Karma, Evolution, Personal Transformation, Unlimited Human Potential, Reality Creating, Energy Alignment, Energy Healing, Energy Focusing, Attunement, At-one-ment, Enlightenment, Inner Power, Goddess Within, Mother Earth, Sensory Deprivation, Intuitive Abilities, Near-Death Experiences, Chakras, Gurus, Tarot, Kabbalah, Pyramids, Crystal, Power, Auras, Colour Balancing, Psychic Centring, UFOs, Extraterrestrials, Brotherhood of Light, Higher Consciousness, Cosmic Consciousness, The Christ, Ascended Masters, Spirit Guides, Meditation, Yoga, Guided Imagery, Visualisation, Astral Projection, Silver Cord, Inner Light, Out-of-Body Experiences, Mystics, Metaphysical, Holistic Healing, Therapeutic Touch, Biofeedback, Transpersonal Psychology, Hypnotherapy, Paranormal, Parapsychology, Higher Self, Personal Transformation, Values Clarification. *THE KINGDOM OF THE CULTS {REVISED}* by Walter Martin (1997), Hank Hanegraaff, Editor, 2000 bible study centre DIGITAL LIBRARY, Page 458.

One of the tenants of NAM is evolutionary optimism.

The major goal of the New Age Movement is to bring peace to the world upon entering the Age of Aquarius. This will be accomplished primarily through the leadership of "the Christ" (also known as "Lord Maitreya"), who will supposedly come to teach us to live at peace with each other. Some of the other stated goals of the movement are to establish a World Food Authority, World Water Authority, World Economic Order, and an entirely New World Order. It should be noted here that one of the requirements for a person to enter the New Age is that he or she will have to take what is known as a "Luciferic Initiation," a kind of pledge of allegiance to the Christ of the New Age and to the New World Order. The primary goals of the movement then, are to prepare the world to receive the Christ and to enter the Age of Aquarius, thus establishing the New World Order. www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Cults/newage.htm

The "Age of Aquarius": Astrologers believe that evolution goes through cycles corresponding to the signs of the _____, each lasting from 2,000 to 2,400 years. NAM advocates say we are now moving from the cycle associated with Pisces into the one associated with Aquarius. The Aquarian Age will supposedly be characterized by a heightened degree of spiritual or cosmic consciousness.

	New Age	Biblical Christianity
Authority	There is no objective source of authority. Sacred writings and devotional material from many traditions have spiritual value.	The Bible is only source of authority.
God	God (ultimate reality) is an impersonal power, often spoken of as energy, consciousness, mind, or truth. God is everything; everything is god.	Plurality within unity; (three Persons in one nature); personal
Jesus	Jesus was one of many appearances of god throughout the ages, one of many people who were fully aware of their true divinity. Christ is separate from Jesus, the way-shower. Christ is the perfect god idea - the awareness of divinity within each person.	Both God and man; died on the cross for our sins; rose from the dead for our justification
Man	Humanity is not distinct from god. Human beings are essentially divine; god is within each person. Everyone has the "Christ spirit", everyone is potentially good. The human problem is illusion, ignorance, or lack of perception. People are unaware of their true identity as divine, as one with god. They need to be "enlightened" to find ultimate spiritual knowledge and liberation from the cycle of reincarnation.	Sinful by nature and therefore separated from their Creator.
Salvation	People overcome lack of perception by using techniques to change (transform) their consciousness. They can attain enlightenment when they step outside ordinary modes of perception into altered states of consciousness that dispel illusory boundaries of individual existence. Souls are evolving toward union with god and will eventually find spiritual knowledge and liberation from the cycle of rebirth.	By grace through faith.

Witnessing Strategies for New Agers:

Let's remember some of our general strategies:

1. Sanctify your heart. (1 Pet 3:15)
2. Pray – this is a spiritual battle for the truth. (2 Cor 10:3-5)
3. Be ready with a good understanding of the Scriptures.
4. Do not argue. Do not attack the person. (2 Tim 2:24-26)
5. Make sure you define words.
6. Do not get off on tangents. The important points are the source of authority, the nature of God, the person and work of Jesus, the nature of man, and the means of salvation.
7. Avoid Christian jargon – it has no meaning for the unchurched.

Some Specifics:

1. The specifics above for Hinduism and Buddhism.
2. Lovingly share with New Agers some of the implications of their belief system. For example, many New Agers do not realize that one implication of pantheism is that God is _____. Also, one of the implications of their belief in karma and reincarnation is that there are no innocent sufferers.

World Religions, Cults, and Aberrant Beliefs

Lesson 5 – Roman Catholicism

Review

We have looked at some of the major world religions including: Judaism, Islam, and the Eastern religions of Hinduism and Buddhism (along with the US variant – the New Age Movement). These religions are decidedly non-Christian. The next grouping we will look at is the major pseudo-Christian religions (commonly termed Christian cults).

A cult is sometimes difficult to define as there are many definitions to choose from. The non-Christian definition of a cult usually is focused on sociological, psychological, or behavioral factors. According to these factors, a cult is a religious group that seeks to control its members either by a single individual or the organization. The cult is manipulative and demands total commitment and loyalty of the followers. Even truly Christian groups can be cult-like in their use of manipulation and demands of loyalty.

The standard evangelical definition of a Christian cult is any group that deviates from Biblical Christianity in fundamental doctrines of the faith: the source of authority, the nature of God including the Trinity, the person and work of Christ, the nature of man, and the means of salvation. In many cases, these groups may use the same words as true Christians, but radically redefine them.

Remember that all false philosophies (religious, psychological, etc.) are _____ creation. Any distortion of the true gospel is the work of Satan who's aim is to deceive people into thinking that they are doing what is needed to be rewarded heaven upon death. This is salvation by works (doing "good" things and not doing "bad" things).

If one carefully studies the various religions and cults of the world, he will soon discover that, without exception, **they are founded on some form of human effort and works-righteousness.** ... Only grace-centered, biblical Christianity is from God. Every other form of religion is from Satan, inspired by his demon spirits, promoted by his lying human agents (1 Tim 4:1-2), and centered in works righteousness. MacArthur's NT Commentary: Galatians

Introduction

Today we are going to look at Roman Catholicism (RC). To categorize RC is somewhat challenging. Other groups like Mormons or Jehovah Witnesses are easy to classify as a Christian _____ as they have distinctly aberrant beliefs, but also because they began at a point in time claiming new, unbiblical revelation from God. These groups have always been referred to by historic Christianity as "cults" and this labeling serves to highlight their aberrant beliefs. Catholicism, on the other hand, is an historically Christian group – meaning that it did not begin at a certain time, but developed slowly into what it is today.

In addition, Catholicism holds many doctrines that are considered orthodox including: 1) the inerrancy of the Bible; 2) the _____ nature of God; 3) the deity of Jesus Christ; and 4) Christ's virgin birth, sinless life, crucifixion, and resurrection.

The label "cult" may be considered inflammatory when applied to RC – perhaps unnecessarily limiting witnessing opportunities. With this said, the RC church (RCC) has several doctrines that would place them into the "cult" category. There are many RC doctrines that we could highlight that distort the true gospel. Errors in RC doctrine are present in almost every major area of theology. We could spend a great deal of time investigating each. However, we will focus on our five areas which define a cult.

Source of authority

To understand Catholic teaching concerning authority we can look at the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) published in 1997 in Latin. The CCC is a summary of all essential and basic teachings of Catholicism. These teachings are derived from many sources:

- The Catholic Bible (66 books of the Protestant Bible plus the Apocrypha)
- The decrees of ecumenical councils (21 total out of which three are the most referenced)
 - the Council of Trent (1545-1563)
 - the First Vatican Council (1869-1870)
 - the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)
- Writings of Popes
- The Code of Canon Law – 1752 laws that govern the RCC
- Church liturgy – public worship and practice of the RCC
- The Catechism of the Council of Trent – guide to the RC faith published in 1566 by Pius V
- Thomas Aquinas' (c. 1225-1274) "Summa Theology"

According to Catholic teaching, the source of authority does not rest with Scripture alone, but with Scripture, tradition, and the Pope – each with equal authority.

"**_____ Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal. Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ, who promised to remain with his own "always, to the close of the age".** CCC p80

"*Sacred Scripture* is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit. **And [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God** which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching." CCC p81

"As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. **Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.**" CCC p82

"It is clear therefore that, in the supremely wise arrangement of God, **sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others.** Working together, each in its own way, under the action of the one Holy Spirit, they all contribute effectively to the salvation of souls." CCC p95

The Supreme Pontiff, in virtue of his office, possesses infallible teaching authority when, as _____ pastor and teacher of all the faithful he proclaims with a definitive act that a doctrine of faith or morals is to be held as such." CCC p891

The task of **interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the Magisterium of the Church**, that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him. CCC p100

We agree with Catholicism that Scripture is authoritative, though only the 66 books recognized before the council of Trent.

Rejection of the Old Testament Apocrypha as Authoritative (from VBC notes on Theology)

The Apocrypha (or deuterocanonical books) consists of a set of books written between approximately 400 BC and the time of Christ. The word "apocrypha" means "_____". The OT Apocrypha includes (see www.carm.org for details on each book):

- The Wisdom of Solomon (c. 30 BC), known as the Book of Wisdom.
- Ecclesiasticus (132 BC), also known as Sirach.
- Tobit (c. 200 BC).
- Judith (c. 150 BC).
- 1 Maccabees (c. 110 BC)
- 2 Maccabees (c. 110 BC)
- Prayer of Azariah (c. 100 BC) placed as Daniel 3:24-90 by Roman Catholics.
- Susanna (c. 100 BC) placed as Daniel 13 by Roman Catholics.
- Bel and the Dragon (c. 100 BC), placed as Daniel 14 by Roman Catholics.
- Baruch (c. 150-50 BC), placed as Baruch 1-5 by Roman Catholics.
- Letter of Jeremiah (c. 300-100 BC) placed as Baruch 6 by Roman Catholics.
- Additions to Esther (140-130 BC), placed as Esther 10:4-16:24 by Roman Catholics.
- 1 Esdras (c. 150-100 BC), also known as 3 Esdras.
- 2 Esdras (c. 150-100 BC), known as 4 Esdras.
- Prayer of Manasseh (c. 100 BC)

The RC Council of Trent accepted all of the OT Apocrypha as canonical in 1546, with the exception of 1 and 2 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh. While there are 15 total books in the Apocrypha, RC Bibles count only 11 because they combine the Letter of Jeremiah with Baruch and omit 1 and 2 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh. The teaching of 2 Esdras 7:105 in _____ to prayer for the dead may have led to its exclusion by the Roman Catholic Church.

The reasons suggested for the OT Apocrypha as Scripture include:

- Some early church fathers accepted these books (Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria)
- The Syriac church accepted them in the fourth century
- The Eastern Orthodox church accepts them
- The RCC proclaimed them as canonical in 1546
- The Apocrypha was included in Protestant Bibles, including the original King James version of 1611
- Some of the OT Apocrypha has been found among other OT books with the Dead Sea Scrolls

However, there is abundant, compelling evidence for rejecting the Apocrypha as inspired by God. While these books may be of historical value and in some ways supplement God's truth, they are not canonical for the following reasons:

- Jesus and the apostles did not accept these books as part of the Scripture. There are no NT references to any of the Apocrypha as being authoritative in any way. The NT writers quote not one part of the Apocrypha.
- Judaism has never accepted these books as part of the Scriptures. Ancient Jewish leaders specifically _____ the Apocrypha (Josephus, Philo).

- While a few early church leaders may appear to take some material from the Apocrypha, most were opposed to the inclusion of the Apocrypha into the canon of Scripture (Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Jerome, Origen). Furthermore, no church council for the entire church accepted these books as Scripture.
- The Apocrypha itself recognizes our OT canon as a distinct twenty-four books, which corresponds to the Hebrew Bible as it is known today. In 2 Esdras 14:44-48, seventy books are distinguished from ninety-four, leaving twenty-four, or exact number of the Hebrew canon, which became our 39 OT books. Not only does the Apocrypha not claim inspiration for itself, it actually denies it when 1 Maccabees 9:27 describes an existing cessation of prophecy.
- The Apocrypha includes unbiblical teaching, including prayers for the dead (2 Maccabees 12:45, or 12:46 in Roman Catholic Bibles) and salvation by works (Tobit 12:9).
- The first official adoption of the Apocrypha by the RCC came at the Council of Trent in 1546, over 1,500 years after the books were written. This was part of a reaction by Catholicism against the Protestant Reformation and if anyone did not accept these books they were considered accursed. When the Apocrypha appeared in Protestant Bibles, it was normally placed in a separate section since it was not considered of equal authority.
- When Greek manuscripts do include books of the Apocrypha, they do not do so completely. In fact, no Greek manuscript contains the exact collection of the books of the Apocrypha as was accepted by the Council of Trent. While the Syrian church accepted the Apocrypha in the fourth century, the translation of the Bible into Syrian in the second century AD did not include it.
- The Qumran community had hundreds of books in its library beyond the Scripture. While the library had some of the Apocrypha, it did not have commentaries on the Apocrypha as it did with OT books. The OT books had special script and parchment, unlike the Apocrypha. Qumran clearly considered the Apocrypha as different from Scripture.

Up until the Council of Trent established the Apocrypha as Scripture by the RCC, different people viewed it with different degrees of value. Very few considered it to be Scripture and if so it was for few reasons. We should not consider people who viewed the Apocrypha highly as necessarily supporting it as authoritative Scripture.

Rejection of the Tradition as Authoritative

Tradition (*paradosis*) is used 13 times in the NT and means that which is delivered, the substance of a teaching. It is used both negatively (Matt 15:2; 3; 6; Mark 7:3; 5; 8; 9; 13; Gal 1:14; Col 2:8) and positively (2 Thess 3:6; 2 Thess 2:15; 1 Cor 11:2) depending of the context.

Traditions (*paradosis*) means “that which is passed along by teaching” and is used in a negative way in the New Testament when it refers to man-made ideas or practices (as is Matt. 15:2-6; Gal. 1:14; Col. 2:8). But the term is also applied to divinely revealed teaching, as here and in 2 Thess. 2:15. To Paul’s inspired apostolic teaching the Corinthian believers had held **firmly**.

MacArthur's NT Commentary: 1 Corinthians

Negatively it is used to refer to human doctrines, teaching, or rules which take the place of Scripture. These traditions “invalidate the word of God”. Invalidate (*akyroō*) means to render void or deprive of force or authority.

³And He answered and said to them, “Why do you yourselves **transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?** ⁴For God said, ‘HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,’ and, ‘HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.’ ⁵But you say, ‘Whoever says to *his* father or mother, “Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God,” ⁶he is not to honor his father or his mother.’ And *by this* you _____ **the word of God for the sake of your tradition.** Matt 15:3-6

⁵The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the **tradition** of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?” ⁶And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. ⁷BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.’ ⁸“**Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.**” ⁹He was also saying to them, “**You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.**” ¹⁰“For Moses said, ‘HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER’; and, ‘HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH’; ¹¹but you say, ‘If a man says to *his* father or *his* mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),’ ¹²you no longer permit him to do anything for *his* father or *his* mother; ¹³**thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down;** and you do many things such as that.” Mark 7:5-13

⁸**See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.** Col 2:8

Positively it is used to refer to inspired apostolic teaching – i.e. Scripture.

¹⁵So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the **traditions** which you were taught, whether by word of *mouth* or by letter from us. 2 Thess 2:15

⁶Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not **according to the tradition which you received from us.** 2 Thess 3:6

²Now **I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.** 1 Cor 11:2

From these passages, it is clear that “_____” is acceptable if it does not invalidate the word of God. Scripture has the final authority. We must not exceed what is written.

⁶Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you **may learn not to exceed what is written**, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other. 1 Cor 4:6

⁵**Every word of God is tested;** He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. ⁶**Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you,** and you will be proved a liar. Prov 30:5-6

In addition, only Scripture is referred to as being written by men “moved” by the Holy Spirit which is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.

²⁰But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one’s own interpretation, ²¹**for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.** 2 Pet 1:20-21

¹⁶**All Scripture is inspired by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17

Rejection of the Pope as Authoritative (From “The Gospel According to Rome” by James McCarthy)

Concerning the Pope – the Catholic church believes that it’s hierarchy, culminating with the bishop of Rome (Pope) derives authority from three beliefs: 1) Christ made Peter the head of the apostles and the universal church, 2) the apostles appointed bishops as their successors, and 3) the Pope is Peter’s successor. However, each of these beliefs are in _____

1. Peter was not the head of the apostles and the universal church

¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴And they said, “Some *say* John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵He said* to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸**“I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church;** and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. ¹⁹“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” ²⁰Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ. Matt 16:13-20

The RCC claims that Matt 16:18 shows that Peter is the rock upon which Christ will build His church. However, the Greek does not support this interpretation. Peter is the masculine noun Petros meaning boulder whereas rock is the feminine noun petra meaning mass of rock. The verse is equivalent to saying, “you are Peter, and upon this mass of rock, I will build My church.” The question then is what is the “bedrock” upon which Christ is building His church? The context in this passage is about Christ and who He is – “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” The foundation of the church is _____ not Peter.

¹¹For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
1 Cor 3:11

Also, while it is true that Peter is usually listed first in the lists of the apostles this does not mean that he was the head of the apostles (see Acts 15:6-35).

2. The apostles did not appoint bishops as their successors

Scripture used by the RCC to justify this is 2 Tim 2:2 which simply speaks of discipling men to disciple other men. In addition, the RCC holds Timothy and Titus up as examples of bishops appointed by Paul, Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete. However, Scripture nowhere calls these men out as bishops and Paul simply calls them “partner and fellow worker” (2 Cor 9:23).

3. The Pope is not Peter’s successor

There is no Scriptural evidence to support this claim by the Catholic church.

Clearly we must join with the reformers and declare that Scripture alone is the authority for the believer. The Scriptures are authoritative and constitute the believer’s only source of faith and practice (Matt 5:18; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Heb 4:12; 2 Pet 1:20-21). Only Scripture is perfectly adequate for all matters of faith and conduct – for salvation _____ sanctification. It is all-sufficient in regards to the soul of man, in our relationship to God, and in our relationship to others.

The nature of God including the Trinity

The RCC agrees with historical, Biblical Christianity on the nature of God, including the doctrine of the Trinity.

The person and work of Jesus Christ

The RCC _____ with historical, Biblical Christianity on the person and work of Jesus Christ. The RCC affirms Jesus as the second Person of the Trinity, as well as His full deity and full humanity. The RCC believes Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on a Roman cross, was buried, and was resurrected from the dead. He returned to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

The nature of man

The RCC teaches that human beings are created in God's image. Every person is a unique, precious being of dignity and worth. By their free will, human beings have chosen to sin against God, rejecting His nature and pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character and revealed law.

However, the RCC distinguishes between two types of sin: mortal and _____ (CCC p1854).

Mortal sin destroys the sanctifying grace of God within the individual and necessitates forgiveness through a sacrament of reconciliation (CCC p1856) which reconciles one with God (CCC p1468) and obtains "forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism" (CCC p1486). It causes exclusion from heaven and results in "the eternal death of hell" (CCC p1861). Catholics classify a sin as mortal when it meets the following conditions: the sin is serious or "grave" (murder, adultery, stealing, bearing false witness, etc.) and is committed with "full knowledge and complete consent" (CCC, p1857-59).

A venial sin is either not serious or grave or does not involve full knowledge or complete consent (CCC p1862). Unlike mortal sin, venial sin does not destroy the saving grace of God in the individual. "Venial sin does not deprive the sinner of sanctifying grace, friendship with God, charity, and consequently eternal happiness" (CCC p1863).

Biblical Response

By their free will, mankind chose to sin against God and are therefore under the condemnation of physical and spiritual death (eternal separation from their creator) (Gen 3; Rom 3:23; Isa 59:1-2). The corruption of sin extends to every aspect of our being (Rom 1:18-3:20) including intellect (2 Cor 4:4), conscience (1 Tim 4:2), will (Rom 1:28), and heart (Eph 4:18). All people are therefore unable to enter into a personal relationship with God on their own initiative (Rom 3:23; 6:23; Eph 2:1-3).

For the Believer, the Bible does not distinguish between "big" sins and "little" sins. The result of sin in the believer's life is loss of fellowship (1 John 1:6); church discipline (Matt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:4-5); the Lord's discipline (Heb 12:6); and sometimes physical death (1 Cor 11:30). The remedy for sin when it occurs in the believer's life is _____ and confession to God (Heb 6:1; 1 John 1:9).

The means of salvation

John MacArthur and Paul Enns provide a good summary of the Catholic view of salvation.

According to Roman Catholicism, justification is a process in which God's grace is poured forth into the sinner's heart, making that person progressively more righteous. During this process, it is the sinner's responsibility to preserve and increase that grace by various good _____. The means by which justification is initially obtained is not faith, but the sacrament of baptism. Furthermore, justification is forfeited whenever the believer commits a mortal sin, such as hatred or adultery. In the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, then, works are necessary both to begin and to continue the process of justification. "Is Roman Catholicism Biblical?" by John MacArthur on the GTY Website

... the entire system of sacraments is a genuine rejection of the true grace of God and salvation by grace. Salvation in Roman Catholic theology is not by grace through faith but a complex adherence to the sacraments and rituals as legislated by the church hierarchy. The Moody Handbook of Theology by Paul P. Enns

(The following information is from “The Gospel According to Rome” by James McCarthy) The RCC teaches that God's grace is granted through the sacrament of baptism. This “sanctifying grace” is a gift of the Holy Spirit, but can be lost through serious, conscience, and deliberate sin. It can then be regained through penance. There is also “actual grace” which is a temporary supernatural assistance to perform good works necessary for salvation. The sacraments (baptism, penance, Eucharist, confirmation, matrimony, holy orders, and anointing the sick) are the primary means by which God provides sanctifying and actual grace. This then enables the Catholic to do good works which are _____ with heaven after final purification in purgatory.

- Infants receive grace through the sacrament of baptism and adult converts receive grace through the sacrament of baptism after proper preparation.

...**Baptism is the first and chief sacrament of forgiveness of sins** because it unites us with Christ, who died for our sins and rose for our justification, so that ‘we too might walk in newness of life,’ CCC p977

Justification has been merited for us by the Passion of Christ. It is granted us through Baptism. CCC p2020

Catholic justification = Spiritual rebirth and the lifelong process of sanctification which begins at the point of the sacrament of baptism.

- Sacraments and good works increase _____ in the soul; cooperation with grace preserves grace in the soul.

We can therefore hope in the glory of heaven promised by God to those who love him and do his will. In every circumstance, each one of us should hope, with the grace of God, to persevere ‘to the end’ and **to obtain the joy of heaven, as God's eternal reward for the good works accomplished with the grace of Christ...** CCC p1821

Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, **we can then merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification.** CCC p2010

- Grace is lost through mortal sin, but can be regained through the sacrament of penance.

Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance for all sinful members of his Church: above all for those who, since Baptism, have fallen into grave sin, and have thus lost their baptismal grace and wounded ecclesial communion. It is to them that **the sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification.** The Fathers of the Church present this sacrament as ‘the second plank (of salvation) after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace,...’ CCC p1446

One who desires to obtain reconciliation with God and with the Church, **must confess to a priest all the unconfessed grave sins he remembers after having carefully examined his conscience.** CCC p1493

By Christ's will, **the Church possesses the power to forgive the sins of the baptized and exercises it through bishops and priests normally in the sacrament of Penance.** CCC p986

- Eternal life is attained by dying in a state of grace. If one has not attained the state of holiness required to enter directly into heaven then they go to purgatory to make _____ for sins that was not made on earth.

All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but **after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.** CCC p1030

In contrast to RC's salvation of works, the Bible teaches clearly that salvation is by grace (unmerited favor) through _____ alone. Salvation is the work of God whereby he saves individuals from the penalty, power, and one day the very presence of sin. It is completely by God and not on the basis of human merit or works.

By Grace:

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. Eph 2:8-10

⁶But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. Rom 11:6

²¹I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness *comes* through the Law, then Christ died needlessly. Gal 2:21

⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, ⁵He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life. Titus 3:4-7

Through Faith:

⁴⁷“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who _____ has eternal life. John 6:47

²⁸For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. Rom 3:28

⁵But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, Rom 4:5

¹Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom 5:1

¹⁶nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified. Gal 2:16

²⁴Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. Gal 3:24

Kept forever:

The Scriptures declare that _____ can separate the believer from the Christ (Rom 8:28-39). All true believers once saved are kept by God's power and are always saved (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Cor 1:4-8; Eph 4:30; Heb 7:25; 13:5; 1 Pet 1:5; Jude 24). When a professor of Christ turns away it shows that true salvation never took place (1 John 2:19).

¹Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Rom 8:1

By a fully sufficient sacrifice:

¹⁰By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

¹¹And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹²but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, ¹³waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. ¹⁴For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. Heb 10:10-14

Resulting in good works:

²⁸Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; ²⁹for our God is a consuming fire.
Heb 12:28-29

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) declared the following. The RCC maintains these positions today.

Canon 9: If anyone says that the sinner is justified by ____ alone, meaning that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be anathema.

Canon 19: If anyone says that nothing besides faith is commanded in the gospel, that other things are indifferent, neither commanded nor forbidden, but free; or that the ten commandments in no way pertain to Christians, let him be anathema.

Canon 24: If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not _____ before God through good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of its increase, let him be anathema.

Canon 27: If anyone says that there is no mortal sin except that of unbelief, or that grace once received is not lost through any other sin however grievous and enormous except by that of unbelief, let him be anathema.

Canon 30: If anyone says that after the reception of the grace of justification the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out to every repentant sinner, that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged either in this world or in purgatory before the gates of heaven can be opened, let him be anathema.

Canon 33: If anyone says that the Catholic doctrine of justification as set forth by the holy council in the present decree, _____ in some respect from the glory of God or the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, and does not rather illustrate the truth of our faith and no less the glory of God and of Christ Jesus, let him be anathema."

... Roman Catholicism places an undue stress on human works. Catholic doctrine denies that God "justifies the ungodly" (Rom 4:5) without first making them godly. Good works therefore become the ground of justification. As thousands of former Catholics will testify, Roman Catholic doctrine and liturgy obscure the essential truth that the believer is saved by grace through faith and not by his own works (Eph 2:8-9). In a simple sense, Catholics genuinely believe they are saved by doing good, confessing sin, and observing ceremonies. "Is Roman Catholicism Biblical?" by John MacArthur on the GTY Website

"... the Roman system ... is not a group of wayward brothers but is an apostate form of Christianity. It is a false religion, it is another religion." John MacArthur on the television broadcast of a round table discussion on the John Ankerberg Show titled "Irreconcilable Differences: Catholics, Evangelicals, and the New Quest for Unity" that took place in Ft Lauderdale, Florida in 1995 between Dr. James Kennedy, Dr. John MacArthur, Dr. R. C. Sproul, and John Ankerberg.

Big Questions

Can somebody belong to the Roman Catholic Church and be saved?

The answer is yes, however, they are not saved through the RC gospel. The RC gospel is a _____ gospel. A Roman Catholic can be saved through the true gospel at which time they are no longer Roman Catholic because they have accepted a gospel that the RCC condemns.

Once saved can a Christian stay in the Roman Catholic church?

Yes, but it does not make sense Biblically to do so. Today we looked at three areas which are part of RC's false gospel. In addition, there are multiple unbiblical RC teachings including: Mary, praying to saints, praying for the dead, purgatory, etc. If a person claims to be a true Christian, and yet stays in the RCC, supporting its doctrines, then that would seem to indicate that they still accept RC's false gospel.

Witnessing Strategies for Catholics:

Let's remember some of our general strategies:

1. Sanctify your heart. (1 Pet 3:15)
2. Pray – this is a spiritual battle for the truth. (2 Cor 10:3-5)
3. Be ready with a good understanding of the Scriptures.
4. Do not argue. Do not attack the person. (2 Tim 2:24-26)
5. Make sure you define words.
6. Do not get off on tangents. The important points are the source of authority, the nature of God, the person and work of Jesus, the nature of man, and the means of salvation.
7. Avoid Christian jargon – it has no meaning for the unchurched.
8. Share your testimony and your assurance of eternal life through Christ.

Some specifics:

1. Avoid getting bogged down with _____ issues (like Mary, transubstantiation, icons, etc.) that are not central to salvation.
2. Focus on sin and the inability to save oneself through good works.
3. Give them a New Testament and show your RC friend passages that present the true gospel.

References and Additional Resources:

- MacCarthy, James G., "The Gospel According to Rome", Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR, 1995.
- Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry Website, <http://www.carm.org/catholic.htm>
- Catechism of the Catholic Church Second Edition <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc.htm>

Transubstantiation

<http://www.valleybible.net/resources/PositionPapers/Lord'sSupper.shtml>

Mary

<http://www.carm.org/catholic/mary.htm>

Roman Catholic Terms

- Absolution - the act of releasing someone from their sin by God, through the means of a priest.
- Assumption - the taking of the body and soul of Mary, by God, into glory. Catholic doctrine, apparently, does not state whether or not Mary died, but *tradition* holds that she died and was immediately afterward assumed into heaven both body and soul.
- Confirmation - a ceremony performed by a bishop that is supposed to strengthen a person and enable him to resist sin. It is usually done at the age of 12. The Bishop dips his right thumb in holy oil and anoints the person on the forehead by making the sign of the cross and says, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."
- Consecration - a moment during the ceremony of the mass where God, allegedly through the priest, changes bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus.
- Diocese - an area of many parishes presided over by a bishop.
- Eucharist - The elements of the communion supper where the bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ.
- Extreme Unction - A sacrament given to a person who is ill or in danger of dying intended to strengthen their soul and help their love be pure so they may enter into heaven. It is done through prayer and the anointing of oil (also known as Anointing of the Sick or the Sacrament of the Sick).
- Holy Chrism - the special oil used in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders.
- Holy Water - Special water that has been blessed by a priest, bishop, etc. or a liturgical ceremony. It is used to bring a blessing to a person when applied.
- Immaculate Conception - The teaching that Mary was conceived without original sin.
- Indulgence - An indulgence is a means by which the Catholic church takes away some or all of the punishment due the Christian in this life and/or purgatory because of his sin even though that sin has been forgiven. This punishment is most often in purgatory but can also be suffered in this life. Therefore, indulgences remove time needed to be spent in purgatory.
- Lent - a forty day period between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. Usually it is accompanied by some form of prayer and fasting.
- Mass - a reenactment of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross in a ceremony performed by a priest. This ceremony is symbolically carried out by the priest and involves Consecration where the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus.
- Penance - a means by which all sins committed after baptism are removed. The means are assigned by a priest and usually consist of special prayers or deeds performed by the sinner.
- Relic - a part of the body of a saint including clothing, jewelry, etc. The relic is considered holy due to its association with the saint.
- Rosary - A string of beads containing five sets with ten small beads. Each set of ten is separated by another bead. It also contains a crucifix. It is used in saying special prayers, usually to Mary where the rosary is used to count the prayers.
- Saint - A very holy person. Usually, it is someone who has been dead for many years and has been canonized by the Catholic Church. Saints do not have to pass through purgatory.
- Sign of the Cross - A sacramental. It is the movement of the right hand from the forehead to the chest and then left and right upon the shoulders.
- Stations of the Cross - depictions of 14 events during the passion and death of Jesus that usually appear on the walls of Catholic churches.
- Transubstantiation - The teaching that the bread and wine in the communion supper become the body and blood of the Lord Jesus at the Consecration during the Mass.

The Seven Roman Catholic Sacraments from The Moody Handbook of Theology, Paul P. Enns

Sacrament	Procedure	Significance	Vatican II Emphasis
Baptism	Priest performs the rite on infants.	Produces rebirth, "infant Christian." Necessary for salvation. Frees one from original sin and guilt. Unites one to Christ and the church.	Baptism to receive greater emphasis. Convert to receive instruction beforehand. Illustrates commitment to Christ. Emphasizes unity of all members in Christ.
Confirmation	Bishop lays hands on person whereby they receive the Holy Spirit.	Necessary sequence after baptism. With baptism, part of the "Sacrament of initiation." Person receives the Holy Spirit, bringing on to maturity and dedication.	Endeavor to unite baptism and confirmation as one act of initiation. Separating the two sacraments suggests there are "degrees of membership in church."
Eucharist	Priest celebrates Mass. Upon pronouncing, "This is my body" bread and wine turn to body and blood of Christ.	Mass is ongoing sacrifice of Christ. Same as Calvary except Mass is unbloody. In Mass, Christ offers atonement for sin. Participant receives forgiveness from venial sins. Eating bread is eating Christ.	Frequent participation encouraged to increase "union with Christ." Ceremony now involves lay people. Shorter, simpler ceremony; more use of Scripture.
Confession (Penance)	Three steps: 1. Sorrow for sin. 2. Oral confession to priest. 3. Absolution of sins by priest.	Having confessed all known sins to priest, and stated intention not to sin in the future, the adherent receives absolution from sins by priest.	New view of sin: distorted personal relationship and motives. Allows for general confession and absolution. General confession performed in service of singing, Scripture, prayer, sermon, self-examination, confession, absolution.
Holy Orders	Ordination to office: bishop, priest, deacon. As successor to the apostles, bishop ordains priest.	Confers on recipient power to sanctify others. Priest receives power to offer body and blood of Christ and to remit sins. Priest mediates between God and men as Christ mediated between God and men.	Greater involvement of lay people in ministry. Lay people to develop/use gifts in church. Reduced distinction between priest and people. Priest considered "brother among brothers."
Marriage	Vows are exchanged in presence of a priest.	Sign of union of Christ and church. Indissoluble because marriage of Christ and church is indissoluble.	Marriage is not just for procreation. Greater emphasis on love in marriage. Mass permitted at weddings with baptized non-Catholics.
Anointing the Sick	Bishop consecrates oil. Person near death anointed by priest.	Removes infirmity and obstacles left by sin, which prevent soul from glory. Prepares people for death by making them like the risen Christ. Prepares soul for eternity.	Broadened usage: changed from "extreme unction" to "anointing the sick." Used to strengthen/heal body and soul. Sick person shares in readings, prayers.

World Religions, Cults, and Aberrant Beliefs

Lesson 6 – Mormonism

Review

Remember, the standard evangelical definition of a Christian cult is any group that deviates from Biblical Christianity in fundamental doctrines of the faith: the source of authority, the nature of God including the Trinity, the person and work of Christ, the nature of man, and the means of salvation. In many cases, cults use the same words as true Christians, but radically _____ them.

History of Mormonism

Mormonism, officially called The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS), was founded by Joseph Smith in the early 1800s. Smith was born in 1805 in Vermont. His father was a treasure hunter and money counterfeiter. Smith grew up poorly educated and _____. At age 11, his family moved to Palmyra, New York.

In 1820, when Smith was 15, there was much interest in religion in Palmyra and Smith was torn as to what denomination he should join. After reading James 1:5, he prayed about what church he should join and was supposedly visited by god the father and god the son. He was told by Jesus, he should join none of them for they were "all wrong" and all the Christian church's doctrines "were an abomination" (Joseph Smith – Pearl of Great Price).

This first vision was supposedly followed by several visits from an angel named Moroni. In 1827, Moroni supposedly allowed Smith to retrieve a set of golden plates which had been buried in a hill near Smith's home in Palmyra, New York. Between 1827-1830, Smith, with the help of friends, translated the golden plates into the LDS scripture, the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon was published in 1830 and became the first of many scriptures for the Mormon Church.

Smith organized the church on April 6, 1830, with six original members. Over the next ten years the church headquarters moved to Kirtland, Ohio; Independence, Missouri; and Far West, Missouri – finally landing in Nauvoo, Illinois between 1839-1844. In Nauvoo, Smith was jailed for encouraging the destruction of a local newspaper and was eventually murdered by a mob in Carthage, Illinois on June 27, 1844. After Smith's murder, several LDS leaders stepped forward to take control of the Church. The majority of the Mormons followed Brigham Young to the Salt Lake Valley.

The Mormon church is organized so that one prophet leads the church. Beneath the prophet in authority is the Council of the Twelve Apostles. A third group of men are called the First and Second Councils of the Seventy. All of these men together are called the General Authorities. Local churches are called *Wards* or *Stake Centers* and meet for worship in what the Mormons call "meetinghouses." The *Temples* are not for _____, but are used for ceremonies for the living and the dead. Less than ten percent of all LDS members are allowed to enter these structures. Temples are required for Mormon marriages and for proxy baptisms of ancestors.

Mormonism in a Nutshell

from the Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry at <http://www.carm.org/lds/nutshell.htm>

Mormonism teaches that god used to be a man on another _____ and that he became a god by following the laws and ordinances of his god on his home world. He brought his wife to this world, a woman he had married on the other world. She is, essentially, a goddess.

In his present god-state, he rules our world. He has a body of flesh and bones. Since god and his wife are both exalted persons, they each possess physical bodies. In their exalted states as deities, they produce spirit children that grow and mature in the spiritual realm. The first spirit born was Jesus. Afterwards Lucifer was born along with the rest of us. So, Mormonism teaches that we all pre-existed in the spirit realm having been produced from the union of god and his goddess wife. Therefore, we all existed in spirit form before coming down and entering the bodies of human babies that are being born on earth. During this 'compression' into the infant state, the memories of their pre-existence is 'veiled.'

God the father, who is called Elohim, was concerned for the future salvation of the people on earth. In the heavenly realm, the father had a plan for the salvation of the world. Jesus endorsed the father's plan. Lucifer did not. Lucifer became jealous and rebelled. In his rebellion he convinced a large portion of the spirits existing in heaven to side with him and oppose god. God being more powerful than they, cursed these rebellious spirits to become demons. They can never be born in human bodies.

The remaining spirits sided with god. Since they chose the better way, when it comes time for them to live on earth, they have the privilege of being born in races and locations that are relative to their condition and choice made in the spirit realm.¹

In the Mormon plan of salvation there needed to be a savior: Jesus. But Jesus was a spirit in heaven. For him to be born on earth, Brigham Young the second prophet of the Mormon church said that instead of letting any other man do it, god the father did it with Mary. He said that the birth of our savior was as natural as the birth of our parents. Essentially, what this means is that Brigham Young taught that god the father came down and had _____ with Mary, his spirit daughter, to produce the body of Jesus. Though many Mormons will not entertain such incestuous thoughts about god and Mary, this is what Brigham Young taught and as far as we know, this has not been denied by the Mormon church.

Nevertheless, Jesus was born, got married, and had children.² He died on the cross and paid for sins -- but not on the cross only. According to Mormonism, the atonement of Christ was not only on the cross. It began in the Garden of Gethsemane *before* he went to the cross.

In Mormonism, men and women have the potential of becoming gods. President Lorenzo Snow said, "As god once was, man is. As god is, man may become." In order to reach this exalted state of godhood, a person must first become a good Mormon, pay a full ten percent tithe to the Mormon church, follow various laws and ordinances of the church, and be found worthy. At this point, they receive a temple recommend whereupon, the Mormon is allowed to enter their sacred temples in order to go through a set of secret _____ baptism for the dead, celestial marriage, and various oaths of secrecy and commitment. Additionally, four secret handshakes are taught so the believing Mormon, upon entering the third level of Mormon heaven, can shake hands with god in a certain pattern. This celestial ritual is for the purpose of permitting entrance into the highest level of heaven.³ For those who achieve this highest of heavens, exaltation to godhood awaits them. Then, he or she, will be permitted to have his or her own planet and be the god of his own world and the Mormon system will be expanded to other planets.

¹ Page 616 of Mormon Doctrine by Bruce R. McConkie

² Jedediah M. Grant, second Counselor to Brigham Young said so in Journal of Discourses, vol. 1, pp. 345-346.

Apostle Orson Hyde stated it in, vol. 2: 210, 328; vol. 4:259-260; vol. 13:309; Millennial Star, Vol. 15, p. 825; The Seer, page 172, 158, -- Note: These references are not official Mormon scripture and there is disagreement in acceptance of this teaching among Mormons.

³ What's Going on in There? An Exposing of the Secret Mormon Temple Rituals, by Bob Witte & Gordon H. Fraser. Gordon Fraser, Publisher.

Source of Authority

Mormons accept four books as scripture. Mormons believe that the canon of Scripture was not closed when the Bible was completed. They believe that the Bible is the word of God, but deny that it has been translated correctly and believe that it has been _____ since the days of the apostles. In addition to the Bible, Mormons believe that The Book of Mormon, Doctrines and Covenants, and The Pearl of Great Price all contain god's revelation. Whenever a Mormon belief contradicts the Bible, Mormons say that particular part of the Bible is translated incorrectly, and that the correct doctrine is in one of the Mormon scriptures. Thereby, the Bible is rejected as the infallible Word of God.

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.

8th and 9th Article of Faith of the Mormon Church

The *Book of Mormon* tells the story of a supposed migration of Israelites in 600 BC to the American continent, but does not contain explicit Mormon doctrine. These Israelites subsequently lapsed into apostasy although their story was preserved on golden plates written in Reformed Egyptian. Joseph Smith supposedly translated the plates by the "gift and power of God" (*Doctrine and Covenants* 135:3). However, Reformed Egyptian does not _____ as a language. The golden plates were returned to the angel Moroni after they were transcribed and Moroni returned them to heaven. There were no reliable witnesses who saw the tablets.

There have been over 2000 corrections made to the Book of Mormon since the original publication. This is strange since Smith claimed that the translation was divinely given. In addition, Smith provided several prophecies that did not come true showing himself to be a false prophet according to Deut 18:21-22 and Jer 28:9.

²¹You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' ²²**When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.** Deut 18:21-22

⁹The prophet who prophesies of peace, **when the word of the prophet comes to pass, then that prophet will be known as one whom the LORD has truly sent.**" Jer 28:9

Doctrines and Covenants contains the _____ of the Mormon prophets – 138 in number along with two "declarations." Here, most of Mormon doctrine can be found including the priesthood, baptism for the dead, godhood, and polygamy.

The Pearl of Great Price contains Smith's religious history, Smith's Articles of Faith, the Book of Abraham, and the Book of Moses.

Biblical Response

The Bible is the only source of authority. The Bible, composed of the 39 OT books and the 27 NT books, constitutes God's only written revelation to mankind. It is the inspired, verbal (extending to the very words), plenary (including all of the words), infallible (trustworthy), inerrant in the original manuscripts Word of God. The Bible is the sole authority for faith and practice (Matt 5:18; 22:31-32; Gal 3:16; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Heb 4:12; 2 Pet 1:20-21). In addition, there has been no other written revelation given by God.

The Bible is a historically reliable document. There are three tests applied to determine historical reliability of the Bible.

- 1) Bibliographic Test – examines if the documents we have today are the same as those penned by the authors. This test considers the quantity of existing manuscripts and the time between the earliest copies and the originals.
- 2) Internal (or eyewitness) Test – considers the credibility of the authors and the truthfulness of what was written.
- 3) External Test – considers historical events, geography, archaeology, and cultural consistencies.

The Bible was written over 1500 years by 40 different authors in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) and yet there are no _____

One of the most significant evidences for the divine origin of the Bible is prophecy. There are ~2500 prophecies in the Bible with ~2000 already having been fulfilled. (For examples see various works including those of Josh McDowell.) It is statistically impossible for the Bible's detailed prophecies to have been fulfilled through chance, guessing, or intent.

Concerning written revelation from God after the Bible: the Scriptures themselves explicitly warn against _____ to or taking away from what God has given.

²"You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. Deut 4:2

³²"Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it. Deut 12:32

⁵Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. ⁶Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar. Prov 30:5-6

¹⁸I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; ¹⁹and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. Rev 22:18-19

Nature of God

Essentially, Mormonism is a _____, God-humanizing religion. Mormonism teaches that god the father is a resurrected, "exalted" human being named Elohim who at one time was not a god. Rather, he was once a mortal man on another planet who, through obedience to the precepts of his god, eventually attained exaltation, or godhood, himself. The Mormon god, is located in time and space, has a body of flesh and bone and thus is neither spirit nor omnipresent. Mormonism teaches that god increases in knowledge and, consequently, god does not have absolute and total knowledge. Mormonism also teaches that the god over this world is one in an infinite lineage of gods. In the Mormon universe, god is not responsible for creating or sustaining matter, energy, natural laws, human personhood, moral principles, nor the process of salvation (or exaltation). In fact, instead of the universe being subject to him (which is the biblical view), the Mormon god is subject to the universe.

"This is the way our Heavenly Father became God. Joseph Smith taught: '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...' (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 345-46)." Gospel Principles – Chapter 47 Exaltation

"The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us." D&C 130:22

“Because we are made in his image (see Moses 6:9), we know that God has a body that looks like ours. His eternal spirit is housed in a tangible body of flesh and bones (see D&C 130:22).” Gospel Principles – Chapter 1 Our Father in Heaven.

All that the Bible says about the true God, the Mormon god is _____

Biblical Response

There is one God (Deut. 6:4). He is Creator and Lord of everything that exists (Gen 1-3). He is infinite (1 Kings 8:27; Acts 17:28), transcendent (yet personal), eternal (Gen 21:33; Psa 90:2), unchangeable (James 1:17), omnipresent (Psa 139:7-12), sovereign (Eph 1), omniscient (Matt 11:21), and omnipotent (Rev 19:6). He eternally exists as Triune God: three persons – Father (John 6:27, Eph 4:6), Son (Col 1:16-19; Heb 1:8), Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4) – each equal, having the same attributes, and are equally worthy of adoration, worship, and faith.

1. God is self-existent and eternal (Ex 3:14; Psa 90:2; Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16-17)

²Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. Psa 90:2

³⁶For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things To Him be the glory forever. Amen. Rom 11:36

2. God is immutable or changeless (Psa 102:24-27; Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8; James 1:17)

⁶“For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. Mal 3:6

¹⁷Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. James 1:17

3. God is omniscient (Job 28:20-28, Psa 139:2-4, 17-18; 147:4-5; Jer 17:10; Rom 11:33; 1 John 1:5)

²You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. ³You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. ⁴Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all. Psalm 139:2-4

⁴He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them. ⁵Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite. Psalm 147:4-5

4. God is omnipotent (Gen 1:1, Jer 24:5, 32:27, Psa 139:13-16, Isa 46:8-13; Job 2:10; Matt 19:26)

²⁷“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?” Jer 32:27

⁸Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you transgressors. ⁹Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me,

¹⁰Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;

¹¹Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it. Isa 46:8-13

The Person and Work of Jesus

Mormons believe that Jesus is a god. They also believe that Lucifer, the demons, and all mankind are all spirit brothers and sisters, born in the spirit world as spirit babies to Elohim and his goddess wives.

Mormon leaders have consistently taught that god the father had sexual relations on earth with Mary (his own spirit daughter), to produce the physical body of Jesus. Early Mormon apostles also asserted that Jesus was a _____, and that His wives included Mary and Martha (the sisters of Lazarus) and Mary Magdalene.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, as well as on the cross, Jesus atoned for Adam's sin and guaranteed all humankind resurrection and immortality. Jesus visited the Israelites or Indians of North America after his resurrection and established the _____ church among them.

"Every person who was ever born on earth was our spirit brother or sister in heaven. The first spirit born to our heavenly parents was Jesus Christ (see D&C 93:21), so he is literally our elder brother (see Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 26)." Gospel Principles – Chapter 3 Jesus Christ, Our Chosen Leader And Savior

We needed a Savior to pay for our sins and teach us how to return to our Heavenly Father. Our Father said, "Whom shall I send?" (Abraham 3:27). Two of our brothers offered to help. Our oldest brother, Jesus Christ, who was then called Jehovah, said, "Here am I, send me" (Abraham 3:27)... Satan, who was called Lucifer, also came, saying, "Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor" (Moses 4:1). Gospel Principles – Chapter 2 Our Heavenly Family

Biblical Response

Jesus the Christ is the eternal, _____ second person of the Godhead. He is eternally God. He was eternally one with the Father and incarnated supernaturally (John 1:1-12; Matt 1:18-25). He is the God-man – 100% God and 100% man. All things were created by Him and all the universe is held together by Him (Col 1:16-17).

Christ's deity is shown by

1. the names attributed to Him of God (Heb 1:8), Son of God (Matt 16:16; 26:61-64a), Lord (Matt 22:43-45), and King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16);
2. His attributes of omnipotence (Matt 28:18), omniscience (John 1:48), omnipresence (Matt 18:20), life (John 1:4), truth (John 14:6), and immutability (Heb 13:8);
3. His works of creating (John 1:3), sustaining (Col 1:17), forgiving sin (Luke 7:48), raising the dead (John 5:25), judging (John 5:27) and sending the Holy Spirit (John 15:26).
4. being worshiped by angels (Heb 1:6), men (Matt 14:33), and one day all (Phil 2:10)
5. His equality in the Trinity– with the Father (John 14:23; 10:30) and with the Father and the Spirit (Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14).

Jesus willingly died on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for sin (John 10:15; 3:16; Rom 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Pet 2:24). The resurrection of Jesus confirmed His deity and proved that God had accepted His atoning sacrifice (John 5:26-29; 14:19; Rom 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10). Jesus is the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5) – the only way to the Father (means of salvation) (John 14:6).

The Nature of Man

Mormonism claims that humans _____ as spirit children in heaven, who are later given bodies to live on earth so that they may progress _____ to godhead. Mormonism teaches that preexistent humans made choices as spirit children that determined whether or not they would come to earth. Those who were obedient, received physical bodies. Mormonism teaches that humans can become gods through obedience to Mormon teaching and obeying the Church and the Prophet.

"All men and women are . . . literally the sons and daughters of Deity. . . . Man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal [physical] body" (Joseph F. Smith, "The Origin of Man," Improvement Era, Nov. 1909, pp. 78, 80)

"We began to make choices as spirit children in our Heavenly Father's presence." Gospel Principles – Chapter 4 Freedom to Choose

“When we lived as spirit children with our heavenly parents, our Heavenly Father told us about his plan for us to become more like him.” Gospel Principles – Chapter 5 The Creation

Since we could not progress further in heaven, our Heavenly Father called a Grand Council to present his plan for our progression (see Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 348, 349, 365). We learned that if we followed his plan, we would become _____. We would have a resurrected body; we would have all power in heaven and on earth; we would become heavenly parents and have spirit children just as he does (see D&C 132:19-20). Gospel Principles – Chapter 3 Jesus Christ, Our Chosen Leader And Savior.

“Thus, spirit children of our Heavenly Father began leaving his presence to come to the earth as they had been promised.” Gospel Principles – Chapter 7 The Holy Ghost

“Other important truths that the Lord restored include the following: 2. We existed in premortal life as spirit children of God.” Gospel Principles – Chapter 17 The Church of Jesus Christ Today

Man was also in the _____ with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be” D&C 93:29

Life, intelligence, mind, the 'light of truth' , or whatever name one gives to the center of the personality of man, is an uncreated, eternally existent, indestructible entity...In the first stage, man was an eternally existent being termed an intelligence...The next realm where man dwelt was the spirit world....eternally-existing intelligences were clothed with spirit bodies...numerous sons and daughters were begotten and born of heavenly parents into that eternal family in the spirit world" The Gospel Through the ages, pp.126-127

He revealed that one of the purposes of marriage is to provide mortal bodies for his spirit children. Gospel Principles – Chapter 36 The Family Can be Eternal

It [motherhood] is a sacred calling, a partnership with God in bringing his spirit children into the world. Gospel Principles – Chapter 37 Family Responsibilities

“Heavenly Father has given us the law of eternal marriage so we can become like him. We must live this law to be able to have spirit children.” Gospel Principles – Chapter 38 Eternal Marriage

Biblical Response

God created man in His image and likeness – sinless, with intelligence, self-consciousness, and self-determination (Gen 2:7; 15-25; 1 Cor 11:7; James 3:9). Man was created to glorify God (i.e. to display His character and goodness in our lives and therefore bring Him honor).

⁷Everyone who is called by My name, And **whom I have _____** for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made." Isa 43:7

Man's immaterial part is generated at conception (Psa 51:5; Rom 5:12; Heb 7:10) with the sin nature being transmitted through the father.

The Means of Salvation

Mormon theology teaches that the atonement of Christ was essential to our salvation and eternal life with god, but that it is not _____. Christ's shed blood on the cross provides for universal resurrection of all people, but does not pay for personal sins. According to Mormonism, only Christ's blood "shed" in the Garden of Gethsemane atones for personal sin. Only the most faithful Mormons have godhood or enter the celestial kingdom. In order to obtain this ultimate step, Mormons must exercise faith in the god of Mormonism, its Christ, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; exercise repentance; and be baptized in the LDS Church. Additionally, Mormons must keep the "Word of Wisdom" by abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine; tithe to the church; attend weekly sacrament meetings; support the Mormon prophet; do temple works; and be active in their support of the church. Mormonism also teaches that one must be baptized in water to be saved, and that salvation will also be available in the next world for those "missing-out" in this one. Therefore, Mormons avidly pursue genealogy and practice baptism for the dead.

"One of the most fallacious doctrines originated by Satan and propounded by man is that man is saved alone by the grace of God; that belief in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed for salvation." Miracle of Forgiveness, Spencer W. Kimball, p. 206

A plan of salvation was needed for the people of earth so Jesus offered a plan to the Father and Satan offered a plan to the father but Jesus' plan was accepted. In effect the Devil wanted to be the Savior of all Mankind and to "deny men their agency and to dethrone god." Mormon Doctrine, page 193; Journal of Discourses, vol. 6, page 8

Jesus' sacrifice was not able to _____ us from all our sins, (murder and repeated adultery are exceptions), Journal of Discourses, Vol. 3, p. 247, 1856

Good works are necessary for salvation, Articles of Faith, p. 92

There is no salvation without accepting Joseph Smith as a prophet of God, Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 1, p. 188

"As these sins are the result of individual acts it is just that forgiveness for them should be conditioned on individual compliance with prescribed requirements -- 'obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.'" Articles of Faith p. 79

"This grace is an enabling power that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts" LDS Bible Dictionary, p. 697

"We know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do," 2 Nephi 25:23

Biblical Response

Salvation is the work of God whereby he saves individuals from the penalty, power, and one day the very presence of sin. It is completely by God and not on the basis of human _____ or _____. (John 1:12; Eph 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet 1:18-19). Forgiveness of sins (Col 2:13-14) is a free gift (Eph 2:8-9) that is given to those that repent from their sins (Heb 6:1) and exercise faith (John 3:16) in Jesus as Lord and Savior. No pre-forgiveness work is required (i.e. baptism, good deeds, obeying commandments, going to church, giving money, praying, doing penance, surrendering to an organization, etc.).

Witnessing Strategies for Mormons:

Let's remember some of our general strategies:

1. Sanctify your heart. (1 Pet 3:15)
2. Pray – this is a spiritual battle for the truth. (2 Cor 10:3-5)
3. Be ready with a good understanding of the Scriptures.
4. Do not argue. Do not attack the person. (2 Tim 2:24-26)
5. Make sure you define words.
6. Do not get off on tangents. The important points are the source of authority, the nature of God, the person and work of Jesus, the nature of man, and the means of salvation.
7. Avoid Christian jargon – it has no meaning for the unchurched.
8. Share your testimony and your assurance of eternal life through Christ.

Some Specifics:

1. Approach your Mormon friend with sensitivity. Even if he understands and accepts that Mormonism is a lie, there is intense _____ to remain a Mormon.
2. Mormons use Christian vocabulary (Jesus, gospel, atonement, god), but radically _____ their meanings. Define clearly what you mean.
3. Brigham Young said, "Take up the Bible, compare the religion of the Latter-day Saints with it and see if it will stand the test." Limit your conversations to what the Bible says and compare LDS doctrine to it.
4. Emphasize your security of salvation. For the Mormon there is no absolute security in attaining their ultimate salvation (or godhood) since it is based on works.
5. Warn the Mormon about trusting in feelings (i.e., the burning in the bosom) for a validation of Mormonism's truth claim. Without historical, objective verification, feelings are useless.

World Religions, Cults, and Aberrant Beliefs

Lesson 7 – Jehovah's Witnesses

Review

Remember, the standard evangelical definition of a Christian cult is any group that deviates from Biblical Christianity in fundamental doctrines of the faith: the source of authority, the nature of God including the Trinity, the person and work of Christ, the nature of man, and the means of salvation. In many cases, cults use the same words as true Christians, but radically redefine them.

Our Heart

When studying the cults, we may be tempted to scoff at the seeming ludicrous beliefs. We must remember that the average cultist that we will encounter is not a false teacher, but is deceived by Satan. This is someone that God _____; someone for whom Christ died.

⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior and **His love for mankind** appeared, Titus 3:4

¹⁶"For **God so loved the world**, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16

⁸But **God demonstrates His own love toward us**, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Rom 5:8

⁵and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth **To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood--** Rev 1:5

Paul's example should be ours.

¹I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, ²that **I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.** ³**For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,** Rom 9:1-3

¹**Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.** Rom 10:1

History of the Jehovah's Witnesses

The Jehovah's Witnesses was begun by Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916) in 1872. Russell had great difficulty in dealing with the doctrine of eternal hell fire and in his studies came to deny not only eternal punishment, but also the _____, and the deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit. When Russell was 18, he organized a Bible class in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania focusing on the second coming of Christ and biblical chronology. He published his views in several books and began lecturing in 1878. In 1879 Russell published *The Herald of the Morning* magazine and in 1884 Russell renamed it *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*, and founded Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society. The first edition of The Watchtower magazine was only 6,000 copies each month. From 1886 until his death in 1916, Russell wrote a series of books called *Studies in the Scriptures*. Russell claimed that the Bible could only be understood according to his interpretations. The contents of *Studies in the Scriptures* formed the basis of Jehovah's Witnesses' theology.

After the death of Russell in 1916, a lawyer named Joseph Franklin Rutherford took over the presidency of the Watch Tower Society which was known then as the International Bible Students Association. In 1931 he changed the name of the organization to "The Jehovah's Witnesses."

The Jehovah's Witnesses have several 'book studies' each week. The members are not required to attend, but there is an expectation to participate. It is during these 'book studies' that the Jehovah's Witness is constantly exposed to _____ Christian teachings. The Watchtower Society statistics indicate that 740 house calls are required to recruit each of the nearly 200,000 new members who join every year.

“Jehovah's Witnesses in a Nutshell” from www.carm.org/jw/nutshell.htm

According to Jehovah's Witness' theology, God is a single person, not a Trinity, who does not know all things and is not everywhere. He first created Michael the Archangel through whom He created all "other things," including the universe, the earth, Adam and Eve, etc. This creative work took God 42,000 years. At one point, The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society taught that God ruled the universe from somewhere in the Pleiades star system. They have since modified this to say that the "Pleiades can no longer be considered the center of the universe and it would be unwise for us to try to fix God's throne as being at a particular spot in the universe."¹ Such _____ and even _____ in teaching are frequent in the Watchtower organization and when a doctrine changes, they tell their followers that the light of truth is getting brighter.

After Adam sinned, the paradise which God had created for them, was ruined. So, God instituted a system of redemption which was revealed in the Bible and would ultimately lead to the crucifixion of Jesus the messiah. But, in the meantime, God needed to have a visible, theocratic organization on earth to accurately represent Him. Throughout history, this true organization had a remnant of faithful Jehovah's Witnesses (Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, etc.) but it wasn't until the late 1800's that Charles Taze Russell formerly began what is now known as the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society which is run out of Brooklyn, New York. This organization claims to be the only true channel of God's truth on earth today and that it alone can properly interpret God's word since it is the angel directed, prophet of God on earth.

When it came time for the savior to be born, Michael the Archangel became a _____, in the form of Jesus. Jesus grew and kept all the laws of God and never sinned. Finally, when Jesus died, it was not on a cross, but on a torture stake, where he bore the sins of mankind -- but this did not include Adam's sins. Jesus rose from the dead as a spirit, not physically (his body was dissolved and taken by God) and during his visitations to people on earth, he manifested a temporary physical body for them to see and touch. Thus began the true Christian church of Jehovah's followers.

Throughout history there have been faithful Jehovah's witnesses who have managed to keep The Truth in spite of the "demonic" doctrine of Trinitarianism that has permeated the Christian church in "Christendom." Christendom is filled with pastors who are antichrists, in churches run by Satan, and who support the earthly governments which are all of the devil. In other words, all of Christianity is false and only the Jehovah's Witness "theocratic" organization lead by several men in Brooklyn, New York, is true.

In the late 1800's, a young man of 18 years, by the name of Charles Taze Russell, organized a Bible class in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1879 he sought to popularize his ideas on doctrine so he co-published *The Herald of the Morning* magazine with its founder, N. H. Barbour and by 1884 Russell controlled the publication and renamed it *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*, and founded Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society (now known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society). Russell served as the teacher and guide for the organization which taught that Jesus returned invisibly in 1914 and is now reigning in heaven. When Jesus finally returns physical to earth, which will happen at the time of the Battle of Armageddon, He will set up his earthly 1000 year kingdom. During this 1000 year period, people will be resurrected and have a second chance to receive eternal salvation by following the principles of Jehovah's Organization on earth known as the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. After the millennium, those who reject God and His organization will be annihilated; that is, they will cease to exist. The rest of the Jehovah's Witness who have faithfully followed God's organization on earth will be saved from eternal annihilation and reside forever on Paradise earth. Heaven, however, is a place for a special group of _____ Jehovah's Witnesses - the only ones who are "born again" and who alone are allowed to take communion in their annual communion service. These are the ones who have "immortal life," all other Witnesses have "everlasting life." Those with immortal life do not have resurrected bodies. They have "spirit bodies." Those on Paradise Earth have everlasting life and consists of a resurrected body that must be maintained through eating, rest, etc.

When you study with the Jehovah's Witness, you agree to attend five meetings a week where you are taught from Watchtower literature. You cannot be baptized until you have studied their material for at least six months and have answered numerous questions before a panel of elders. Men are not supposed have long hair or wear beards and women are to dress in modest apparel. They refuse to vote, salute the flag, sing the "Star Spangled Banner, celebrate birthdays or Christmas, won't take blood transfusions, and they can't join the armed forces. A schedule of door-to-door canvassing is required where you distribute the Watchtower literature, acquire donations, and forward all monies to the headquarters in Brooklyn, New York.

If you ever leave the Jehovah's Witness organization, you are considered an apostate and are to be shunned.

1. Watchtower 11/15/53, page. 703.

Prophecy Chronology (from members.aol.com/beyondjw/quikhist.htm)

- The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (the organization run by the Governing Body of the Jehovah's Witnesses) claims that it is the _____ channel of information between God and humanity.
- They base this claim on a complicated, Bible-based chronology devised by the Adventist N. H. Barbour in 1875. The founder of Jehovah's Witnesses, Charles Taze Russell, obtained many of his ideas from Adventists and others who speculated in Bible prophecy. In 1884, Russell founded the Watchtower Society, which became the legal corporation used by the International Bible Students, the early name for Jehovah's Witnesses.
- The chronology stated that Jesus had invisibly returned to earth in 1874 to set up his kingdom, and that in 1914, at the end of the "Gentile Times", Jesus would come to judge the earth and annihilate the wicked.
- When nothing supernatural happened in 1874, the Watchtower Society started transferring all of the doctrines about 1874 to 1914. They explained that Christ's kingdom had been set up invisibly in 1914, and that although secular governments were still in place, their rule was no longer valid. Based on the Society's writings, Jehovah's Witnesses looked forward to momentous events in the year 1918.
- When nothing supernatural happened in 1918, the Watchtower Society looked forward to momentous events in 1925.
- When nothing supernatural happened in 1925, the Watchtower Society lost three quarters of its members.
- Charles Taze Russell had been held to be the "Faithful and Wise Servant" of Matthew 24:45-47, but by 1928 the Society applied that to its leaders. They taught that the scripture was a prophecy, and that in 1918 they had been chosen by Jesus "over all that he hath". Since they believed Jesus was ruling the world invisibly, they claimed for themselves a position as God's channel of communication with mankind.
- The Society checked its predictions and explained that all of the prophecies in Matthew 24 and 25 would take place within a "single generation" (Matthew 24:34), so the time of "the end of the world" (Matthew 24:3) could be delayed as long as 30 or 40 years. In 1929, the Society built a mansion ("Beth Sarim") to house the resurrected prophets, who were expected to arrive soon. The new definition of "generation" promised momentous events during the 1940's.
- When nothing supernatural had happened by 1945, the Society _____ the meaning of "generation" to 80 years (the maximum lifespan of a typical man, as explained in Psalms 90:10). "Beth Sarim" was eventually sold.
- Although 1914 plus 80 equals 1994, in 1966 the Watchtower Society decided that the year 1975 was "significant", because they had calculated that it marked the end of six thousand years since the creation of Adam and Eve. Watchtower publications strongly hinted that "the end" would come in 1975.
- When nothing supernatural happened in 1975, the Watchtower Society lost many members. It explained that the time between Adam's creation and Eve's creation was not known, so the 1975 date was only _____.
- In 1980, the Society suggested that the Witnesses and the publishing staff had been overly enthusiastic about the "possibility" of Armageddon in 1975. This failed to lure back thousands who had left, but regular door-to-door preaching restored the rapid growth the Witnesses had enjoyed since the "significance" of 1975 had been announced.

- When the year 1994 arrived (1914 plus 80 years), nothing supernatural happened. The Society had not ascribed any special significance to 1994, but the "generation" issue was becoming awkward. The ranks of the Society's special members (the 144,000 who were "anointed", based on an interpretation of Revelation) were dying out. The _____ that Jesus had appointed the Watchtower Society special status in 1918 was becoming hard to defend.
- In 1995, the Watchtower Society decided that "generation" did not mean a physical generation (i.e. 80 years) but meant "age", as in "era". This extended the "end times" indefinitely, although when the last of the 144,000 special members die out, the Society will have to be run by regular members.
- A close inspection of Matthew 24:34 in context makes the "age" interpretation hard to understand, since Jesus speaks of the generation "passing away" (which sounds like a physical event). The Watchtower Society states that it alone understands that "generation" means "age" because it has special status, which was granted to it in 1918.
- The Watchtower magazine, published by the Society, has said the end is "soon", in every issue since it was first printed ... in 1879.

Source of Authority

The Jehovah Witnesses view the Bible as the divinely inspired and infallible Word of God. They believe that a "...proper study of the Scriptures must include the entire Bible". They also teach that "Though the Bible is not a science textbook, it is scientifically accurate. ... The Bible contains many prophecies that have been fulfilled in detail."

The Jehovah Witnesses' use the "New World Translation" (NWT) of the Scriptures. They view this translation as the best translation because "the translators held so closely to what is in the original Bible languages".

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society is regarded as Jehovah God's only channel of accurate biblical interpretation in the world today. Jehovah Witnesses believe there is no _____ apart from the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society .

Nature of God

Jehovah Witnesses believe the true god is named Jehovah. One God, properly called Jehovah. He is a spirit-being, invisible and eternal, but has a spiritual body and is not omnipresent. The doctrine of the Trinity is rejected. His Holy Spirit is an impersonal force.

The Person and Work of Jesus

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus is God's only direct creation, that everything else was created by means of Christ, and that the initial unassisted act of creation uniquely identifies Jesus as God's "only-begotten Son". They believe that Jesus is a created being with stages of existence: 1) Archangel Michael or the Word; 2) Jesus, perfect man, became Messiah at his baptism; and 3) after his spiritual resurrection, became _____ again but retains the name Jesus. Jesus served as a redeemer and a ransom sacrifice to pay for the sins of humankind. They believe Jesus died on a single upright torture stake rather than the traditional cross. They believe that references in the Bible to the Archangel Michael, Apollyon, and the Word all refer to Jesus. Jesus is considered to be the only intercessor and high priest between God and humankind, and appointed by God as the king and judge of his kingdom.

The Nature of Man

Jehovah Witnesses believe that the spirit, or life-force, that God gives at our birth departs at death. There is no conscious existence at death. They believe that there is no consciousness after death.

The Means of Salvation

Salvation is obtained from allegiance to Jehovah _____ works (baptism by emersion; active association with the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society; faithfulness in Kingdom Hall work; and righteous conduct).

There is no assurance of salvation, only hope for a resurrection. Those who fail to live up to the requirements for salvation or who are disfellowshipped by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society have no hope of salvation.

Only 144,000 faithful elect Jehovah's Witnesses, known as the "Anointed Class" will reign with Christ in Kingdom of God (heaven). Only those born since 33 AD can be part of that number. Most Jehovah's Witnesses hope to be among "other sheep" or "great crowd" who will not go to _____, but, after Armageddon and the millennium, will live forever in Paradise on earth.

Those who have disobeyed Jehovah and his law will be annihilated out of existence with Satan and his demons. This is the "second death." The doctrine of eternal hell is regarded as unscriptural, unreasonable, contrary to God's love, and unjust.

The path to Jesus as Jehovah with the Jehovah's Witness

1. Ask the Jehovah Witness to show the Scriptures that refer to Jesus as Michael the Archangel.

- 1) "one of the foremost princes" (Dan 10:13, NWT)
- 2) "the prince of [Daniel's] people" (Dan 10:21, NWT)
- 3) "the great prince who is standing in behalf of the sons of [Daniel's] people" (Dan 12:1, NWT)
- 4) "the archangel" who "had a difference with the devil and was disputing about Moses' body" but "did not dare to bring a judgment against him in abusive terms" (Jude 9, NWT)
- 5) a participant in heavenly conflict when "Michael and his angels battled with the dragon" (Rev 12:7, NWT).

Jesus is instead referred to as: "Lord of lords and King of kings" (Rev 17:14, NWT) and unlike Michael did rebuke Satan: "Go away, Satan!" (Matt 4:10, NWT).

Refer to Hebrews 1 to show that Jesus is superior to all angels.

⁵For to which of the angels did He ever say, YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"? And again, "I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME"? ⁶And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM." Heb 1:5-6

Show that angels refuse worship (Rev 22:8-9), but the Father's command is that all the angels worship His Son (Heb 1:6).

Note: The NWT was _____ here in 1970 from "worship" "do obeisance" (to express homage by bowing).

Show Hebrews 1:10-12. The important thing to stick to here is that the "Son" is the one being referred to in the entire context of Heb 1. Then go to Psa 102. The NWT is the best because "Jehovah" is referred to throughout. Then Psa 102:25-27 is quoted in Heb 1:10-12 which talks about the "Son" as being "Jehovah".

2. Start in Rev 1:8 and ask who is the “Alpha and Omega”.

⁸“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” Rev 1:8

Read Rev 1:17-18 and see who calls Himself the “First and Last”.

¹⁷When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, ¹⁸and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Rev 1:17-18

Finally, read Rev 22:13 with verse 16.

¹²“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” ¹⁴Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. ¹⁵Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. ¹⁶“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.” Rev 22:12-16

Witnessing Strategies for Jehovah’s Witnesses:

Let’s remember some of our general strategies:

1. Sanctify your heart. (1 Pet 3:15)
2. Pray – this is a spiritual battle for the truth. (2 Cor 10:3-5)
3. Be ready with a good understanding of the Scriptures.
4. Do not argue. Do not attack the person. (2 Tim 2:24-26)
5. Make sure you define words.
6. Do not get off on tangents. The important points are the source of authority, the nature of God, the person and work of Jesus, the nature of man, and the means of salvation.
7. Avoid Christian jargon – it has no meaning for the unchurched.
8. Share your testimony and your assurance of eternal life through Christ.

Some Specifics:

1. Show the multiple ways in which the Watchtower has _____ over the years (i.e. has lied to its followers).
2. Present evidence of the Watchtower’s false prophecies.
3. Most Witnesses will not accept material from you so you should be able to provide evidence from within the Bible that Jesus is God. Present Biblical material they have not been given pat answers for. (ex Acts 2:26 that shows that Jesus was resurrected physically)
4. Allow the Witness to save face. (Reasoning from the Scriptures... page 406)

World Religions, Cults, and Aberrant Beliefs

Lesson 8 – Seventh Day Adventism

Review

A cult is sometimes difficult to define, as there are many choices of definitions. The non-Christian definition of a cult usually focuses on sociological, psychological, or behavioral factors. According to these factors, a cult is a religious group that seeks to control its members by either a single individual or the organization. The cult is manipulative and demands total commitment and loyalty of the followers.

The standard evangelical definition of a Christian cult is any group that deviates from Biblical Christianity in fundamental doctrines of the faith:

1. the source of authority
2. the nature of God including the Trinity
3. the person and work of Christ
4. the nature of man
5. the means of salvation

In many cases, these groups may use the same words as true Christians, but radically redefine them.

Remember that all false philosophies (religious, psychological, etc.) are Satan's creation. Any distortion of the true gospel is the work of Satan whose aim is to deceive people into thinking that they are doing what is needed to be rewarded heaven upon death. This is salvation by works (doing "good" things and not doing "bad" things).

If one carefully studies the various religions and cults of the world, he will soon discover that, without exception, **they are founded on some form of human effort and works-righteousness.** ... Only grace-centered, biblical Christianity is from God. Every other form of religion is from Satan, inspired by his demon spirits, promoted by his lying human agents (1 Tim 4:1-2), and centered in works righteousness. MacArthur's NT Commentary: Galatians

Our Heart

When studying the cults, we may be tempted to scoff at the seemingly ludicrous beliefs. We must remember that the average cultist that we will encounter is not a false teacher, but is deceived by Satan. This is someone that God loves; someone for whom Christ died.

⁸But **God demonstrates His own love toward us**, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Rom 5:8

⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior and **His love for mankind** appeared, Titus 3:4

¹⁶"For **God so loved the world**, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16

Paul's example should be ours.

¹I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,
²that **I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.** ³**For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,** Rom 9:1-3

¹**Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.** Rom 10:1

History of Seventh Day Adventism

Seventh Day Adventism grew out of the Millerite movement in the USA in the early 1800's. William Miller (1782-1849) converted from deism to Christianity in 1816 and became a Baptist. He studied the Bible in order to reconcile apparent biblical difficulties raised by deists. In his studies, he developed a focus on the imminent return of Jesus. He began preaching at the age of 50.

America's Second Great Awakening (~1790 - 1840) saw an intense interest in the second coming of Jesus. As a result, the Millerites accepted Miller's idea that Jesus would return in the year covering spring 1843 – spring 1844. He had arrived at this date based on a study of Daniel 8:14.

¹⁴He said to me, "For 2,300 evenings *and* mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored."
Dan 8:14

Miller interpreted the 2300 evenings and mornings to be years and counted forward from 457 BC when the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem was given (Dan 9:24-25). When his initial predictions _____, he adjusted his prediction to conclude that Jesus would return on 21 Mar 1844 and then later on 22 Oct 1844. After these too failed, Miller quit promoting his ideas on Jesus' return and the Millerites broke up. Before his death in 1849, Miller said:

"We expected the personal coming of Christ at that time; and now to contend that we were not mistaken is dishonest. We should never be ashamed frankly to confess our errors. I have no confidence in any of the new theories that grew out of the movement."

On the morning following the "Great Disappointment" of 22 Oct 1844, Hiram Edson claimed to have seen a _____. He said that he saw Jesus standing at the altar of heaven and concluded that Miller had been right about the time, but wrong about the place. Jesus' return was not to earth, but a move into the heavenly sanctuary as is referenced in Heb 8:1-2.

⁸Now the main point in what has been said *is this*: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ²a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. Heb 8:1-2

Joseph Bates (1792-1872), a retired sea captain and convert to Millerism, began to promote the idea of Jesus moving into the heavenly sanctuary. He published a pamphlet, which greatly influenced James (1821-1881) and Ellen White (1827-1915). These three were the driving force behind the Seventh Day Adventist church (SDA) movement.

SDA reports state that Ellen White saw visions from an early age including shortly after the Great Disappointment. White claimed to see a vision of a narrow path where an angel was guiding Adventists. Subsequent visions resulted in various interpretations including _____ against Sunday worship.

As of 2005, the SDA had 17 million baptized members worldwide. It is one of the world's fastest-growing organizations, primarily due to increases in Third World membership. It now operates in 209 out of 232 countries/regions recognized by the United Nations.

Teachings of Seventh Day Adventism

The name of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination indicates its two main distinctive characteristics: Sabbath observance on the seventh day (i.e., Saturday) and an expectation that the end of the world is drawing near. Other distinguishing characteristics include adherence to the teachings of Ellen White (who is regarded as a prophet) and various dietary observances rooted in Jewish law.

The SDA considers itself a branch of Protestant Christianity, though differences in doctrine and practice have led some mainstream Christians to dispute that designation.

...it is perfectly possible to be a Seventh-day Adventist and be a true follower of Jesus Christ despite heterodox concepts... Walter Martin in Kingdom of the Cults

In our evaluation of SDA today, let us see if we can agree with Walter Martin.

Source of authority

The SDA believes that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant word of God.

However, the official church position of the SDA is that Ellen White performed the work of a true _____ during the seventy years of her public ministry.

18. The Gift of Prophecy

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

White herself claimed:

When I send you a testimony of warning and reproof, many of you declare it to be merely the opinion of Sister White. You have thereby insulted the _____ (Testimonies 4:661).

The SDA's "Questions on Doctrine" states:

While Adventists hold the writings of Ellen G. White in highest esteem, yet these are not the source of our expositions. We base our teachings on the Scriptures, the only foundation of all true Christian doctrine. However, it is our belief that the Holy Spirit opened to her mind important events and called her to give certain instructions for these last days. And inasmuch as these instructions, in our understanding, are in harmony with the Word of God, which Word alone is able to make us wise unto salvation, we as a denomination accept them as inspired counsels from the Lord. But we have never equated them with Scripture as some falsely charge. Mrs. White herself stated explicitly the relation of her writings to the Bible:

Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light.—*The Review and Herald*, Jan. 20, 1903. "The Lord designs to warn you, to reprove, to counsel, through the testimonies given, and to impress your minds with the importance of the truth of His word."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 665.

From sdanet.org/atissue/books/qod/q09.htm

In 1980, Walter Rea, a SDA minister announced research showing that Ellen White plagiarized nearly 90% of her writings. Because of this, some modern SDA leaders tend to water down the SDA's official stance of viewing White as a prophet.

The Nature of God Including the Trinity

The early writings of Ellen White are ambiguous regarding the Trinity, but current official SDA teaching agrees with historical, Biblical Christianity on the nature of God, including the doctrine of the Trinity.

The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

While many SDA teachings on Christ are orthodox, some are not. The SDA believes that Jesus is God and has always existed with the Father, His sacrifice was vicarious, He rose from the dead physically in his glorified body, and He ascended bodily into heaven.

Michael the archangel

Ellen White taught that the angel Michael was pre-incarnate appearances of Jesus. The SDA is quick to point out that they do not believe Jesus is any kind of an angel. Since Michael is called an "Archangel", they interpret this to mean that Jesus is "_____ over the angels," while still being God.

However, Daniel 10:13 says that Michael is "ONE OF the chief princes." Is Jesus "one of the chief princes?" Furthermore, Michael dared not to rebuke Satan (Jude 9). Jesus, on the other hand, repeatedly rebuked Satan (Matt 17:18, Mark 9:25, etc.). Jesus is clearly not Michael.

Christ's Nature

Ellen White taught that: "Christ took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature ... Christ took human nature and bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race. He took our nature and its deteriorating condition" (Q.D., pp. 654-656). According to SDA, then, Christ acquired a _____ nature.

However, Jesus Christ is unblemished deity and perfect (sinless) humanity united in one Person forever (cf. John 1:14; Phil 2:7-8; 1 Tim 3:6). Jesus did not have a sin nature. If he had, there would have been no perfect sacrifice.

The Nature of Man

The SDA mostly agrees with historical, Biblical Christianity on the nature of man. They teach that the universe was created in six literal days, people are created in God's image and likeness, people fell into sin by their own choice, and now share a fallen nature and its consequences. However, the SDA believes in soul sleep and denies the immortality of the soul.

The SDA teaches that people who have died are in an unconscious, _____, state. Believers are awaiting the appearance of Christ when they will be resurrected and caught up to meet the Lord. The unrighteous wicked will be resurrected and judged after the millennium.

The SDA teaches that, after Christ's thousand-year rule, a second resurrection of those not saved will occur. Those whose names are not found in the "book of life" (unsaved) will be cast into the lake of fire and annihilated out of existence. They deny the doctrine of eternal hell.

The Means of Salvation

The Remnant Church

The SDA Church teaches that Christianity in its original form was corrupted in the centuries after the New Testament era by apostate Roman Catholic popes. The sign of this apostasy was the shifting of the Sabbath day from the seventh to the first day of the week. Throughout history, a small, faithful group of Christians has maintained true worship. The SDA believes that it is the "_____ " church.

However, the Bible teaches that the church is the total group of individuals who place their faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. When born again, these individuals are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body (1 Cor 12:12-13; Gal 3:26-28). No single organization can claim exclusive title as the true or remnant church. The church includes all the redeemed of all ages (Matt 16:15-19; Ro. 12:4-5; 1 Co. 12:14; Eph 1:22-23; 3:21; 4:4-13).

The Investigative Judgment

According to SDA theology, beginning on 22 Oct 1844, Christ entered upon the "judgment phase" of His ministry, whereby He blots out sin.

"When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the sins of His people from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration, He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the judgment, must bear the final penalty." The Great Controversy p422

Seventh-day Adventists teach the following regarding the Investigative Judgment:

1. Christ moved from the Holy Place to the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary on 22 Oct 1844, and began a new phase of ministry. This ministry was foreshadowed by the Levitical Day of Atonement (Lev 16:16-33).
2. The first phase of the "Day of Atonement" is called the "cleansing of the Sanctuary". It involves a pre-Advent investigation and judging of God's people to determine whose sins will be removed from the Sanctuary. Christ started this judgment in 1844 with Adam and Eve and began progressing through the ages, judging all of the dead believers. At some point, near the end of time, Christ will begin judging the living believers. During this Investigative Judgment God either blots out the sins of the believer, or he removes the name of the believer from the Book of Life.

3. Whenever one of God's followers commits a sin and asks forgiveness from God, that sin is transferred into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly Sanctuary. It remains there, in the Sanctuary, until the Investigative Judgment is completed. At the end of time, all the sins of the righteous are transferred from the sanctuary onto the _____, who is Satan. Satan then suffers the final punishment for his sins and all the sins of the righteous.

This lack of clear distinction between the forgiveness of sins and the blotting out of sins, makes it impossible for anyone to know, even in the hour of his death, whether he is saved or not. Moreover, the concept that the sins of all men are to be laid on Satan, assigns to Satan an indispensable role in the blotting out of sin, thus nullifying the all-sufficiency of the finished work of Christ.

According to Ellen White, one must believe this doctrine to be _____.

“Those who would share the benefits of the Savior’s mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God... The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position [in the Holy of Holies] and work [investigative judgment] of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs for them to fill. Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. Each has a case pending at the bar of God ... All who have received the light on these subjects are to bear testimony of the great truths which God has committed to them. The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ’s work in behalf of men ... It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects ... The intercession of Christ in man’s behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon a cross. By His death He began that work which after his resurrection He ascended to complete in Heaven” The Great Controversy pp488-489

Keeping the Old Testament Law – The Sabbath

According to the SDA, anyone who is a supposed believer is to be under strict adherence to OT law, including the Ten Commandments. The SDA publicly states its belief that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. However, SDA teaching often implies that certain outward acts of righteousness are necessary to _____ one’s assurance of salvation, especially observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. SDA members also are expected to observe strict dietary regulations and to abstain from alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.

Ellen White taught clearly that Sabbath observance was a criterion for salvation.

"In the last days, the Sabbath test will be made plain. When this time comes, anyone who does not keep the Sabbath will receive the mark of the beast and will be kept from heaven" The Great Controversy P449

"... [T]he divine institution of the Sabbath is to be restored ... The delivering of this message will precipitate a conflict that will involve the whole world. The central issue will be obedience to God's law and the observance of the Sabbath. ... Those who reject it will eventually receive the mark of the beast" The Great Controversy pp262-263

"I saw that the Holy Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers" Early Writings p33

"Sabbath ... observance was of sufficient importance to draw a line between the people of God and unbelievers" Early Writings p85

The quoted statements above are clear. According to the SDA, Sabbath observance, not trust in Christ alone for complete forgiveness of sins and eternal life, is to be the dividing line between the saved and the lost in the end time.

Concerning the Christian's relationship to the Law of Moses:

Christians are not under the Mosaic Law because Christ is the ____ of the Law to everyone who believes.

⁴For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Rom 10:4

Christians are not under the Mosaic Law because they have died to the Law.

⁶But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter. Rom 7:6

Christians are not under the Mosaic Law because of the New _____

⁴Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. ⁵Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, ⁶who also made us adequate *as* servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 2 Cor 3:4-6

Christians are not under the Mosaic Law because of the change in the priesthood.

¹²For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of Law also. Heb 7:12

Christians are not under the Mosaic Law because Paul taught that he was not under the Law.

²⁰To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; 1 Cor 9:20

Based on the doctrines of the remnant church, investigative judgment, and the additions to salvation by keeping the Law; SDA must be considered a cult.

Witnessing Strategies

Let's remember some of our general strategies:

1. Sanctify your heart. (1 Pet 3:15)
2. Pray – this is a spiritual battle for the truth. (2 Cor 10:3-5)
3. Be ready with a good understanding of the Scriptures.
4. Do not argue. Do not attack the person. (2 Tim 2:24-26)
5. Make sure you define words.
6. Do not get off on tangents. The important points are the source of authority, the nature of God, the person and work of Jesus, the nature of man, and the means of salvation.
7. Avoid Christian jargon – it has no meaning for the unchurched.
8. Share your testimony and your assurance of eternal life through Christ.

Some specifics:

1. Establish the sole authority of the Bible.
2. Determine what relationship the Adventist has with Jesus Christ.

World Religions, Cults, and Aberrant Beliefs

Lesson 9 – Christian Science and Scientology

The Church of Christ, Scientist (Also known as The Christian Science Church)

History

Christian Science was begun in 1897 by Mary Baker Eddy in Boston, Massachusetts. She was born Mary Baker in New Hampshire in 1821 to a Congregationalist church member. In her youth, she was from various ailments and was frequently ill. At age 22, she was married, but her husband died soon after from yellow fever leaving her poor and with an infant son whom she gave up to foster care. In 1853, she married again in an attempt to regain custody of her son. In 1862 (~41 years old) she suffered from an illness and visited a mind science healer named Phineas Quimby. Quimby taught that the mind had the power to heal the body and had a significant influence on her thinking regarding spiritual matters.

In 1866, she was seriously injured in a fall and was not expected to recover. She supposedly read Matthew 9:2, pronounced _____ healed, and experienced a miraculous healing.

²And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven." Matt 9:2

She claimed to have discovered the secret to health. It was this experience that convinced her of the "truth" of Christian Science. In 1873, she divorced her second husband. In 1875, when she was 54, she founded the Christian Science Association and published *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (S&H). Here she set forth her teachings on health and philosophy. She claimed it was the final revelation of God to mankind and asserted that her work was inspired of God. The word "Key" in the title of her book is in reference her book being the "key" to unlocking the Bible which she claimed had many _____. She placed her own writings on par with Scripture.

In 1877, she remarried again to Asa Albert Eddy and in 1879 founded The First Church of Christ, Scientist, of Boston claiming to be the restoration of the original New Testament church. In 1881 she opened a healing college and charged \$300 for 12 healing lessons. In 1908, Baker Eddy founded *The Christian Science Monitor*, an international newspaper, whose employees have won 6 Pulitzer prizes. Mary Baker Eddy died a millionaire in 1910. Authority for the Church of Christ, Scientist now rests with its board of Directors.

Christian Science membership has been dwindling for decades. The number of practitioners and teachers has dropped from ~5000 in 1971 to ~1200 in 2005. The number of Christian Science churches has dropped from ~1800 in 1971 to ~1000 in 2005.

Of all the biblically based cults in America today, Christian Science is one of the most interesting. Not only does it deny the essential doctrines of Christianity, but it has completely _____ the Bible. It drastically redefines the Bible's culture and terminology and rips thousands of scriptures out of their historical and biblical contexts. The result is a non-Christian mixture of metaphysical and philosophical thoughts. Christian Science is so foreign to the Bible that, if it didn't use words like Jesus, Trinity, Love, Grace, Sin, etc., you'd never suspect it had anything to do with the Bible at all. Additionally, the book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, which is the Christian Scientist's mainstay of spiritual knowledge, reads with a rhythm of pseudo-logical statements that has the tendency to dull the senses when read long enough. Is Christian Science Christian? Definitely not. *Is Christian Science Christian?* www.carm.org/christian_science/cult.htm

The Source of Authority

Mary Baker Eddy maintained that “as adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life” (S&H p497). However, Eddy questioned the textual reliability of the Bible saying, “the manifest mistakes in the ancient versions ... these facts show how a mortal and material sense stole into the divine record, with its own hue darkening to some extent the inspired pages” (S&H p139). In addition, Christian Scientists interpret the Bible in a radical way according to their metaphysical presuppositions – eliminating any semblance of historical Christianity. Eddy ascribes arbitrary spiritual _____ to biblical terms. For example “Jerusalem” is defined as “Mortal belief and knowledge obtained from the five corporeal senses” (S&H p589). “Holy Ghost” is defined as “Divine Science; the development of eternal Life, Truth, and Love” (S&H p588).

Concerning S&H she stated, “I should blush to write of Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures as I have, were it of human origin and I apart from God its author, but as I was only a scribe echoing the harmonies of Heaven in divine metaphysics, I cannot be super-modest of the Christian Science Textbook” (Christian Science Journal, Jan. 1901).

The Nature of God

Mary Baker Eddy taught that “God is incorporeal, divine, supreme, infinite Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love” (S&H p465). These are synonymous terms that “refer to one absolute God. They are also intended to express the nature, essence, and wholeness of Deity. The attributes of God are justice, mercy, wisdom, goodness, and so on” (S&H p465). To the Christian Scientist, God (the Father-Mother) is a Principle known as the Divine _____. It has no personhood and no personality. A catch phrase used in their literature is that God is “All in All.” In other words, God is all that exists and what we perceive as matter is an interpretation of divine mind. Since God is love, it means that sin and sickness are only errors of interpreting the Divine Mind and have no true reality. Since God’s essential essence is spirit or mind, and only that which reflects His nature is real, then matter does not really exist. “Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal” (S&H p468).

Concerning the Trinity Eddy taught that the Trinity was “life, truth, and love”. She wrote that, “The theory of three persons in one God (that is, a personal Trinity or Tri-unity) suggests polytheism, rather than the one ever-present I AM” (S&H p256).

The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

To the Christian Scientist, Jesus is a Way-shower. He is someone who epitomized the true principle of the Christ Consciousness which indwells ____all. Therefore, Jesus did not really die on the cross. He was not God in flesh. He made no atonement in shedding His blood (S&H 25:6). There is an essential difference between Jesus the man and the “Christ Principle” which came upon Him as He comprehended it. Concerning Jesus Christ, Eddy wrote:

“The word *Christ* is not properly a synonym for Jesus, though it is commonly so used” (S&H p333).

“...and recognize that Jesus Christ is not God, as Jesus himself declared, but is the Son of God” (S&H p361).

“One sacrifice, however great, is insufficient to pay the debt of sin. The atonement requires constant self-immolation on the sinner’s part. That God’s wrath should be vented upon His beloved Son, is divinely unnatural. Such a theory is man-made” (S&H p23).

“The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon ‘the accursed tree,’ than when it was flowing in his veins as he went daily about his Father’s business” (S&H 25).

“We acknowledge Jesus’ atonement as the evidence of divine, efficacious Love, unfolding man’s unity with God through Christ Jesus the Way-shower” (S&H p497).

The Nature of Man

In Christian Science, matter does not exist. The _____ is not real. It is an illusion of the "mortal mind" of man. Man originally existed with God and is an expression of the Divine Principle (of God).

"An error of physical belief; a supposition that life, substance, and intelligence are in matter; an illusion." (S&H p335)

"Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual" (S&H p468).

Since only those ideas that reflect God's nature actually are real, then sin, death, disease, and pain are not real, but only illusions. To the Christian Scientist, there is no sin.

"The only reality of sin, sickness, or death is the awful fact that unrealities seem real to human, erring belief. . . . They are not true, because they are not of God" (S&H p472).

"The cause of all so-called disease is mental, a mortal fear, a mistaken belief or conviction of the necessity and power of ill-health" (S&H p377).

"There is no sin." (S&H p447) and "The soul is sinless." (S&H p288) and "Man is incapable of sin, sickness and death." (S&H p475)

"Evil has no reality" (S&H p71)

"We shall learn that sin and mortality are without actual origin or rightful existence." (S&H p281)

Since God and man are immortal spirit or mind, death is also only an illusion. It is a transition from the illusion of the material to ultimate reality of immortal spirit.

"So, when our friends pass from our sight and we lament, that lamentation is needless and causeless" (S&H p386).

The Means of Salvation

Since sin does not exist, then _____ has no purpose and also does not exist.

"Final deliverance from error...is not reached through paths of flowers, not by pinning one's faith without works to another's vicarious effort." (S&H p22)

To achieve "salvation," the Christian Scientist needs only to find the true reality of understanding, as revealed in Christian Science teachings. Since sin and death are false beliefs (illusions), salvation involves overcoming the false idea that they exist with a realization of our divine spirit and mind.

"We acknowledge that the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection served to uplift faith to understand eternal Life, even the allness of Soul, Spirit, and the nothingness of matter" (S&H p497).

Witnessing Strategies for Christian Scientists

Let's remember some of our general strategies:

1. Sanctify your heart. (1 Pet 3:15)
2. Pray – this is a spiritual battle for the truth. (2 Cor 10:3-5)
3. Be ready with a good understanding of the Scriptures.
4. Do not argue. Do not attack the person. (2 Tim 2:24-26)
5. **Make sure you define words.**
6. Do not get off on tangents. The important points are the source of authority, the nature of God, the person and work of Jesus, the nature of man, and the means of salvation.
7. Avoid Christian jargon – it has no meaning for the unchurched.
8. Share your testimony and your assurance of eternal life through Christ.

Some specifics:

1. Establish the unique authority of the Bible.
2. Show the Christian Scientist that the only for them to be consistent is to stop clothing or feeding the body since the body itself is only an _____.

Scientology

History

Scientology was founded in 1954 by science fiction author Lafayette Ronald Hubbard. Hubbard was born in Nebraska in 1911. He is the youngest Boy Scout Eagle Scout in history, earning the rank at age 13. In his late teens he traveled all over Asia and was influenced by the eastern religions of Buddhism and Hinduism. He was also influenced by a student of Freud. In his 1950 book *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* he formulated his novel psychological theories.

The Church of Scientology is a controversial new religion developed by L. Ron Hubbard as an extension of his earlier psychological theories of Dianetics. Drawing on ideas from Buddhist and Hindu religious philosophy, science fiction, and Western concepts in psychology and science, L. Ron Hubbard produced a religion ...

Although the church claims its beliefs are not incompatible with Christian faith, an evaluation of what Scientology teaches in the areas of God, man, the creation, salvation, and death proves this is not so. Scientology is a powerful new religion whose teachings are _____ with the beliefs of orthodox Christian faith. SCIENTOLOGY: From Science Fiction to Space-Age Religion by John Weldon at www.equip.org

Many do not use "religion" when describing Scientology, but instead it is a business. Hubbard is quoted as saying:

"Writing for a penny a word is ridiculous. If a man really wants to make a million dollars, the best way would be to start his own religion" Reader's Digest

Scientology is also a strict religion, and very punitive against those who would try to leave behind its teachings and membership. It also takes to court many to conceal its secrets and to keep people from digging too deep into it. Scientology is a religion for those with _____. It is extremely expensive since every aspect of Scientology has some sort of fee associated with it. Scientology has created a special church that caters to artists, politicians, leaders of industry, sports figures, etc. Among its adherents are many celebrities including: John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, Lisa Marie Presley, Jason Lee (star of *My Name is Earl*), Tom Cruise, and Katie Holmes.

Commonly Used Scientology Terms (from www.4truth.net)

Analytical mind: The conscious, rational, and problem solving part of one's mind.

Auditing: Scientology's personal counseling using dianetic techniques and utilizing an E-meter for reading engrams.

Auditor: Counselor who conducts auditing session.

Clear: State of person who has completed auditing. Person is supposedly liberated from all engrams and their ill effects on the mind and body.

Dianetics: Method developed by L. Ron Hubbard for removing engrams and their negative effects from the mind.

E-Meter (Electropsychometer): Instrument invented by L. Ron Hubbard for utilization in auditing process.

Engram: Unconscious, prenatal impressions accumulated by the soul (or thetan) during _____; a mental image recorded in the reactive mind that has negative effects on a person's life.

MEST: Acronym coined from the initial letters of matter, energy, space, and time which compose the physical universe and hold the thetan captive.

Preclear: A person undergoing Dianetics auditing progressing toward Clear.

Reactive mind: The part of the mind not under a person's rational, conscious control or awareness.

Thetan: The immortal human soul or spiritual being. It is the true, timeless identity of the individual.

All Scripture are from the NASB '95 Update unless noted.

The Basis for Scientology

This story is the basis for the business/religion of Scientology.

75 million years ago, the galactic overlord for this sector of the galaxy was called Xenu. He was in charge of 76 planets, including Earth (at that time known as Teegeeeack). All of the planets Xenu controlled were over-populated by, on average, 178 billion people. Social problems dictated that Xenu rid his sector of the galaxy of this overpopulation problem, so he developed a plan.

Xenu sent out tax audit demands to all these trillions of people. As each one entered the audit centers for the income tax inspections, the people were seized, held down and injected with a mixture of alcohol and glycol, and i _____. Then, all 13.5 trillion of these frozen people were put into spaceships that looked exactly like DC8 airplanes, except that the spaceships had rocket engines instead of propellers. Xenu's entire fleet of DC8-like spaceships then flew to planet Earth, where the frozen people were dumped in and around volcanoes in the Canary Islands and the Hawaiian Islands. When Xenu's Air Force had finished dumping the bodies into the volcanoes, hydrogen bombs were dropped into the volcanoes and the frozen space aliens were vaporized.

However, Xenu's plan involved setting up electronic traps in Teegeeeack's atmosphere which were designed to trap the souls or spirits of the dead space aliens. When the 13.5 trillion spirits were being blown around on the nuclear winds, the electronic traps worked like a charm and captured all the souls in the electronic, sticky fly-paper like traps.

The spirits of the aliens were then taken to huge multiplex _____ that Xenu had previously instructed his forces to build on Teegeeeack. In these movie theaters the spirits had to spend many days watching special 3-D movies, the purpose of which was twofold: 1) to implant into these spirits a false reality, i.e. the reality that WOGS (Hubbard's term for anyone not a Scientologists) know on Earth today; and, 2) to control these spirits for all eternity so that they could never cause trouble for Xenu in this sector of the Galaxy. During these films, many false pictures and stories were implanted into these spirits, which resulted in the spirits believing in all the things that control mankind on Earth today, including religion. The concept of religion, including God, Christ, Mohammed, Moses etc., were all an implanted false reality that to this very minute are used to control WOGS on Earth.

When the films ended and the souls left the cinema, they started to stick together in clusters of a few thousand and remained that way until mankind began to inhabit the Earth. Today on Earth all the spirits of these aliens have _____ themselves to our bodies and are the root cause of the false reality that all but Scientology's "Homo Novis" or OT 8's on earth experience. It is the job of all Scientologists to remove this false reality from the world by auditing each and every space alien spirit and human on earth and the entire universe to clear.

The loyal officers of the Marcab Confederation finally discovered how evil Xenu was and overthrew him. He is now locked away in a mountain on one of the planets and kept in by a force-field powered by an eternal battery. From cs.cmu.edu/~dst/OTIII/minton-essay.txt

The Source of Authority

For the Scientologist, the sources of authority are the writings and speeches of L. Ron Hubbard. Of special importance is his book *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*. Scientology continued on after Hubbard's death and now is publishing new materials and producing educational/promotional material.

The Nature of God

The Church of Scientology International has no clear _____ of the nature or person of God. References to a Supreme Being are rare in Scientology literature. The Supreme Being is defined in vague, pantheistic terms as embracing the "allness of all." All that exists is a manifestation of the universal spirit, which is all that actually exists.

The Person and work of Jesus Christ

Scientology denies the deity of Christ. He is assigned the characteristics of some sort of lesser god who has obtained a sort of legendary status over the years.

The Nature of Man

People are _____, divine beings. They are composed of three dimensions: soul (thetan), mind (an accumulation of all past experiences in this and past lives), and body (the physical component). Engrams are stored in one's "reactive mind" and learned from one's past lives, prenatal experience, and early childhood. These prevent individuals from realizing their innate divinity and experiencing a happy and fulfilled life using their analytical minds. Scientology believes in the inherent goodness of man and that it is despicable and utterly beneath contempt to tell a man he must repent, that he is evil.

The Means of Salvation

Scientology believes in reincarnation and that personal salvation in one's lifetime is _____ from the cycle of birth and death associated with reincarnation. They believe that religious practice of all faiths is the universal way to wisdom, understanding, and salvation. Engrams are removed from the mind only by an expensive process of dianetic counseling. This process, called "auditing," involves the utilization of an "E-meter" that supposedly indicates when a person has discovered an engram and helps the client expunge it from his or her unconscious reactive mind in order to achieve "Clear." The path to salvation, or enlightenment, includes achieving states of increasingly greater mental awareness--Pre-Clear, Clear, and ultimately Operating Thetan. An Operating Thetan is a spirit who can control matter, energy, space, time, thought, and life. A person who has attained Clear may need further auditing to remove engrams held over from previous lives. A person will experience many thetan reincarnations in many lives over thousands of years. (Thus, auditing often must include clearing the client of engrams from past lives.) Eventually, the thetan can liberate itself completely from matter, energy, space, & time (MEST) and attain total spiritual awareness and become one with infinity.

Why is Scientology Attractive

It gives a sense of self-empowerment; you can become one with the universe by clearing your mind of bad thoughts; sin is not an issue; there is a methodology (works) that allows you to obtain spiritual awareness; and there is no God that you are accountable to.

Witnessing Strategies for Scientologists

Some specifics:

1. Establish the unique authority of the Bible.
2. Show the uniqueness of Jesus.
3. Do not bring up the strange stuff – lower-level members do not know about it.
4. Do not deny Scientology is a _____ – they will likely tune you out.
5. Don't smear Hubbard's character – they will defend his character and consider you part of a "conspiracy"
6. Ask about some internal Scientology inconsistencies (e.g. higher-level people getting sick/cancer/dying)

World Religions, Cults, and Aberrant Beliefs

Lesson 10 – Oneness Pentecostalism

History

Pentecostalism refers to a movement or denomination that places special emphasis on a personal experience of God through the baptism with the Holy Spirit. “Pentecostal” is derived from Pentecost, which is the coming of the Spirit at the beginning of the Church (Acts 2). Pentecostals tend to see their movement as reflecting the same kind of spiritual power and teachings that were found in the Apostolic Age of the early church. For this reason, some Pentecostals also use the term “Apostolic” or “full gospel” to describe their movement.

The modern Pentecostal movement is generally regarded to have begun in 1901 in a chapel prayer meeting in Topeka, Kansas, led by Charles Parham, a teacher at Bethel Bible College. In 1906, the Pentecostal experience of “speaking in tongues” burst on the scene during a revival in an African-American Baptist church on Azusa Street in LA. Following these beginnings, Pentecostal preachers and churches spread rapidly coalescing into various denominations and factions.

In 1913, one popular teacher, R.E. McAlister of Toronto, Ontario, began teaching that the Trinity doctrine was untrue and that baptism should be done correctly in Jesus’ name only—not in the traditional Trinitarian formula. This theology is called “oneness” which teaches that God is a person who was manifested as Father in creation and as the Father of the Son, in the Son for our redemption, and as the Holy Spirit in our regeneration. It is called modalism.

By 1916, “oneness” views were being expounded by some ministers in the Assemblies of God (AOG) denomination. They were strongly rejected by the denomination’s council that year, and the AOG adopted a strong Trinitarian stance in its statement of faith. More than 160 oneness ministers who were expelled from the AOG quickly formed their own alliances to promote their doctrines. After that time, a number of oneness sects formed, most of which were predominately African-American. The largest oneness movements today are the United Pentecostal Church International (UPCI) and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW). The UPCI was organized in 1945 with the union of two predominately white groups started earlier in the century. The PAW formed in 1918, but split along racial lines in 1924. Today it is predominately African-American. T. D. Jakes is a well-known tele-preacher.

Source of authority

The Oneness Pentecostalism believes that the Bible is the inspired word of God and the ultimate source of authority. However, their specific interpretations are considered correct over other interpretations.

The Nature of God Including the Trinity

Oneness Pentecostal theology affirms that there exists only one God. It affirms the deity of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. However, Oneness theology denies the Trinity and teaches that God is a single person who was “manifested as Father in creation and as the Father of the Son, in the Son for our redemption, and as the Holy Spirit in our regeneration.” Another way of looking at it is that God revealed himself in three separate appearances at points in time: as Father in the OT, as the Son in Jesus during Christ’s ministry on earth, and now as the Holy Spirit after Christ’s ascension.

Biblical Response

There is one God (Deut. 6:4). He is Creator and Lord of everything that exists (Gen 1-3). He is infinite (1 Kings 8:27; Acts 17:28), transcendent (yet personal), eternal (Gen 21:33; Psalms 90:2), unchangeable (James 1:17), omnipresent (Psalms 139:7-12), sovereign (Eph 1), omniscient (Matt 11:21), and omnipotent (Rev 19:6). He eternally exists as Triune God: three persons – Father (John 6:27, Eph 4:6), Son (Col 1:16-19; Heb 1:8), Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4) – each equal; having the same attributes; and equally worthy of adoration, worship, and faith.

The Threeness of God

God exists eternally as ____ : the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The first indication of the plurality of Persons within the Godhead comes in Genesis 1 where God speaks of Himself in a plural sense (Gen 1:26-27 cf. Gen 3:22; 11:7; Isa 6:8). In context, the plural name for God, Elohim, speaks of God's supremacy more than the Trinity. However, the plural opens the door for plurality. In addition, the plural sense in Hebrew is three or more, further implying the Trinity.

The threeness of God is developed in the NT as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all recognized as God. This observation of the deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is foundation to Trinitarianism. Importantly, the threeness of God does not contradict the oneness of God because the threeness is in respect to *persons* and oneness is in respect to *essence*. The term "person" is somewhat inadequate because it connotes some things that are true of God and some things that are not. By using the term "person," Christians do not mean that God has a physical body or that there are three distinct beings. We have only known one person as equaling one being. The concept of three persons in one being is unfamiliar to us.

The Distinction of Persons

In the OT, God the Father is distinguished within the _____ in several ways.

- God is set apart from the Lord (Gen 19:24; Hos 1:7).
- The Lord is set apart from the Redeemer (Isa 59:20).
- The Lord is set apart from the Spirit (Isa 48:16; 59:21; 63:9-10).
- The Lord is set apart from the Angel of the Lord (Gen 16:7-13; Mal 3:1).

In the NT, God the Father is distinguished from the Son in that they relate with each other (Matt 17:5; 27:46). In addition, the Son and the Spirit are distinct from each other (John 16:13-14).

The Relationship of Persons

Jesus Christ is uniquely described as God's "only begotten Son" (John 3:16). He is also described as "the only begotten God" in John 1:18. The Holy Spirit is uniquely described as "proceeding from the Father" in John 15:26. The Father sent the Son (John 5:36-37; 6:44; 1 John 4:14) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 1 Peter 1:12) in Christ's name. Due to the eternality of Jesus Christ, "begotten" must be understood in the sense of generation not creation. From this we can deduce that the Father begat the Son and the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father. The difference between "begat" and "proceed" is a fine point indeed. The more common word "sent" is perhaps the safest place to focus the relationship within the members of the Trinity.

There is clearly an initiating role that God the Father has in the Trinity. The Father sent the Son with authority (Matt 28:20; John 5:26-27, 30) and also sent the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). The Son clearly has the initiating role with the Holy Spirit (John 16:7). John 15:26 and 16:7 say that the Son will send the Holy Spirit.

The relationship within the Trinity never describes the Father in a _____ role and never describes the Holy Spirit in an initiating role. While there is a functional order within the Trinity, this does not lead us to conclude there is a subordinate nature. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal in nature as God. The nature of God's immutability leads us to believe, with historical Christianity, that the ordering of the relationships within the Trinity is eternal.

As there is a functional order within the roles of the Trinity, there is an order of emphasis that the Father, Son and, Holy Spirit serving in relation to creation. For example, in salvation we find the Father in the role of electing (1 Pet 1:2), the Son in the role of redeeming (1 Pet 1:18), and the Holy Spirit in the role of regenerating (Titus 3:5).

Trinity Conclusion

Because God is uniquely three Persons in one Being, there are no analogies that can completely communicate the Trinity. Because the concept of three Persons dwelling in one Divine Being is unfamiliar to mankind, it is difficult to communicate this doctrine. The difficulty of man's understanding does not negate the importance of the Trinity. God is complex and what more important undertaking exists than to focus our attention on God's Being? The practical importance of the doctrine of the Trinity is that it requires us to pay equal attention, and give _____ honor, to all three persons.

The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

Oneness Pentecostals agrees with historical, Biblical Christianity that Jesus was born of a virgin and that He had two natures. However, they deny the doctrine of the Trinity and believe that Jesus is God the Father, Jesus is the Holy Spirit, and the name of God is "Jesus." They also deny the _____ of the Word as the Son and teach that He existed as the Father.

Biblical Response

As with the study of the Trinity, there are multitudes of passages that speak of the Father, Son, and Spirit as separate persons. One particularly convincing passage recounts Jesus' baptism.

¹⁶ After being baptized, **Jesus came up immediately from the water**; and behold, the heavens were opened, and **he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him**, ¹⁷ and behold, **a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."** Matt 3:16-17

Jesus had a pre-incarnate existence. Pre-incarnate simply means existence prior to the incarnation i.e. His existence as the Second Person of the Godhead prior to His incarnation at the virgin birth.

Positively Stated: In His essential being, Jesus Christ never began to be; He existed from eternity as the Second Person of the Triune Godhead.

Negatively Stated: In His essential being, Jesus Christ did not begin to exist when He was conceived in the womb of His mother, Mary.

Practically Stated: The Second Person of the Triune Godhead made a conscious and gracious decision to lay aside the glories and reputation of deity to take upon Himself the nature of man and the form of a servant (Phil 2:5-11).

Christ's preexistence is shown in passages in the NT (John 1:1; 1:14; 3:13; 3:31; 6:33; 6:35; 6:41; 6:62; 8:23; 8:58; 17:5; Heb 1:8; Col 1:17) as well as the OT (Mic 5:2, Isa 9:6). Jesus was active prior to His incarnation primarily as Creator and the Angel of the Lord.

The Nature of Man

Oneness Pentecostals are Arminian in soteriology, therefore, they believe that man _____ weakness from Adam and although is far removed from perfect righteousness is still free to do spiritual good.

Biblical Response

Sin can be defined as anything contrary to the character of God (Rom 3:23) either by commission or omission transgressing God's word (Rom 5:15), lawlessness or rebellion (1 John 3:4), and missing the mark of perfect righteousness (Matt 5:48). Every person has a sin nature. It is the sinful state in which people are born. We inherit the sin nature from Adam (Rom 5:12). The sin nature is the corruption of our whole nature and is that which inclines us to sin. The result of the sin nature is "total depravity" – where the corruption of sin extends to every aspect of our being (Rom. 1:18–3:20) including intellect (2 Cor. 4:4), conscience (1 Tim. 4:2), will (Rom. 1:28), and heart (Eph. 4:18).

The Means of Salvation

Oneness Pentecostals agrees with historical, Biblical Christianity that through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, sins can be forgiven and humanity reconciled with God. However, Oneness Pentecostals add to the saving work of Christ _____ needed for salvation.

Oneness theology also maintains that baptism is a necessary part of salvation; that is, in order to be saved, one must be baptized, by immersion. Not only must baptism be by immersion, it must also be administered with the formula "In Jesus' name" rather than the formula "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit". Finally, this baptism must be administered by a duly ordained minister of a church that maintains oneness theology.

Biblical Response

Baptism is the first step in _____ of the new believer (Acts 8:36-38) and the outward testimony to the world that the believer is identifying himself with Christ in death and resurrection to new life (Rom 6:1-11) and with the Body of Christ (Acts 2:41). Baptism pictures outwardly what the Holy Spirit has accomplished inwardly by placing the believer into union with Jesus Christ (Rom 6:3-4) and into Christ's spiritual body, which is the church (1 Cor 12:13).

³⁶As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" ³⁷[And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."] ³⁸And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. Acts 8:36-38

³Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. Rom 6:3-4

¹³For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Cor 12:13

Oneness churches also teach that speaking in _____ is a necessary manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Since a person cannot be saved without the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9), it follows that only those who have spoken in tongues are really saved. There is, therefore, an emphasis that Oneness church members speak in tongues to "demonstrate" that they are saved and have the truth: no tongues means no salvation. This has placed tremendous socio-psychological pressure on adherents to conjure up the gift of tongues. Those who do not speak in tongues are thought to be lacking in faith or even to be entirely unrepentant.

Biblical Response

All spiritual gifts are distributed sovereignly by the Holy Spirit to those He wills for the equipping and edification of the whole body of Christ (1 Cor 12-14). There is no indication that any spiritual gift is _____ to receive God's gift of salvation by grace or to be filled with His Holy Spirit.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not accompanied by charismatic signs. Unfortunately, in the last century many from the Charismatic churches have misapplied Acts 2 and have taught that the gift of speaking in tongues or some other experiential sign must accompany the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They have deemed that the absence of such signs suggest that one has not truly been baptized by the Spirit. However, the gift of tongues in Acts 2 is a foundational ministry of the Holy Spirit in starting the church and the church age (1 Cor 13:8-12). The giving of speaking and serving gifts were for the edification of the body of Christ, but the sign gifts were given to authenticate the early messengers of Scripture as being from God (Cf. 2 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:2-3).

Oneness groups are decidedly Arminian in the doctrine of salvation. They deny the total depravity of man, the sovereignty of God, man can choose to believe in God on his own free will, God's call in the heart of a sinner can be rejected, and salvation can be _____.

Biblical Response

The Scriptures are clear that every person is totally depraved (Rom 5:12; Rom 1:18-3:20; 2 Cor 4:4; 1 Tim 4:2; Rom 1:28; Eph 4:18). The idea of Total Depravity is not that man displays as much evil as he possibly could, nor that he cannot do any good, or even feign a love for God, but that his entire nature is affected by sin and as such he is totally incapable of moving on his own toward God (Psa 51:5; Rom 3:10-18; Rom 3:23; Gen 6:5; Jer 17:9; Eph 2:1-3; John 3:19-20; John 6:44; John 6:65; John 8:33).

The Scriptures are also clear that God chooses those whom He will save. Unconditional Election is God's unconditioned choice before the foundation of the world of those individuals whom He would save (Matt 22:1-14; Rom 3:10-13; 8:27-30; 9:6-24; 1 Cor 1:18-19; Eph 1:3-11; 2:8-9; 2; Acts 13:48; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10; 1 Pet 1:1-2; 2 Pet 1:10; 2:13;). Since man is dead, blind, held captive, etc., the remedy must come from outside himself. The dead cannot cause themselves to be alive. The Scriptures declare that we have been "made alive" (Eph 2:4-6) and "born again" (1 Pet 1:3) by God (from outside ourselves). God's choice cannot be resisted; and even if it could, the touched heart would not desire to resist.

The Scriptures also teach that a true believer cannot lose their salvation for the Scriptures declare that nothing can separate the believer from Christ (Rom 8:28-39). All true believers once saved are kept by God's power and are always saved (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Cor 1:4-8; Eph 4:30; Heb 7:25; 13:5; 1 Pet 1:5; Jude 24).

Oneness Pentecostals have an _____ view of God, an unbiblical doctrine of Jesus Christ, an unbiblical understanding of man's position before God, and unbiblical requirements for salvation (water baptism in Jesus' name, speaking in tongues, and human effort or works). Oneness Pentecostalism, therefore, must be viewed as a Christian cult.

Witnessing Strategies

Let's remember some of our general strategies:

1. Sanctify your heart. (1 Pet 3:15)
2. Pray – this is a spiritual battle for the truth. (2 Cor 10:3-5)
3. Be ready with a good understanding of the Scriptures.
4. Do not argue. Do not attack the person. (2 Tim 2:24-26)
5. Make sure you define words.
6. Do not get off on tangents. The important points are the source of authority, the nature of God, the person and work of Jesus, the nature of man, and the means of salvation.
7. Avoid Christian jargon – it has no meaning for the unchurched.
8. Share your testimony and your assurance of eternal life through Christ.

World Religions, Cults, and Aberrant Beliefs

Lesson 11 – Freemasonry

History

Freemasonry, or simply Masonry, is the largest _____ fraternity in the world. Masonry's purpose is to unite men in fellowship under the principal themes of the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the immortality of the soul. Masonry exists in various forms all over the world with membership estimated around 5 million including around 2 million in the United States.

There was no single individual who founded Masonry. Masonry appears to have developed from obscure origins to its current form in the late 1500s to early 1600s. The oldest Masonic document dates to ~1390. Masonic legend places its origin to the building of Solomon's temple, building of the pyramids, and even the ancient civilization of Atlantis. The present form of Masonry is known as "speculative" Masonry to distinguish it from the "operative" or "working" Masonry of the medieval stonemasons. Freemasonry has no centralized organizational structure, but is organized by grand lodges, which exercise administrative powers over individual lodges.

In medieval Europe (900-1600 AD), large construction projects, such as castles and cathedrals, were built mainly by "free" itinerant skilled tradesmen. Often they lived together in huts or sheds called "lodges," sharing not only the skills of their crafts but views on philosophy, politics, and religion as well. Because of the prominence of brick and stone construction, masons became the prominent craftsmen. It was in these craft groups that apprentices were mentored by the masters and learned the skills of the trades. They were also taught the spiritual values of integrity, brotherhood, and belief in God. Gradually allegories, symbolism, and rituals developed comparing the building crafts, especially masonry, with the building of personal character and the spiritual life. Initially, Christianity influenced much of the spiritual teaching, but then their theology, symbolism, and rituals liberalized to encompass broader religious ideas, including medieval European occultism. A Biblical Perspective of Freemasonry By Clark Blanchard (www.relationalconcepts.org)

The Organization

For many Masons, Masonry is a religious quest for spiritual _____. Freemasonry uses the metaphors of operative stonemasons' tools and implements, against the allegorical backdrop of the building of King Solomon's Temple, to convey what has been described by both Masons and critics as "*a system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.*"

Generally, the membership requirements are: (from Wikipedia)

- Be a man who comes of his own free will.
- Belief in a Supreme Being. (The form of which is left to open interpretation by the candidate)
- Be at least the minimum age (from 18–25 years old depending on the jurisdiction).
- Be of good morals and of good reputation.
- Be of sound mind and body (Lodges had in the past denied membership to a man because of a physical _____; however, now, if a potential candidate says a disability will not cause problems, it will not be held against him).
- Be free-born (or "born free", i.e. not born a slave or bondsman). As with the previous, this is entirely an historical holdover. Some jurisdictions have removed this requirement.
- Be capable of furnishing character references, as well as one or two references from current Masons, depending on jurisdiction.

Masonic hierarchy in the USA is detailed below. All Masons strive for the 3rd degree or "Master Mason" after which there are additional degrees, which represent a lateral movement in Masonic education. These are degrees of instruction not degrees of rank.

- 1° Entered Apprentice. This degree begins a man's journey into freemasonry and represents _____
- 2° Fellowcraft. This degree symbolizes man in adulthood and represents work
- 3° Master Mason. This degree represents man in old age and relates to wisdom
- 4° Secret Master. In this degree, the dignity of fidelity and integrity is demonstrated.
- 5° Perfect Maser. This degree teaches that unworthy ambitions are corruptive and destructive to the man who forgets his duty to family, country and God
- 6° Intimate Secretary. This degree shows that a man who is trustworthy can survive false accusations
- 7° Provost and Judge. This degree teaches that Truth prevails, and Justice triumphs, tempered with mercy and forgiveness
- 8° Intendant of the Building. This degree symbolizes that the personal goal of title and position can cause strife
- 9° Master Elect of Nine. **This degree teaches that Truth often emerges from the clash of opinions, and to look at life and duty and God through the minds of others who do not share the same religious faith**
- 10° Master Elect of Fifteen. This degree uses the symbolism of Solomon's life and that his pride prevented him from asking for forgiveness
- 11° Sublime Master Elected. This degree emphasizes virtue of good citizenship and that a man should ever be loyal, brave and courageous in the conviction that right will eventually prevail
- 12° Grand Master Architect. This degree teaches that the quality of Mercy through a spirit of compassion and a tenderness of heart will enable one to overlook injuries, or to treat the offender better than they deserve
- 13° Master of the Ninth Arch. This degree portrays the history and legend of Enoch and prepares the candidate for the 14 degree
- 14° Grand Elect Mason. This degree describes the constant endeavor of perfection of character
- 15° Knight of the East or Sword. This degree shows the important lesson by the example of Zerubbabel, of loyalty to conviction, fidelity to duty, and devotion to Truth
- 16° Prince of Jerusalem. This degree is a drama of the rewards found in the lessons of the 15 degree
- 17° Knight of the East and West. This degree teaches that one should learn from, and avoid repeating, the errors of the past
- 18° Knight of the Rose Croix of H.R.D.M.. **In this degree, the principles of _____ are affirmed and grants to each man the right to answer, in his own way, his convictions**
- 19° Grand Pontiff. **This degree proclaims the spiritual unity of all who believe in God and cherish the hope of immortality, no matter what religious leader they follow or what creed they profess.** It is concerned primarily with the perennial conflict between light and darkness, good and evil, God and Satan.
- 20° Master ad Vitam. This degree is a drama of the American spirit confronting the challenge of disloyalty and treason. Masonic principles and leadership are subjected to a crucial test. The degree demonstrates the Masonic condemnation of all who conspire against the security of the nation and the happiness of our people.
- 21° Patriarch Noachite. This degree teaches that Freemasonry is not a shield for evil doing and that justice is one of the chief supports of our fraternity.
- 22° Prince of Libanus. In this degree, the dignity of labor is demonstrated. It is no curse, but a privilege, for man to be allowed to earn his sustenance by work. Idleness, not labor, is disgraceful.
- 23° Chief of the Tabernacle. This degree teaches that those with faith in God and love for their fellow man will make great sacrifices to help others.
- 24° Prince of the Tabernacle. **This degree teaches that a mutual belief in a Supreme Power should bind all men together in a world-wide brotherhood.**
- 25° Knight of the Brazen Serpent. This degree teaches that there are desert stretches in every individual life in the history of every nation, with a resultant breakdown of discipline and loss of faith. This degree is a clarion call to faith-in ourselves, in each other, and in God.
- 26° Prince of Mercy. This degree teaches the quality of mercy; that it is a spirit of compassion and a tenderness of heart which dispose us to overlook injuries and to treat an offender better than he deserves.

27° Commander of the Temple. This degree teaches that Scottish Rite Freemasonry believes in the concept of a free church in a free state, each supreme in its own sphere, neither seeking to dominate the other, but cooperating for the common good.

28° Knight of the Sun. This degree using the symbolism of the tools and implements of architecture teaches that by building high moral character among its adherents, Freemasonry may advance man's determined quest for the achievement of unity and good will throughout the world.

29° Knight of St. Andrew. This degree emphasizes the Masonic teachings of equality and toleration. **We are reminded that no one man, no one Church, no one religion, has a monopoly of truth; that while we must be true and faithful to our own convictions, we must respect the opinions of others.**

30° Grand Elect Knight Kadosh. This degree sets forth the tests and ceremonies that symbolize the experiences we must undergo in the building of excellence in character.

31° Grand Inspector Inquisitor Commander. This degree teaches that we should give every man the benefit of innocence and purity of intentions. He who would judge others must first judge himself.

32° Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret. This degree describes the victory of the spiritual over the human in man and the conquest of appetites and passions by moral sense and reason. The exemplar represents every Freemason eager to serve humanity but caught between self-interest and the call of duty. Duty often requires sacrifice, sometimes the supreme sacrifice.

Remember that we can define a cult in two ways:

1. According to sociological, psychological, or behavior factors.
2. Any group that claims compatibility with Christianity, but deviates from Biblical Christianity in fundamental doctrines of the faith including: the source of authority, the nature of God including the Trinity, the person and work of Jesus Christ, the nature of man, and the means of salvation.

According to our first definition, we could call Freemasonry "cult-like". There are rites and teaching that are to be kept secret through the use of spiritual intimidation (in modern times) and through physical intimidation (historically).

According to our second definition, we could define Freemasonry as a cult because it claims compatibility with Christianity, but deviates from the Biblical teachings above. Among its general members, there is a view that it is simply a fraternal organization and is compatible with whatever one's own religious beliefs may be. However, there is a religious nature to Masonry, which is incompatible with Christianity. As we will see, Masonic teachings are cultish. We must also address: Is it right for a professing Christian to be a member of this organization?

Concerning the religious nature of Masonry, one of Freemasonry's most notable resources says:

"I contend without any sort of hesitation, that Masonry is, ... an eminently religious institution - that is indebted solely to the religious element which it contains for its continued existence, and that without this religious element it would scarcely be worthy of cultivation by the wise and the good. But, that I may be fully understood, it will be well first to agree upon the true definition of religion. There is nothing more illogical than to reason upon undefined terms."

"Look at its ancient landmarks, its sublime ceremonies, its profound symbols and allegories – all inculcating religious doctrine, commanding religious observance, and teaching religious truth, and who can deny that it is eminently a religious institution?" An Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sciences by Albert G. Mackey, M.D., 33°

The Royal Arch degree declares, *"Every Masonic Lodge is a temple of religion and its teaching are instruction in religion."*

The Grand Elect, Perfect and Sublime Mason degree says, *"It is the universal, eternal, immutable religion."*

The Prince Adept degree declares, *"Masonry propagates no creed except its own most simple and sublime one; that universal religion taught by nature and reason."*

The Source of Authority

While the Bible may be freely quoted in some Lodges, for the Mason, the sources of authority are the Masonic _____ the Grand Lodges, and prominent Masonic authorities and writers. The rituals of the Scottish Rite teach that "Masonry is of divine origin." A Mason newsletter has stated that "Masonry is a divinely appointed institution...." In Freemasonry, the Masonic authorities supersede the Bible. For the Christian who is a Mason this is incompatible with the place of authority that the Word of God should have in their life.

Biblical Response

Scripture alone is the authority for the believer. The Scriptures are _____ and constitute the believer's only source of faith and practice (Matt 5:18; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Heb 4:12; 2 Pet 1:20-21). Only Scripture is perfectly adequate for all matters of faith and conduct – for salvation and sanctification. It is all-sufficient in regards to the soul of man, in our relationship to God, and in our relationship to others.

The Nature of God

For the individual Mason, they may believe in any god that they choose. However, the Masonic name for god is the "Great Architect of the Universe" or "G.A.O.T.U.". As the Mason progresses through the degrees he is taught that the most significant secrete in Masonry is god's name and the true name for god is "Jabulon".

"This is probably Jabulum, incorrectly copied; which, as I have shown, meant 'the product of, that which proceeded, issued or emanated from Om.' If correctly written, it is compounded of ... Yu or Yah-u ... Baal or Bal or Bel, and Om, thus combining the names of the Hebrew, Phoenician and Hindu Deities, to indicate that they are in reality the same. In some old rituals it is Jabulum." Albert Pike, *The Book of the Words* p. 151.

This name conveys the Masonic view that all religions have the _____ idea of the deity.

Masonry teaches that god created the universe but is not currently active in either mercy or in judgment. Therefore, he cannot be known personally or by revelation but only generally through reason. Jesus Christ and the Bible, therefore, are not revelations of god.

Biblical Response

The Bible declares that there is only one God (Deut. 6:4). He is Creator and Lord of everything that exists (Gen 1-3). He is infinite (1 Kings 8:27; Acts 17:28), transcendent (yet personal), eternal (Gen 21:33; Psa 90:2), unchangeable (James 1:17), omnipresent (Psa 139:7-12), sovereign (Eph 1), omniscient (Matt 11:21), and omnipotent (Rev 19:6). He eternally exists as Triune God: three persons – Father (John 6:27, Eph 4:6), Son (Col 1:16-19; Heb 1:8), Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4) – each equal, having the same attributes, and are equally worthy of adoration, worship, and faith.

The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

For the Mason, Jesus was a _____ man who understood divine (Masonic) truth. Additionally, the Mason believes that there are many ways to God.

"In his private petitions a man may petition God or Jehovah, Allah or Buddha, Mohammed or Jesus; he may call upon the God of Israel or the First Great Cause. In the Masonic Lodge he hears petition to the Great Architect of the Universe, finding his own deity under that name. A hundred paths may wind upward around a mountain; at the top they meet." Carl H. Claudy, "Introduction to Freemasonry." p. 38

Biblical Response

The Bible declares that Jesus, the Christ, is the eternal, uncreated second person of the Trinity. He was eternally one with the Father and incarnated supernaturally (John 1:1-12; Matt 1:18-25). He is the eternal God-man. In the incarnation Jesus surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence (Phil 2:5-8; Col 1:16-19). Jesus' birth, sinless life, death, and resurrection are literal, historical events. Jesus willingly died on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for sin (John 10:15; 3:16; Rom 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Pet 2:24). The resurrection of Jesus confirmed His deity and proved that God had accepted His atoning sacrifice (John 5:26-29; 14:19; Rom 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10). Jesus is the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5) – the only way to the Father (means of salvation) (John 14:6).

⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; **no one comes to the Father but _____ Me.** John 14:6

The nature of man

According to Masons, humans are flawed, but not depraved. All non-Masons exist in spiritual _____. Humans are able to improve their behavior and character and each individual must be educated to reach this perfection. Freemasonry provides the means by which one can attain salvation. Humans are not in the need of someone to make atonement for their sins. Humans are capable of doing all that is needed for their salvation, through Masonry.

Biblical Response

The Bible declares, God created mankind in His image and likeness – sinless, with intelligence, self-consciousness, and self-determination (Gen 2:7; 15-25; 1 Cor 11:7; James 3:9). By their free will, mankind chose to sin against God and are therefore under the condemnation of physical and spiritual death (eternal separation from their creator) (Gen 3; Rom 3:23; Isa 59:1-2). The corruption of sin extends to every aspect of our being (Rom. 1:18–3:20) including intellect (2 Cor. 4:4), conscience (1 Tim. 4:2), will (Rom. 1:28), and heart (Eph. 4:18). All people are therefore unable to enter into a personal relationship with God on their own initiative (Rom 3:23; 6:23; Eph 2:1-3).

The Means of salvation

Masonry teaches a works salvation which is _____ to the Biblical plan of salvation of grace through faith in Jesus.

"These three degrees (1st, 2nd, 3rd) thus form a perfect and harmonious whole, nor can it be conceived that anything can be suggested more, which the soul of man requires." Daniel Sickles, "Ahimon Rezon or Freemason's Guide." page 196

"If we with suitable true devotion maintain our Masonic profession, our faith will become a beam of light and bring us to those blessed mansions where we shall be eternally happy with God, the Great Architect of the Universe." Daniel Sickles, "Ahimon Rezon or Freemason's Guide." page 79

"...salvation by faith and the vicarious atonement were not taught as now interpreted, by Jesus, nor are these doctrines taught in the esoteric scriptures. They are later and ignorant perversions of the original doctrines." J.D. Buck, "Mystic Masonry." page 57

Biblical Response

The Bible declares, salvation is the work of God whereby he saves individuals from the penalty, power, and one day the very presence of sin. It is completely by God and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Eph 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet 1:18-19). Forgiveness of sins (Col 2:13-14) is a free gift (Eph 2:8-9) that is given to those that repent from their sins (Heb 6:1) and exercise faith (John 3:16) in Jesus as Lord and Savior. No pre-forgiveness work is required (i.e. baptism, good deeds, obeying commandments, going to church, giving money, praying, doing penance, surrendering to an organization, etc.).

Witnessing Strategies for Freemasons

Let's remember some of our general strategies:

1. Sanctify your heart. (1 Pet 3:15)
2. Pray – this is a spiritual battle for the truth. (2 Cor 10:3-5)
3. Be ready with a good understanding of the Scriptures.
4. Do not argue. Do not attack the person. (2 Tim 2:24-26)
5. Make sure you define words.
6. Do not get off on tangents. The important points are the source of authority, the nature of God, the person and work of Jesus, the nature of man, and the means of salvation.
7. Avoid Christian jargon – it has no meaning for the unchurched.
8. Share your testimony and your assurance of eternal life through Christ.

Some specifics:

1. For the non-Believer, share specifics of their own religion.
2. For the Believer, show the incompatibility of Masonry with Christianity.

It is clear that Freemasonry teaches doctrines of _____, God, Jesus, man and salvation that are contrary to what the Bible teaches. If what is taught in Freemasonry is opposed to Christianity, why would a professing believer remain a Mason?

1. Ignorance
2. Immaturity
3. Fear men more than God
4. Not true believer

It is this writer's personal observation that most men who go into Masonry do so out of good human intentions but are unaware of its incompatibility with biblical truth. Its effect on individuals is usually biblical apathy, doctrinal liberalism, and pride. If these men are church members, they will have the same _____ effect on their churches. If they have no church affiliation, Freemasonry will tend to become their entire religion (2 Timothy 2:24-26). Many oppose Freemasonry because it is a secret organization, but its secrecy is a secondary issue. The primary issue is its false teaching that a person can merit God's approval by quality of character and good deeds apart from the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. A Biblical Perspective of Freemasonry By Clark Blanchard (relationalconcepts.org)

World Religions, Cults, and Aberrant Beliefs

Lesson 12 – The Occult

Review

The Scriptures teach that the whole world lies in the power of Satan (1 John 5:19). Therefore, the world's religious philosophies are Satan's doing. Satan's servants are false teachers that disguise themselves as teachers of the truth and doers of righteousness (2 Cor 11:13-15).

In order to understand the occult correctly, we need to have understand correct angelology. Otherwise, we may go beyond what the Scriptures teach about Satan and demons.

Angelology

Angelology is the category of systematic theology that deals with the holy angels, Satan, and fallen angels or demons.

Holy Angels (and Angel Characteristics)

Angels are mentioned some 275 times in 34 books of the Bible (17 in each Testament). In the OT, the word used for “angel” is “*malek*” meaning messenger. Additional OT names for angels include “cherubim”, “saraphim”, “men”, and sometimes “sons of God”. In the NT, the word “angel” comes from the Greek word “*angelos*” also meaning messenger. “Angel” can be used of men or heavenly beings that are charged by God with a commission.

Angels are _____ beings (Heb 1:14) created (Psa 148:2-5; Col 1:16) holy before the creation of the world (Job 38:6-7). The innumerable “myriads” of angels (Heb 12:22, Rev 5:11) were all created simultaneously (Col 1:16) by Jesus. Unlike Adam, there is no indication that angels were created from previously created matter (like Adam from dust in Gen 2:7). Their number does not change since they cannot reproduce (Matt 22:30) and are not subject to death (Luke 20:36). Angels had, and some still have, access to God (Job 1:6, 12; 2:1, 7; Matt 18:10).

Angels have intellect (Matt 28:5; Luke 1:13-16; 1 Pet 1:12; Rev 10:5-6). They know more than man. They have lived much longer than man has and have learned much more than man has. Angels may perceive the intentions of man through observation, but there is no indication in Scripture that they can read the thoughts or hear the silent prayers of man. They know Jesus Christ and God's plan of redemption as it has been revealed to them. Angels know less than God, they are _____ omniscient. Angels show emotion (Job 38:7; Luke 2:13; Luke 15:10), have a will or self-determination (Jude 6), and have great power (2 Pet 2:11).

Angels are NOT omnipresent. They are always somewhere at a given moment (Dan 9:21-23; 10:11-12). Angels are always at some place in time, but they are not limited to the confines of material places. They are not limited in the amount of space they can inhabit (Luke 8:30). They are immaterial and incorporeal (Luke 2:9-15). Angels can move through walls, for example, but they cannot be in two houses at the same time. Angels exist and act in time; they are one-way immortal.

Angels live in heaven (Matt 22:30; Gal 1:8; Isa 6:1-2; Rev 4:6) and the “heavenly places” (Eph 3:8-10; 6:12). Angels have appeared to people in Scripture in different modes such as dreams (Matt 1), visions (2 Kings 6), men (Gen 18; 19), man-like beings (Dan 10; Matt 28), and living creatures (Rev 4:7; Ezek 1).

Angels are a higher order of _____ than man (Heb 2:7; 1 Cor 6:2-3) and have greater wisdom and power (Matt 28:2; Acts 5:19; 2 Pet 2:11) than man, but both are limited (Matt 24:36; Dan 10:13). Angels can impact the natural world and the affairs of men so long as God allows it (Matt 28:2; Acts 12:6-11; Dan 10:10-21). They are great in might and power, but do not use that power to punish other angels – that is God's prerogative (2 Pet 2:10-11; Jude 9).

Angels are organized (Psa 89:5-7; Rev 12:7; Eph 3:10). Apparently, there is only one archangel (Jude 9; 1 Thess 4:16). There are high ranking angels (chief princes) (Dan 10:13), ruling angels (Eph 3:10), cherubim (Gen 3:24; Ex 25:17-22; 1 King 6:23-29; Ezek 1:1-4; 10:15-20; 41:18-20), and seraphim (Isa 6:2-7).

Cherubim (cherub) are angelic or supernatural beings created with powers and beauty beyond the capabilities of the human mind to describe or understand. The mention of cherubim is almost exclusively in the OT (Gen 3:24; Ex 25; 26:1, 31; Num 7:89; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; Ezek 1; 10:4; 18-22), Heb 9:5 being their only mention in the NT. Though they are supernatural beings, cherubim are never referred to as _____ in Scripture because they do not exercise the duties of a messenger in any of their appearances. The purpose of cherubim is to be “proclaimers and protectors of God’s glorious presence, His sovereignty, and His holiness” (Dickason in “Angels”), keeping away anything that is unholy. The presence of cherubim designates the presence of God, as God is enthroned above them (Psa 80:1; 99:1).

Seraphim (seraph) is from the Hebrew meaning, “burning one.” Seraphim are another special class of angels, and as with cherubim, seraphim are also associated with the glory of God (Isa 6:1-7). Some have speculated that their name (burning ones) addresses their consuming devotion to God and not their outward ministry. The distinct ministry of seraphim is to perform a priestly type of service to God. We see them declaring that man must be cleansed of sin’s moral defilement before they can stand in front of God and be of service to Him. Seraphim “praise and proclaim the perfect holiness of God” (Dickason in “Angels”).

Michael meaning, “who is like God?” is an angel called by name in Scripture (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev 12:7-8). _____ meaning “mighty one of God” is another holy angel called by name (Dan 8:16; 9:20-21; Luke 1:19; 26-27). Other angels with names and responsibilities are the “Fire” angel (Rev 14:18), the “Water” angel (Rev 16:5), the “Abyss” angel who binds Satan (Rev 20:1-3), a “star from heaven which had fallen” angel (Rev 9:1), and Apollyon meaning destroyer (Rev 9:11).

Holy angels worship and praise God (Heb 1:6; Rev 4:8; 5:11-12; Psa 148:1-2; Isa 6:3; Luke 2:9-14), render service to believers (Heb 1:14; Matt 4:11), announce and administer God’s judgment (Gen 19:10-14; Rev 14:6-7; 19:17-18; Acts 12:23; Rev 16:1), and influence world affairs (Dan 4:17; 10:21; 12:1).

Satan

Satan is the name given to the leader of the fallen angels (Matt 12:26). The name comes from the Hebrew word “*sātān*” which means “an adversary, one who _____.” It is clear from the Scriptures that Satan exists – it is taught in seven OT books (Gen 3:1; 1 Chron 21:1; Job 1:6-9, 12; 2:1-7; Zech 3:1-2, etc.) and by every NT writer and Jesus (Matt 13:39; Luke 10:18; 11:18). **Since Satan is a created being he does not possess the divine attributes like omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, sovereignty, etc.**

Satan’s pre-fall state was that of perfection – full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, he had a privileged place with God, he is a cherub, he was blameless (Ezek 28:11-15). Then he sinned (Ezek 28:15-18; Isa 14:12-14), unrighteousness was found in him, and was cast from the mountain of God. The time of Satan’s fall is unspecified, but probably came after the creation and before Adam’s fall (Job 38:6-7). His pre-fall name is Lucifer (son of the morning in Isa 14:12), but is thereafter referred to as Satan (Matt 4:10), Devil (Matt 4:1), Evil one (John 17:15), Great red dragon (Rev 12:3, 7), Serpent of old (Rev 12:9), Adversary (1 Pet 5:8), Beelzebul (Lord of the fly in Matt 12:24), Belial (Worthless in 2 Cor 6:15), God of this world (2 Cor 4:4), Ruler of this world (John 12:31), Prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), Enemy (Matt 13:28), Tempter (Matt 4:3), Murderer (John 8:44), Liar (John 8:44), and Accuser (Rev 12:10).

Satan is a murderer and liar (John 8:44) and the accuser (Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5; Zech 3:1; Rev 12:10) and adversary of the brethren (1 Pet 5:8). He attempted to thwart God's plan of redemption through Christ (Matt 4:1-11; Matt 2:16; John 8:44; Matt 16:23; John 13:27), he _____ the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor 4:4) snatching the word from their hearts (Luke 8:12), he tempts believers (Acts 5:3; 1 Cor 7:5) working to defeat them (1 Thess 2:18; Eph 6:11-12; Matt 13:38-39; Rev 2:10), and may masquerade as an angel of light to deceive people (2 Cor 11:14).

Satan was initially judged at his fall where he lost his fellowship with God, was corrupted so he lost the uncorrupted nature he had since his creation, and lost whatever authority over elect angels he might have had before he sinned. Satan was also judged at the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:14-15). The serpent was cursed and God established His plan for Christ to defeat Satan. Satan was also judged at the cross (John 12:31; 16:11; Col 2:14-15), where Christ openly triumphed over the principalities and powers. The result of this judgment is that Satan has lost and Christ is victorious.

Satan will be judged in the Tribulation (Rev 12:7-12) where he will be cast out of heaven with his angels by God's elect angels. Satan will lose all access to the throne of God at this point – he and his angels will be exiled from their natural sphere. Satan will also be judged at the Second Coming (Rev 20:1-3) when he will be cast down to the Abyss for one thousand years, during the Millennial Kingdom reign of Christ on earth. Satan's final judgment (Rev 20:10) will come after when he will be cast into the Lake of Fire, and there he will be tormented day and night for all eternity.

Demons

Demons are evil or fallen angels who followed Satan in his revolt against God (Matt 25:41; Rev 12:3-4) and who are ruled by Satan (Matt 12:24; 25:41; 12:17). The existence of demons is shown in the OT (e.g. Deut 32:17; Psalms 106:37; Lev 17:7; Psalms 96:5) and NT (e.g. Matt 8:31; John 8:48-49; Luke 10:17-20). There are two groups of demons. One group is free and is actively opposing God's plan (Eph 6:11-12). The other group is currently confined (Luke 8:31) – some temporarily (Rev 9:1-15) others permanently (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6). Some are perhaps confined because of the sin of Gen 6:1-4.

Demons are Satan's tool for _____ creation. They extend satanic influence over men (Eph 2:1-2), nations (Dan 10), the world, and the heavenly places (Eph 6:11-12). Demons can cause disease (Luke 13:11; Matt 9:32-33; Matt 12:22; 17:15-18) with God's permission (Job 1:12; 2:6; cf. 2 Cor 12:7-10), influence the mind of unbelievers (2 Cor 4:4) and deceive people (1 Thess 3:5) and nations (Rev 16:14). They tempt believers by enticement through the Satan's world system of deception and wickedness that leaves God out and is opposed to Him (James 1:13-14; 2 Cor 11:3; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor 4:4; John 16:11; 1 John 2:15-17; James 3:15). Satan's aim is to make the values of this godless system seem attractive; appealing to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life to entice us to sin.

Demons can also _____ unbelievers (Matt 4:24; Luke 8:27-29; Mark 9:22). Some of the characteristics of demonic possession include (Mark 5:3-13): great strength (5:3); fits of rage (5:4); split personality (5:6-7); resistance to spiritual things (5:7); yet spiritual insight (5:7); and altered voice (5:9).

Demon possession means a demon residing in a person, exerting direct control and influence over that person, with certain derangement of mind and/or body. Demon possession is to be distinguished from demon influence or demon activity in relation to a person. The work of the demon in the latter is from the outside; in demon possession it is from within. By this definition a Christian cannot be possessed by a demon since he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. However, a believer can be the target of demonic activity to such an extent that he may give the appearance of demon possession. Ryrie Study Bible NASB

Eventually all demons including Satan will be cast into the lake of fire (Matt 25:41).

The Occult

The occult is defined as:

Of, relating to, or dealing with _____ influences, agencies, or phenomena. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition (<http://www.bartleby.com/61/>)

Matters regarded as involving the action or influence of supernatural or supernormal powers or some secret knowledge of them. Miriam-Webster Online Dictionary

The occult is an umbrella term that includes many practices and belief systems. These beliefs are usually based on the idea that everything is or contains energy (an unquantifiable energy), and one can access, change, channel and/or manipulate this energy (or force) for the purposes of gaining information, healing, or bringing a desired situation or thing into material reality. THE OCCULT: BRIEF EXPLANATIONS OF VARIOUS TERMS AND CONCEPTS by Marcia Montenegro (www.christiananswersforthenewage.org/Articles_OccultTerms1.html)

The word occult is generally associated with _____ practices. It can be thought of as involving the action or influence of supernatural agencies or some secret knowledge of them, which transcend the natural senses, to seek their influence in our present or future lives, or the lives of others. Many occultic practices are associated with the New Age Movement. The activities of the occult are found everywhere today, and we see that these activities have been present for a long time as they are referred to in Scripture repeatedly.

Occult covers practices that are not approved of by God e.g., astrology (Isa 47:13), casting spells (Deut 18:11), consulting with spirits (Deut 18:11), magic (Gen 41:8), sorcery (Ex 22:18), witchcraft (Deut 18:10), and spiritism (Deut 18:11).

A central passage describing the occult is Deut 18:9-13. Here the Israelites are commanded to not learn to imitate the detestable occultic practices of the Canaanites. There are three general categories of occultic practice mentioned in this passage.

⁹"When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. ¹⁰"There shall not be found among you anyone who **makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire**, one who **uses divination**, one who **practices witchcraft**, or one who **interprets omens**, or a **sorcerer**, ¹¹or one who **casts a spell**, or a **medium**, or a **spiritist**, or **one who calls up the dead**. ¹²"For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. ¹³"You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. Deut 18:9-13

"Makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire" – refers to the Canaanite practice of sacrificing children to their god Molech. (e.g. Ahaz in 2 Kings 16:3; Manasseh in 2 Kings 21:6 and 2 Chron 33:6; practice to false gods in 2 Kings 3:26; 17:31; 23:10; and Jer 19:5)

1. Divination – The attempt to foretell the _____ in order to shape our lives according to it.
 - a. Divination (v10) – to seek to determine the will of the gods by examining and interpreting omens.
 - b. Interprets omens (v10) – to tell the future based on 'signs' such as the movement of birds, fire, or rain. Some sort of aid is used to gain knowledge of the future.

Divination is the most widespread occultic practice. The occultic practice of divination is practiced by observing omens, casting lots, interpreting physical objects or shapes, or spontaneously by whatever the diviner sees. Divination practitioners use literally a myriad of techniques and paraphernalia such as: astrology, books, tarot cards, crystal balls, tea-leaves, palm reading, Ouija boards (this could be under the spiritism section also), water, fire, numbers, dreams, rods (especially for discovering underground water), entrails of animals, Feng Shui, the dead, etc. The Scriptures seem to say that true divination is brought about by demons.

¹²My people consult their wooden idol, and their diviner's wand informs them; For a **spirit of harlotry** has led them astray, And they have played the harlot, departing from their God. Hosea 4:12

¹⁶It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a **slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us**, who was bringing her masters much profit by **fortune-telling**. ¹⁷Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation." ¹⁸She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "**I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!**" And it came out at that very moment. Acts 16:16-18

Astrology

A significant means of divination in our society is astrology, which is the practice of using the position of the planets, sun, and moon at the time and place of birth as signposts to explain the person's character, life, and destiny. It teaches that the positions and movements of the stars and planets directly influence _____ events. One's personality and character weaknesses and strengths are also affected by these movements. Using a horoscope, astrologers claim to predict the future. The horoscope is derived from the location of the sun and planets when the individual was born.

¹⁹"And **beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them**, those which the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. Deut 4:19

²⁶If I have looked at the sun when it shone Or the moon going in splendor, ²⁷And my heart became secretly enticed, And my hand threw a kiss from my mouth, ²⁸That too would have been an iniquity calling for judgment, **For I would have denied God above.** Job 31:26-28

Ouija Board

Another method of divination is the Ouija Board. William Fuld patented the Ouija Board in 1892, but it was made popular in the 1960s by Parker Brothers as a parlor board game. It is the most popular game rooted in _____ in America today.

The December 1994 Consumer Reports published the results of a survey among 17,000 young people ages 10 to 14. They answered a query concerning what games they played with and which they enjoyed the most. Out of 83 games listed, Monopoly was no. 1 and the Ouija Board was no. 2! *Should Christians Use the Ouija Board?* at www.johnankerberg.org/ankerberg-articles/ouija.html

The players ask questions while their hands rest on the mobile pointer. The pointer's movement on the board produces the answer.

The Scriptures are clear that all aspects of divination are _____ to the Lord.

¹²"For **whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD**; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. Deut 18:12

¹⁶They forsook all the commandments of the LORD their God and made for themselves molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. ¹⁷Then they made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire, and **practiced divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him.** ¹⁸**So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from His sight;** none was left except the tribe of Judah. 2 Kings 17:16-18

²²Samuel said, Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.

²³"For **rebellion is as the sin of divination**, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king." 1 Sam 15:22-23

2. Magic – The attempt to _____ the present, our lives, the lives of others, or events of nature by ceremonies, charms, or spells believed to have supernatural powers. This would include hypnotism.
 - a. Practices witchcraft (v10) – is the attempt to control people or circumstances through power given by evil spirits.
 - b. Sorcerer (v10) – involves practicing magic by incantations and drugs or potions.
 - c. One who casts a spell (v11) – is literally 'one who ties knots,' thus one who binds other people by magical mutterings.

⁸But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, **those who practice magic arts**, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death. Rev 21:8 (NIV)

¹⁹Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, **sorcery**, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal 5:19-21

3. Spiritism – The attempt to communicate with the _____, to receive information and help from them.
 - a. Medium (v11) – one who supposedly communicates with the dead but who actually communicates with demons.
 - b. Spiritist (v11) – One who has an intimate knowledge of the demonic, spiritual world.
 - c. One who calls up the dead (v11) – investigating and seeking information from the dead.

The modern, new-age version of spiritism is channeling. In many cases, channeling may be used by practitioners to make a dishonest income. However, in other cases actual contact with a spirit being may be taking place.

CHANNEL—a person who allows his body and mind to be used as a _____ for the etheric world intelligences to bring psychic information or healing energy to others; comes through in physical and mental psychic skills, while the person is in a deep or semi-trance state; used in inspirational speaking, writing, psychic surgery, etc.

CHANNELING—to allow an etheric world intelligence to enter one's mind and impress thoughts upon the consciousness to be spoken aloud, using one's own voice; medium's body is relaxed and mind is uncluttered and free of former concepts and opinions; awareness is heightened and medium senses another presence operating through him or her but does not sense the significance of the material until afterward; the knowledge brought through is beyond normal comprehension of the medium and must be studied to be understood; currently becoming very popular. *Donning International Encyclopedic Psychic Dictionary*, p. 105

There are three general groups of those involved in channeling:

1. Those that have complete control of their body and speak the message of the spirit guide.
2. Those that enter a deep trance as the message is given from the entity.
3. Those that remain conscious but will voluntarily yield control of their body to allow the entity to use their hands for writing messages (also known as automatic writing).

³¹**Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.** Lev 19:31

⁶As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, to play the harlot after them, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people. ... ²⁷Now a man or a woman who is a medium or a spiritist shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones, their bloodguiltiness is upon them." Lev 20:6, 27

What about ghosts?

Ghosts are talked about in the Bible.

⁷Then Saul said to his servants, "Seek for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a woman who is a medium at En-dor." ... ¹¹Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me."

¹²When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice; and the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul." ¹³The king said to her, "Do not be afraid; but what do you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I see a divine being coming up out of the earth."

¹⁴He said to her, "What is his form?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped with a robe." And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and did homage. ¹⁵Then Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" And Saul answered, "I am greatly distressed; for the Philistines are waging war against me, and God has departed from me and no longer answers me, either through prophets or by dreams; therefore I have called you, that you may make known to me what I should do." 1 Sam 28:7, 11-15

Most commentators believe that this was a unique case of actually being able to contact a dead person. More than likely this woman had contacted spirits in the past, but those spirits were actually _____. This is why she cried out with a loud voice when she realized it was Samuel, since she had not expected to actually contact Samuel. God used this instance to show both his power and presence to the medium revealing himself as the one true God. He also used it to send a message of condemnation to Saul.

³Then the spirit of the Egyptians will be demoralized within them; And I will confound their strategy, So that they will resort to idols and **ghosts** of the dead And to mediums and spiritists. Isaiah 19:3

²⁶When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a **ghost**!" And they cried out in fear. Matt 14:26

³⁹"See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a **spirit** does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." Luke 24:39

¹⁴No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 2 Cor 11:14

The Bible is clear that "...it is appointed for man to die once and after this comes judgment" (Heb 9:27). Therefore, there are no disembodied souls left behind.

Conclusion

It is clear from these passages about the occult that overt involvement is _____ the will of God. The prohibition found in Deut 18:9 given to Israel, but the principle seems applicable to Christians as well, is to "not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations."

People who find themselves practicing these activities open themselves up for even greater demonic influence. Demons may further deceive people who begin down the path of these practices by causing events to come about that would increase people's faith in this sort of thing. From www.valleybible.net/Adults/ClassNotes/TheologySurvey/Demons/WorkOfDemons.pdf

What do you think of the Harry Potter movies? (from <http://www.valleybible.net/ask.php#harrypotter>)

Not all of us have viewed the Harry Potter movies, nor are we very interested in doing movie reviews. Colossians 3:2 tells us to set our mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth and Philippians 4:8 teaches us to let our mind dwell on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, etc. This applies to far more than movies and each of us can improve in what we focus our mind upon.

We have heard that some Christian leaders have called people to not view these movies or read the books based on its subject matter of witchcraft. However, we need to recognize the _____ between fantasy and reality. That which is real in life is worthy of serious and thoughtful consideration. These books are works of fiction and when we distinguish between what is fiction from what is non-fiction, we will be better able to serve God in reality without importing imagination and speculation into the Christian life.

More important is the troubling trend among Christian leaders to take a stand against some popular interest of the world. Somehow, the words of Jesus in Matthew 15:11 have been overlooked, "Not what _____ into the mouth defiles the man, but what _____ out of the mouth, this defiles the man." This principle suggests that our reading of a Harry Potter book is of little consequence to living a godly Christian life.

The More Important Issue

⁴But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to **deceitful spirits** and **doctrines of demons**, 1 Tim 4:11

Satan does _____ work (deceitful, seducing spirits) and _____ work (doctrines of demons).

Now let me add something here. Satan has some very effective lies. And I really feel that one thing Satan has done today with the preoccupation with witchcraft and the occult and all of that stuff, is he has directed peoples' attention away from the real issue. People, I know there's a lot of real fantastic and exciting things about Ouija boards. And even those of us who are Christians and reject all of that kind of like to fiddle around with it and read about it cause it's kind of funny...kind of weird. And we're all kind of hung up on finding out a little more about the next world. And what Satan, I'm sure, would like to do would be to get everybody diverted into his overt activity and forget his covert activity which is really where he works the hardest and that is at lying.

I think an interesting statement that I read recently by Dave Breis is this: "Witchcraft is certainly dangerous but it deceives only the simple minded. Toying with Ouija boards or holding a reference for fetishes can produce a dreadful spiritual infection. Their main appeal, however, will be to those limited intellects who feel more than they think. External phenomena may be interesting, even spectacular, but are limited in their appeal to reasonable people. With witchcraft, orgies and séances and demon possession, he has captured thousands; with false doctrine millions."

He's right. The real work of Satan is in false doctrine. If you want to know what I believe it is much more seriously Satanic in terms of its ultimate influence to have somebody standing in a pulpit and denying the Word of God than to have a séance going on. That is obvious. This is subtle. Satan's deadliest activity, beloved, is in the area of perverting the truth. That's where he spends his time. And I'm sure he'd like to get a whole lot of Christians diverted into thinking that all he's doing is running around with his demons and playing little games in people. "Satan: What is he like?--Part 2" by John MacArthur