

## WAR OF THE WORLDVIEWS #39

### “The Chaos of the Cults”

#### Review

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> message in our mini-series on the enemy’s strategies to defeat the Church from the inside; what we have called the “5<sup>th</sup> Column”. (As in the famous story of the Trojan Horse, which brought down the city of Troy).

**”The greatest dangers to the church do not come from outside but from within:** We looked at 2 of these:

**(1) False doctrine or false teaching;** what Jesus and the NT writers called “leaven”

**(2) The *particular* false doctrines of Dispensationalism;** especially its pessimistic view of the future of the Church on earth

Today we look at one more great enemy within Christian culture today...

#### I. The Chaos of the Cults

Or better: “The Chaos Caused by Cults That Call Themselves Christian”

##### A. Definitions

1. What do we mean by “chaos”?

**“chaos”**

**A state of complete disorder and confusion**

a. Satan sows the cults into the Christian culture to create confusion and throw God’s troops into disarray.

2. What is a Christian “cult”?

**“A cult is a religious movement that often claims support for its views by using the Bible but is fundamentally wrong on the basics of the Christian faith.”**

**Gary DeMar**

3. Cults are counterfeit Christianity; some of them look like and even sound like the real thing.

**“The devil is not fighting religion. He’s too smart for that. He is producing a counterfeit Christianity, so much like the real one that good Christians are afraid to speak out against it.”**

**Vance Havner**

4. Cults come about whenever the true church fails to preach the whole counsel of God and faithfully put forth a biblical worldview.

a. That’s how millions have been misled.

b. For example, the defeatist doctrines of Dispensationalism have unwittingly plowed the ground for disillusioned disciples:

**“The vacuum caused by a retreating Christianity has made it possible for all types of spiritual counterfeits to invade our nation and capture the hearts and minds of the unsuspecting and the vulnerable.”**

**Gary DeMar, War of the Worldviews**

c. J.K. Van Baalen, in his book “Chaos of the Cults”, identified the problem this way:

**“The cults are the unpaid bills of the Church.”**

**J.K. Van Baalen, “Chaos of Cults”**

## **B. Cults are Not a New Thing!**

1. Consider Paul’s warning to the Corinthian church:

**For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear *this* beautifully.**

**2 Corinthians 11:4 NASB**

a. In the context, Paul was complaining how these churchgoers were challenging his teaching but quite ready to listen to the false teachers at the same time; “you bear this beautifully”; NLT: “You happily put up with what anyone tells you...”

2. Notice that even in the early church, there were those who preached:

- “another Jesus”
- “a different spirit”
- “different gospel”

3. There have always been many “Jesuses” out there!

**When people say, ‘I believe in Jesus’, look them straight in the eye and ask,  
‘Which one?’**

**Dr. Walter Martin**

4. Today we have a chaos of confusion through the multiplication of dozens of counterfeit Christian cults founded by various individuals. Here are a few of the most prominent:

**Mormonism-Joseph Smith**  
**Jehovah’s Witnesses-Charles Taze Russell**  
**Christian Science-Mary Baker Eddy**  
**The Way International-Victor Paul Wierwille**  
**The Unification Church-Sun Myung Moon**  
**The Worldwide Church of God-Herbert W. Armstrong**  
**Unity-Charles Sherlock Fillmore**  
**Forum (formerly EST)-Werner Erhard**

So How Do We Identify the Christian Cults?

## II. 3 Marks of a Christian Cult

### A. The First Mark of a Christian Cult:

**There is more than one standard of authority.**

1. In the genuine Christian faith, the ultimate standard of authority is the Bible, the Holy Scriptures, which is believed to be the very Word of God.

2. But a Christian cult will always insist on an *additional* standard:

**Mormonism**

**a. The Mormons, also called “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, believe the Book of Mormon is equal in authority to the Bible.**

- Mormonism was founded by Joseph Smith (later led by Brigham Young) in the 1820’s.
- **Smith claimed the angel Moroni appeared to him and gave him a set of “golden plates”, which with Divine help, he translated into the Book of Mormon**
- Smith claimed the Book to be a “new revelation” of Jesus Christ

**“I received the golden plates and the Urim and Thummim with them, by means of which I translated the plates, and thus became the Book of Mormon.”  
Joseph Smith**

Mormons take their textbooks, the Book of Mormon, The Pearl of Great Price, and Doctrine and Covenants to be equal authority to the Bible

### Christian Science

**b. 4 decades after Smith founded the Mormons, on February 4, 1866, a 46 year old woman named Mary Baker Eddy suffered a spinal cord injury slipping on an icy sidewalk in Swampscott, Massachusetts. She credited her miraculous healing from the fall to her discovery of the secret of Divine metaphysics, which she came to call “Christian Science”.**

- The textbook of Christian Science is Mary Baker Eddy’s “Science and Health with Keys to the Scriptures”:

**Christian Scientists believe that this book alone contains the proper interpretation of the Bible and that you cannot understand the Bible without it.**

### Jehovah’s Witnesses

**c. 10 years after Mary Baker Eddy founded Christian Science, a man named Charles Taze Russell became convinced that the historical Christian creeds were defective, and founded a movement today known as the Jehovah’s Witnesses.**

- Russell published his beliefs in the movement’s frontline paper known as The Watchtower. His writings are considered equal to Scripture.
- **Today, the Jehovah’s Witnesses have their own Bible called “The New World Translation” (This is the one they bring to your front door)**

### The Unification Church

d. In more modern times, we have the Unification Church, also called the “Moonies” after its founder, the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. His book, “The Divine Principle”, is considered an equal authority to the Bible.

**“In a way then, ‘The Divine Principle’, this new revelation, is the documentary of my life...my own life experience. The Divine Principle is in me and I am in the Divine Principle.”**

**Rev. Sun Myung Moon**

Time won’t allow us to go through them all; but all Christian cults have Mark #1: the Bible is not their only standard of authority

### **B. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Mark of a Christian Cult:**

**There is “Another Jesus” who is less than God.**

1. The best question to ask of a suspected cult is, “Who is Jesus to you?”

#### **The Mormon Jesus**

- **A created being, born of the sexual union between god and his goddess wife who used to be people from another world**
  - **Jesus is Adam; the “spirit brother” of Satan, and of you and I**
- **God has a body of flesh and blood, as does his wife, and together they produce spirit offspring in heaven who inhabit physical bodies on earth**  
See McConkie, Bruce, Mormon Doctrine, p.192,321,516,589

a. Mormons are actually “polytheistic”; many gods. God Himself once was a man; faithful Mormon men will become gods themselves! Lorenzo Snow, the 5<sup>th</sup> President of the Mormon Church once said...

**“As man is now, God once was; as God is now, man may become.”**

**Lorenzo Snow**  
**(1814-1901)**

(You won't see these facts in the Mormon TV commercials!)

### **The Jesus of the Jehovah's Witnesses**

(Who's that knocking on your door?)

- **Deny the Deity of Jesus Christ; teach that before His earthly life He was Michael the Archangel; that He became the Messiah at His baptism**
  - **Deny the Trinity**
- **Deny the physical resurrection of Jesus; teaching it was only 'spiritual'**

### The Jesus of the Christian Scientists

- Christian Science denies the Trinity and separates the Man Jesus from the "Spirit" man Christ

**"Jesus is the name of the man who, more than all other men, has presented Christ, the true idea of God, healing the sick and the sinning and destroying the power of death. Jesus is the human man, and Christ is the divine idea; hence the duality of Jesus the Christ."**

**Mary Baker Eddy, Science and Health with Keys to the Scriptures**

### **The Jesus of the Church Across the Street Unity**

**Unity Church followers believe in the divinity of Jesus, but only in the sense that all humans are the children of God and share that divine potential. They believe that Jesus was a master teacher who expressed this divine potential and sought to show others how to do the same.**

We cannot go through all the cults for time's sake; but let's move on to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mark of a cult:

### **C. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Mark of a Christian Cult**

**There is a claim to be a new interpretation of the Christian faith.**

1. All the cults that call themselves Christians:

- Have more than 1 standard of authority equal to the Bible

- All preach “Another Jesus”; where Jesus is less than God
- And all share this 3<sup>rd</sup> mark as much as they do the 1<sup>st</sup> two.

**2. In every case you have a *founder* who has been critical of the historical church, certain the Church is defective, and *who claims to have received some Divine visitation or revelation that reinterprets the faith of our fathers.***

3. The 1<sup>st</sup> Christian cult in the early church was Gnosticism, rebutted by the Apostle John in his 1<sup>st</sup> epistle.

3. But the multiplication of Christian cults really went into high gear in the 1800’s (Mormonism, Christian Science, Jehovah’s Witnesses), and continues today with the Rev. Moon’s Unification Church, Erhard’s EST, L. Ron Hubbard’s Scientology.

4. Every cult breaks with the Christian creeds and historical Christianity, claiming there is a need for a new interpretation of the faith.

5. Besides the 3 main marks of a cult, there may be secondary signs:

#### **SECONDARY SIGNS**

- An elite membership
- A demand to break family relationships
- Surrender of possessions
- Threat of losing your salvation if you leave
  - Scripture twisting
  - A corrupt leadership
  - Destruction of individuality
  - Control of incoming information

### **III. Conclusion**

#### **A. Overcoming the Chaos of the Cults**

1. We have defined what a Christian cult is; we have given you some signs that mark the Christian cults.

2. But let me close with the #1 surest way to identify counterfeit Christianity; or any counterfeit...become thoroughly familiar with the genuine!

**We overcome counterfeit Christianity by becoming thoroughly familiar with genuine Christianity!**

3. All Federal agents in the Treasury Department are especially trained to identify counterfeit money. How are they trained? They spend a little time studying the counterfeit; but they spend a most of their time studying the real thing!

**Monopoly Money Fools Nobody!**

4. Monopoly money is really not counterfeit money, by definition...

**“counterfeit”**

**An imitation made to be deceptively passed off as genuine.  
Dictionary.com**

a. Monopoly money is not dangerous because it is not even close to looking like genuine money.

**“genuine”**

**Real; not false or fake  
Dictionary.com**

5. A counterfeiter knows he can only get away with his deception if his product looks like the real thing. So with the cults....

**“The cults succeed most powerfully when they imitate the church most closely. The closer they look like us, the worse the deception. The closer they get to our vocabulary, carry our Bible, mention the name of Jesus and talk the lingo of Christianity, the more dangerous they become.”  
Dr. Walter Martin, The Kingdom of the Cults**

## **B. Final Word**

1. When the enemy cannot defeat the church from without, he employs a “5<sup>th</sup> Column” to defeat us from within.



2. He has sown the cults into the culture to create chaos and confusion; so we close by re-echoing the warning words of the Apostle Jude...

**3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God\* and our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Jude 3-4**

Closing Prayer

**Title**

**I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him Who called you by the grace of Christ for a different Gospel.**

**Galatians 1:6**