
A Study of



Denominations

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Preface

In the first epistle to the church at Corinth, the apostle Paul strongly criticized them for being divided and pleaded with them to be “perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1:10) To denominate is to divide. Thus when we see the religious world divided into many denominations, we are viewing that which the apostle condemned.

Writing to the church in Ephesus, Paul encouraged them to be “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (4:3) because, he continued, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling...” (v. 4). That body is the church that belongs to Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18, 24). Though many hold to the belief that there are many churches and you can choose the one which suits you, the New Testament tells us that such a view is not true. As a matter of fact, it stands diametrically opposed to the intent and prayer of Jesus.

In John 17, while praying for His disciples, Jesus added, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (vv. 20-21).

In an effort to help others see how they need to be a part of that one body, that one church being built by Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:18), this study was prepared. It examines several of the major denominations and religious groups in light of the Scriptures to see whether or not they fit within the guidelines given in God’s holy word which define and delineate the Lord’s church.

Any group which claims to be the church of the Lord cannot put forth or stand upon any teaching, dogma or creed that has its origin with man. Jesus, in speaking of the religious of his day, said of them, “And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matthew 15:9) Thus any religious group or organization which includes the “commandments of men” in their worship and practice, no matter what they claim to the contrary, is laboring in vain.

We encourage all to go back to the Bible and base all their teachings and practices on its principles alone. May this study help you sort through the religions of men and see how they are not churches after the New Testament order and are thus practicing a false religion. May it cause you to seek out the Lord’s church.

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Denominationalism

Introduction

1. Denominationalism is:
 - a. A synonym for division. It consists of several hundred discordant religious sects who have no unity in name, organization, doctrine or practice.
 - b. A sectarian spirit or policy, the tendency to divide into sects.
2. Denominationalism is contrary to the will of God.
 - a. Many people pray thanking God that there are so many different denominations.
 - 1) Jesus prayed that His disciples be one as He and the Father are one. (John 17:21)
 - 2) When people thank God for denominationalism, they, in reality, are thanking Him for division and confusion but He is not the author of confusion. (1 Cor. 14:33)
 - b. The apostle Paul commanded that people endeavor to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Eph. 4:3)
 - c. Division was soundly condemned among believers in the city of Corinth. (1 Cor. 1:10-13)
 - d. Division is the result of false teaching. (2 Pet. 2:1)

I. The Origins of Denominationalism

- A. Shortly after the first century, unscriptural changes took place in church organization which ultimately resulted in the Catholic Church.
 1. This apostasy continued to grow farther and farther away from the New Testament pattern for the church.
 2. This extreme corruption became evident to men, even some of its own priests, who tried to reform it.
- B. Starting in the 1500’s, several efforts were made to remove the corruptions from Catholicism.
 1. Reformation movements were inaugurated by, among others, Martin Luther (1483-1546), Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), and John Calvin (1509-1564).
 2. These movements resulted in Lutheran, Reformed and Calvinist crusades.
 3. While Lutherans and Presbyterians, a merger of Reformed and Calvinist groups based in Switzerland, spread their teachings and sought political power, more radical reformers, who were generally labeled Anabaptists, attempted to reproduce the New Testament church in strict detail. While many of the concepts of that restitution varied and were sometimes bizarre, seed was sown which contributed to the rise of such bodies as Mennonites, Independents, Baptists, Quakers and several varieties of Brethren.
 4. During this time, King Henry VIII (1491-1547) broke with the Roman Catholic Church resulting in a separate Church of England or Anglican Church.
 5. In summary: The Protestant Reformation changed the religious landscape of the West from one dominated by Catholicism to one dotted with nationally established churches in competition with smaller parties.
- C. Its origin in America.
 1. The major churches of Europe came to be represented in America.
 2. Once in this country, many of these groups continued to divide internally over such things as national origin, language, culture, etc.
 3. The process of division has continued in America so that it is difficult to compute the number of denominations.

II. Prominent Characteristics of Modern Denominations

- A. A modern denomination is an organized form of religion that begins with some things taught or practiced by Jesus and His apostles but changes those things by the application of human ideas. Such changes are made in the name of progress, service, peace, love or some other “positive sounding” term.
- B. A denomination is an organization larger than the local church to which local churches belong but smaller than the universal church for usually none claims to be the whole body of the saved.
 - 1. The concept of a denominational church is foreign to the New Testament.
 - 2. “When men speak of a particular denomination, say the Baptist Church, they do not mean to imply that all the saved throughout the world are in the Baptist church. The word ‘church’ here is used by them to embrace *less* than is embraced by the church universal. But everyone knows that the expression ‘Baptist Church’ is intended to embrace more than a congregation. The denominational usage of the word ‘church’ embraces *too little* to be the New Testament church universal, and *too much* to be the New Testament church local. But these are the only two New Testament usages, other than assembly. Hence, the concept of a denominational church is foreign to the New Testament, and therefore unscriptural.” (Cecil Willis, *Denominationalism*, p. 1)
- C. Denominational boundaries are determined by such factors as a human designation or name which is worn, a creed composed by men, some favorite doctrine emphasized to the exclusion of other truths, close adherence to one or more human leaders, and institutional loyalty.
- D. The most widely held view among denominations of all sorts is that *it is not essential to salvation for one to join any denomination at all so long as he in his own way respects, serves or worships God.*
 - 1. This is the idea that *one church is as good as another.*
 - 2. This view is based on the belief that God accepts and approves all denominations.

III. Defenses of Denominationalism

- A. The vine and the branches. (John 15)
 - 1. Some believe this teaches authority for divisive religious organizations.
 - 2. Jesus was talking about individuals (v. 6), not denominations.
 - 3. The absurdity of this application of Jesus’ teaching is seen by asking whether or not one has ever seen a single vine which bore hundreds of different kinds of fruit.
- B. “The different churches are just different routes to heaven.”
 - 1. Jesus is “the way” (John 14:6) not the founder of many ways.
 - 2. Every way other than the way of Jesus is a way unto death. (Prov. 14:12)
 - 3. If man could devise successful ways to heaven, then Jesus died for naught. (Gal. 2:21)
- C. “All denominations teach some truth.”
 - 1. This claim is readily admitted but “some truth” is not enough to save people.
 - a. Even Satan tells “some truth.”
 - b. Atheists teach “some truth.”
 - 2. The Bible teaches that salvation requires “the whole counsel of God.” (Acts 20:27; Rom. 15:19)
 - 3. The least corruption of the word of God by the teachings of men bring condemnation and make one’s religion vain. (Gal. 1:6-9; Matt. 15:9)

- D. "There are good people in all churches."
1. If some good people justifies a denomination, then one has to accept atheism, Hinduism, and Mohammedism because of "good" atheists, "good" Hindus, etc.
 2. Mere human goodness without the blood of Christ cannot save.
 3. Mere human goodness and sincerity is not enough to save. (Acts 10:1-2,22; 23:1; 16:9)
- E. "One church is as good as another."
1. This is true when applied to denominations because one church started by man is as good as any other church started by man.
 2. But no church is as good as the church planned by God and being built by Jesus. (Eph. 3:8-11; Matt. 16:18)
 - a. The blood of Christ is in no other church but His. (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25)
 - b. Reconciliation to God is only in Christ's church. (Eph. 2:16)
 - c. Salvation is only in the church belonging to Christ. (Acts 2:38-41,47)
 - d. Christ is the Savior of no other church but His. (Eph. 5:23)

IV. The Condemnation of Denominationalism

- A. It is condemned by the word of God.
1. All believers are to be one. (John 17:20-21)
 2. Religious division is denounced. (1 Cor. 1:10-12)
 3. All are to pursue the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph. 4:3)
 4. Denominationalism exalts men, and the will of men, above God and His will. (2 Thes. 2:3-4)
- B. It is condemned by its fruits. (Matt. 7:20) Denominationalism causes:
1. Confusion. Many simply do not know where to turn in religion because of the chaos and confusion it causes. (1 Cor. 14:33)
 2. Destruction of the unity for which Jesus prayed. (John 17:20-21)
 3. The condemnation of souls in hell. (Acts 4:12)
- C. It is condemned by those who have been part of it.
1. Martin Luther. "I pray you to leave my name alone, and call not yourselves 'Lutherans,' but 'Christians.' Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine. I have not been crucified for anyone. St. Paul would not permit that any should call themselves of Paul, nor of Peter but of Christ. How, then, does it befit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of Christ? Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions; away with them all; let us call ourselves only 'Christians' after him from whom our doctrine comes." (*Life of Luther*, p. 289)
 2. Charles Spurgeon, noted Baptist preacher. "I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone. I hope the 'Baptist' name will soon perish, but let Christ's name last forever." (*Spurgeon Memorial Library*, Vol. I, p. 168)
 3. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. "Would to God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world were forgot; that we might all agree to sit down together as humble, loving disciples at the feet of the common Master, to hear his word, to imbibe his Spirit, and to transcribe his life into our own." (*Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons*, Vol. V, p. 60)

4. Albert Barnes, Presbyterian commentator. “The existence of sects, and denominations, and contentions may be traced to the following causes: (1) The love of power, and they who have control of the consciences of men and of their religious feelings and opinions can control them altogether. (2) Showing more respect to religious teachers than to Christ. (3) The multiplication of tests, and the enlargement of creeds and confessions of faith. The consequence is that every new doctrine that is incorporated into a creed gives cause for those to separate who cannot accord with it. (4) The passions of men—their pride, and ambition, and bigotry, and unenlightened zeal. Christ evidently meant that his church should be one, and that all who were his true followers should be admitted to her communion and acknowledged everywhere as his true friends. And the time may yet come when this union shall be restored to his long-distracted church, and that while there may be an honest difference of opinion maintained and allowed, still the bonds of Christian love shall secure union of heart in all that love the Lord Jesus and union in effort in the grand enterprise in which all can unite—that of making war upon sin and securing the conversion of the whole world to God.”

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Give a basic definition of denominationalism.
2. How did the Catholic Church originate?
3. What was the Reformation? What prompted it? What was the outcome of it?
4. How is a denomination larger than the local church but smaller than the universal church?
5. What is the most widely held view among denominations? Why is it an erroneous view?
6. Though often used as one, why is the figure of “the vine and the branches” in John 15 not really a defense of denominationalism?
7. What is wrong with the statement, “One church is as good as another?”
8. How do the Biblical principles that all believers are to “be one” and pursue “the unity of the Spirit” condemn denominationalism?
9. How does denominationalism exalt men and the will of men above the will of God?
10. What are some “fruits” of denominationalism? How do they add to the condemnation of it?

The Catholic Church

Introduction

1. The Roman Catholic Church is the most powerful religious organization in the Western World.
 - a. It claims a membership of over 600 million people.
 - b. The majority of those who claim to be “Christians,” as the world uses the term, are members of the Catholic Church.
2. Because of her great power, she is able not only to wield tremendous pressure in advancing her religious views in the political arena but also in holding sway over the millions who are under her domination.

I. The Origin of the Roman Catholic Church

- A. One can neither locate or identify a specific date as the birth or beginning of the Roman Catholic Church nor specify some individual as its founder.
- B. The Roman Catholic Church is the result of a general departure from the divine pattern of organization, doctrine, worship and work given by Jesus Christ through the apostles which is contained in the New Testament.
 1. Beginning in the second century, a few years after the death of the last apostle, this departure moved very slowly, but surely, gradually introducing human doctrines over a long period of time.
 2. The first departures were in church organization which ultimately led to the recognition of a papacy as the head of the church.
 3. This departure brought forth a church which bears little resemblance to the one built by and belonging to Jesus.
- C. The New Testament not only revealed that such a departure was possible but also prophesied that it would take place.
 1. The apostle Paul’s warning to the elders of the church at Ephesus. (Acts 20:29-30)
 2. The Thessalonians were told of the reality of this departure. (2 Thess. 2:3-5)
 3. Timothy was told of some of the doctrines which would be taught by those who advocated this departure. (1 Tim. 4:1-4)
 4. In the second epistle to Timothy, Paul told him that the false teachings of those in this departure would be that which people would desire to hear and follow. (2 Tim. 4:1-14)
- D. The Roman Catholic Church is an apostate church which has some doctrines which are 18 centuries old and some not even a century old.
 1. According to its teaching, there can be no Roman Catholic Church without a pope. “The (Roman Catholic - GT) Church is the congregation of all baptized persons united in the same true faith, the same sacrifice, and the same sacraments, under the Holy Father, the Pope.” (*A Catechism of Christian Doctrine*, p. 12)
 - a. The first man in history to actually exert power in anything like universal domination was Gregory the Great (590-604) but he refused to be called Ecumenical Bishop, or pope.
 - b. There was no pope until Boniface III was elected universal bishop, or pope, in 606 A.D.

2. Since, by their own teaching, there could be no Roman Catholic Church without a pope, and since there was no pope prior to 606 A.D., it is obvious that the Roman Catholic Church, by their own admission and history, is the product of apostasy and is not the New Testament church.

II. The Organization of the Roman Catholic Church

- A. The government of the Roman Catholic Church is an absolute hierarchy.
 1. Hierarchy: “A ruling body of clergy organized into orders or ranks each subordinate to the one above it.” (*Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 982)
 2. The pope stands at the top of the hierarchy.
- B. The pope is believed to be “Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Christ, and ‘the visible’ Head of the Roman Catholic Church.”
 1. His authority is supreme in all matters of faith and morals as head of the church.
 2. He is elected by the College of Cardinals.
- C. The College of Cardinals elects the pope, serves as his advisers, and holds authority over the church between popes.
 1. Most of the cardinals reside in Rome.
 2. With them and the Roman Curia, the administrative arm of the church, the pope governs world-wide Catholicism.
- D. Next, in descending order, are archbishops, bishops and priests.
 1. An archbishop is the spiritual ruler of an archdiocese made up of several dioceses.
 2. Bishops rule over dioceses as their territorial jurisdiction.
 3. Under the bishops, the parish priests preside over the parishes. A parish is the ecclesiastical unit of area committed to one pastor.
- E. All members of the hierarchy are ordained priests.
- F. In addition to the regular ranks of the Roman clergy in the hierarchy are other priests, monks, deacons, subdeacons, and the whole army of “Orders of Congregations.” There are two types of orders: monastic orders and the religious congregations of priests, and various brotherhoods and sisterhoods, such as Jesuits, Franciscans, etc.

III. The Basic Authority of the Roman Catholic Church

- A. The Roman Catholic Church’s faith and doctrine is founded upon “that deposit of faith given to it by Christ and through his apostles, sustained by the Bible and by tradition.” (*A Catechism of Christian Doctrine*, p. 44)
 1. While they make use of certain passages in the Bible in an effort to justify their peculiar doctrines, they make no claim to follow the teaching of the Word of God.
 2. In addition to the Bible they have added what they call “Divine Tradition.”
- B. Catholicism states, “Not all truths revealed for us by God are found in the Bible; some are found only in Divine Tradition. By Divine Tradition is meant the revealed truths taught by Christ and His apostles, which were given to the Church only by word of mouth and not through the Bible, though they were put in writing, principally by the Fathers of the Church. Divine Tradition must be believed as firmly as the Bible because it also contains the word of God.” (Ibid)

- C. The doctrine of Papal Infallibility recognizes the Bishop of Rome as being incapable of being in error when he defines any matter of faith and morals for the entire Church as a consequence of his “occupying the chair of Peter.”
 - 1. Catholic doctrine teaches that when the pope speaks *Ex Cathedra* that his message is binding as the word of God since he is viewed as the Vicar of Christ.
 - 2. If this doctrine is accepted, then any new doctrine or practice, any innovation, **must** be accepted by the membership.
- D. The Bible teaches that the New Testament is the complete and final revelation of God’s will for all time to come. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
 - 1. We are forbidden to go beyond the revealed will of Christ. (2 John 9,10)
 - 2. One is not to teach anything other than the gospel revealed by the apostles in the New Testament. To do so is to be accursed. (Gal. 1:6-9)
 - 3. That which Catholics call “Divine Tradition” is nothing more than the doctrines and commandments of men which Jesus said makes religion vain. (Matt. 15:8-9)

IV. The Primary Beliefs and Doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church

- A. Some identifying characteristics of the Catholic Church.
 - 1. **An allegedly infallible Pope in Rome** - one bishop over the entire church. The New Testament had a plurality of bishops or elders in every congregation. (Acts 20:17, 28; 14:23; Phil. 1:1)
 - 2. **Unmarried priests and bishops.**
 - a. This teaching has varied through the centuries.
 - b. “In the Western church marriage is prohibited to all clergy of the rank of subdeacon and upwards.” (*A Catholic Dictionary*, Donald Attwater, ed.)
 - c. The apostle Peter was married. (Matt. 8:14; Mark 1:30; Luke 4:38) Philip the evangelist was married. (Acts 21:8-9).
 - 3. **“Mass.”**
 - a. The mass is a service in which the literal body of Christ is sacrificed over and over again, day after day.
 - b. The New Testament teaches Christ was offered once. (Heb. 9:28)
 - 4. **College of Cardinals.**
 - a. As it is now known, it was formed in 1059.
 - b. There is no reference whatsoever in the New Testament to Cardinals or Archbishops as used by the Catholic Church.
 - 5. **Auricular Confession** - the practice of confessing to a “Priest” and being interrogated by the “Priest” concerning one’s sins.
 - a. The New Testament teaches that Christians are to confess their faults to one another and to forgive each other. (Jas. 5:16; 1 John 1:9; Acts 19:18-19)
 - b. None of the above Scriptures authorize a secret question and answer session with a priest.
 - c. Closely linked to this is the doctrine of **penance**.
 - 1) “A sacrament of the New Law instituted by Christ in which by which absolution of a priest, acting as judge, sins committed after baptism are forgiven to a person who confesses them with sorrow and a purpose of amendment.” (Ibid)
 - 2) In the New Testament, no man stands between the sinner and Christ.

6. **Veneration of Images and Relics.**
 - a. The Second Council of Nicea, 787 A.D., introduced this doctrine.
 - b. “The images especially of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of other saints, are to be had and kept in churches and due honour and reverence paid to them.” (Ibid)
 - c. The New Testament teaches that Christians are not to revere, worship, or venerate idols, etc. (1 John 5:21; Acts 17:29)
 7. **Invocation of the Saints.**
 - a. Praying to dead saints was never practiced or authorized by the New Testament.
 - b. That *living* saints were asked to pray for the *living* is readily admitted. (Acts 8:22-24; Jas. 5:16)
 8. **The doctrine of purgatory.**
 - a. This is a doctrine which offers a “second chance” after death, a “purgatory” or “cleansing” after death.
 - b. “The place and state in which souls suffer for a while and are purged after death, before they go to Heaven, on account of their sins.” (Ibid)
 - c. If this doctrine has any basis, then Luke 16, the account of the rich man and Lazarus, must be rejected.
 9. **Erroneous doctrines on baptism.** (All quotes are from *A Catholic Dictionary*)
 - a. “In the Western church, baptism may only be lawfully conferred by infusion, and there should be three distinct pourings.”
 - b. “Baptism of children of non-Catholics may be lawfully performed, even if the parents object, provided the child is in danger of death...”
 - c. “Baptism may be administered in the womb...”
 - d. “An aborted foetus must also be baptized.”
 10. **Extreme unction.** “A sacrament of the New Law in which, by anointing with oil and the prayers of the priest health of soul and (sometimes) of body is conferred on a baptized person who is in danger of death through sickness. The oil must be specially blessed and the prayers of the priest must have a particular form.” (Ibid)
 11. **Instrumental music.** “Liturgical music is essentially vocal and its decadence was greatly hastened by the introduction of orchestral instruments. In the Western church today the organ is permitted except at Office and Mass of the Dead and on ferias of Advent and Lent; on special occasions other instruments are allowed by particular leave of the bishop.” (Ibid)
- B. An historical perspective of major Catholic doctrines.
1. Holy water, 120 A.D.
 2. Penance, ca. 157 A.D.
 3. The Latin Mass, 394 A.D.
 4. The worship of Mary, the 4th century.
 5. Extreme unction, 588 A.D.
 6. Purgatory, 593 A.D.
 7. The Universal Bishop, or Pope, 606 A.D.
 8. Instrumental music, ca. 666 A.D.
 9. Transubstantiation, 1000 A.D.
 10. Celibacy, 1015 A.D.
 11. Indulgences, 1192 A.D.

12. Auricular confession, 1215 A.D.
13. Sprinkling for baptism, 1311 A.D.
14. Infallibility of the pope, July 18, 1870 A.D.
15. Jurisdiction over civil authorities, 728-1870 A.D.

Conclusion

1. The Roman Catholic Church began, not in the first century, but in the apostasy that followed the first century.
2. Its organizational structure is completely foreign to what we see in the New Testament as to the organization of the church.
3. It does not even claim to follow the New Testament as its sole authority in religion.
4. The Roman Catholic Church cannot be the church Christ established on the Pentecost recorded in Acts 2.

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Why is it difficult to determine a specific date for the origin of the Catholic Church?
2. In what area of New Testament teaching were the first departures which ultimately led to the Catholic Church?
3. What is a hierarchy? Describe the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church.
4. What does the Roman Catholic Church claim as its basic authority?
5. What is “Divine Tradition” as used by the Roman Catholic Church? How does the Bible condemn it?
6. What is the Roman Catholic doctrine of “Papal Infallibility?” How does it oppose Scripture?
7. What is the Catholic “Mass?” How is its basic idea contrary to the teachings of God’s word?
8. What are the Catholic doctrines of “Auricular Confession” and “Penance?” How are they condemned by the Bible?
9. What is the doctrine of “Purgatory?” How does the Bible expose it as being erroneous?
10. How, by its own teachings, does the Roman Catholic Church admit to being a product of apostasy and not the New Testament Church?

The Lutheran Church

Introduction

1. The Lutheran Church was the first of the many Protestant churches formed out of the protest against Catholicism during the Reformation Movement.
2. The Lutheran Church dates from All Saints Day, October 31, 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the Castle Church door in Wittenberg, Germany, protesting the sale of indulgences by the Roman Catholic Church under Tetzel in Germany.
 - a. Luther's desire was not to start another church but rather to suppress a great evil.
 - b. His actions, however, struck a blow at the papacy which led to the Reformation and the origin of the Lutheran Church.
3. "Today there are almost a score of Lutheran denominations, but all of them wear the name 'Lutheran,' and look to Martin Luther as the founder of the Lutheran Church." (Bill Crews, *Church Origins*, p. 16)

I. Martin Luther and The Origin of the Lutheran Church

- A. Martin Luther (1483-1546) was the first great reformer.
- B. He was born in Eisleben, Germany in 1483.
 1. He had begun to prepare for a career in law but shocked by the combined experience of a friend's death and a fearful storm, he entered a monastery at the age of 22.
 2. He was ordained as a priest, an Augustinian friar, only two years later in 1507.
 3. He became a lecturer at Wittenburg University and in 1512 was made a doctor of theology.
- C. During the winter of 1512-13, his study prompted him to begin to see some errors in the Catholic Church.
- D. On October 31, 1517, he nailed his famous 95 theses to the door of the church building in Wittenburg, Germany, proclaiming the errors of Catholicism.
 1. His three greatest objections were the selling of indulgences, the authority of the Pope and the doctrine of transubstantiation.
 2. In his theses, he named these objections and asked for a debate with some one who would defend them.
 3. In 1519 he had a debate with Dr. John Eck in Leipzig which resulted in a declaration of his stand against some doctrines of Catholicism.
- E. After much criticism and church trials, he was excommunicated from the Church.
 1. He continued to preach against the errors he had found.
 2. The Lutheran Church thus had its beginning even though Luther asked his followers not to call themselves after him but rather after Christ.
- F. His greatest error was his teaching that justification was by "faith only" teaching that people are saved at the point of faith without further acts of obedience.
 1. He overreacted to the Catholic position of justification by works.
 2. Because James contradicted his teaching of "faith only," Luther rejected the book of James as being part of the New Testament and labeled it a "right strawy epistle."

II. The Lutheran Church and Creeds

- A. The Lutheran Church claims to use the Bible as their only standard of authority.
1. “The Lutheran Church is a Bible church. She receives the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as the only source and standard of doctrine, the sole authority in matters of faith and life.” (*Our Church and Others*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. 7th printing, 1969, p. 24)
 2. Such is typical of denominational creeds which make such a claim and then immediately repudiate it by stating doctrines which are admittedly not found in the Bible.
- B. “Our Lutheran Church has nine creeds and confessions in which we state what we believe.
- “The Ecumenical (or Universal) Creeds are:
- “1. The Apostles’ Creed.
 - “2. The Nicene Creed.
 - “3. The Athanasian Creed.
- “The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are:
- “1. The Augsburg Confession.
 - “2. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession.
 - “3. The Smalcald Articles.
 - “4. The Small Catechism of Luther.
 - “5. The Large Catechism of Luther.
 - “6. The Formula of Concord.
- “These six Confessions and the Ecumenical Creeds form the Book of Concord, first published in 1580.” (*Luther’s Small Catechism*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943, p. 210)
- C. The Lutheran Church requires loyalty to its creeds and confessions by its members.
1. “If someone asks a Lutheran: ‘What does the Lutheran Church teach?’ or: ‘What do you as a Lutheran believe?’ he can direct the inquirer to the Lutheran confessions.” (*Our Church and Others*, p. 25)
 2. “The Lutheran confessions may also be regarded as a standard around which Lutherans can rally in their common defense of the doctrines of the Scriptures against error, or they may be regarded as a flag to which the teachers of the church pledge loyalty.” (Ibid)
 3. “The cementing force in American Lutheranism must be sought in a loyalty to the Lutheran confessions.” (*Our Church and Others.*, p. 37)
 4. “The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the total of all who unreservedly accept all canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as God’s revealed Word and who confess agreement with the teaching again brought to light through Luther’s reformation and represented concisely in writing to Emperor and Empire at Augsburg in 1530 and repeated and expanded in the other so-called Lutheran symbols.” (*Our Church and Others*, p. 25)
 5. “The Lutheran Church observes and maintains certain time-honored customs and practices, some of which are derived from Scriptural command or precedent, while others are merely of human ecclesiastical origin.” (*Our Church and Others*, p. 37)
 6. “We who are Lutherans prize our Catechism as one of the crown jewels of our church. It is a summary of heavenly truth presented in a most desirable manner.” (*Lutheran Catechism*, Revised 1967, pp. 56-60)

III. Some Doctrines, Teachings and Views of the Lutheran Church

- A. "The Lutheran Church observes and maintains certain time-honored customs and practices, some of which are derived from Scriptural command or precedent, while others are merely of human ecclesiastical origin. Some of these are: sponsor at Baptism; the use of the wafer in Holy Communion; close Communion and announcement for communion; confession and absolution; parochial schools; catechetical instruction; confirmation; ordination; clerical vestments; altar and pulpit; the sign of the cross; set forms of prayers; the observance of the church year; and the like." (*Our Church and Others*, p. 37)
- B. "Justification by faith alone in Jesus Christ is held to be the central doctrine of the word of God." (*Government Report of Denominations*, Vol. 2, p. 853)
1. "This faith in Christ is neither wholly nor in the least part the work of man but the work of God's grace and almighty power alone...Faith alone justifies the sinner..." (*Our Church and Others*, pp. 33-34)
 2. Scriptural refutations of this doctrine.
 - a. Faith without works is dead. (Jas. 2:17-24, 26)
 - b. Faith only saves when it *works* through love. (Gal. 5:6)
 - c. Faith plus baptism equals salvation. (Mark 16:16)
- C. "Christ does not specify the mode of baptism. It may be performed in any one of three ways; namely, by sprinkling, pouring or immersion. One mode is just as valid as another." (*Luther's Catechism*, p. 147)
1. The Greek word "***baptizo***," translated "baptize" in the English Bibles means "to dip, to plunge, to immerse."
 2. Scriptural baptism is a burial in water. (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12)
- D. "Christ has commanded that little children should be brought to him and we obey this command by baptizing them and teaching them." (*Luther's Catechism*, p. 146)
1. Infant baptism is unknown to the New Testament.
 2. In the NT, only believers were baptized. (Acts 2:38; 8:36-37)
- E. "They (children) have inherited a sinful heart, and the germs of sin in them will soon grow." (*Lutheran Catechism*, p. 146)
1. The Bible teaches that sin is not inherited. (Ezek. 18:20)
 2. Children are innocent and without sin. (Matt. 18:2-3)
- F. Errors on the Lord's Supper.
1. "What is the sacrament of the Altar? Answer: It is the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, given unto us Christians to eat and drink as it was instituted by Christ Himself." (*Lutheran Catechism*, p. 19)
 2. "Sacrament through which forgiveness of sins is promised." (*Lutheran Catechism*, p. 159)
- G. "The Ten Commandments are for us and all God's creatures." (*Lutheran Catechism*, pp. 41-42)
1. There was a change of law from the old to the new. (Heb. 7:12)
 2. Jesus "nailed" the Old Law to the cross. (Col. 2:14)
- H. "...circumcision, which is a type of baptism." (*Lutheran Catechism*, p. 146)
1. Baptism is never compared to circumcision in the Bible.
 2. Circumcision of the flesh was a shadow of circumcision of the heart. (Heb. 10:1; Rom. 2:29)

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What was the Reformation?
2. What were Martin Luther's greatest objections to the Catholic Church?
3. What does the Lutheran Church claim as its only source of authority? Is this a truthful claim? Explain.
4. How many creeds and confessions does the Lutheran Church include as doctrine?
5. According to its own teachings, what are the sources of the "customs and practices" of the Lutheran Church?
6. What are some of the Scriptural refutations of the Lutheran doctrine of "salvation by faith only?"
7. What are the errors of the Lutheran Church in regards to the Lord's Supper?
8. What erroneous views on baptism does the Lutheran Church have?
9. Why is it wrong for the Lutheran Church to observe the Ten Commandments?
10. Of what does the Lutheran Church believe that circumcision is a type? Why is this an incorrect view?

The Presbyterian Church

Introduction

1. There are nine Presbyterian denominations in the United States, three of which are major denominations.
 - a. The United Presbyterian Church is by far the largest one of these in America.
 - b. The Presbyterian Church in the United States (the Southern Presbyterian Church) is about one-third the size of the United Presbyterian Church.
 - c. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church is the smallest of the three.
2. Modern Presbyterianism is far different from what it was in its beginnings.

I. The Origin and History of the Presbyterian Church

- A. Presbyterianism grew out of the teachings of John Calvin (1509-1564).
 1. Though Calvin never founded a distinct denomination, he preached and put into practice the principles which underlie all Presbyterian Churches.
 - a. Actually the principles of Calvin's teachings have been embraced by many Protestant groups.
 - b. In addition to the Presbyterians, his teachings influenced the Huguenots of France, the Puritans of England, the Covenanters of Scotland and the Dutch Reformed Church of Holland.
 2. Born in Noyon France, he became well-educated and, while a young man, sided with the Protestant Movement within the Catholic Church.
 3. Due to his opposition to Catholicism, he was forced to flee France so he took refuge in Geneva, Switzerland.
 - a. It was in Geneva that he developed his doctrine which has since been appropriately dubbed "Calvinism." Its five tenets, based upon the sover-eignty of God, include:
 - 1) Total hereditary depravity. This teaches that as a result of Adam's sin, all of his descendants are born totally depraved, "opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil," unable to do anything toward being saved.
 - 2) Unconditional election. This states that God, before the creation, unconditionally elected or predestined certain individuals to be saved.
 - 3) Limited atonement. This says that since only the elected ones could be saved, then Jesus died only for those who were to be saved—the elect.
 - 4) Irresistible grace. This states that when God in His own due time acted upon a sinner who was among the unconditionally elected, the sinner could not resist God's grace. He would be saved no matter what.
 - 5) Perseverance of the saints. This teaches that none of the elect, having received the grace of God, could fall away and be lost.
 - b. It was also in Geneva where he established a social-religious system which some called "the Protestant Church State" which formed the basis of Presbyterianism.
 - c. "Presbyterianism was...the purest form of Calvinism; although Calvinism has affected the doctrines of all the 'reformed' churches, the Baptist churches, the Holiness churches, and others." (Paul K. Williams, "The Presbyterian Church," *Denominationalism*, p. 6)

- B. Though Presbyterianism grew out of the teachings of Calvin, John Knox (1505-1572) can rightfully be called the founder of Presbyterianism.
 - 1. Born in Haddington, Scotland and educated at the University of Glasgow, he became a Roman Catholic priest, but he was then attracted to the preachings of Scottish Protestant reformer George Wishart.
 - 2. Knox fled England in 1533 because of the religious persecution which followed the coronation of Mary, daughter of Henry VIII and went to Geneva where he studied under Calvin.
 - 3. He returned to Scotland in 1559 where he spent the rest of his life establishing Calvinistic theology in Scotland.
- C. The first general assembly of the Presbyterian Church was held in Scotland in 1560. The “Scotch Confession of Faith” and the “First Book of Discipline” came from it.
- D. In 1592 Parliament established Presbyterianism as the Church of Scotland.
- E. The Westminster Association met in session from July 1, 1643 to February 22, 1649. It framed the Westminster Confession of Faith which became the doctrinal foundation of English and American Presbyterianism, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.
- F. The “Father of American Presbyterianism” was Francis Makemie who organized the Rehoboth Church in Maryland in 1684.

II. The Organization of the Presbyterian Church

- A. The Presbyterian Church receives its name from its form of government.
 - 1. The church is made up of congregations, Presbyteries, Synods and the General Assembly. Delegates to the General Assembly are sent by the Synod.
 - 2. Although each congregation enjoys considerable freedom in dealing with her own affairs, the congregations are organized so that the General Assembly possesses great influence, as well as judicial power, over the congregations.
- B. There are three offices in each congregation.
 - 1. Pastor. He is considered the representative of Christ.
 - 2. Ruling Elder. He represents the people of the congregation.
 - 3. Deacon. He is the administrator of temporal affairs.
- C. The Presbyteries are made up of a certain number of churches.
 - 1. Each church in the Presbytery has its regularly installed pastor, or pastors, as well as an equal number of presiding elders on the “board,” which is the presbytery.
 - 2. These presbyteries rule in the denomination even deciding to reject or accept rulings of the General Assembly.

III. The Modern Presbyterian Church

- A. In the past, gospel preachers battled Presbyterianism on doctrinal grounds, such things as predestination, infant baptism, etc., but to concentrate on these issues today is to fight a “dead man” for Presbyterians are not concerned about them any more.
- B. The heart and soul of Presbyterianism today is *modernism*.
 - 1. Modernists look upon the Bible as the product of man, not God.
 - a. They believe that it represents man’s efforts to find God.
 - b. They say it is “inspired” in the same way that the work of Shakespeare is “inspired,” i.e., representative of genius or great ability.

2. Although the Westminster Confession of Faith is still nominally the creed of Presbyterianism, the truth is that the Presbyterian Church left it long ago.
 - a. Noted theologian Harry Emerson Fosdick was forced to leave the Presbyterian Church three generations ago because of his modernistic views (e.g., He affirmed, among other things, that it was not important whether Jesus was raised from the dead or not), but now he would fit right in.
 - b. The Westminster Confession of Faith states, “The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God, (who is truth itself), the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received because it is the word of God” (Chapter I). The modern Presbyterian Church no longer believes this statement to be true.
 3. The Confession of 1967, accepted by the 178th General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church, states more accurately the belief of Presbyterians today in relation to the Bible: “The Bible is to be interpreted in the light of its witness to God’s work of reconciliation in Christ. The Scriptures, given under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are nevertheless the words of men, conditioned by the language, thought forms, and literary fashions of the places and times at which they were written. They reflect views of life, history, and the cosmos which were then current.”
 4. Today the vast majority of Presbyterian preachers do not believe that the Bible is verbally inspired and that it is the word of God.
- C. A representative view of modern Presbyterianism can be seen in a booklet published by the Presbyterian Church entitled *The Fascinating Doctrine of Predestination*.
1. Subtitled “Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Predestination (And a wee bit more!),” it was written by Dick McEuen and distributed by the First Presbyterian Church of Jasper, Florida.
 2. Its perspective on Scripture is nothing but modernism.
 3. “The blessed thing about Christian Doctrine is that there are no right or wrong answers. There is no winning an argument or losing an argument. It is not a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ situation. It is how people throughout history have looked at the world about them and their relationship to God...

“So any study begins with a realization that there is no absolute proof of any doctrine. Scripture seems to substantiate both sides of any arguments. Shakespeare was right when he had Antonio declare ‘The devil can cite scripture for his purposes’ [*Merchant of Venice* I,3]. (*The Fascinating Doctrine of Predestination*)

IV. Some Classic Beliefs and Doctrines of the Presbyterian Church

A. Predestination.

1. “God has predestinated and foreordained some men and angels out of His free grace and love without any foresight of faith or works in man or perseverance in either of them, and others are foreordained to everlasting death and the number of either is so certain and definite that it cannot be increased or diminished.” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*)
2. If this doctrine is true, it destroys man’s free moral agency and his ability to choose. But the Bible recognizes these traits. (Rev. 22:17; Mark 16:16; etc.)

B. Salvation by faith only.

1. Like other denominations which are influenced by Calvinism, Presbyterianism embraces this doctrine.
2. It is opposed to clear Biblical teaching. (Jas. 2:14,17,19,24; Heb. 5:8-9; etc.)

C. The Apostles' Creed.

1. Presbyterians require a confession of the "Apostles' Creed."
2. There is no record of any such "creed" in the word of God.
3. The creed of Christianity is Jesus Christ. We are to confess our faith in Him. (Matt. 16:16; Acts 8:36-39; Rom. 10:10)

D. Errors on baptism.

1. Presbyterians believe that sprinkling, pouring or immersion are all proper modes of baptism.
 - a. The Westminster Assembly voted to retain sprinkling and to drop dipping or immersion by a vote of 25 to 24. (*History of Religions*, Vol. 6, pp. 68-75)
 - b. The New Testament only recognizes immersion. (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12; Eph. 4:5)
2. Presbyterians practice infant baptism.
 - a. In the New Testament, only believers were baptized. (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36-38; etc.)
 - b. Can infants be "believers?" Of course not.

E. Errors on their name.

1. The name "Presbyterian" is not authorized by Scripture as a proper designation of God's people.
2. To be scriptural in name, the names found in the word of God must be used and used in the same way they are used in Scripture.
 - a. Though the term *presbyter* is in the original Greek text. It referred to those who would oversee the local congregation.
 - b. The Bible does not authorize anyone to name the church after a form of government.

F. Modernistic views of the word of God (See III, B. and C. above).

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What role did John Calvin have in the founding of the Presbyterian Church?
2. Briefly describe the basic teachings of John Calvin.
3. Why can John Knox be rightly called the founder of Presbyterianism?
4. What is the Westminster Confession of Faith? What relation does it have to the Presbyterian Church?
5. How was the name "Presbyterian" derived for this particular denomination?

6. Briefly describe the organization of the Presbyterian Church.
7. How does the modern Presbyterian Church differ from traditional Presbyterianism?
8. What is modernism? What are some of its teachings and views? How has it impacted the Presbyterian Church?
9. What is the “Apostles’ Creed?” What is its relation to the Presbyterian Church?
10. Why is the name “Presbyterian Church” unscriptural?

The Episcopal Church

Introduction

1. The Protestant Episcopal Church in America is known in other countries as the Church of England or the Anglican Church.
2. This denomination originated in England during the first half of the 16th century.
3. It was, and still remains, very similar in teaching and practice to the Roman Catholic Church.

I. The Origin of the Episcopal Church

A. The historical background of its origin.

1. In the year 1501, a Spanish princess, Catherine of Aragon, married Arthur, Prince of Wales.
 - d. This union was arranged by the Pope (Pope Julius II) to strengthen an alliance between Spain and England.
 - e. Arthur died four months after the wedding so Spain insisted that the widow marry Henry, her husband's successor as Prince of Wales.
 - 1) Henry (1491-1547) was Arthur's brother and, according to Catholic doctrine, a union of this kind was sinful.
 - 2) Pope Julius II, nevertheless, granted his permission and the marriage took place.
2. Henry ascended to the throne of England in 1509 as King Henry VIII ruling from 1509 to 1547.
 - a. At first his reign was harmonious with the Catholic Church.
 - 1) He strongly opposed the doctrines of Luther at this time.
 - 2) So strong was his opposition to Lutheranism that the Pope, being pleased with his work, bestowed on him the title "Defender of the Faith."
 - b. Circumstances arose which caused him to rebel against the Catholic Church.
3. As years passed, Henry became preoccupied with the fact that no son had been born to Catherine thus no male heir to the throne.
 - a. He believed that God was punishing him for his sin of being in an immoral relationship, according to Catholic doctrine, by withholding a male heir.
 - b. In 1527 he requested the Pope, Clement VII, to annul his marriage and allow him to marry Ann Boleyn.
 - c. The Pope refused to grant him the annulment because Clement VII thought too much of the power of Charles V, King of Spain and uncle of Catherine.
4. Henry took his case to the English people and government.
 - a. In 1532 he obtained recognition from the clergy of his place as supreme head of the Church of England.
 - b. He convinced Parliament in 1533 to enact a law which declared that the King of England was "their single protector and only supreme Lord, as far as that is permitted by the law of Christ, the supreme head of the church and of the clergy" and then secretly married Ann Boleyn.
 - c. He was excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church in 1534.

- B. Parliament, in the Act of Supremacy in 1534, officially began the Church of England and made the King head of the Anglican church.
 - 1. Henry severed the relationship with the Catholic Church in Rome and the Pope.
 - 2. During the reign of Edward VI, son of Henry VIII, the Common Prayer Book and the Forty-Two Articles of Religion were adopted as the creed of the Church of England.

II. The Episcopal Church in America

- A. The Protestant Episcopal Church is the name of “The Self-Governing Branch” of the Anglican Church in America.
 - 1. For the first century and a half of its existence in America it was known as the Church of England and was considered part of the Anglican Church, the state religion of England.
 - 2. As a result of the American Revolution, it became self-governing.
 - 3. In 1783 the name “Protestant Episcopal Church” was adopted.
 - 4. In 1789 a constitution was adopted in Philadelphia and the “Book of Common Prayer” of the Anglican Church was revised for use in America.
- B. “The Protestant Episcopal Church in America, known in other countries as the Church of England, or the Anglican Church, adopted this name at a conference of Episcopal Churches in 1783. The name ‘Protestant’ was included to distinguish her from the Roman Catholic Church; the name ‘Episcopal’ to distinguish her from the Presbyterians and Congregationalists.”
(Handbook of Denominations in the United States, p. 185)

III. The Nature of the Episcopal Church and Its Teachings

- A. In spite of breaking away from Roman Catholicism, much of the organization and many of the teachings of the Anglican Church, and in turn the Episcopal Church, are very similar, if not identical, to the Roman Catholic Church.
 - 1. A clergy-laity distinction.
 - a. The New Testament knows of no distinction.
 - b. The word of God says that all members of the church comprise a “holy priesthood” whose duty is to offer spiritual sacrifices. (1 Pet. 2:5,9)
 - 2. Baptism administered by affusion (pouring).
 - a. The Scriptural mode of baptism is a burial in water. (Acts 8:39; Col. 2:12)
 - b. The Greek word *baptizo*, which has been transliterated into “baptize,” literally means to dip, immerse or plunge thus carrying with it the idea of being completely immersed in water.
 - 3. Transubstantiation.
 - a. This doctrine teaches that the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine literally become the body and blood of Christ in the observance of the Lord’s Supper after thanks is given for it.
 - b. If this doctrine is true:
 - 1) Jesus did not know it for He still called the cup “the fruit of the vine.” (Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25)
 - 2) Paul did not recognize it for he said the substance that was eaten during the Supper was “bread.” (1 Cor. 11:26, 27)

4. The confirmation of children.
 - a. This practice was necessitated by two points of error which this denomination teaches: (1) original sin which necessitated (2) infant baptism.
 - 1) To assure proper indoctrination of children after their baptism, sponsors were appointed to see that each child received proper instruction in the catechism.
 - 2) When the child was old enough, having received enough instruction to establish his own faith, he was then confirmed.
 - b. The New Testament does not authorize the baptism of infants.
 - 1) The one to be baptized must first “believe” (Mark 16:16) and then “repent” (Acts 2:38).
 - 2) The New Testament presents infants as innocent ones who did not need to have sins washed away. (Matt. 18:2-3; Ezek. 18:4)
- B. The Episcopal Church does differ in some doctrines from the Catholic Church. The most noteworthy is in the doctrine of salvation.
 1. The Catholic Church teaches a system of salvation through meritorious works.
 2. The Episcopal Church teaches “salvation by faith only.”
 - a. “...that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.” (*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 605)
 - b. The New Testament teaches justification by faith (Rom. 5:1) but not by “faith only.” (Jas. 2:24)
- C. For the most part, Episcopal priests, thus the Episcopal Church itself, are very liberal in their theology.
 1. Ex-Episcopal Bishop of San Francisco, James A. Pike (deceased), called both the Biblical account of the Garden of Eden and that of the virgin birth of Jesus “myths,” saying of the account of the Garden of Eden, “Yet I do not know a single member of the Anglican Communion—Bishop, Presbyter, Deacon or Layman—who believes this story literally.” (Bill Crews, *Church Origins*, p. 4)
 2. In commenting on his book, *A Church Without God*, published in 1967 in which he denies the divinity of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible and many other fundamentals, Ernest Harrison, an Anglican clergyman from Toronto, Canada, said, “Life has shown us that nobody has the final answers for all time, that we learn from experience and from each other.” (AP News Release, May, 6, 1967)
 3. John Shelby Spong is the Episcopal Bishop of Newark, New Jersey.
 - a. He gained prominence by presenting his liberal view of the Bible while appearing with Jerry Falwell on the “Good Morning America” television program in 1989.
 - b. He has since authored a book entitled *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism*.
 - 1) Of it, he said, “I hold the Bible before my readers seeking boldly to free it from the clutches of mindless literalism.” (Jacket notes)
 - 2) On the jacket notes, the publisher said of this book, “In this provocative best-seller, the outspoken and controversial bishop John Shelby Spong reveals how literal interpretations of Scripture have been used to justify slavery, ban textbooks, deny the rights of gays and lesbians, subordinate women and justify war and revenge.”

- c. In his preface to a book on the letters of the apostle Paul, he wrote, “So to read Paul accurately one must read him as he was, a limited citizen of his century whose life was marked by moments of great spiritual power and by moments of an embarrassingly petty humanity. Paul accepted uncritically, for example, the patriarchal value system of his day that regarded men as created in God’s image and women as a lesser creation who should be subject to their husbands (Col. 3:18). He also asserted that it was ‘shameful’ if women spoke in church (1 Cor. 14:35). As a child of his time he accepted slavery (Philem., Col. 3:22ff). Furthermore, he appears to have accepted the Levitical definition of homosexuality found in the holiness code (Lev. 18:20) as evil and worthy of judgment (Rom. 1:18-32). Each of these attitudes was present inside the prevailing definitions of Paul’s day, and each was part of the pattern of cultural assumptions out of which Paul operated. Those who read Paul today need to appreciate these realities and seek to understand Paul’s genius in terms of the limits of his day and world. No one can finally transcend the time in which he or she lives.” (*The Letters of Paul*, pp. x, xi)

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. How did King Henry VIII get the title “Defender of the Faith?”
2. Why did King Henry VIII become unhappy with the Roman Catholic Church?
3. What was the Act of Supremacy?
4. How does the Episcopal Church differ from the Church of England or Anglican Church?
5. What are some of the doctrines that both the Roman Catholic Church and the Episcopal Church have in common?
6. How does the New Testament condemn the distinction between a clergy and laity?
7. How does the New Testament condemn the doctrine of confirmation of children?
8. How do the teachings of the Episcopal Church differ from those of the Roman Catholic Church on the doctrine of salvation?
9. What does the New Testament teach about the doctrine of salvation by “faith only?”
10. What does it mean to be “liberal” in theology?

The Methodist Church

Introduction

1. Although John Wesley lived and died in the Episcopal Church, he founded a large and popular denomination—the Methodist Church.
2. There are some twenty Methodist denominations in the United States today.
3. The Methodist church had its beginning in the early part of the eighteenth century as part of the Protestant Reformation Movement.

I. The Origin and History of the Methodist Church

- A. The origin of Methodism according to the Methodist Church.
 1. The Methodist Church did not start as an independent denominational body but “had its origin within the Church of England.” (*The Doctrines and Disciplines of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1948*, p. 3)
 2. ““In 1729 two young men in England, reading the Bible saw they could not be saved without holiness, followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737 they saw likewise, that men are justified before they are sanctified; but still holiness was their object. God then thrust them out to raise a holy people’. This was the rise of Methodism, as given in the words of its founders, John and Charles Wesley, of Oxford University, and Presbyters of the Church of England.” (*The Doctrines and Disciplines of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1908*, p. 15)
- B. The founder of the Methodist Church was John Wesley (1703-1791), a preacher in the Church of England. (Ibid)
 1. John Wesley was born in the rectory at Epworth, Lincolnshire, in 1703 and educated at Charterhouse School and Christ Church, University of Oxford.
 2. He was the fifteenth child of British clergyman Samuel Wesley.
 3. He was ordained deacon in 1725 and admitted to the priesthood of the Church of England in 1728.
- C. In 1729, while at Oxford, he, along with his brother Charles, joined a group of students which included George Whitefield, the founder of Calvinistic Methodism, who had formed a “Holy Club.”
 1. The purpose of the club was to read the New Testament in Greek with the idea of trying to conform their ideas and behavior to the teaching of the New Testament.
 2. They had no intention of starting a new denomination but were rather protesting the formality, coldness, indifference and ungodliness in the Church of England.
 3. They arranged a daily schedule of activities—setting hours for visiting the sick and those in prison, praying aloud three times a day, etc.
 4. This group was given nicknames by other students such as “Bible Moths,” “Bible Bigots,” and “Holy Club.” But because the club members adhered strictly and methodically to religious precepts and practices, they were derisively called “Methodists”—the name which they adopted.
- D. From c. 1735 to 1738, John Wesley did mission work in the state of Georgia.
 1. While sailing to America, he met some German Moravians whose simple piety greatly impressed him.
 2. He continued to associate with the Moravians while in Georgia and even translated some of their hymns into English.

- E. Upon his return to England in 1738, Wesley sought out the Moravians.
1. While attending one of their meetings in Aldersgate Street, London, on May 24, 1738, he experienced a “religious awakening” that profoundly convinced him that salvation was possible for every man through faith in Jesus Christ alone.
 2. In describing this experience, Wesley said: “I felt my heart strangely warmed; I felt that I did trust in Christ, in Christ alone for salvation and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine and saved me from the law of sin and death.”
 3. Some view this “experience” as the beginning of the Methodist Church. “The Methodist Church is young, barely two hundred years old. It was born in 1738 when John Wesley’s heart was strangely warmed at Aldersgate in London, England.” (James S. Chubb, *The Methodist Church*)
 4. Wesley parted with the Moravians in 1740 because of doctrinal disagreements. (Note: he also rejected the Calvinist doctrine of *predestination* thus breaking ties with Whitefield)
- F. On May 1, 1739, Wesley and a group of his followers, meeting in a shop on West Street in London, formed the first Methodist society. Two similar organizations were established in Bristol in the same month.
- G. In 1742, the societies were divided into classes with a leader for each class.
- H. In 1744, Wesley called the first conference of Methodist leaders and conferences were held annually thereafter.
- J. Wesley discarded many tenets of the Church of England but he never voiced any intention of establishing the movement as a new church.
- K. In 1784 Wesley issued the deed of declaration which provided rules and regulations for the guidance of the Methodist societies.
- L. Also in 1784, he appointed his aide, Thomas Coke, an Anglican clergyman, as superintendent of the Methodist organization in the United States empowering him to administer the sacraments.
1. Other ordinations followed. Such ordinations represented the biggest step in the direction of a break with the Anglican Church.
 2. The separation did not take place until after Wesley’s death.
- M. The Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States had its beginning when the Christian Conference convened in Baltimore on December 24, 1784.
1. At this conference, the Book of Discipline prepared by Wesley was adopted which cut the 39 Articles of the Episcopal Church down to 24 Articles then added one to cover the church rulers in the United States.
 2. The Apostles’ Creed, inherited by the Episcopal Church from the Catholic Church, was also brought into the Methodist form of worship.
- N. Major divisions and unions within the Methodist Church.
1. Two notable divisions.
 - a. In 1828, a group separated over the “insistence of lay representation” becoming known as the Methodist Protestant Church.
 - b. In 1844 there was another division over the slavery issue and “a constitutional issue over the powers of the General Conference versus the episcopacy.” (*Methodist Discipline, 1948, p. 6*)
 2. Two notable unions.
 - a. In 1939 three main divisions—The Methodist Episcopal Church; The Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and the Methodist Protestant Church—united to form the Methodist Church.
 - b. In 1968 the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church became the United Methodist Church.

II. The Organization of the Methodist Church

- A. “The Methodist Church has an ecclesiastical form of government, something like the Roman Catholic Church. Bishops make decisions and these are imposed upon the Methodist Church...” (Earl Robertson, “The Methodist Church,” *Denominationalism*, p. 12)
- B. The Methodist Church is organized into local congregations they call “charges.”
 - 1. Trustees manage property interests and stewards handle finances and guide in spiritual matters.
 - 2. The “Pastor” for each charge is appointed by the “Bishop” at the annual conference.
- C. The government of the Methodist Church is invested in conferences.
 - 1. Quarterly Conference. Meets in a local charge.
 - 2. District Conference. Meets annually if authorized by the Annual Conference.
 - 3. Annual Conference. Covers a defined geographical area.
 - 4. Jurisdictional Conference. Meets every four years and its main function is to elect Bishops.
 - 5. General Conference. Meets every four years and is the law-making body of the Methodist Church.

III. Some Doctrines, Teachings and Views of the Methodist Church

- A. “The Methodist Church is a church of Christ in which ‘the pure word of God is preached and the Sacraments duly administered.’” (*Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, N.B. Harmon, ed., p. 3)
 - 1. The name “Methodist” is not in the Bible.
 - 2. The word “sacraments” is not in the Bible but even if it were, the Methodist Church does not “duly administer” them according to the Bible.
 - a. The Methodist Church believes in two sacraments: baptism and the Lord’s Supper. (R. Sockman, “What Is a Methodist?”, *Religions of America*, p. 82)
 - b. The Methodist Church has a number of erroneous views on baptism and it does not observe the Lord’s Supper on a weekly basis as authorized by the New Testament (Acts 20:7) but rather observes it quarterly.
- B. “Let every adult person, and the parents of every child to be baptized, have the choice of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.” (*Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, p. 410)
 - 1. Baptism is an immersion or “burial” in and “raising up” from water. (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12)
 - 2. There was and is only “one baptism.” (Eph. 4:5)
- C. “The baptism of infants” is justified on the basis Jesus said, “Suffer the children to come to me.” (*Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, Art. 1910, pp. 470-474)
 - 1. Baptism is not under consideration in Matthew 18. Infants were never baptized in the first century.
 - 2. Their practice of infant baptism is difficult for Methodists to explain.
 - a. They changed their view on Total Hereditary Depravity in 1910. They no longer believe that children are born in sin. Compare page 349 of *The Discipline, 1908* with page 470 of *The Discipline, 1948*.
 - 1) “Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin...” (*The Discipline, 1908*, p. 349)
 - 2) “Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are heirs of eternal life...” (*The Discipline, 1948*, p. 470)
 - b. There seems to be no logical basis, even in Methodist doctrine, for the baptism of infants.

- D. The Methodist Discipline gives rules, doctrines, and regulations governing all procedures and affairs of the church, and all ministers are obligated to observe “every part” of it in their districts. (*Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, Art. 362, p. 108)
1. The Scriptures constitute God’s only authorized guide for the church. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
 2. Nothing is to be added to nor taken away from the word of God. (Rev. 22:18-19)
 3. No other doctrine, principle, precept, commandment, procedure or policy is to be taught by man or angel other than that which was given to the apostles. (Gal. 1:8-9)
- E. The complex organization of the Methodist Church with all its conferences, powers and duties are set forth in the Discipline. (*Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, Art. 4, p. 10)
1. The church of Christ seen in the New Testament had no ecclesiastical governing bodies.
 2. Each local congregation in the New Testament was independent of all others with Christ alone as its head. (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23)
- F. No member of the Methodist Church may preach without a license. (*Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, Art. 302, p. 91)
1. The responsibility of the great commission is upon every Christian. (Matt. 28:18-20)
 2. In the New Testament, every Christian was involved in preaching. (Acts 8:4)
- G. Women may engage in the ministry of preaching except as traveling evangelists. (*Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, Art. 313, p. 94)
1. This is without any Scriptural precedent or authority.
 2. The New Testament does not allow women to serve as preachers in a public way. (1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:12)
- H. The term “reverend” is applied to Methodist ministers. (*Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, Art. 414, p. 119)
1. No man is to wear any religious title.
 2. “Reverent” is used only once in the Bible and there it is applied to God. (Psa. 111:9)
- J. The doctrine of “justification of faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort.” (*Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, Art. 9)
1. This doctrine stands opposed to the plain teaching of James 2:14-26.
 2. Faith only gives one the “right,” the possibility, to become a child of God. (John 1:12)
- K. “The forgiveness of sins and the new life must come before the administration of baptism ...The Methodist Church regards water baptism as a church ordinance, and not essential to salvation.” (Cullen T. Carter, *Methodist Doctrinal Beliefs*, pp. 9,15)
1. Baptism is for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38)
 2. Baptism is to enter Christ. (Gal. 3:27)
 3. Being born of water and the Spirit is essential to enter the kingdom of heaven. (John 3:3-5)
 4. Sins are washed away at baptism. (Acts 22:16)
 5. Baptism is into Christ’s death and puts one in His body. (Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:20)
 6. Baptism now saves us. (1 Pet. 3:21)
- L. In instructing the minister not to perform a marriage ceremony for a divorced person whose husband or wife is still living and unmarried, the Discipline then says, “but this rule will *not* apply to the innocent person when it is clearly established by competent testimony that the true cause for divorce was adultery or ***other vicious conditions*** which through mental or physical peril invalidated the marriage vow.” (*The Discipline, 1948*, pp. 107)
1. The New Testament only allows one condition for divorce and remarriage—sexual immorality. (Matt. 5:32; 19:9)
 2. In allowing other causes, Methodism has added to the word of God (Rev. 22:18-19).

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. From what other denomination did the Methodist Church originate?
2. Who is considered the founder of the Methodist Church? Instead of starting a new denomination, what was his original intention?
3. What influence did the Moravians have on John Wesley?
4. When and how did the Methodist Episcopal Church have its beginning in America?
5. What denominations united to make up what is known today as the United Methodist Church?
6. Briefly describe the government and organization of the Methodist Church?
7. What does the Methodist Church teach as to the proper mode of baptism? What does the Bible teach on this subject?
8. What significant doctrine was changed by the Methodist Church in 1910? What effects did this have on their teachings?
9. What does the Methodist Church teach as to the essentiality of baptism? What does the Bible teach on this subject?
10. What is the stance of the Methodist Church as to women preachers? What does the Bible teach on this subject?

The Baptist Church

Introduction

1. The Baptist church is one of the largest and most influential protestant denominations in the world.
2. Today there are more than twenty (about ten major divisions) Baptist denominations.
3. The Baptist church had its beginning in the early part of the seventeenth century as part of the Protestant Reformation Movement.

I. The Origin and History of the Baptist Church

- A. "The first regularly organized Baptist Church of which we possess any account is dated from 1607, and was formed in London by a Mr. Smyth, who had been a clergyman of the Church of England. It was formed on the principles of the 'General Baptist.' In the year 1633 the first Particular Baptist Church was formed in London under Mr. Spilsbury." (David Benedict, *History of Baptists*, p. 304)
 1. Smyth was not satisfied with his infant baptism.
 2. "Some contend Smyth re-baptized himself by pouring water on himself while others contend he was baptized by John Morton in 1606 in the Don River at midnight." (*Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, p. 2202)
- B. General Baptists versus Particular Baptists.
 1. "The difference was small. Smyth is regarded as the founder of the General Baptists of England, which are Armenian in doctrine and 'close,' or 'restricted,' in communion; while the Particular Baptist are, for the most part, Calvinistic in doctrine and open in communion." (*Story of the Baptist*, Cook, p. 2)
 2. The Particular Baptists originated in 1633 and began the practice of immersion in 1641.
 - a. They suffered many persecutions and were nick-named "Anabaptists" and "Cantabaptists."
 - b. In 1689 the act of Toleration passed by Parliament gave them religious liberty.
- C. The first Baptist Church was organized in America by Roger Williams and Ezekiel Holliman in Providence, Rhode Island in March 1639.
 1. Holliman baptized Williams. Williams then baptized Holliman and several others.
 2. Holliman had apparently been a member of Williams' church at Salem before he baptized Williams.
- D. The name "Baptist."
 1. "That the name Baptist first came into use shortly after 1641, is another evidence of the fact in question...Henceforth, they were called 'baptized Christians' par excellence, and in due time Baptists. The earliest instance in which this name occurs as a denominational designation, so far as information goes, befell in the year 1644...The name Baptist was in 1644 first claimed by our people. They have claimed it ever since." (W.H. Whelsitt, *A Question of Baptist History*, pp. 92-93)
 2. "The word, Baptists, as the descriptive name of a body of Christians, was first used in English Literature, so far as is now known, in the year 1644...the name Baptists seems to have been first published in 'The Moderate Baptist.' The first official use of the name is in 'The Baptist Catechism' issued by the authority of the Assembly ...There had been no such churches before, and hence there was no need of the name...The history of the

- Baptist churches cannot be carried, by the scientific method, farther back than the year 1611, when the first Anabaptist church consisting wholly of Englishmen was founded in Amsterdam by John Smith, the Se-Baptist. This is not, strictly speaking a Baptist church, but it was the direct progenitor of churches in England that a few years later became Baptist, and therefore the history begins.” (V.C. Vedder, *Short History of the Baptists*, pp. 3-4)
3. The name “Baptist” was not at first adopted by them.
 - a. “They preferred to be known as Brethren, Disciples of Christ, Christians or Believers.” (A.H. Newman, *History of the Baptist Churches in the United States*, p. 1)
 - b. “The name ‘Baptist’ was first claimed in 1644, and these people have worn it ever since.” (Whelsitt, 93)

II. The Church and Creeds

- A. Generally, Baptists today have no confession of faith and are congregational in their form of government.
 1. In their earlier history they did follow human creeds and they required each congregation to subscribe to them.
 2. Church Manuals, as those written by J.M. Pendleton and John T. Hiscox, while not as rigidly enforced as similar works in some denominations, are still to be submitted to by those who become members. Members are expected to “yield substantial agreement.” (*Hiscox Standard Manual for Baptist Churches*, p. 56)
- B. “These over-all doctrines have never been written by Baptists into any official Baptist creed for all their churches, but they have been incorporated in two very important confessions of faith for the denomination. The Baptist churches of London wrote a Philadelphia Confession in the year 1689, and this confession was enlarged by the Philadelphia Association in 1742. The New Hampshire State Baptist Convention drew up another famous confession in 1832. The older Philadelphia Confession is strongly Calvinistic in statement; the New Hampshire Confession, only moderately so.” (Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, p. 34)
 1. The first confession was actually written in London in 1677 but was not adopted until the Particular Baptists did so in 1689.
 2. The mildly Calvinistic New Hampshire Confession which was written by J. Newton Brown, is the most popular confession among Baptists.

III. Some Doctrines, Teachings and Views of the Baptist Church

- A. Members who are received into fellowship “are not required to subscribe or pledge con-formity to any creedform, but are expected to yield substantial agreement to that which the church with which they unite has adopted.” (*Hiscox*, *ibid.*)
 1. The Scriptures alone tell one how to behave in the house of God, the church. (1 Tim. 3:14-17)
 2. Why should the “church” adopt or subscribe to a man-made creed and its members be expected to agree with it? (Matt. 15:7-9; Rev. 22:18-19)
- B. Divine election, predestination.
 1. “Baptists are decidedly Calvinistic. A person is dead in sin and cannot do one thing to rescue himself. If one is saved, it is because God elected to save him from be-fore the foundation of the world.” (*Hiscox*, 57)

2. Scriptures which refute this teaching.
 - a. God does not will that any perish. (2 Pet. 3:9)
 - b. God would have all saved. (1 Tim. 2:3-4)
 - c. Christ saves *all* who obey. (Heb. 5:8-9)
 - d. God is no respecter of persons. (Col. 3:25)
- C. Eternal security.
 1. "We believe that such only are real believers as endure to the end." (J.M. Pendleton, *Church Manual Designed for Use of Baptist Churches*, p. 54)
 2. "Such as are truly regenerate will not utterly fall away." (*Hiscox*, 67)
 3. Scriptures which refute this teaching.
 - a. Simon the sorcerer believed and was baptized and continued for a time. (Acts 8:13)
 - b. Though once saved, some were later lost. (Heb. 6:1-6)
 - c. One can fall from grace. (Gal. 5:4)
 - d. The apostle Paul knew that he could be lost. (1 Cor. 9:27)
 - e. One must continue in the word in order to be saved. (John 8:31)
- D. The church was established during the days of John the Baptist.
 1. "I *will* build My church." (Matt. 16:18)
 2. The kingdom came with power on the Day of Pentecost. (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Mark 9:1; Acts 2:1-4) John was already dead. (Matt. 14:10-12; 11:11)
- E. Salvation by faith only.
 1. "...solely through faith." (*Hiscox*, 62)
 2. Scriptures which refute this teaching.
 - a. Faith without works is dead. (Jas. 2:17-24,26)
 - b. Faith only saves when it *works* through love. (Gal. 5:6)
 - c. Faith + baptism = salvation. (Mark 16:16)
- F. Errors on baptism.
 1. Baptism is "not essential to salvation." (*Hiscox*, 20)
 2. One must be baptized to enter the Baptist Church making it a "church ordinance." (Pendleton, 65, 90)
 3. "One must relate an 'experience' then the membership votes whether to receive the new member and allow him to be baptized." (Pendleton, 17, 103)
 4. Scriptures which refute these teachings.
 - a. Baptism precedes salvation. (Mark 16:16)
 - b. Baptism is for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38)
 - c. Baptism is to enter Christ. (Gal. 3:27)
 - d. Being born of water and the Spirit is essential to enter the kingdom of heaven. (John 3:3-5)
 - e. Sins are washed away at baptism. (Acts 22:16)
 - f. Baptism is into Christ's death and puts one in His body. (Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:20)
- G. The use of instruments of music in worship. There is no Scriptural authority for such.
- H. The name "Baptist Church." There is no Scriptural authority for such.

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What is the first Baptist Church of which there is record? Who started it? Why was it started?

2. Who started the first Baptist Church in America? When and where did it originate?
3. When was the name “Baptist” first used? When was it officially adopted as a designation for this denomination?
4. Does the Baptist Church have any official creed? What is required of members as to confessions of faith and adherence to the peculiar doctrines of the Baptist Church?
5. Is the Baptist Church Calvinistic in its teachings? Cite evidence to support your answer.
6. When do Baptists believe the church was established? Who do they believe established it? What does the Bible teach on this matter?
7. What is the Baptist doctrine of “eternal security?” What does the Bible teach on this subject?
8. What does the Baptist Church as to when the sinner is saved? What does the Bible teach on this subject?
9. What are some erroneous views that the Baptist Church has on baptism?
10. What kind of “experience” must be related by a candidate for membership in the Baptist Church? Why must such an experience be related? What does the Bible teach on this matter?

The Christian Church

Introduction

1. The term “Christian Church” denotes two separate religious bodies.
 - a. What we commonly think of as the Christian Church is the liberal branch known as the Disciples of Christ.
 - b. The other segment never uses the designation Disciples of Christ but is sometimes referred to as the conservative or independent Christian Church. Some of their congregations wear the designation “Church of Christ.”
2. Both bodies evolved from a nineteenth-century division in the ranks of what is known as the Restoration Movement.
3. The liberals are represented by their International Convention and its auxiliary United Christian Missionary Society while the conservatives have their North American Christian Convention.
4. The bulk of the membership is located in the Midwestern states of Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky and Missouri. Membership statistics still reflect the situation as it existed at the time of the original division during Restoration times—the South tended to be more conservative, the North more liberal.

I. The History of the Christian Church

- A. The history of the Christian Church is difficult to recount in specific terms because, like Catholicism, it evolved gradually.
- B. The Restoration Movement from which the Christian Church developed was not begun as a denomination.
 1. It was an effort to observe New Testament principles toward the end that the church as found in the New Testament might exist on earth again—unencumbered by sectarian creeds and traditional practices.
 2. But after the Restoration Movement had achieved great numerical and spiritual success for about fifty years, new attitudes among leaders resulted in several changes.
- C. The changing attitudes of leaders in the Restoration Movement brought changes which smacked of denominationalism.
 1. Preachers became pastors and assumed the title of “Reverend.”
 2. Instrumental music was added to the worship.
 3. Meeting houses became sanctuaries.
 4. Various sub-church organizations sprang up with offices unknown to the New Testament.
 5. The church extended its domain to the areas of recreation, entertainment and social welfare.
 6. A brotherhood-wide society was established to facilitate the preaching of the gospel.
- D. Somewhere in the period from 1850 to around 1890 the modern Christian Church was born.
- E. By 1906 the Christian Church was recognized as a body distinct from the churches of Christ which had rejected the various innovations listed above.
- F. Now nearly all among the liberal element, the Disciples of Christ, will admit to being a denomination. The characteristics of a denomination are in place.
 1. A headquarters in Indianapolis with a brotherhood publishing house in St. Louis.
 2. Recognition of “sister-denominations.”
 3. Organization into districts with conventions, pastors-at-large, and brotherhood-wide institutions, etc.

- G. The conservative element of the Christian Church disavows the United Christian Missionary Society but has developed a less tightly organized, less authoritative society of their own.
1. They tend to include fewer denominational practices than their more modernistic brethren.
 2. They are united with the liberal element in favor of the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship.

II. Creed and Government of the Christian Church

- A. The Christian Church claims to have no creed but Christ and the New Testament. Yet, they believe each member has liberty to decide on his own interpretation of the Bible.
1. This liberty is more restricted than some realize by the influence of the International Convention and its policies.
 2. Churches are “autonomous” until they decide to leave the Convention or oppose its position. Preachers are at “liberty” to teach their own convictions until they accuse the Christian Church of error.
- B. It would be more accurate to say that rather than the New Testament, the true creed of the Christian Church is the general beliefs of the Christian Church as defined by their leaders in the conventions.

III. Some Basic Errors of the Christian Church

- A. An improper view of how Bible authority is established.
1. The division of the nineteenth-century centered on two major controversies:
 - a. Whether or not churches could build and maintain organizations separate from the local church for the purpose of preaching the gospel.
 - b. Whether or not mechanical instruments of music could be used to accompany singing in worship.
 - c. Local churches, following 1859, began to line up and brand each other as “anti” (conservative) or “digressive” (liberal).
 2. The real problem in the above controversies and all the innovations which led to the Christian Church was an improper understanding and application of Bible authority—whether or not it is right to engage in practices not authorized by God.
 3. The Christian Church says that where the Bible is silent they may act.
 - a. This attitude led to the introduction of countless practices found in denominationalism but not found in Scripture. Members of the church of Christ are highly mistaken when they think that the use of instruments of music in worship is the only difference between them and the Christian church.
 - b. This attitude has opened the gates to a flood of innovations that seems to know no bounds: Baby-blessing, candle-lighting, clerical vestments, local church organization along the lines of civil government, proposed mergers with denominations, etc.
- B. The missionary society.
1. The Bible recognizes no “super-organization” to control preaching or benevolence.
 2. The local church is the only provision God made for collective activity among Christians. Through the local church, and the pattern provided for it, Christians may work together to accomplish all of God’s purposes.
- C. Instrumental music in the worship of the church.
1. No passage of New Testament Scripture which speaks of the present age remotely hints at mechanical instruments of music in worship.

2. Every verse which deals with music as worship specifies singing as the act acceptable with God.

Conclusion

No authority has been found for the missionary society, the inclusion of the instrument of music in the worship of the church or for any other innovation of the Christian Church.

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. What two religious groups are identified by the term “Christian Church?”
2. From what did both of the above bodies evolve?
3. Why is it difficult to recount the history of the Christian Church in specific terms?
4. What changes in attitudes among some Restoration Movement leaders precipitated the development of the Christian Church?
5. What are some characteristics of the Christian Church which identify it as a denomination?
6. Describe the “liberty” and the limits of it that the Christian Church grants to its:
 - d. Individual congregations.
 - e. Members.
 - f. Preachers.
7. What two major controversies led to the division of the 19th century in the Restoration Movement?
8. What erroneous view does the Christian Church have of Scriptural authority?
9. Why is a missionary society a violation of Biblical authority?
10. Is the name “Christian Church” a proper designation for the church? Explain your answer.

Seventh-Day Adventism

Introduction

1. Six present-day denominations exist as the fruit of the “Adventist Movement” inaugurated by William Miller.
 - a. They are the Advent Christian Church, Church of God, Churches of God in Jesus Christ, Evangelical Adventists, Life and Advent Union and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.
 - b. The two largest are “The Seventh-Day Adventist Church” and the “Advent Christian Church.”
2. The Seventh-Day Adventist denomination should never be considered as a small, insignificant group. It is an international denomination whose institutions and programs of work in relation to its size exceed those of most religious bodies today.
3. The very name, *Seventh-Day Adventist*, defines the two foundation principles of this denomination.
 - a. “Seventh-day” refers to their teachings on the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath.
 - b. “Adventist” refers to their views concerning the imminent return of Christ.

I. The Origin and History of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church

- A. Adventism had its origin in Massachusetts in 1831 under the leadership of William Miller.
 1. Miller was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, February 15, 1782, and was living in Low Hampton, New York, in 1831.
 2. He was “a reputable farmer, a good soldier and captain in the War of 1812, apparently an outstanding citizen.” (John H. Gerstner, *The Theology of the Major Sects*, p. 19)
 3. At first he was a rather earnest normal member of a local Baptist church.
 - a. He was influenced by friends who were skeptics which caused him to become a deist.
 - b. After he had found his religious faith again he became a Baptist minister and he applied himself very earnestly to a study of the Bible, utilizing every spare moment for 16 years with his Bible and concordance.
 4. His intense study resulted in his calculations about obscure prophetic predictions which led him to believe and teach the imminent return of Christ.
 5. In 1833 Miller began to preach the end of the world was at hand publishing a pamphlet entitled “Evidences from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ about the year 1843, and of His Personal Reign of One Thousand Years.”
- B. By 1840 Adventism was under way as a significant religious movement among the people of the churches.
 1. In that year the influential Adventist periodical, *The Signs of the Times*, first appeared to spread the imminency message far and wide.
 2. The number of preachers and lecturers of the message that Christ was to return in 1843 had increased to the point that they became a loose organization which is always the first step toward a new sect.
 3. On October 13, 1840, a conference was held at the Chardon Street Chapel in Boston by “Reverend” Joshua V. Himes.
 4. Great camp meetings began to characterize the ever widening reach of the Adventist movement.

- C. William Miller set the exact date for the return of Christ to be during the year of March 21, 1842 to March 21, 1843.
1. People left their farms and businesses unattended, sold their property, etc., in anticipation of Christ's coming.
 2. When this prophecy failed, he said his mistake was that he had followed the Hebrew rather than the Roman chronology.
 3. Miller said that he had missed the date by one year and that Jesus would come on October 22, 1844.
 4. When the 1844 date failed, he reset it for 1845. The third failure fragmented his followers and left him a disappointed failure.
 5. Though some followers deserted the ranks, others made explanations and found loopholes for the failures while continuing to doggedly embrace the principles of Adventism and follow its leaders.
- D. In spite of Miller's failures, a sizable group met in Albany, New York on April 29, 1845 and formed the "American Millerite Association."
1. Some later formed the "Evangelical Adventist," a group that has dwindled away.
 2. In 1861, under the leadership of Jonathan Cummings, the "Advent Christian Church" was organized.
- E. In 1846, the wife of Elder James White, the former Ellen G. Harmon, became the leader of the Seventh-Day branch of Adventism.
1. She, supposedly, began to have dreams which she regarded as having divine significance.
 - a. Her first vision came in 1844 where she saw the Adventists marching straight to heaven.
 - b. She claimed to have such visions until her death in 1915.
 2. She reinterpreted Miller's calculations in order to show they did, in reality, to come to pass.
 - a. She wrote, "I have seen that the 1843 chart was directed by the hand of the Lord, and that it should not be altered; that the figures were as he wanted them; that his hand was over and hid the mistake in some of the figures." (*Early Writings*, 64)
 - b. "I saw that God was in the proclamation of the time 1843." (Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gift*, Vol. I, p. 133)
 - c. She transferred the fulfillment from earth, where it clearly did not occur, to heaven, where she could claim that it did.
 - d. While Miller always attempted to ground his teachings on his exposition of the Bible, she went beyond the Bible and based much of her teaching on her numerous revelations.
- F. Where Miller admitted his mistakes, Ellen G. White denied any error claiming her teachings were the word of God. Her writings were called *Testimonies*.
1. "It is God and not an erring mortal, that has spoken." (*Testimonies*, Vol. III, p. 347)
 2. To oppose her was "not fighting against us, but against God." (op.cit., p. 260)
 3. "In these letters which I write, in the testimonies that I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my ideas. They are what God opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne." (*Testimony No. 31*, p. 63)
 4. "If you lessen the confidence of God's people in the testimonies he has sent them (i.e., Ellen G. White's writings—GT), you are rebelling against God as certainly were Kora, Dathan, and Abiram." (*Testimony No. 31*, p. 62)
 5. Her opus work was *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*.

G. Through the efforts of Ellen G. White and her husband, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church was organized.

1. Headquarters were set up in Battle Creek, Michigan in 1855.
2. In 1860 the name “Seventh-Day Adventist” was officially adopted.
3. In 1903 the headquarters were moved to Washington, D.C.

H. Ellen G. White and her husband championed the idea of observing the Sabbath of the Old Testament.

1. William Miller always taught that the day of worship was the first day of the week.
2. Mrs. White claimed to have had a dream in which she saw a halo around the fourth commandment which she interpreted as meaning that people were not keeping the Sabbath and that this was God’s way of showing it was to be kept in this age.

J. The history of Seventh-Day Adventism as viewed from their perspective.

“In the 1840s large numbers of people in all religious groups in America and Europe became deeply absorbed in the doctrine of Christ’s return. This interest was sparked by prophetic time references in Daniel and elsewhere in Scripture. Followers of William Miller, then a licensed Baptist minister, set a definite time for the event, but their predictions soon proved unfounded.

“Among those disappointed at that time, one group carefully and prayerfully restudied the prophecies and came to the conclusion that they indicated another event in the course of Christianity—the beginning of the final judgment and that Christ’s coming was still future.

“This group organized in 1863 as the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Their work is to continue the task begun in Reformation times, to help reillumine principles tarnished or forgotten during Christianity’s long and tortuous history. Basing their faith and practice wholly on the Bible, the Adventist church is a closely knit, worldwide, Christian organization with specialized departments, a trained and ordained clergy, and a sound system of finance.” (*A Quick Look at Seventh-Day Adventists*, p.5)

II. Some Doctrines, Teachings and Views of Seventh-Day Adventism

(Note: All of the following is taken verbatim from *A Quick Look at Seventh-Day Adventists*, an official publication of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, pp. 2-6)

- A. “**THE SECOND COMING** of Christ is near according to the Bible. Current conditions on earth are fast fulfilling Bible prophecy. This coming, not man-made forces, will mark the end of the world. But no man can know when this event will be. His coming will be literal, physical, visible to all mankind simultaneously. It is carefully described in Scripture as well as the signs of its proximity. Matthew 24; 2 Timothy 2:3-5; Revelation 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).”
- B. “**JESUS CHRIST**, the Son of God, pre-existed with God the Father, for our sake was born of a virgin, lived as a man among men, died on the cross as a complete atonement for our sins, rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven. By His perfect life, man may be saved from eternal death. John 3:16-17.”
- C. “**THE RESURRECTION** of the righteous dead takes place at the coming of Christ. These righteous ones who have been asleep in the grave come forth from their resting place and with the righteous living are caught up to heaven with Christ. Those who have rejected salvation are destroyed at this time by the brightness of Christ’s coming. They and the wicked dead will be resurrected when Christ returns to cleanse the earth at the end of the millennium. They will be forever destroyed by fire when the Holy City is established upon earth and made new. 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17. Revelation 20 and 21.”

- D. “**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS** are a perpetual law for Christian living. Different from the old ceremonial law, which pointed to Christ’s death on the cross, the Ten Commandments present man’s responsibility to God (the first four) and to his fellowman (the last six). By observing this law, man demonstrates his respect and love for God. John 14:21; Exodus 20:3-17; Revelation 14:12.”
- E. “**THE SEVENTH DAY** is the Sabbath. Adventists believe that both the Old and New Testaments point to the sacredness of the seventh-day, a memorial to God’s creative power, a sign of His authority. Adventists observe the Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday, the seventh in the cycle of the days of creation. Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11.”
- F. “**BAPTISM BY IMMERSION** is a Biblical figure of the burial of ‘the old man of sin’ and a resurrection of the new man reborn in Christ. Baptism is a rite reserved for those of sufficient maturity to understand its meaning. Matthew 3:13-17.”
- G. “**THE BIBLE** is the inspired word of God. Both the Old and New Testaments reveal Christ and are taken as the base of all doctrines. These inspired messages were given man by inspiration as ‘holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’ 2 Peter 1:21.”
- H. “**SIMPLICITY OF LIVING.** The Bible describes man as ‘the temple of God’ (1 Corinthians 3:16,17) and warns that this temple should not be defiled. For this reason the church teaches that one should not abuse his body by intemperate living or by partaking of that which is injurious to the body or dulls the mind. Its members abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and other narcotics. Through a vigorous narcotics education program, the church also reaches out to help others break addiction to these narcotics.”
- J. “**VEGETARIAN DIET.** Man’s original diet in Eden did not include meat. His digestive system was designed for the ingestion of vegetables, grains, and fruits rather than flesh foods. Seventh-day Adventists believe that the best diet is still the meatless diet, using vegetable proteins instead of the protein derived from meat which may contain disease. The church’s interest in nonmeat protein dishes has contributed to a burgeoning health-food industry in several countries.”

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. How does the name “Seventh-Day Adventist” define the two foundation principles of the denomination?
2. Who was William Miller? How is he connected to Adventism?
3. Why was 1840 a significant year in the Adventist movement?
4. What date did William Miller originally set for the return of Christ? What reason did he give for his failure? What did he do with this failure? What were the ultimate results?
5. Who was Ellen G. White? What office did she hold in relation to Adventism?
6. What was Ellen G. White’s attitude toward the calculations of William Miller?

7. What claim did Ellen G. White make in reference to her teachings and writings?
8. What was Ellen G. White's reason for teaching that the Sabbath of the Old Testament is to be observed today?
9. What do Seventh-Day Adventists describe as simplicity of living? Why do they advocate this position?
10. What do Seventh-Day Adventists teach in reference to the following subjects?
 - a. The Second Coming.
 - b. Jesus Christ.
 - c. The resurrection of the dead.
 - d. The Ten Commandments.
 - e. The Seventh-Day Sabbath.
 - f. Baptism.
 - g. The Bible.
 - h. Vegetarian diet.

The Mormon Church

Introduction

1. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, having over 29,000 missionaries in the field, is the fastest growing religious body in America.
2. Because of the zeal of their missionaries, all of us will come in contact with them and their teachings so we need to be prepared to refute their doctrines.

I. The History of Mormonism

- A. Joseph Smith, the founder and prophet of Mormonism, was born December 23, 1805 in Sharon, Vermont.
 1. He claimed to have had his first vision in 1820.
 2. In 1823 he claimed to have had a vision (dream) to end all dreams: The Angel Moroni, who had died about 400 A.D., supposedly appeared to Smith and gave him an important message. It seems that Moroni, the son of Mormon, was the last of the Nephites who had been crushed by the rival Lamanites. The whole story was recorded on golden plates that Moroni had hidden under the Hill Cumorah. This hill is located between Palmyra and Manchester in western New York state. These plates had remained hidden until time for them to be revealed to the prophet. Smith, it seems, wanted the plates but was told he could not have them for another four years. During those four years he was supposed to visit Hill Cumorah every year.
 3. In 1827 Smith claimed he was permitted to take the plates home.
- B. It took Joseph Smith three years to translate the “Reformed Egyptian Hieroglyphics” on the plates by the use of Urim and Thummim that he said he found in a breastplate hidden with the plates.
 1. As he translated, Smith, the plates and the Urim and Thummim were out of sight (behind a sheet) of the secretary who recorded the translation. That secretary was not supposed to see the plates with his “profane” eyes lest he suffer immediate death.
 2. Mormons affirm and believe that the golden plates contained “the fullness of the Gospel” and the “pure words of Christ” unlike the Bible that “has been altered by wicked priests.”
- C. The “revelation” was published in Palmyra, New York, in 1830 as the *Book of Mormon*.
- D. In August 1830 the Church of Christ was formed by Joseph Smith and five others in Fayette, New York.
 1. In 1831 the new church was moved to Kirtland (now Kirtland Hills), Ohio.
 - a. Here Smith built a temple and established a communal society.
 - b. Much of the original *Doctrines and Covenants* dealt with communal teachings which have been subsequently removed.
 2. From Kirtland it moved to Jackson County, Missouri where a colony had been founded in 1831.
 - a. This move was the result of a “revelation” by Smith that Jackson County was the place for saints to gather because it was the “Land of Zion” and the place where the Garden of Eden used to be located.
 - b. Actually the move was caused by popular opposition to their presence in Ohio.
 - c. Smith was imprisoned there for various legal infractions and a “revelation” told him to move the church to Nauvoo, Illinois.
 - d. This move, in the winter of 1839, where 12,000 Mormons were driven from Missouri, again was caused by popular opposition.

- E. In 1844, Joseph Smith was killed in a gunfight with a mob. In the fight he was credited with killing at least two of his assailants. Thus, he is considered a martyr.
- F. In 1847, Brigham Young, the new leader of the church, moved it out of U.S. Government control to Salt Lake City, Utah, where it remains to this day.
- G. Though the Mormons began to practice polygamy under Smith, it really blossomed under Young's leadership.
 - 1. As late as 1890 the 4th President of the Mormon Church, Wilford Woodruff, said that even though the government has laws against polygamy, God is for it so we must, regardless of circumstances, practice it.
 - 2. However, after Woodruff was tried for practicing polygamy later in 1890, he had a "revelation" where God changed his mind and forbade polygamy.
- H. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was headed by Smith's son and is not associated with the Utah church in any way although they share some basic beliefs. It was the first of four splits in the Mormon church.

II. The Organization of the Mormon Church

- A. The Mormon Church is highly organized—much like the organization of the Catholic Church.
 - 1. Its organization is composed of two priesthoods: the Aaronic and Melchizedek.
 - 2. The Melchizedek priesthood has supreme spiritual authority.
- B. The Melchizedek Priesthood. It is composed of:
 - 1. The Presidency. A first president and two counselors. The President speaks for God.
 - 2. Twelve Apostles. These appoint the other officials, administer the sacraments and govern between Presidents.
 - 3. The Patriarch who blesses members.
 - 4. The High Priesthood consisting of the presidents of the states of Zion (America).
 - 5. The Seventies who are missionary groups of seventy.
 - 6. Elders who preach, baptize and impart the Holy Spirit by laying on of hands.
- C. The Aaronic Priesthood. It is composed of:
 - 1. The Presiding Bishopric of three bishops in a council who collect all tithes and care for the poor.
 - 2. Priests who expound the Bible, baptize, and administer the Lord's Supper.
 - 3. Teachers who assist the priests and watch that no iniquity occurs.
 - 4. Deacons who assist the teachers and who expound the Bible.

III. The Mormon Scriptures

- A. *The Book of Mormon.*
 - 1. Containing 15 books, it was translated directly from the golden plates by Joseph Smith with the help of the Urim and Thummim.
 - 2. It is basically the story of two groups migrating from the mid-east to North America.
 - a. The first migration took place just before the confusion of languages at the tower of Babel.
 - b. The second migration was from Jerusalem about 600 B.C. just before its destruction by the Babylonians.
 - c. The story of the second migration and its results comprise most of the book.
 - d. After their arrival in America, the second migration split—one group following Nephi and one following his brother Laman.
 - 1) Eventually, the Lamanites turn against God and fight with the Nephites. God curses the Lamanites with dark skin.

- 2) The Lamanites eventually kill all the Nephites and were discovered by Columbus and called “Indians.”
 - 3) About 420 A.D., the last Nephite prophet, Moroni, hides the golden plates written by his father, Mormon, that contained the records of these events so that Joseph Smith could find them and bring them to light.
3. Possible origins of the *Book of Mormon*.
 - a. It is completely from the mind of Joseph Smith.
 - b. It was a reworking of a romantic manuscript of the “Reverend” Solomon Spaulding about the origin of the American Indians.
 - c. It is a plagiarized and expanded version of Ethan Smith’s *View of the Hebrews*.”
 - d. It is inspired by God just as Joseph Smith claimed.
 4. Changes in the *Book of Mormon*.
 - a. Since its original printing, it has undergone 4,113 changes—some minor, some substantial.
 - b. Changes are important because:
 - 1) Joseph Smith claimed that “I have told the brethren that the *Book of Mormon* was the most correct of any book on earth.”
 - 2) Of the statement made by David Whitmer, one of the three “witnesses” to the *Book of Mormon*: “I will give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man.”
 - 3) Most Mormons believe that Smith was an unlearned man and that God did the translating through the stones. And since God made the translation, one would expect the 1830 edition to be exactly what God wanted.
 5. Examples of common errors in the original *Book of Mormon* that have subsequently been corrected.
 - a. “But it all were vain.”
 - b. “It were easy to guard them.”
 - c. “Here is our weapons of war.”
 - d. “As I was a journeying.”
 - e. “He found Maloki a preaching.”
 - f. “Having no respects to persons.”
 - g. “We have took of their wine.”
 6. Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, a Mormon apologist, admits that many of the changes were made by Dr. James Talmadge, a Mormon Apostle, and were incorporated into the 1920 edition and all subsequent editions of the book.

7. Examples of substantial errors in the original *Book of Mormon* that have subsequently been corrected.
 - a. The current Mormon doctrine of God is one of a plurality of Gods. However, in 1 Nephi the 1830 edition said, “And the angel spake unto me saying: These last records...shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people that the Lamb of God is the Eternal Father and the Saviour of the World...” The 1837 edition and all subsequent editions say: “...Lamb of God is **the Son of** the Eternal Father and the Saviour of the World...” (Emphasis mine—GT)
 - b. On page 200 of the 1830 edition, the name of the king is Benjamin. In all later editions, the name has been changed to “Mosiah.” The chronology in the *Book of Mormon* has Benjamin dead for some time before he reappears accidentally on the scene.
 8. Mormon explanations of changes in the original *Book of Mormon*.
 - a. They will often explain the changes as errors by the printer of the original edition.
 - 1) Unfortunately, most of them do not know that the original handwritten copies of the *Book of Mormon* still exist and that they confirm the correctness of the 1830 edition.
 - 2) All changes were done, not for a printing error, but on purpose.
 - b. Another defense is that of a Joseph Smith “slip of the tongue” as he dictated the *Book of Mormon* to his secretary, Oliver Cowdery. This cannot be true when considered in light of Whitmer’s account of the translation process.
 9. The *Book of Mormon* and archaeology.
 - a. The *Book of Mormon* claims that the second migration endured from 600 B.C. to 400 A.D. During that time they built 37 large cities and that “the whole face of the land had become covered with buildings.” (Mormon 1:7)
 - b. At Hill Cumorah in New York, over 230,000 Nephites were killed on or near the hill on the field of battle. (Mormon 6:10-15)
 - c. No archaeological evidence of any kind supports either of the above claims.
- B. *Doctrines and Covenants* (136 sections).
1. It claims to be the word of God. (D&C 1:37-39)
 2. Most Mormon doctrine is taken from the *Doctrines and Covenants* or its predecessor, the *Book of Commandments*.
 3. Not found in the *Book of Mormon*, but found in *Doctrines and Covenants* are the key Mormon doctrines of:
 - a. Church organization.
 - b. Melchizedek priesthood.
 - c. Aaronic priesthood.
 - d. Plurality of Gods.
 - e. God as man exalted.
 - f. Human’s ability to become a god.
 - g. Three degrees of heaven.
 - h. Plurality of wives.
 - i. Word of Wisdom.
 - j. Pre-existence of the human spirit.
 - k. Eternal progression.
 - l. Baptism for the dead.
 - m. Celestial marriage.

4. *Doctrines and Covenants* contains changes in revelations.
 - a. In the *Book of Commandments* 4:2 it said, “He (Joseph Smith—GT) has no power over them (the golden plates—GT) except I grant it unto him; and he has a gift to translate the book, and I have commanded him that he shall pretend to no other gift, for I will grant him no other gift.” This unfortunate slip means that Joseph Smith did not have any other gifts and so should not be writing the *Book of Commandments* since his ability to translate and bring to light the *Book of Mormon* was everything he was granted. Yet it says that in the *Book of Commandments*. It cannot be both ways.
 - b. Realizing the error, the current *Doctrines and Covenants* 5:4 reads: “And **you have** a gift to translate the **plates**; and **this is the first gift that I bestowed upon you**; and I have commanded that **you should** pretend to no other gift **until my purpose is fulfilled in this**; for I will grant **unto you** no other gift **until it is finished**.” (Emphasis mine—GT) The words in bold type have been altered or added since the statement was originally published as the word of God.
 - c. *Book of Commandments* 6 in 1833 had 143 words while the current version in *Doctrines and Covenants* has 252 words—an addition of 109 words to the word of God.
 5. *Doctrines and Covenants* and the *Book of Mormon* frequently contradict each other. Some examples:
 - a. Works save (D&C 20:37) versus baptism saves (BoM - 2 Nephi 31:17).
 - b. Polygamy is all right (D&C 132:4) versus polygamy is not right (BoM - Ether 10:5).
- C. *The Pearl of Great Price* (Four books and usually ends with Articles of Faith appended to it).
1. The *Book of Moses* is Joseph Smith’s revision of part of the Bible by “divine revelation.”
 2. The *Book of Abraham* is claimed to be “a translation of some ancient records, that have fallen into our hands from the catacombs of Egypt, the writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand, upon Papyrus. Translated from the Papyrus by Joseph Smith.”
 - a. It was translated by Smith from some papyrus fragments he purchased in Ohio from an exhibit of Egyptian mummies and papyrus. Manuscripts were thought to be lost but in 1967 they were given to the Mormon Church by the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art.
 - b. The text used by Smith is one of those manuscripts. We know this because beside the English words in his book he placed each hieroglyph for reference. One of the manuscripts given to the Mormons is the manuscript that matches Smith’s *Book of Abraham*. The original had 46 Egyptian hieroglyphic characters that Smith turned into 1146 English words. The actual text translation, even agreed to by Mormon translators, is a *Book of Breathings* that accompanied all mummies to aid the deceased on their journey to the afterlife. The actual hieroglyphs translate to only a few dozen English words and have nothing whatsoever to do with Abraham.
 3. The *Book of Matthew* is a retranslation of Matthew by Joseph Smith.
 4. The fourth book is a portion of the Joseph Smith History and two of his “revelations.”

IV. Mormon Articles of Faith

(Mormons claim 13 Articles of Faith. On the surface, they appear quite reasonable. Further investigation shows that they are definitely not teachings of Christ).

- A. “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.” This article embraces the following points.
 1. There are many Gods.
 2. These Gods are polygamous.
 3. Adam is the God of this world (hence Father Adam).
 4. These Gods have fleshly bodies.
 5. They have children forever.
 6. That God and Christ are different physical beings.
 7. That Gods are simply human beings grown divine.
- B. “We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression.” This article embraces the following points.
 1. Adam did not sin. He merely determined to acquire Godlike knowledge.
 2. “As man is, God once was; as God is, men may be.”
- C. “We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.” This article embraces the following points.
 1. Since man cannot “sin,” this article has little meaning.
 2. Polygamy is required because the spirit children of the Gods need fleshly bodies, and all mankind should procreate to produce those fleshly bodies so the spirit children can be saved. (This has subsequently been repudiated by the Mormon Church)
- D. “We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: (1) Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; (2) Repentance; (3) Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; (4) Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.”
- E. “We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands, by those who are in authority to preach the Gospel and administer the ordinances thereof.”
- F. “We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, viz., apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc.”
 1. This and the two previous articles embrace the idea that no church except the Mormon Church can save an individual. Or to put it in their words, “Any person who shall be so wicked as to receive a holy ordinance of the Gospel from the ministers of these apostate (read “all other”—GT) churches will be sent down to hell with them, unless he repents of the unholy and impious act.”
 2. Additionally, baptism for the dead is practiced based upon 1 Corinthians 15:29. Thus, endless genealogies are kept to help individuals baptize their long-dead relatives so that all can be saved.
- G. “We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.”
- H. “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.”
 1. All translations of the Bible are considered inaccurate because “...those wicked priests” of the Catholic Church destroyed God’s pure word.
 2. Since, they believe, the Bible has been polluted, the *Book of Mormon* is needed.

- J. “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.”
- K. “We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion will be built upon this (the American—GT) continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.”
- L. “We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.”
- M. “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.”
- N. “We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.”

V. Some Miscellaneous Mormon Beliefs

- A. They teach that **all** other churches are in a state of apostasy.
- B. They believe that Joseph Smith, their founder, was visited by God, Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Moses, Elijah, Elias, Michael, Raphael, Nephi, Moroni and Mormon.
- C. They believe that God and Jesus Christ visited Joseph Smith and told him not to join any of the apostate churches. (*Pearl of Great Price* 2:18-19)
- D. They claim something that no other religious body has ever dared to claim: “...we are the only people that know how to save our progenitors, how to save ourselves, and how to save our posterity in the celestial kingdom of God;...we are in fact the saviours of the world...” (*Journal of Discoveries*, Vol. 6, p. 163)
- E. They teach that anyone who does not confess Joseph Smith as a prophet has the spirit of the Anti-Christ.
- F. A standard defense to any changes in their sacred books since first written is that God has a right to change His word. (see Article of Faith 9 [J])

Conclusion

Mormons are to be pitied for they are victims of our great enemy. They are to be feared because they are leading millions to certain punishment.

- Most of the material in this lesson was gathered by Michael Di Paolo

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Who is considered the founder of Mormonism? What vision did he claim to have in 1823?
2. Briefly describe how *The Book of Mormon* supposedly came into existence? When was it first published?

3. When and where was The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints formed? Where was its headquarters moved in 1831? Why? Where was it next moved? Why?
4. Where was the headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints finally established? Who moved it there and why?
5. What is polygamy? Why, though it first advocated it as one of its doctrines, did The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints abolish it?
6. Briefly describe the organization of the Mormon Church.
7. What claims do the Mormons make for *The Book of Mormon*? Cite evidence which disproves these claims.
8. What claim does the book *Doctrines and Covenants* make for itself? What key Mormon doctrines not found in *The Book of Mormon* are found in *Doctrines and Covenants*?
9. What is *The Pearl of Great Price*?
10. Though on the surface they appear quite reasonable, why, upon further investigation, is it evident that the Mormon Articles of Faith are not the teachings of Christ?

The Jehovah's Witnesses

Introduction

1. The Jehovah's Witnesses is a religious group which had its formal beginnings in the early twentieth century.
2. Founded by Charles T. Russell, this group has been characterized by a missionary zeal which is commendable.
 - a. Because they teach several major false doctrines, they confuse people who have little or no Bible knowledge.
 - b. Since most of us have been, or will be, confronted at one time or another by Jehovah's Witnesses, we need to be familiar with them, their doctrines, and how to refute them.

I. The History of the Jehovah's Witnesses

A. Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916).

1. Russell is considered to be the founder of the Witnesses.
2. Born February 16, 1852, to Scotch-Irish parents, he was raised a Presbyterian but at age 15 joined a Congregational Church.
3. In 1868 he began meeting with a group that had split from a William Miller group. (See lesson nine on Adventism—GT)
 - a. He was attracted to this group because he became disgruntled with the idea of predestination as taught by the Presbyterians as well as the Biblical doctrine of eternal punishment for the wicked.
 - b. His association with this group greatly influenced his thoughts when establishing his own religious organization for Adventists groups had the following distinct teachings which can be seen in the teachings of the Witnesses:
 - 1) No hell or punishment for the wicked.
 - 2) No conscious existence after death.
 - 3) The destiny of man is everlasting life on earth.
 - 4) The end of the world is nearly here.
 - 5) After Jesus came He would judge the world, resurrect those in the grave and renovate the earth to sinless perfection.
4. In 1870 he formed a Bible study group of six members who elected him their "Pastor." This group met from 1870 to 1875 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
5. In 1876 he met N.H. Barbour who was an Adventist who published a paper, *The Herald of the Morning*. They combined their groups and published the paper jointly.
6. In 1877 he invited all the ministers in Pittsburgh to join him in preaching his "New Light" revelation to the world. They declined and he became bitter toward them declaring that all organized religions were of the Devil.
7. He and Barbour parted company in 1879 and about that time he started a new paper, *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*. He thus severed all connections with "orthodox" Adventists.
8. By 1880 there were 30 congregations in seven states.
9. In 1881 Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society was established.
10. In 1884 the Society was granted a charter and became a corporation.

11. In 1886 he published *Millenial Dawn*, his first of six volumes of doctrinal studies.
 - a. The title was later changed to *Studies in the Scriptures*.
 - b. He believed and taught that this series was “practically the Bible, topically arranged.”
 - c. He believed it was essential to salvation. He actually believed that one could not be saved by reading the Bible alone but that he could be saved by reading *Studies in the Scriptures* alone (*The Watch Tower*, 9/15/10, p. 298).
 - d. A seventh volume entitled *The Finished Mystery* appeared in 1917 after his death.
 12. He died in October 1916.
 13. None of his works or writings are considered authoritative by the Witnesses today.
- B. Judge Joseph Franklin Rutherford (1869-1942).
1. He was born November 8, 1869 to Baptist parents in Booneville, Missouri.
 2. He entered law school at age 16 and by age 22 had become a member of the Missouri bar and was later appointed Public Prosecutor of Missouri’s fourteenth judicial district.
 3. He joined the Witnesses in 1906 and was appointed their legal counsel in 1907.
 4. He succeeded Russell to the Presidency of the Watch Tower Society on January 6, 1917.
 5. Because of their bitter anti-war stand, the Witnesses instructed their members not to participate in any way with the government in World War I.
 - a. In May 1918 arrest warrants were issued for Rutherford and seven other Society leaders in U.S. District Court of Eastern New York which charged them with sedition.
 - b. They were found guilty on June 20 and sentenced to 20 years in the Federal Penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia.
 - c. The press denounced the conviction immediately and placed great pressure in high places to have the decision reversed.
 - d. In the spring of 1919 they were released. The Witnesses today believe it was a great miracle of God that brought their acquittal.
 6. With Rutherford came great changes in Witness doctrine since his writings not only replaced but also denounced those of Russell. The significant changes included:
 - a. The change in emphasis from Bible study to selling Watchtower publications. In 1922 the *Watchtower* became the basis for study in the congregations.
 - b. The change in name from “Bible Students” to “Jehovah’s Witnesses” in 1931. (The name taken from Isa. 43:10)
 - c. A change in organization and structure from being locally organized and independent to be totally dominated and ruled by the Watchtower Society. This change began in earnest in 1932 and was finished in 1938.
 7. In 1920 he authored the now famous, and embarrassing to present day Witnesses, booklet *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*.
 - a. In it he claimed that 1925 was the year in which the present order of things would end and that, at that same time, the resurrection of the righteous of all times would occur and usher in the New World and the ascension of the “heavenly class.”
 - b. None of his predictions in this book came true.
 8. At the time of his death in 1942, he was considered, by many of his own, a dictator who had caused much division during his rule.

C. Nathan H. Knorr (1905-1977).

1. Not much is known of him generally but much change took place under his leadership.
 - a. He developed their present “smoothness of presentation” and instituted the “Circuit Servant,” who travels among congregations helping to improve their effectiveness.
 - b. He established the “Theocratic Ministry Schools” and wrote three books to aid its growth: *Theocratic Aid to Kingdom Publishers* (1945); *Equipped for Every Good Work* (1946); and *Qualified to Be Ministers* (1955).
2. The *New World Translation*, which is inaccurate and unreliable, was published under his rule (1950-1961). Its basis for translation came from *The Emphatic Diaglott*, a so-called “translation” by Benjamin Wilson.
3. Under him the Society experienced its greatest growth: from 106,000 members to two million at the time of his death in June 1977.
4. Frederick W. Frantz, former Vice-President to the Society, assumed leadership following Knorr’s death.

II. The Organization of the Jehovah’s Witnesses

- A. The basis of the organization rests in two Societies.
 1. The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania which is the International Society.
 2. The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. which is the U.S. branch.
- B. The Pennsylvania Corporation is responsible for the world-wide work directing the activities of all Branches in all nations. Its board of directors is responsible for the spiritual oversight of all Witnesses.
- C. Not all Witnesses are members of the Watchtower Society. Membership is limited by charter to 500 members.
- D. The structural organization of the Society.
 1. **Board of Directors.** Seven in number. Each holds office for two or three years and then is either reinstated or new ones voted in. The Board appoints the President. The responsibilities of the Board are in framing policy and seeing to its execution.
 2. **Branch Servant.** He is over an entire nation or group of small nations. He is the direct representative of the Society in that area and controls the affairs for the Society. He is appointed by the Pennsylvania Corporation.
 3. **District Servant.** He is appointed by the President and subject to the Branch Servant. A district usually covers approximately 25 circuits. His duties are basically to supervise those circuits by checking into the teaching activities of all the congregations and Pioneers. He checks on growth in district and checks the detailed records of each company. He literally makes sure that the orders of the Society are strictly followed.
 4. **Circuit Servant.** Each District is divided into circuits. The Circuit Servant is subject to the District Servant. The number of companies (congregations) under him may vary from 8 to 24. His duties are much the same as the District Servant except that he has more personal contact with the local units, visiting each at least twice a year. He also teaches the general membership on more effective ways of promoting their religion.
 5. **Congregation.** The basic unit of the Society is the local company of Witnesses. The Branch Servant determines the area in which this company may operate. Their buildings are called Kingdom Halls.

6. **Congregational Servants.** Fully organized, seven overseers exist in each Kingdom Hall. They are selected by the Circuit Servant and may be composed of both men and women. These servants have the spiritual and administrative charge of the congregation. They arrange territories to be covered, order all books and magazines and are responsible for money received. They have charge of the training school in that company.
7. **Pioneers.** These are special persons set apart in the ministry of the Witnesses. They may be men or women and must have attended the “Theocratic Ministry School” for at least six months. Their task is to “pioneer” the work by going from door to door.
8. **Congregation or Kingdom Publisher.** This is the rank and file member. You become one after going through “seven steps” culminating in baptism as a dedication.

III. Some False Prophecies of the Jehovah’s Witnesses

- A. The Witnesses have made numerous predictions which have not come to pass. These predictions have been used as:
 1. Evangelistic tools to motivate their members to great zeal in propagating JW doctrine.
 2. To motivate non-members to join them in order to have the hope of resurrection from the dead to enjoy earthly paradise.
- B. These false prophecies include predictions which were made about the following years.
 1. **1925.** Rutherford predicted that “1925 shall mark the resurrection of the faithful worthies of old and the beginning of reconstruction...” He said, “millions now living shall never die.” (*Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, p. 97)
 2. **1929.** The Witnesses built Beth Sarim—a house for the Old Testament worthies who were supposed to be resurrected in a very short time.
 3. **1941.** The book *Children* was written to recommend that Witnesses put off marriage until after Armageddon which was soon to come.
 4. **1975.** The Witnesses predicted that Armageddon was to come that year.

IV. Some False Doctrines of the Jehovah’s Witnesses

- A. They deny the deity of Jesus Christ.
 1. They teach that Jesus is a created being and does not have the same deity as God the Father.
 2. In commenting on John 1:1, they state, “the Word was a powerful godlike one.” (*The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, p. 24)
 3. A number of Bible verses show the deity of Christ: Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; John 20:28; Colossians 2:9; Philippians 2:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:15; John 1:1,14.
- B. They deny the deity of the Holy Spirit.
 1. They deny the personality of the Holy Spirit. Rather, they describe Him as “God’s active force.” (*Let God Be True*, p. 108; *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, p. 24)
 2. The Holy Spirit has personality. He is not an impersonal, active force.
 - a. He speaks (1 Tim. 4:1); witnesses (John 15:26); teaches (John 14:26); and guides (John 16:12-13).
 - b. He has mind (Rom. 8:27); knowledge (1 Cor. 2:11); affection (Rom. 15:30); and will (1 Cor. 12:11).
 3. The Holy Spirit not only has attributes of deity but He, in fact, is called “God” in Acts 5:3.
 4. Because of their denial of the deity of the Holy Spirit and Jesus, they deny that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit constitute the Godhead.

- C. They deny that man has an immortal soul.
1. They believe that when a person dies no part of him continues to live. They believe the dead are not conscious. (*The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, p. 41)
 2. The Bible teaches man has a soul which survives the death of his body (Matt. 10:28; Acts 2:27; Rev. 6:9; 20:4; Jas. 5:20). Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are described as “living” in spite of the fact that their bodies had been dead for centuries (Matt. 22:32).
- D. They deny the existence of Hell.
1. Source: *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, pp. 41, 44.
 2. Jesus spoke of hell more than any other person in the Bible. (Matt. 5:22, 29; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5)
 3. The Bible describes the place of eternal torment as a:
 - a. Place of outer darkness. (Matt. 8:12; 22:13)
 - b. Place of pain. (Rom. 2:5,8-9)
 - c. Place of fire and brimstone. (Rev. 21:8)
 - d. Fate worse than death without mercy. (Heb. 10:29)
 - e. Place of torment. (Rev. 14:11)
- E. Some miscellaneous errors.
1. The plan of salvation.
 - a. They deny that water baptism has anything to do with salvation. (*The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, pp. 183-184)
 - b. The Bible teaches that water baptism is a condition for remission of sins. (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21)
 2. The organization of the church.
 - a. The Witnesses place all their organization, all their “Kingdom Halls,” under the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.
 - b. Their organization is totally without authority for it is unknown to the word of God.
 3. The establishment of the kingdom of God.
 - a. They teach that the kingdom of God was not established on earth until 1914. (*The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, pp. 87, 99)
 - b. Jesus said that the kingdom of God would be established within the lifetime of those who heard Him speak. (Mark 9:1)
 - c. The kingdom of God was established on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus. (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-4)
 4. They do not properly observe the Lord’s Supper.
 - a. They divide their members into two groups—the 144,000 who expect to be with God in heaven and the “Great Crowd” which expects to enjoy paradise on earth.
 - 1) The Supper is observed only by the 144,000.
 - 2) The Supper is observed annually.
 - b. The NT church observed the Lord’s Supper on the first day of every week (Acts 20:7) by every member of the local church joining in the observance.

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Who is considered the founder of the Jehovah’s Witnesses?

2. Briefly describe how the Jehovah's Witnesses originated?
3. Who was J.F. Rutherford? What was his attitude toward his predecessor?
4. What great changes took place in the Jehovah's Witnesses under the leadership of Rutherford?
5. What happened to the Jehovah's Witnesses during World War I?
6. What translation of the Bible is used by Jehovah's Witnesses? Why do they use this translation?
7. List some of the false prophecies the Jehovah's Witnesses have made over the years? Since these prophecies were not fulfilled, what conclusions can one draw from that fact?
8. How do Jehovah's Witnesses view:
 - e. Jesus Christ?
 - f. The Holy Spirit?
 - g. The soul of man?
 - h. The existence of hell?
9. What do the Jehovah's Witnesses teach concerning the kingdom of God?
10. Who, according to the Jehovah's Witnesses, are the only ones allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper?

Holiness Churches

Introduction

1. An expressive and rather numerous group of churches in America come under the heading of “Holiness Churches.”
2. This term is applied to them because of the emphasis they place upon the need for a holy life and their emphasis on the Holy Spirit.

I. The Origins and History of the Holiness Churches

A. Church of God.

1. Five distinct groups, all known by the term “Church of God,” have their head-quarters in Cleveland, Tennessee. Though they now possess distinct differences, they can all be traced to the work of A.J. Tomlinson.
2. A.J. Tomlinson.
 - a. He founded the group which was the parent of the Churches of God.
 - b. He was general overseer of this group from 1903 to 1923.
3. Even before Tomlinson’s death, evidences of unrest were seen over the question of his successor which degenerated into a three-way split. These three groups, at a later time, splintered into the present five.
4. These groups hold in common that:
 - a. Believers today experience Holy Spirit baptism.
 - b. Miraculous divine healing is still to be practiced.
 - c. Speaking in tongues is experienced as evidence of Spirit baptism.

B. The United Pentecostal Church.

1. This group is a more radical offshoot of the Holiness movement.
2. The origin of the Pentecostal Church can be traced to New Year’s eve, 1899.
 - a. “The Pentecostal Church, Inc., traces its beginning to New Years Eve, 1899. In Topeka, Kansas, a band of earnest hungry-hearted Christian people, being hungry for more of God, called a fast that lasted twenty-one days. During this time they prayed earnestly for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which to their joyful surprise came at midnight on New Years Eve, 1899. Mighty manifestations were witnessed in the meeting soon after midnight, and people were heard speaking in other languages as the Holy Spirit gave utterance in the same manner as the 120 received it on the Day of Pentecost, when the multitudes came together and they were understood to speak in the different languages of the earth...
“Ministers and evangelists came from every section of the United States and missionaries returned from the foreign field to learn more about this strange doctrine. Many who came received a like experience of the group in Topeka, and returned to their field of labor preaching that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” (*Religious Bodies. Statistics, History and Doctrines*, Vol. II, p. 1334)
 - b. “During the last twenty-one days of the nineteenth century a band of earnest, hungry-hearted ministers and Christian workers in Bethel Bible College, Topeka, Kansas, called a fast, praying earnestly for a great out-pouring of the Holy Spirit,

- which, to their joyful surprise, came upon them in the early hours of the morning, on January 1, 1900.” (*Pentecostal Church Manual*, Foreward, p. 8)
3. In 1914, in Kansas City, Missouri, a group claimed a revelation concerning the “absolute deity of Christ” and began to teach that there is only one person in the Godhead.
 - a. “In the year 1914 came the revelation on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The pivotal doctrines of the absolute deity of Jesus Christ and baptism in his name became tenets of faith. God marvelously confirmed our message as the Gospel was preached in its fulness. The power which was hidden in the name of Jesus began to be revealed. Literally thousands were rebaptized into the name of Jesus Christ, and multitudes received the baptism of the Holy Spirit while in the water. “Great numbers were healed of incurable diseases; demons were cast out as in the days of the apostles. In many cities where this message had gone, the report of the Samaritan revival was duplicated. (Acts 8:12)...” (*Pentecostal Church Manual*, p. 9)
 - b. “But in the year 1914 a conference was called at Hot Springs, Ark., during which a General Council of the Assemblies of God was formed. Later because of what many believed to be new revelation of doctrine this group was divided and two or three other smaller groups were formed, among them being what is known as The Pentecostal Church, Inc., was formed, composed of white brethren only.” (*Religious Bodies*, 1335)
 4. In 1944, several splinter groups united to form the United Pentecostal Church, Inc.
 - “During the early half of this century various groups were organized. Among them two of the major bodies known as the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ, Inc., and the Pentecostal Church, Inc., became so closely associated in doctrine and fellowship that in 1944 steps were taken to unite the two bodies into one organization known as the United Pentecostal Church...To this end we now pledge our prayers, our faith, our life, and love, our earthly means of support, and our times, in the fear of God and for his glory alone. UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH.” (*Pentecostal Church Manual*, Foreward, p. 10)
 5. Oral Roberts, whose activities have involved a multimillion dollar annual budget, is probably the best known of all Pentecostal preachers. (Note: After Roberts started his university, in a move to get broader acceptance, he ended his association with the United Pentecostal Church and became a member of the Methodist Church— GT)
 6. This group maintains about the same position on Holy Spirit baptism, miracles and tongues as that held by the more orthodox Holiness churches.
- C. Neo-Pentecostalism.
1. Neo-Pentecostalism, also known as the “Charismatic Movement,” has arisen in the United States in the last 30 years.
 2. Its origin can be traced to St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California.
 - a. Its rector, Dennis Bennett, first became involved in glossolalia.
 - b. It spread to the members of the St. Mark’s congregation.
 - c. It was at first bitterly opposed by the Episcopal religious authorities but it spread like “wildfire.”
 3. In its first ten years, it affected nearly every religious group in the United States.
 4. One of the chief means of its spread was the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International—FGBMFI.
 - a. Oral Roberts helped at its organization in Los Angeles in 1960.
 - b. There are now chapters throughout the United States and in many parts of the world.

II. Some Basic Beliefs of Holiness Churches

A. Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

1. They state that believers today still experience Holy Spirit baptism.
2. Their “proofs” of this doctrine.
 - a. Matthew 3:10. This passage, they say, is assurance of the present existence of Holy Spirit baptism and that it includes all believers—Holy Spirit and fire baptized people.
 - 1) The context shows the “baptism of fire” to be a punishment for the wicked. (note v. 12)
 - 2) Acts 1:5 reveals the apostles as the “you” in Matthew 3:10 who would receive the Holy Spirit baptism.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 12:13. This verse, to them, teaches that the Spirit is the element into which one is immersed and that all are to be so immersed.
 - 1) This verse is actually teaching that it is through the teaching of the Spirit, one is led to be baptized into one body.
 - 2) Compare Ephesians 5:25, where the church is said to be sanctified “by the washing of water (baptism—GT) by the word (of the Spirit —GT)” and John 3:5—”Except a man be born of water (baptism— GT) and of the Spirit (begotten through His teaching—GT), he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”
 - 3) The “one baptism” of Ephesians 4:5 is baptism in water which is required by the teaching of the Spirit.
 - c. “Filled with the Spirit: is the same as “baptize with the Holy Spirit.”
 - 1) With few exceptions, the New Testament passages which mention being filled with the Spirit are understood by Holiness people to mean being baptized in the Spirit.
 - 2) Holiness teaching does not recognize Holy Spirit baptism before Pentecost, yet men were “filled with the Spirit” before that time. Luke 1:15 shows that John the Baptist was to be filled with the Spirit from his birth.

B. Miraculous gifts.

1. Holiness churches contend for the continued existence of miraculous gifts with special emphasis on miraculous healing and speaking in tongues.
2. Their “proofs” of this doctrine.
 - a. “Divine healing, as we teach and believe, is altogether a product of the atoning merit of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. ‘He bare our sicknesses on the tree’ and ‘by his stripes we are healed.’” (*Pentecostal Holiness Discipline—1957*)
 - 1) “Is Divine Healing In The Atonement? We believe it is...Through the Fall we lost everything. Jesus recovered all through His atonement...we are redeemed from the entire curse, body, soul, and spirit.” (F.F. Bosworth, *Christ the Healer*, pp. 25, 38)
 - 2) If healing were a part of the atonement, it would be experienced by *all* those who profited by the atonement but such is not the case.
 - 3) There are various cases in the New Testament where disciples were obviously deprived of the atonement.
 - aa. Epaphroditus was “sick nigh unto death.” (Phil. 2:27)
 - bb. Paul told Timothy to “use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.” (1 Tim. 5:23)

- b. “Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8).
 - 1) They believe that since Christ once performed miracles and empowered His disciples to do so, and never changes, then this must still be so.
 - 2) This position proves far too much. Christ once had living apostles in the church. If the fact that He is the same involves everything He has ever done, then He still has living apostles.
 - 3) The statement in Hebrews refers to the nature of Christ—His truthfulness, power, etc.
- c. Mark 16:17.
 - 1) This passage indicates, they say, that miraculous healing, etc., still prevails.
 - 2) This verse refers to the apostles. Even Holiness people are forced to admit it is limited for not every Christian in the New Testament could do such things. (1 Cor. 12:29-30)
 - 3) Verse 20 identifies that it was those who revealed the word in the first century, needing divine confirmation, were the ones that these signs followed.
- 3. The Holiness position stems from a basic misunderstanding as to the nature and purpose of the miraculous gifts when they did exist.
 - a. These gifts were confirmatory of the divine message and functioned as miraculous helps until God’s will was fully revealed. (1 Cor. 13:10)
 - b. Since the message has been given (Jude 3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3), the signs performed by those who revealed it confirming it, in the absence of further revelation, the miraculous gifts have no further place.
 - c. What the gifts once did for God’s people is now completely accomplished through His completed word.
- C. Only one person in the Godhead.
 - 1. The Holiness group includes a very vocal and militant element which contends that there is only one person in the Godhead and that “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit” all refer to Him.
 - 2. Their extreme literalization of certain passages, and arbitrary selection of Scripture fragments for their “proof” is largely self-defeating.
 - 3. The Bible presents the simultaneous existence of all three persons of the Godhead.
 - a. At the baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3:16-17).
 - b. The apostle Paul prayed for all three to work for the benefit of the Christian. (2 Cor. 13:14)
 - c. All three are involved in salvation. (Acts 5:30-32)
 - d. We are to be baptized into the name of all three. (Matt. 28:18-20)
 - 4. The reply of the Holiness person to the simultaneous presentation of the Godhead is to emphasize that the Bible states “There is one God.”
 - a. That there is “one God” is a true statement.
 - b. The Bible reveals “one God” in three persons: each distinct from the other, each having a distinct role.
- D. Some miscellaneous beliefs and practices.
 - 1. Women may participate in leading public prayer, teaching and preaching.
 - 2. Instruments of music are included in worship.
 - 3. Religion is a “romantic” philosophy, truth is subjective and man’s feelings are the highest authority.

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Who was the founder of the Church of God denominations?
2. What beliefs are common to the Church of God denominations?
3. Briefly describe the origin of the United Pentecostal Church?
4. What “revelation” did Pentecostals supposedly receive in 1914?
5. What is neo-pentecostalism? By what other name is it known?
6. Where did the present neo-pentecostalism movement start? What is one of the chief groups which spread its teachings and influence?
7. What do Holiness groups generally believe about the baptism of the Holy Spirit?
8. What are some “proofs” Holiness groups offer for their belief in miraculous divine healing today?
9. What is the fundamental error which causes Holiness groups to believe in modern day miracles?
10. Briefly summarize the Holiness doctrine of only one person in the Godhead. How does the Bible show this to be an erroneous doctrine?

The Masonic Lodge

Introduction

1. In this lesson we are going to investigate a seldom discussed religion: the Masonic Lodge and its auxiliary organizations.
 - a. I have no animosity toward individual Masons; most are good fathers and honest, law abiding citizens.
 - b. This body of nearly six million men has done a lot of good, such as the Shriner's Hospitals for burned and crippled children.
 - c. Many great men in American history have been members of the Lodge: Benjamin Franklin, Henry Ford, General Douglas MacArthur, George Washington and 12 other U.S. Presidents.
 - d. Doctors, lawyers and judges are often members of the Masonic Lodge.
 - 1) Unfortunately, many Christians have joined their number.
 - 2) "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3).
 - 3) "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad." (Matthew 12:30)
2. My respect for friends and relatives who are Masons does not diminish my abhorrence for their Lodge.
 - a. It is evil because it duplicates the sin of Absalom when he "stole the hearts of the men of Israel." (2 Samuel 15:6).
 - b. Masonry will turn a Christian's heart away from God.
 - c. The Masonic Temple is the Temple of Baal, and at its altar many unsuspecting men vow their lives to a pagan god!
3. Have you been told that a non-Mason cannot understand the Lodge?
 - a. Does a doctor have to have a baby to help a pregnant woman?
 - b. Some have claimed their "secret work" has never been written down.
 - c. Though their books are sometimes hard to find, you can obtain them.
 - d. I have purchased from Macoy and the Ezra Cook Publishing Company.
 - e. I have every issue of "*The Northern Light*" (for northern Shriners).
 - f. I have more Masonic books in my library than most Masons.
4. I am going to be quoting from many books published by Masons.
 - a. It would be unfair to quote from anti-Masonic sources.
 - b. I sent letters to the Grand Lodges of several states and asked them to tell me what books would fairly and accurately represent them.
 - c. In this lesson, I will only quote from books recommended by Masons.
 - d. The Grand Lodge of Indiana recommended: *Goodly Heritage*, *Coil's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, and *Freemasonry Through Six Centuries*.
 - e. The Grand Lodge of Ohio recommended seventeen books, including: *The Religion of Masonry*, *Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, *The Little Masonic Library*, and *The Builders*.
 - f. I will also be quoting from books published by the Grand Lodges of several states and books produced for the Supreme Council of the Thirty-third Degree of the Scottish Rite.

I. What Is The Masonic Lodge?

- A. “Freemasonry refers to the principles, institutions, and practices of the fraternal order of Free and Accepted Masons. The largest worldwide society, Freemasonry is an organization of men based on the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, using builders tools as symbols to teach basic moral truths generally accepted by persons of good will. It is religious in that a belief in God is the prime requirement for membership, but it is nonsectarian in that no religious test is used.” (*American Academic Encyclopedia*)
 - 1. You must believe in a god, but you get to choose what it is!
- B. “There have been many definitions of Freemasonry. Perhaps one of the simplest and most direct is that employed by our English brethren: ‘Freemasonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols.’” (*On The Threshold*, p. 5, Grand Lodge of Indiana)
- C. The “Working Tools Of A Master Mason”:
 - 1. The 24 Inch Gauge—to divide their day.
 - 2. The Common Gavel—to break off the rough corners of life.
 - 3. The Plumb—admonishes us to walk uprightly.
 - 4. The Square—“square our actions” by virtue.
 - 5. The Level—“travel upon the level of time.”
 - 6. The Trowel—“spreading the cement of brotherly love.”
- D. The Blue Lodge (the first three degrees) is the foundation for many other Masonic organizations.
 - 1. The York Rite (12 degrees).
 - 2. The Scottish Rite (30 degrees).
 - a. You earn the first 32 degrees; the 33^o is bestowed upon you.
 - b. My grandfather was a 32^o Mason, and thus wore the title of “A Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret.”
 - 3. The Shriners (a social and charitable organization for 32^o Masons).
 - 4. Order of the Eastern Star (for Master Masons and their wives).
 - 5. Order of DeMolay (for boys).
 - 6. Order of Job’s Daughters (for girls).
- E. While it might be interesting to discuss these advanced degrees and auxiliary organizations, time will not permit.
 - 1. We will look at the foundation of Masonry: the Blue Lodge.
 - 2. Most Masons stop at the Blue Lodge.
 - 3. This is much like studying Roman Catholicism: if you destroy the foundation of the Papacy, you have destroyed the entire institution.

II. Is Masonry A Religion?

- A. Webster’s Dictionary defines “religion” as “**a**) belief in a divine or superhuman power of powers to be obeyed and worshiped as the creator(s) and ruler(s) of the universe **b**) expression of such a belief in conduct and ritual.”
- B. The answer to our question about Masonry being a religion depends upon who is asking and who answers.
- C. To the world, Masonry claims it is not a religion:
 - 1. “Though religious in character, Masonry is not a religion, not a substitute for one.” (*Freemasonry, A Way Of Life*, Grand Lodge of Indiana).
 - 2. “Freemasonry is not a religion. It has a philosophy of its own, which is in harmony with the church, the school, and all other worthy organizations” (*On The Threshold*, Grand Lodge of Indiana).

- D. To the Master Mason, Masonry claims it is a religion:
1. "Freemasonry is a charitable, benevolent, educational and religious society." (*Indiana Monitor*, p. 35).
 2. "Masonry, like all the Religions, all the Mysteries, Hereticism and Alchemy, conceals its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be misled; to conceal the Truth, which it calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it...So Masonry jealously conceals its secrets, and intentionally leads conceited interpreters away." (*Morals and Dogma*, Albert Pike, p. 105)
 - c. This book was published under the auspices of the Supreme Council of the Thirty-third Degree of the Scottish Rite.
 3. "...as Masons we are taught that no man should ever enter upon any great or important undertaking without first invoking the blessing of Deity. This is because Masonry is a religious institution..." (*Kentucky Monitor*, p. 28)
 4. "Every Masonic Lodge is a temple of religion; and its teachings are instruction in religion." (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 213)
 5. Masonry is the "universal, eternal, immutable religion, such as God planted in the heart of universal humanity...The ministers of this religion are all Masons who comprehend." (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 219).
 6. "Masonry propagates no creed except its own most simple and Sublime One; that universal religion, taught by Nature and by Reason. Its Lodges are neither Jewish, Moslem, nor Christian Temples...it extracts the good and not the evil, the truth and not the error, from all creeds." (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 718)
 7. "I contend, without any sort of hesitation, that Masonry is, in every sense of the word, except one, and that its least philosophical, an eminently religious institution – that it is indebted solely to the religious element which it contains for its origin and for its continued existence, that without this religious element it would scarcely be worthy of cultivation by the wise and good." (Albert Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 727)
 8. "Freemasonry is a charitable, benevolent, educational, and religious society." (*The Master Mason*, Grand Lodge of Indiana)
- E. The Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist church issued a report urging men not to join the Masonic Lodge since it is a "competitor of Christianity." The report also states, "There is a great danger that the Christian who becomes a Freemason will find himself compromising his Christian beliefs or his allegiance to Christ, perhaps without realizing what he is doing." (*Evansville Courier*, June 13, 1985)
1. In the spirit of "ecumenism" the Roman Catholic Church rescinded its papal ban on Lodge membership in 1983.
 2. We must "come out from among them." (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

III. The Religious Element

- A. They have their own Savior—Hiram Abiff.
1. "Now King Solomon sent and brought Hiram from Tyre. He was the son of a widow from the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a bronze worker; he was filled with wisdom and understanding and skill in working with all kinds of bronze work. So he came to King Solomon and did all his work." (1 Kings 7:13-14)

2. "All believed in a future life, to be attained by purification and trials; in a Mediator or Redeemer by whom the Evil Principle was to be overcome and Supreme Deity reconciled to His creatures. The belief was general that He was to be born of a virgin and have a painful death. The Hindus called him Krishna; the Chinese, Kiontse; the Persians, Sosiosch; the Chaldeans, Dhouvanai; the Egyptians, Horus; Plato, Iove; the Scandinavians, Balder; the Christians, Jesus; Masons, Hiram." (*Kentucky Monitor*, pp. 14, 15)

B. They have their own **Baptism**.

1. "Qu: What are the symbols of purification necessary to make us perfect Masons? Ans: Lavation with pure water, or baptism; because to cleanse the body is emblematical of purifying the soul." (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 538)
2. The Bible tells us there is "one baptism." (Ephesians 4:5)

C. They have their own **Fraternal Supper**.

1. "Qu: What is to us the chief symbol of man's ultimate redemption and regeneration? Ans: The fraternal supper, of bread which nourishes, and of wine which refreshes and exhilarates, symbolical of the time which is to come...And thus, in the bread we eat, and in the wine we drink tonight may enter into and form part of us identical particles of matter that once formed parts of the material bodies called Moses, Confucius, Plato, Socrates, or Jesus of Nazareth." (*Morals and Dogma*, p.,539)

D. **Prayers** in the Lodge.

1. "Freemasonry is a religious institution, and hence its regulations inculcate the use of prayer..." (*Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 577)
2. "Masonry, around whose altars the Christian, the Hebrew, the Moslem, the Brahmin, the followers of Confucius and Zoroaster, can assemble as brethren and unite in prayer to one God." (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 226).
3. In the Blue Lodge, the name of Christ is not used. Their prayers simply end with "Amen. Amen. So mote it be!"

E. **Eternal Life** is in the Lodge.

1. The Entered Apprentice is told that the common gavel has the purpose of "divesting our minds and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life, thereby fitting our bodies, as living stones, for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (*King Solomon's Temple*, Indiana Edition)
 - d. "Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:4,5)
 - e. "For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Corinthians 5:1)
2. "Let him who toils complain not, nor feel humiliated. Let him look up, and see his fellow-workman there, in God's Eternity; they alone surviving there." (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 343)

E. Masonry's view of the **Bible**.

1. There is a sacred volume on every altar in every Lodge.

2. “The Volume of the Sacred Law is an indispensable part of the furniture of a Lodge. In our jurisdiction it is usually the Bible, but any candidate not a Christian may have substituted for it any other volume which he considers sacred: e.g., the Old Testament, Koran, Vedas, or Laws of Confucius. In one lodge in China, there are three Sacred Books open on the altar at the same time, and the candidate elects one of the three on which he is obligated.” (*Indiana Monitor*)
3. “The explanation of the presence of the Holy Bible on the altar could not tell the whole story, although true in itself. It represents the Sacred Book of the Law, but has not exclusive rights as such on the altar of Freemasonry, for the supremely sane reason that no one religion has exclusive rights within the Fraternity. The Vedas of the Brahman, the Zend-Avesta of the Parsee, the Koran of the Mohammedan, have, among Masons of these faiths, as rightful a place upon our altar as the Holy Bible. In any faith, however, its Sacred Book of Law is the symbol of man’s acknowledgment of and his relation to Deity. And in this universality of Masonry we find one of our greatest lessons: Toleration.” (*The Entered Apprentice*, Grand Lodge of Indiana, p. 14)
4. Proselytizing is not allowed in the Lodge. This explains why Christians who are Masons cannot convert their Lodge brothers.

IV. The Masonic Ritual

A. The Entered Apprentice (*The First Degree*).

1. In the ante-room, the candidate is divested of all metal, hoodwinked, his left shoe removed, his clothing is arranged so that his left knee and left breast are exposed, and a cabletow is placed around his neck. He is now “duly and truly prepared.” He must knock three times at the door of the Lodge with his own hand.
2. After entering the Lodge, the Senior Deacon pierces his left breast with the point of a compass. He kneels before an altar to take his first oath.
3. “I furthermore promise and swear that I will not write, print, stamp, stain, cut, carve, hew, mark or engrave them on anything moveable or immovable, capable of receiving the least impression of a sign, word, syllable, letter or character, whereby they may become legible or intelligible to any person under the canopy of heaven, and the secrets of Masonry be thereby unlawfully obtained by my unworthiness. All this I most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, with a firm and steadfast resolution to keep the same, without the least equivocation, mental reservation or secret evasion whatsoever, binding myself under no less penalty than that of having my throat cut from ear to ear, my tongue torn out by its roots and buried in the sands of the sea at low water mark, where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours, should I in the least, knowingly or wittingly, violate or transgress this my Entered Apprentice Obligation. So help me God and keep me steadfast.” (*King Solomon’s Temple*, pp. 24, 25)
 - a. “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.” (Matthew 5:33-37).

- b. “But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your ‘Yes,’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No,’ lest you fall into judgment.” (James 5:12)

B. The Fellow Craft Degree (*The Second Degree*).

1. His body is prepared in similar fashion to the first degree, but the right side of his body is exposed.
2. The Senior Deacon presses the angle of the Square against his breast.
3. The candidate is here to “receive more light.”
4. Part of his obligation reads: “I furthermore promise and swear that I will not cheat, wrong or defraud a Lodge of Fellow Crafts, of a brother of this degree, knowingly or wittingly...binding myself under no less penalty than that of having my left breast torn open, my heart plucked from thence and given to the beasts of the field and the birds of the air as a prey, should I, in the least, knowingly or wittingly, violate or transgress this my Fellow Craft obligation. So help me God and keep me steadfast.” (*King Solomon’s Temple*, Ind. edition)
5. In the third degree he promises not to commit adultery with another Mason’s wife, daughter, mother or sister. He also swears he will always defend another Mason in all cases except murder and treason, these being left to his own conscience.
6. Would you trust a judge or police officer who took this oath?

C. The Raising of a Master Mason (*The Third Degree*).

1. He is prepared by having his pants leg rolled up above the knees, his arms taken out of his shirt and his breast left bare. He is hoodwinked and a cabletow is wrapped around his neck.
2. He is now ready to “ride the goat” (don’t take this literally).
3. He is going to relive the legend of the Grand Master Hiram Abiff.
4. According to their story, fifteen Fellow Craft Masons desired the “secrets of a Master Mason” that Hiram held. Twelve later changed their minds. Three ruffians (Jubela, Jubelo and Jubelum) try to gain the secrets by force. Hiram is finally hit by a setting maul and dies. They bury him and plant an acacia at the head to conceal the burial. King Solomon orders a search. After 15 days, the body is found. The Fellow Crafts were ordered to exhume the body. When the smell arose from the body, they placed their hands over the nostrils in the form of the dueguard of a Master Mason. They try to raise the body with the grip of an Entered Apprentice, but the flesh leaves the bone. They tried to raise Hiram with the grip of a Fellow Craft, it failed also. After prayer, King Solomon took the body by the strong grip of a Master Mason (the lion’s paw) and brings Hiram back to life.
5. “The idea that lies behind the Hiram Legend is as old as religious thinking among men. The same elements existed in the story of Osiris, which was celebrated by the Egyptians in their ancient temples; the Persians told it concerning Mithras, their hero God. In Syria, the Dionysian Mysteries had the very same elements in the story of Dionysius; the Romans, Bacchus was the god who died and lived again. There is also the story of Tammaz, older than any of these. These are collectively referred to as ‘the Ancient Mysteries.’” (*The Master Mason*, Grand Lodge of Indiana, p. 9)
6. As the candidate is raised from the dead by the strong grip of the lions paw, he is brought into the “five points of fellowship” (foot to foot, knee to knee, breast to breast, hand to back and mouth to ear) and given the grand omnific word: MAH-HAH-BONE!
 - c. “MAH” from a Hebrew word meaning “What.”
 - d. “HAH” a Hebrew word meaning “the.”
 - e. “BONE” another Hebrew word meaning ‘builder.’
7. All of this is similar to the secret rituals in the Mormon Church.

V. Captain William Morgan

- D. In 1826, William Morgan of Batavia, New York, wrote and printed a book titled: *“Illustrations of Freemasonry, by one of the fraternity who has devoted thirty years to the subject.”*
1. “Morgan, it appears, was a Royal Arch Mason; and when the fact became known that he was preparing a work to reveal the secrets of Masonry, many of the Masonic fraternity became much excited, and appeared determined to put an end to his disclosures...a Royal Arch Chapter was installed at Lewiston...20 or 30 persons came to the fort from Lewiston. About midnight, 7 persons, stated to be Royal Arch Masons, held a consultation on the plain near the graveyard, as to the manner in which Morgan should be disposed of. The prevailing opinion among them appeared to be, that Morgan had forfeited his life for a breach of his Masonic obligations, and that they ought to see the penalty executed by drowning him in the river.” (*Historical Collections of the State of New York*, John W. Baker, 1842)
 2. On October 7, 1827, a body was found on the beach of Lake Ontario. A coroner’s inquest was held on October 17, 1827. The report states that “beyond any shadow of a doubt” the body was that of Capt. William Morgan. It further states that “he came to his death by suffocation by drowning.”
- B. In 1882 a large monument to Morgan was placed in the Batavia City Cemetery. It reads: “Sacred to the memory of Wm. Morgan, a native of Virginia, a Capt. in the war of 1812, a respectable citizen of Batavia, and a martyr to the freedom of writing, printing and speaking the truth. He was abducted from near this spot in the year 1826, by Freemasons and murdered for revealing the secrets of their order. The court records of Genesee County, and the files of the Batavia Advocate, kept in the Records office contain the history of the events that caused the erection of this monument.”

Conclusion

1. What can a Christian learn from a study of the Lodge?
 - a. We are complete in Christ. (Col. 2:10)
 - b. We have no need of Hiram Abiff as our Savior.
2. God has revealed Himself through the Scriptures, and has given us “all things that pertain the life and godliness.” (2 Peter 1:3-4)
3. When one becomes a Mason, he is given a lambskin apron, and told that no greater honor can ever be given to him.
 - a. I submit that being a Christian is the greatest honor.
 - b. “Yet is anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.” (1 Peter 4:16)

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Questions for Review and Discussion

1. According to the *American Academic Encyclopedia*, what is the prime requirement for membership in the Masonic Lodge?

2. List and briefly describe the purpose of the “Working Tools of a Master Mason.”
3. What are the claims of Masonry as to being a religion in relation to:
 - a. The general public?
 - b. The Master Mason?
4. Who, according to the Masons, is their Savior? Tell what you know about him.
5. Do Masons have their own baptism? If so, what, according to them, is its significance?
6. What are the elements of the Masons’ Fraternal Supper? What, to them, do they symbolize?
7. Who, according to their teachings, “unite” as fellow Masons “in prayer to one God?”
8. According to Masonic teaching, how is eternal life secured?
9. How does the Masonic Lodge view the Bible?
10. In your own words, tell how a Christian should view the Masonic Lodge.

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