

Denominational Doctrines

Bible Class

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I. Intro 2

A. Definition of *denomination*

1. The naming of a division or subset
2. To name a particular class or category of things

B. Brief History

1. For the most part, the Jewish nation remained cohesive in their identification as God's people, even though throughout their history there was apostasy at various times.
 - a) Apostasy or deviation from God's word or commands is something we can trace from the beginning.
 - b) Adam deviated from the command, Cain deviated and was disfellowshipped
 - c) A pattern of deviation from God's word and God calling us back to Him is the main theme in the Bible
2. 3 We see in the New Testament, during Jesus' time, two different denominations among the Jews: the Pharisees and Sadducees. They believed different things about the Torah, the Prophets, and the Psalms.
3. We also see in the book of Acts that each congregation was self-ruling and independent. They were overseen by elders whose authority was limited to that local church (Acts 14:23; 1 Pe 5:1-2).
 - a) 4 Acts 14:23 CSB When they had appointed elders for them in every church and prayed with fasting, they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.
 - b) 5 1 Peter 5:1-3 CSB I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness to the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory about to be revealed: (2) Shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; not out of greed for money but eagerly; (3) not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.
4. 6 As the church structure and morality deteriorated, influenced by the politics of the time, local leaders began to exercise authority over other local congregations as archbishops or metropolitans.
5. By the end of the fourth century, the metropolitans of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria had assumed oversight of churches in several provinces. The concept of collective action of churches was now in place – a coalition of churches that constituted a denomination. The whole form of the church had been changed. This change was critical to the concept of a denomination, although modern

denominations did not arise for at least another twelve hundred years! – *Samuel G. Dawson, Denominational Doctrine*

6. **7** The first *universal* (Ecumenical) Council was convened by Roman Emperor Constantine in Nicaea in 325 AD. However, it's important to remember that the early Christians and Apostles of Christ never participated in any congregational meetings. Over the course of just five centuries, the basic structure of independent local churches evolved into the global alliance of local churches, which is now evident in Roman Catholicism.
7. **8** The protestant reformation was a double-edged sword. It opened the door for more denominations to exist than ever before, but it also revived the idea that we need to break away from power structures and doctrine that is not biblical.
8. Rather than the body of Christ consisting of Christians, the concept now was the body of Christ consisting of churches, which themselves consisted of *Christians*.
This is the essence of denominationalism.

- C. **9 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 CSB** Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, that there be no divisions among you, and that you be united with the same understanding and the same conviction. (11) For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers and sisters, by members of Chloe's people, that there is rivalry among you. (12) What I am saying is this: One of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." (13) **Is Christ divided?** Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in Paul's name?

1. This is what happens that fosters denominations.
2. Brethren stop agreeing and pursuing unity with the same conviction and understanding.
3. They start following people (human ideas, explanations and convictions) instead of Christ.

D. Implication

1. Does God promote religious division?
2. Are we all heading to the same place down different roads? Maybe to Hell!
There's only one road to heaven!
 - a) **10 Matthew 7:13-14 CSB** Enter through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who go through it. (14) How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few find it.
 - b) **11 Ephesians 4:4-6 CSB** There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to one hope at your calling — (5) one Lord, one faith, one baptism, (6) one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

II. The New Testament Church

A. Intro

1. **12** Etymology of *pattern*
 - a) Hebrew – *tabnith* – תבנית
(1) pattern, plan, form, construction, figure

- (2) structure; by implication, a model, resemblance:—figure, form, likeness, pattern, similitude
- b) Greek – *tupos* - τύπος
 - (1) the mark of a stroke or blow, print
 - (2) of a type i.e., a person or thing prefiguring a future (Messianic) person or thing
- c) The patterns are discernable by Symbols
 - (1) The symbols pop up now and then throughout the scripture
 - (2) Certain words or word pictures are painted to point out a pattern is being spoken of
 - (3) Symbols aren't just symbols in the bible; they are actual signs, as John calls them in the NT – actual imagery representing a greater and more profound, more permanent reality.

2. The Eden Pattern

- a) **13** There are many repetitive patterns established in the Torah, particularly in Genesis, which are repeated through the rest of the Bible, connecting us to the original narrative of God living in harmony with mankind.
- b) The symbolism of the patterns
 - (1) Garden Imagery – Eden – cohabitation between God and man
 - (2) Water, rivers – washing, renewal, purification, and restoration. Water can also represent facets of de-creation and chaos, by which God brings order.
 - (3) Blood – the blood spilled by Cain – represents man's desire to follow his way as opposed to God's way. Only by spilling righteous blood can man be forgiven of abandoning God's way.
 - (4) There are many other symbols and patterns we will not get into, like olive oil, doves, etc.
- c) The importance of perceiving these patterns
 - (1) Since these patterns are repetitive, as the prophets and even Jesus himself allude to them, God clearly wants us to notice them.
 - (2) They are embedded in the holy writ to drive a point home: God is the one weaving man's story, and these plans, symbolism, and patterns all point to His creation.
 - (3) They are God's recipe for man's restoration and salvation
 - (4) If deviated from, man ends in apostasy, losing his salvation and standing before God.
- d) **14 Symbols (Patterns) Of Importance to Our Study**
 - (1) Noah's Ark
 - (a) A mini-floating Eden in the chaotic waters of de-creation.
 - (b) The animals were there with plenty of food for everyone.

- (c) It was a safe haven amidst the chaos of de-creation
 - (d) The waters destroyed everything else, and yet through the waters the ark was brought to safety.
 - (e) **15 1 Peter 3:20-21 CSB** ...God patiently waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared. In it a few — that is, eight people — were saved through water. (21) Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not as the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...
- (2) The Tabernacle
- (a) **16** The tabernacle was also decorated to represent the Eden pattern.
 - (i) It had fruits and flowers carved and cast on surfaces and columns and cherubim emblazoned on its curtains.
 - (ii) There was a table with bread to represent fellowship with God and man
 - (iii) The entrance to the temple faced east, as did Eden
 - (iv) There was a menorah, symbolizing the life-giving source of the Tree of Life and the Light of the presence of God
 - (v) It was a sacred space amidst desecrated space for God to commune with his people
 - (vi) God's Presence: In Exodus 25:8, God instructs Moses to build the Tabernacle so that He may dwell among His people. This echoes the presence of God in the Garden of Eden, where He walked and communed with Adam and Eve.
 - (vii) Cherubim: Exodus 25:18-22 describes the construction of the Ark of the Covenant, which was placed in the Holy of Holies. On the Ark's cover, known as the mercy seat, were two cherubim facing each other. This imagery recalls the cherubim guarding the entrance to the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3:24.
 - (b) **17 Exodus 25:40 CSB** Be careful to make them according to the pattern you have been shown on the mountain.
 - (c) **18 Acts 7:44 CSB** Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, just as he who spoke to Moses commanded him to make it according to the pattern he had seen.

- (d) **19 Hebrews 8:5 CSB** These serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was warned when he was about to complete the Tabernacle. For God said, Be careful that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain.
- (e) The tabernacle was sanctified by blood and water
- (f) **20 Hebrews 9:19-22 (CSB)** For when every command had been proclaimed by Moses to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, along with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll itself and all the people, (20) saying, This is the blood of the covenant that God has ordained for you. (21) In the same way, he sprinkled the tabernacle and all the articles of worship with blood. (22) According to the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.
- (3) **21 The Temple** Solomon built, and all subsequent temples imitated the pattern of the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle Moses built was taken out of commission once the temple was sanctified to take over as the pattern of Fellowship and Communion with God reminiscent of Eden.
 - (a) The temple was also sanctified by blood and water in the same way the tabernacle was sanctified.
- (4) **22 The Church** is the fulfillment of the dwelling place of God.
 - (a) The Lord desired to live amongst His people
 - (b) In the past He lived in temples made by human hands
 - (c) He wanted to live in us
 - (d) Our body is His temple
 - (e) The Body is the temple where God lives by His Spirit (1 Co 3:16-17; 6:19-20)
 - (f) The church is the Body of Christ (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Co 12:12ff; Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18)
 - (i) The church is not a building made by human hands
 - (ii) The church is to continue reminding us of the pattern of Eden God wants to restore – us living together, reigning together.
 - (iii) One is purified to be part of the church, the temple where God lives by His Spirit, through water and blood, in the same manner as the Tabernacle and the temple.

B. **2 The Pattern of the Church**

1. **3 Plan of Entrance** – Salvation through the Gospel
(Mat 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38)
 - a) Hear and believe – We cannot know the Gospel by instinct, discovery, or science.
 - b) Repentance – there has to be a turning away from man and a turning to God
 - c) Baptism – This is God’s pattern of washing and renewal. The pattern of atonement and purification.
2. **4 Plan of Perseverance** – Discipleship (Mat 16:24; Luke 14:27)
 - a) Common Morality
 - (1) **5** Dying to the flesh – *deny yourself and take up the cross daily*
 - (2) **6** Put to death the deeds of the flesh – *Don’t conform to the pattern of this world* – Romans 12:2
 - (3) **7** In step with the spirit – Galatians 5:16, 25
 - b) Common Love –
 - (1) **8** Characterized by our deep love for one another – **One another** passages:
 - (a) *“Love one another” as I have loved you...*
 - (i) John 13:34; 14:12-13
 - (ii) This command occurs at least 16 times in the New Testament
 - (b) *De devoted to one another... Honor one another...* – Rom 12:10
 - (c) *Accept one another...* - Romans 15:7
 - (d) *Live in harmony with each other...* - Romans 12:16
 - (e) *Bear one another’s burdens...* - Gal 6:2
 - (f) *Build up one another...* - Romans 14:19; 1 Thes 5:11
 - (g) *Encourage one another...* - Hebrews 10:25
 - (2) This love is what characterizes God’s people as a real, functional family, having come out of the dysfunction of the world.
 - (3) **9 1 Peter 1:22-23 CSB** Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly, (23) because you have been born again — not of perishable seed but of imperishable — through the living and enduring word of God.
 - (a) Purification of self is required – 4 degrees of love:
 - (i) Love me for my benefit – child
 - (ii) Love you for my benefit – youth
 - (iii) Love you for your benefit – young adult
 - (iv) Love me for your benefit – maturity
 - (b) Obedience to the word
 - (c) Showing constant, sincere brotherly love
 - (d) Characterized by new birth

- (e) Characterized by the invisible, the imperishable
 - (f) Characterized by God's Word
- c) Common Hope
 - (1) **10** Heavenly citizenship – Phil 3:20
 - (2) **11** Strangers and pilgrims on the earth – 1 Pe 1:17; 2:11; Heb 11:13
 - (a) Our hope and significance don't come from the material world
 - (b) We eagerly await to be fully clothed by our new everlasting body!
 - (c) Peter uses the Greek *paroikia* to qualify our time living on the earth. This is where we get our word *parish* from, which means dwelling as a stranger in a strange land, sojourning, traveling, passing through.
 - (d) This qualifies our life here as a temporary experience from which we must gain insight into godly things, as the Holy Spirit teaches us we should pass this time here conducting ourselves in reverence.
 - (e) This characterizes believers and sets them apart from pagans, who try to hold on to this life since they know no other.
- 3. **12 Corporate Assembly**
 - a) When do we meet? – First Day of the Week – Acts 20:7
 - b) Why do we meet? – Lord's Supper – 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
 - c) Purpose of the Assembly
 - (1) To perpetuate Devotions – Acts 2:42
 - (2) To build up the body – Eph 4:12; 1 The 5:11
 - (3) To provoke one another to love and to do good works – Heb 10:24
 - (4) To promote unity of mind and thought
 - (a) Jesus marked unity as a telling sign of His disciples – John 17:20-21
 - (b) False teachers are marked – Rom 16:17; Titus 3:10-11
- 4. **13 Purpose of the Church**
 - a) To be the salt and light of the earth – Mat 5:13-14
 - b) To preach the Gospel – Mat 28:19-20
 - c) To show God's multi-faceted wisdom to the rulers and authorities of the heavenly realms – Ephesians 3:8-10
 - d) Restore the lost – Luke 19:10; Galatians 6:1
 - e) Prepare people for judgment and the final reveal – John 12:47-48
 - f) We are an Eden community – we're working on restoring the Eden concept which is what will be fulfilled when Jesus returns.
 - (1) Think of the symbols presented in the end chapters of Revelation – Revelation 22:1-5

- (2) All the imagery takes you back to the garden, the tree of life, the river of the water of life, God living among mankind, etc.
- (3) This time a city is there, instead of a garden, since it represents the city built by God, not one built by man. – Revelation 21

C. **14 Organization of the Church** – Ephesians 4:11

- 1. Christ – the Foundation – 1 Co 3:11; Mat 16:18; Ephesians 2:20
- 2. Prophets and Apostles – Ephesians 2:20
- 3. Overseers
- 4. Deacons
- 5. Evangelists
- 6. Teachers
- 7. **15 Purpose of this organization** – Ephesians 4:12-13
 - a) To equip the saints for works of service (ministry)
 - b) To build up the body of Christ
 - c) To reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of Jesus
 - d) To mature as Christians

D. **2 Apostasy**

1. **3 The Primitive Church**

- a) Built by Christ – *purchased with His blood* – Acts 10:28
- b) Established on the Day of Pentecost ~33AD
- c) The seed of the kingdom is the Word of God – Luke 8:11
- d) This kingdom is established in the first century – Daniel 2:44

2. **Departure Foretold** – just like the prophets warned Israel in the Old Testament against false prophets, we see that warning given to Jesus' followers in the New Testament. We know Israel was apostate, was taken captive as punishment, and a remnant was restored. The pattern continues for the people of God.

a) **4 False Prophets**

- (1) **Matthew 7:15 CSB** “Be on your guard against false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves.”
- (2) **1 John 4:1 CSB** Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

b) **False Teachers** –

- (1) **5 Acts 20:28-31 CSB** Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood. (29) I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. (30) Men will rise up even from your own number and distort the truth to lure the disciples into following them. (31) Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for three years I never stopped warning each one of you with tears.

- (2) **6 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 CSB** The coming of the lawless one is based on Satan's working, with every kind of miracle, both signs and wonders serving the lie, (10) and with every wicked deception among those who are perishing. They perish because they did not accept the love of the truth and so be saved. (11) For this reason God sends them a strong delusion so that they will believe the lie, (12) so that all will be condemned — those who did not believe the truth but delighted in unrighteousness.
- (a) The lawless one is thought to be an eschatological person, a type of anti-Christ, as John teaches in 1 John 4:1-3.
- (b) These are a class of people, unbelievers, hard of heart, opposing truth and exalting themselves above God (verse 4).
- c) Some Will Depart the Faith
- (1) **7 1 Timothy 4:1-3 CSB** Now the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will depart from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons, (2) through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared. (3) They forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods that God created to be received with gratitude by those who believe and know the truth.
- (2) **8 Jude 1:3-4 CSB** Dear friends, although I was eager to write you about the salvation we share, I found it necessary to write, appealing to you to contend for the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all. (4) For some people, who were designated for this judgment long ago, have come in by stealth; they are ungodly, turning the grace of our God into sensuality and denying Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord.
- (3) **9 2 Timothy 4:3-4 CSB** For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear what they want to hear. (4) They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths.
3. Early Departures – *Brief walk through how denominations began to proliferate.*
- a) **10 Creeds, Councils, and Edicts**
- (1) The *Apostles' Creed* is one of the earliest and most widely accepted Christian creeds. While its exact origins are not definitively known, it is believed to have developed in the early Christian communities as a summary of essential Christian teachings. The creed likely began to take shape in the 2nd century, and its current form was solidified by the 4th century. It

is called the "Apostles' Creed" because it was thought to reflect the core teachings of the apostles.

- (2) Emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity and the *Edict of Milan* in 313 AD granted religious tolerance to Christians. This marked a significant shift in the status of Christianity, allowing it to flourish and become closely associated with the Roman state.
- (3) The First Council of Nicaea in 325 AD and subsequent councils played a crucial role in shaping the theological direction of the church.

- (a) The *Nicene Creed* was formulated during the First Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, which was convened by Emperor Constantine to address the Arian controversy. The council aimed to clarify the nature of Jesus Christ in relation to God the Father and combat the teachings of Arius, who denied Christ's full divinity. The Nicene Creed established the orthodox view of the Trinity and the deity of Christ. It was later revised at the First Council of Constantinople in 381 AD to further clarify the Holy Spirit's divinity and role.

- (b) Other matters that were resolved were the deity of Jesus, the sonship of Christ as the only begotten, and the Trinity.

- (4) The Second Council of Nicaea, also known as the Seventh Ecumenical Council, took place in 787 AD. This council focused on addressing the use of religious images, particularly icons, within the Christian Church.

- (a) Veneration of icons

- (b) Rejection of those who viewed icons as idolatrous.

- (c) Promoted the orthodoxy of the use of icons.

b) Universal Bishop – Pope

- (1) Over time, the bishop of Rome (the Pope) began to be recognized as having a special role within the church, partly due to the historical importance of Rome as the capital of the Roman Empire. This recognition of the Pope's authority contributed to the centralization of power.

c) The Rise of The Clergy

- (1) Infant baptism
- (2) Sprinkling
- (3) Instrumental music
- (4) Veneration of people

4. **11 Protestant Reformation**

- a) Rejection of abuse of power by the catholic church

- (1) Selling of indulgences – Indulgences were certificates that people could purchase to supposedly reduce the time their souls spent in purgatory.
 - (2) Many people were dissatisfied with what they saw as corruption within the Church, including the extravagant lifestyles of some clergy, the sale of church offices, and the overall perceived moral decline.
- b) **12** Martin Luther
- (1) In 1517, Martin Luther famously posted his "95 Theses" on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. These were a list of points for theological debate, primarily criticizing the sale of indulgences. Luther's actions ignited a broader debate and attracted attention throughout Europe.
 - (2) He challenged the Pope's authority and the Catholic Church's hierarchy.
 - (3) He argued that salvation was achieved through *faith alone*, not through a combination of faith and good works as traditionally taught by the Church.
- c) **13** The Council of Trent was one of the most important and influential ecumenical councils in the history of the Catholic Church. It took place in multiple sessions between 1545 and 1563. The council was convened to address the theological challenges of the Protestant Reformation and provide clarity on various doctrinal and disciplinary matters.
- (1) Tradition and Scripture are both equal in authority.
 - (2) Good works are needed for salvation.
 - (3) 7 sacraments are imparted by God for the reception of God's grace.
 - (4) Transubstantiation indoctrinated.
 - (5) Mass is the central act of worship.
 - (6) Original sin indoctrinated and the need for infant baptism.
 - (7) Affirmation of the authority of the pope
- d) **14** John Calvin – (1509 – 1564) was a prominent theologian and reformer whose ideas and contributions profoundly impacted Christianity, particularly within the Reformed tradition. The acronym TULIP summarizes his ideas and impact on today's denominational thought. We'll look at that later in our class.
- (1) John Knox, influenced by Calvin, played a pivotal role in shaping the Presbyterian Church. After spending time in Geneva under the influence of John Calvin, Knox returned to Scotland and led efforts to reform the Scottish Church along Presbyterian lines. The Church of Scotland, or the Kirk, emerged with a system of governance that included representative assemblies of elders (presbyters) and emphasized the autonomy of individual congregations.

- e) **15** The Protestant Reformation led to the establishment of various Protestant denominations, each with its own distinct theological perspectives and practices. It also resulted in significant religious and political conflicts, including wars and shifts in political alliances, as countries and regions decided whether to align with the Catholic Church or the newly emerging Protestant movements. The Reformation had profound and lasting effects on European society, politics, culture, and religious beliefs, shaping the course of history for centuries to come. Here are some groups from the 16th and 17th centuries:
- (1) Anabaptists: The Anabaptist movement originated in the 16th century as a radical reformation movement within Protestantism. Anabaptists emphasized adult baptism, separation of church and state, and a commitment to nonviolence. They faced persecution for their beliefs and practices and have historically been associated with groups like the Swiss Brethren, the Hutterites, and the Mennonites.
 - (2) Mennonites: Mennonites are descendants of the Anabaptist movement and have a long history dating back to the 16th century. They emphasize simplicity of living, community, nonresistance, and service to others. There are various Mennonite denominations and groups around the world, each with its unique traditions.
 - (3) Quakers: The Religious Society of Friends, commonly known as Quakers, originated in the mid-17th century during the English Civil War era. The movement was founded by George Fox, a preacher from England, who began preaching his distinctive views around the 1640s. The term "Quaker" was initially used as a derogatory label for the movement, but the Friends themselves embraced it.
 - (4) Baptists: The Baptist movement can be traced back to the 17th century, but it gained significant momentum and formalized as a distinct tradition in the 19th century. The key distinguishing feature of Baptists is their belief in adult baptism by immersion and the autonomy of local churches. While there were earlier groups with similar beliefs, the Baptist movement as we know it today began to take shape in the 17th century. It gained further structure and organization in the 18th and 19th centuries.
 - (5) Amish: The Amish are a subgroup within the Anabaptist tradition, known for their strong commitment to simplicity, traditional dress, and separation from modern technologies and conveniences. They emerged in the 17th century as a response to perceived compromises within the Mennonite community.
- f) **16** From the 18th century to the present:

- (1) Methodists – John Wesley, Anglican clergyman, along with his brother Charles Wesley, were part of the *Holy Club*. Emphasized salvation through faith and holiness. Stressed a personal relationship with Jesus. They came out of the church of England.
- (2) Great Awakening – occurred in the American Colonies and Great Britain. The movement was characterized by a fervent call for personal conversion and a deepening of religious experience. The Great Awakening ignited a sense of religious enthusiasm and emotional intensity among believers, leading to large gatherings and outdoor revival meetings. It profoundly impacted American culture, contributing to the development of a distinct American religious identity and fostering ideals of personal freedom and individual responsibility.
- (3) Moravian Brethren – The Moravian Church, also known as the *Unitas Fratrum*, traces its roots back to the 15th century, but it experienced significant growth and revival in the 18th century. Known for their missionary zeal and emphasis on Christian community, the Moravians played a significant role in global missions and influenced other Christian movements.
- (4) Holiness Movement – The Holiness Movement arose in response to perceived spiritual complacency within various Christian denominations. It emphasized the doctrine of sanctification, or the idea of a second work of grace after conversion that would lead to a higher level of holiness and Christian living. This movement contributed to the growth of various Holiness and Pentecostal denominations.
- (5) Shakers – Also known as the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, the Shakers were founded in England in the mid-18th century and later established communities in the United States. They emphasized celibacy, communal living, simplicity, and spiritual devotion. The movement is known for its unique worship practices and contributions to arts and crafts.

5. 17 Restoration Movement – Stone-Campbell Movement

- a) The Restoration Movement of the Churches of Christ was a 19th-century religious movement in the United States that sought to restore Christianity to its original form as described in the New Testament.
 - (1) It emerged as a response to perceived divisions, doctrinal disputes, and institutionalization within various Christian denominations.
 - (2) The movement emphasized a return to the simplicity and purity of early Christianity, with a focus on the Bible as the sole authority for faith and practice.
- b) Key leaders of the Restoration Movement included Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, and Walter Scott.

- (1) They advocated for unity among Christians by discarding denominational labels and adopting a more inclusive term: "Christians" or "Disciples of Christ."
 - (2) The movement gained momentum in the early 19th century and led to the formation of various independent Christian groups, including the Churches of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the independent Christian Churches.
 - c) The Restoration Movement emphasized several core principles, often summarized using slogans such as "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent," and "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, love." This approach aimed to reject human-made creeds and traditions in favor of a direct interpretation of the Bible.
 - d) While the Restoration Movement succeeded in creating a sense of unity and focusing on the Bible's teachings, it also led to the development of different branches and interpretations within the movement itself.
 - (1) **18** Over time, some of the groups that emerged began to develop their own distinctive practices and beliefs. Despite these variations, the Restoration Movement left a lasting impact on American Christianity, influencing the development of non-denominational churches and a focus on the authority of the Bible in religious practice.
 - (a) Churches of Christ
 - (b) Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
 - (c) Independent Christian Churches (Churches of Christ)
 - (d) Evangelical Christian Church in Canada
 - (e) *Crossroads Movement – Boston Movement – Kip McKean*
 - (i) International Church of Christ
 - (ii) Sold-Out Discipling Movement
 - (iii) Remnant Movement
6. **19 Pentecostalism** – *Charismatic Movement*
- a) The Pentecostal movement emerged in the early 20th century as a result of the Azusa Street Revival, which took place from 1906 to 1909 in Los Angeles, California. This revival, led by William J. Seymour, emphasized the restoration of spiritual gifts described in the New Testament, particularly the experience of *speaking in tongues*. The movement was characterized by its emphasis on the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" and the belief in the ongoing manifestation of spiritual gifts, including healing, prophecy, and speaking in tongues.
 - b) The Pentecostal movement rapidly spread across various denominational lines, giving rise to numerous Pentecostal denominations and independent churches. This movement significantly

impacted global Christianity and led to the formation of various Pentecostal and charismatic groups.

7. **Cults** – I did not mention some cults now; we will get into those later.

E. **1 Truth and Authority**

1. **2** The bible declares it reveals the truth of the reality we live in. A truth applicable to everyone, not just believers.

- a) **3 John 8:32 CSB** You will know the **truth**, and the **truth** will set you free.
 - (1) There is a truth that can be known. Jesus teaches us that truth that sets us free.
- b) **John 14:6 CSB** I am the way, the **truth**, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
 - (1) Jesus identifies Himself as TRUTH.
 - (2) No Jesus, no truth.
- c) **4 John 17:17 CSB** Sanctify them by the **truth**; your **word is truth**.
 - (1) This truth can be ascertained by reading the bible.
 - (2) Ephesians 3:4-5. When we read the bible we can learn the mystery. It was revealed to the apostles and prophets.
- d) **2 Timothy 2:15 CSB** Be diligent to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, **correctly teaching the word of truth**.
 - (1) The truth can be mishandled and misrepresented if we don't understand how to handle it.

2. **5** Is truth relative, absolute, or a mix of both?

- a) Relativism – Relativism suggests that truth is subjective and can vary from person to person, culture to culture, or context to context. According to this view, what is considered true might differ based on individual beliefs, cultural norms, or historical circumstances. Relativism implies that there is no absolute or objective truth that exists independently of human perspectives.
- b) Absolutism – Objective truth holds that there are facts and realities that exist independently of human beliefs, feelings, and perceptions. According to this perspective, certain truths are universal and apply regardless of individual viewpoints or cultural differences. Objective truth implies that there is a single reality that can be discovered through observation, reasoning, and scientific inquiry.
- c) If truth were relative, **science would be misinformation**. Scientists are absolutists; otherwise, their very own careers would be in vain.
- d) If we can believe truth can be found via the scientific method, then likewise, we can believe **revelation can be found the same way** since it is not based on man-made opinions or perspectives.
- e) Common Sense – a very interesting book authored by David W. Bercot, a title examination lawyer, who argues that *jurisprudence* should also be considered an absolute science by many who treat it as such instead of those who consider it to be political or argumentative. He speaks of

Truth as something that should be able to be identified by everyone regardless of belief.

3. 6 Characteristics of Truth

- a) Correspondence: Truth is often understood as the *correspondence* between a statement, belief, or proposition and the actual state of affairs in the world. In other words, something is considered true if it accurately represents reality and is grounded in reality – in events that have been corroborated by multiple eyewitness accounts from differing beliefs.
- b) Coherence: *Coherence* refers to the logical consistency and harmony of a set of beliefs or statements. Truth often involves coherence within a system of knowledge or understanding. Many should be able to agree on logical conclusions based on the manuscript evidence and textual interpretation.
- c) Objectivity: Objective truth is independent of personal opinions, emotions, and biases. It exists regardless of individual perspectives and can be verified through empirical observation and rational analysis. We call this *hermeneutics* in textual interpretation.
- d) Universal: Some truths are considered universal, meaning they apply universally across different times, cultures, and contexts. For example, scientific principles are often regarded as universal truths, as well as corroborated divine revelations such as the Bible.
- e) Discoverable: Truth is often seen as something that can be discovered through methods such as observation, experimentation, reasoning, and inquiry. This is particularly relevant in scientific and empirical contexts. Critical and logical textual interpretation of scripture requires the same scientific approach.
- f) Falsifiability: A claim or statement is considered truthful if it is potentially falsifiable, meaning there exists a way to prove it false or wrong. Falsifiability is an important criterion in scientific reasoning. The Bible is our source to prove an existing theological hypothesis correct or presumptive.
- g) Evidential Basis: Truth is often supported by evidence, which can be in the form of data, facts, observations, or logical reasoning. Evidence helps substantiate claims and establish their truthfulness.
- h) Consensus: In some cases, truth is established through consensus among experts, scholars, or a community of thinkers. This is especially true in fields where objective verification might be difficult or complex.
- i) Pragmatism: In some cases, truth is understood in terms of its practical utility and effectiveness. If a belief or statement leads to successful outcomes or predictions, it might be considered true in a pragmatic sense.
- j) Subjective Elements: While objective truth is often discussed, there are instances where truth can be influenced by subjective factors such as

personal experiences, emotions, and cultural contexts. I believe that our human experience can deepen and expand our understanding of truth without necessarily changing its immutability.

- k) Immutable: In the context of objective truths, they are considered immutable and unchanging. They remain true regardless of human beliefs or opinions.
- l) Invariance: Truth does not change based on how it is communicated or by whom it is communicated. It remains the same regardless of the messenger.

4. **7 Standard of Truth**

- a) The Bible is our **standard of truth** since God's revelation can be known by reading the prophets and apostles.
 - (1) **Ephesians 3:3-4 CSB** The mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have briefly written above. (4) By reading this you are able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ.
 - (a) When we study the bible we gain insight into truth.
 - (2) **8 2 Peter 1:19-21 CSB** We also have **the prophetic word strongly confirmed**, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. (20) Above all, you know this: **No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet's own interpretation**, (21) because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, **men spoke from God** as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
 - (3) **9 Mark 16:20 CSB** And they went out and preached everywhere, while **the Lord worked** with them **and confirmed the word** by the accompanying signs.
- b) Jesus corroborated this standard when He came and verified it by many miracles and signs, including His resurrection.
- c) Culture, opinion, scholarship, or any other authority should not be set above the standard of God's Revelation, the Bible. If it is, truth will not be arrived at.

5. **10 Tribunals of Judgment** – these are influences that can unsettle, accuse, or cause you to doubt:

- a) **Human Heart and Public Opinion** - unsettle you to be untrue to yourself, depriving you of developing your true identity. We should not let this human court unsettle us at all. We answer to a higher court. That doesn't mean we won't respect the law of the land; after all, we know it comes from the Lord, whether we deem it good or bad (Rom 13:1-2).
 - (1) **Romans 13:1 CSB** Let everyone submit to the governing authorities, since there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are instituted by God.

- b) **Conscience** - Natural Law (Revelation) - *sometimes accuses you and sometimes defends you* - Romans 2:14-15. Our conscience should be influenced by God's Law of Love and Morality.
 - (1) **Romans 2:14-15 CSB** So, when Gentiles, who do not by nature have the law, do what the law demands, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law. (15) They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts. Their consciences confirm this. Their competing thoughts either accuse or even excuse them...
- c) **The Word of God** - Moral Law (Special Revelation) - The Word cuts deep into the soul, judging our thoughts and attitudes.
 - (1) **Hebrews 4:12 CSB** For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

III. Sin Of Denominationalism

A. **11** Denominational Concept

1. As seen from Scripture, the churches of the New Testament were of the same doctrine and practice! They were all churches of Christ, acting independently according to their local council of elders, deacons, and evangelists, not some man-made organization ruled by a council overseeing the collective of churches based on man-made principles, doctrines, speculations, or philosophies!
2. If we were to break down the word *denomination*, we would get the following:
 - a) **DE** - to break down or separate (like *de-ice*, *detach*, *defrost*, etc.)
 - b) **NOMIN** - to name (for example: "I *nominate* you as president...")
 - c) **ATION** - the act of (for example: segregation = *act of separating*)
3. Therefore, the term *denomination* is defined as the act of naming a division or sect: Catholic, Methodist, Episcopalian, Baptist, Jehovah's Witness, Lutheran, etc.
4. We will break down how each of these departed from the truth revealed in Scripture and how they adopted man-made option as their standard of truth.

B. **12** Ecumenism – This movement gained significant momentum in the 20th century, with events such as the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) in the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches founded in 1948, promoting interdenominational understanding.

1. It is a movement seeking greater cooperation and unity among different branches or denominations within Christianity. It aims to foster dialogue, understanding, and collaboration among various Christian traditions, with the ultimate goal of achieving a more unified Church.
2. Many disciples of Jesus argue that such a movement seeks to compromise truth for the sake of uniformity, which is contrary to what Jesus teaches.
3. Jesus teaches true unity is found when we deny our own opinions and convictions to adapt to the scriptures.

4. This is also how our love for one another matures and becomes an extension of God's love through the unity of the church.
 5. Ecumenism is man-made *unity*, not the unity God calls for.
- C. Non-Denominational – When a church describes itself as "non-denominational," it means that the church does not align itself with any specific established Christian denomination.
1. Instead of adhering to the doctrines, practices, and organizational structures of a particular denomination, a non-denominational church seeks to maintain a more independent and flexible approach to Christianity. This often involves emphasizing a direct focus on the teachings of the Bible and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, rather than adhering to the traditions and rituals of a specific denomination.
 2. Non-denominational churches can vary widely in their beliefs and practices, as they are not bound by a single denominational framework.
 3. Some churches that use this description are more *ecumenical* in their thinking and practice as opposed to seeking unity via scriptures.
 4. They may have preachers from different denominations preach and their membership may represent various differing denominations.
- D. **13** Denominationalism Study
1. **1 Corinthians 1:10 CSB** Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, that there be no divisions among you, and that you be united with the same understanding and the same conviction.
 - a) There should be no divisions among you.
 - b) You should be united with the same understanding and the same conviction.
 2. **14 1 Corinthians 1:12-15 CSB** What I am saying is this: One of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." (13) Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in Paul's name? (14) I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, (15) so that no one can say you were baptized in my name.
- E. Appearances are deceiving – be careful and cautious!
1. Just because they say they are *Christians*; doesn't mean they are disciples.
 - a) **15 John 8:31-32 CSB** Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you continue in my word, you really are my disciples. (32) You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
 - b) There is a truth Jesus says we come to know when we continue in His word as opposed to our own opinions and convictions.
 - c) You will not be able to ascertain this truth if you hold on to your preconceived ideas.
 - d) You get to truth by believing Jesus, believing the Bible is His Word, and obeying it.
 2. Just because it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck doesn't mean it is a duck.

- a) **16 2 Timothy 3:1-5 CSB** But know this: Hard times will come in the last days. (2) For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, proud, demeaning, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, (3) unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, without love for what is good, (4) traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, (5) holding to the form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid these people.
- (1) We are living in hard times because people love pleasure and hate God.
 - (2) Without God people are lovers of self. They cannot tell the difference.
 - (3) They think they have some redeeming virtues or quality, a *form* of godliness.
 - (4) They have no power over sin.
- b) **17 2 Timothy 3:6-9 CSB** For among them are those who worm their way into households and deceive gullible women overwhelmed by sins and led astray by a variety of passions, (7) always learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. (8) Just as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so these also resist the truth. They are men who are corrupt in mind and worthless in regard to the faith. (9) But they will not make further progress, for their foolishness will be clear to all, as was the foolishness of Jannes and Jambres.
- (1) These are some pretty harsh things to say about those who follow their own passions instead of following Jesus.
 - (a) They worm their way – they are like worms slithering deceptively into churches and households with intent on harm and discord.
 - (b) They will be found out.
 - (2) Notice how some people who are weak in their faith are described as:
 - (a) Being gullible – believing anything but the bible
 - (b) Overwhelmed by sins – they have not intentionally decided to follow Jesus and not their hearts.
 - (c) Led astray by a variety of passions – they are caught up in the sensuality of relative thinking.
 - (d) Always learning but never coming to a conviction of truth
 - (3) Those who intentionally deceive are corrupt in their minds and worthless when it comes to faith.
 - (4) Their foolishness is evident to all except for those caught up in passions and sins – the gullible.
3. Just because you live in the world doesn't mean you conform to it.

- a) **18 Romans 12:2 CSB** Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.
- (1) Can you discern the will of God if you're following your heart or adopting man-made opinions?
 - (2) If you want to be like the world, will you get to know the truth?
- b) **19 James 4:4 CSB** You adulterous people! Don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the friend of the world becomes the enemy of God.
- (1) Can you be a friend of the world, supporting its ways and thinking there's nothing wrong, and at the same time say you are a friend to God?
 - (2) We as Christians live with this tension because we are not of the world but live in it.
- c) **20 1 John 2:15-17 CSB** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For everything in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's possessions — is not from the Father, but is from the world. (17) And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God remains forever.
- (1) The world has allure – don't be mesmerized.
 - (2) Don't be impressed by man's achievements and knowledge.
 - (3) All comes from lust and pride – man's achievement.
 - (4) The love of the Father is not in the world, only the lust of man.
 - (5) You will pass away with the world if your heart is in the world.
 - (6) Only by obeying God's will, will you live forever.
 - (7) Abraham's example:
 - (a) **21 Hebrews 11:8-10 CSB** By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed and set out for a place that he was going to receive as an inheritance. He went out, even though he did not know where he was going. (9) By faith he stayed as a foreigner in the land of promise, living in tents as did Isaac and Jacob, coheirs of the same promise. (10) For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.
 - (i) Abraham left the city built by man to follow God's voice.
 - (ii) He did not go out by sight but by faith.
 - (iii) He was looking for the city built by God.
 - (iv) He was not impressed by man.
 - (8) Moses' example:
 - (a) **22 Hebrews 11:24-26 CSB** By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter (25) and chose to suffer with the people of

God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasure of sin.

(26) For he considered reproach for the sake of Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, since he was looking ahead to the reward.

- (b) Likewise, Moses refused to be associated with man's glory, rather choosing to suffer with God's people.
- (c) He'd rather suffer than enjoy sin.
- (d) He considered reproach to be more glorious than wealth because he was looking towards a greater reward.

d) Such are the people who are in the world but not of it.

e) Such are the people of God, the people of truth.

IV. 2 Catholicism – Universalism

A. Introduction

1. 3 The Roman Catholic Church bears five distinctions:
 - a) It is the oldest denomination in the world.
 - b) It is the mother of all other denominations.
 - c) It is the largest denomination in the world.
 - d) It is the most powerful denomination in the world.
 - e) It is the most corrupt denomination in the world.
2. The corruption of the Catholic Church - The perception of corruption within the Catholic Church has been shaped by various historical events and scandals. Some notable instances include:
 - a) **The Avignon Papacy** (1309-1376): During this period, the papal court was moved from Rome to Avignon, France, leading to accusations of excessive influence from the French monarchy and concerns about financial mismanagement.
 - b) **The Borgia Family**: The papacy of Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503) saw allegations of nepotism, political intrigue, and moral misconduct by the Borgia family members.
 - c) **The Protestant Reformation**: The 16th-century movement led by Martin Luther highlighted grievances against the Catholic Church, including the sale of indulgences and perceived corruption in the hierarchy.
 - d) **Sexual Abuse Scandals**: In recent decades, numerous cases of sexual abuse by clergy members have come to light, prompting criticism of the Church's handling of these cases and calls for greater transparency and accountability.
 - e) **Vatican Bank Scandals**: Instances of financial mismanagement and alleged money laundering involving the Vatican Bank have raised concerns about the Church's financial practices.
 - f) **Vatileaks Scandal** (2012): Confidential documents leaked from the Vatican revealed allegations of corruption, power struggles, and mismanagement within the Holy See.

3. **4** It embodies (I'm not saying it is) *Babylon* (Rome), as described in Revelation 17 & 18, although its glory is faded and coming apart in these times. The word picture and symbolism of Babylon represent the greatness of man lauded and exalted in the great and influential cities of the world, beginning with Babel, and at the time of the writing of Revelation, Rome.
 - a) That's why it is called **Roman Catholic** – *catholic* means *universal*.
 - b) **5** It borrows its structure, both politically and religiously, from Rome:
 - (1) Hierarchy: Just as ancient Rome had a hierarchical structure with emperors, senators, and various levels of officials, the Roman Catholic Church has a hierarchical structure. At the top is the Pope, who is considered the spiritual leader and head of the Church, analogous to a monarch. Below the Pope are cardinals, bishops, priests, and deacons, each with specific roles and responsibilities.
 - (2) Dioceses: The Roman Catholic Church is divided into geographical regions called dioceses, each headed by a bishop. This organizational division can be seen as loosely analogous to the way the Roman Empire was divided into provinces, each governed by a governor.
 - (3) Centralization of Authority: Just as ancient Rome centralized authority in the emperor, the Roman Catholic Church centralizes spiritual and doctrinal authority in the Pope. This concept of central authority is somewhat reminiscent of the way the Roman Empire was governed from its center in Rome.
 - (4) Ecclesiastical Titles: The Church's use of titles like "bishop" and "cardinal" can evoke a sense of hierarchy similar to titles used in ancient Roman administration.
 - (5) Liturgical Influence: The grand architecture of some Roman Catholic churches, including basilicas, cathedrals, and the use of iconography, may draw inspiration from the monumental buildings and art of ancient Rome.

B. **6** Origin and History

1. It has a long and convoluted history of how it came into being. You can follow some of the changes in thought that led to its formation in the apostolic father, particularly from the bishop **Clement of Rome**, whom the Catholics claim was the third pop after Peter and Linus.
2. From our study on **apostasy**, we know the RC theology came out of the primitive church.
3. The Holy Spirit testified that some would (1 Tim. 4:1-5):
 - a) Forbid marriage
 - b) Command abstinence from certain foods
4. The Catholic Church grew out the New Testament church and became a full-grown denomination when **Boniface III** became the first pope in 606AD.
 - a) He asserted the primacy of the Bishop of Rome over other bishops.

- b) He sent a letter to the Byzantine Emperor Phocas, who ruled at the time, requesting that the Bishop of Rome be recognized as the universal leader of the Church.
 - c) Emperor Phocas issued a decree in 606 AD that recognized the Bishop of Rome as the "universal bishop" and granted him the title "Ecumenical Patriarch." This title was intended to emphasize the preeminence of the Bishop of Rome over other bishops in the Church.
- 5. The **Great Schism** of 1054 AD.
 - a) The division called *Iconoclastic Controversy* was over the use of images in worship.
 - b) The Eastern Church (Greek & Russian Orthodox) opposed images, while the Western Church favored them.
- 6. The Catholic Church gained considerable influence during the *Middle Ages*, with monasteries, universities, and the development of scholastic theology shaping its identity.
- 7. The **Protestant Reformation** in the 16th century broke the stranglehold Catholicism had on the Western world.
- 8. The Catholic Church responded to the Reformation with the *Counter-Reformation*, which included reforms, the **Council of Trent** (1545-1563), and reaffirmation of Catholic doctrine. This brought the catholic church to its current form and function.
 - a) Doctrinal Clarifications: The council reaffirmed traditional Catholic doctrines and clarified important points of theology. It affirmed the authority of **both Scripture and Tradition** in shaping Christian beliefs.
 - b) Justification by Faith and Works: The council affirmed the Catholic doctrine of **justification**, emphasizing that **salvation involves both faith and good works**, rejecting the Protestant doctrine of "sola fide" (faith alone).
 - c) Sacraments: The council reaffirmed the importance of the seven sacraments, emphasizing their role in **conveying grace**. It clarified the validity of the sacraments and their **necessity for salvation**.
 - d) Transubstantiation: The council defined the doctrine of transubstantiation, affirming the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, where the bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Christ.
 - e) Priesthood and Clerical Celibacy: The council addressed issues related to the priesthood, emphasizing the **necessity of proper education and training** for priests (the idea of seminary). It also upheld the discipline of clerical **celibacy**.
 - f) Biblical Canon: The council confirmed the traditional canon of the Bible, which included the **Deuterocanonical** books (also known as the Apocrypha), which are not present in Protestant Bibles.
 - g) Indulgences: The council condemned abuses related to indulgences, clarifying their proper use and purpose. Indulgences were to be granted based on genuine repentance and good works.

- h) Seminaries and Education: The council emphasized the need for the establishment of **seminaries** to train priests and ensure their proper education in theology and pastoral care.
 - i) Church Authority and Tradition: The council upheld the **authority of the Pope and the Church's tradition** as authoritative sources for interpreting Scripture and guiding the faithful.
 - j) Reformation of Practices: The council initiated reforms to address certain practices and abuses within the Church, including improving the moral conduct of clergy and the administration of sacraments.
 - 9. **First Vatican Council** (1869-1870): This council defined the dogma of papal infallibility, asserting that under specific conditions, the Pope is protected from error when teaching on matters of faith and morals.
 - 10. **Second Vatican Council** (1962-1965): Also known as Vatican II, this council brought substantial changes to the Church's liturgy, ecumenical relationships, and engagement with the modern world. It promoted greater participation of the laity, emphasized the importance of Scripture, and encouraged interfaith dialogue.
 - 11. Over time, the Catholic Church has continued to develop its theology, hierarchy, and traditions through councils, encyclicals, and papal pronouncements. It is ever evolving and changing with the times.
- C. Catechism – *comprehensive summary or exposition of the principles and teachings of a particular religion*
- 1. **7 Truths**
 - a) There is one God, but three persons in the Godhead.
 - b) The Bible is the Word of God
 - c) They believe in Heaven, Hell, the Resurrection and Judgement.
 - d) They oppose divorce and uphold the sanctity of the home.
 - e) They hold a high regard for life and oppose abortion and euthanasia.
 - f) They don't believe women ought to be preachers or be in a lead position in the church.
 - g) They don't believe in same-sex marriage.
 - h) They believe baptism is essential for salvation, except they practice it on infants, and they don't immerse them. Some do immerse adults, though.
 - 2. **8 Errors**
 - a) They teach they are the one and only, true, apostolic church.
 - (1) Pope **Boniface VIII**, in the bull "Unam Sanctum" issued in 1302, stated that outside the Catholic Church, "there is neither salvation nor remission of sins." He further said: "...it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to Roman Pontiff." (Eternal Kingdom, p. 196).
 - (2) The **Magisterium** is a central concept within the Catholic Church that refers to the teaching authority entrusted to the Pope and the bishops in communion with him. This authority enables

them to interpret, safeguard, and authentically transmit the teachings of the Catholic Church, as they believe is found in both Sacred Scripture (the Bible) and Sacred Tradition. The term "Magisterium" comes from the Latin word "magister," meaning "teacher."

- (3) They teach there is a division in the church between clergy and laity.
 - (a) Only clergy can receive special education, orders, and authority to perform sacraments.
 - (b) Only clergy can be ordained as priests, bishops, and archbishops.
 - (c) Only clergy can lead a mass.
 - (d) Laity (common people, or non-clergy) can be ordained as deacons and be allowed to perform certain rites.
- b) They teach there are **Seven Sacraments** (rites by which grace is administered):
 - (a) Baptism (by *sprinkling* or *pouring*; although some practice *immersion* on adults) – The sacrament of initiation into the Christian faith.
 - (i) Through the pouring or immersion of water and the invocation of the Holy Trinity, baptism cleanses individuals of original sin and marks their entrance into the Church.
 - (ii) Original sin is the idea that all humans carry Adam's sin from birth. No one is born free of sin.
 - (iii) Scripture teaches differently: **Ezekiel 18:20 CSB** **The person who sins is the one who will die.** A son won't suffer punishment for the father's iniquity, and a father won't suffer punishment for the son's iniquity. The righteousness of the righteous person will be on him, and the wickedness of the wicked person will be on him.
 - (b) Confirmation – Also known as the sacrament of *Chrismation*, confirmation involves the anointing with chrism (holy oil) by a bishop. It signifies the strengthening of the Holy Spirit and the deepening of the individual's commitment to the faith. Catholics believe that this is the point when you *receive* the Holy Spirit into your life, and you are a real *Christian*.
 - (c) Eucharist – Commonly referred to as Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist involves the consecration of bread and wine during Mass, which Catholics believe becomes the actual body and blood of Christ (*transubstantiation*). It's a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice and a source of spiritual nourishment.

- (d) Reconciliation (Confession or Penance) – Through confession of sins to a priest and the act of contrition, this sacrament offers forgiveness and reconciliation with God and the Church. The priest grants *absolution* on behalf of Christ, usually by having you recite some prayers or doing good acts.
- (e) Anointing of the Sick (Extreme Unction or Last Rites) – Administered to those who are seriously ill or nearing the end of their lives, this sacrament includes the anointing with oil and prayers for spiritual and physical healing, as well as forgiveness of sins.
- (f) Holy Orders – This sacrament ordains individuals as deacons, priests, or bishops, conferring them with the authority to serve and lead the Church (ordination). It is seen as a continuation of the apostolic ministry established by Jesus.
- (g) Matrimony – The sacrament of marriage unites a man and a woman in a lifelong covenant, symbolizing the love between Christ and the Church. It involves the exchange of vows and is witnessed by a priest and the faith community.
- c) They teach that **tradition** and decrees of the popes and church councils are equal in authority with the Bible.
 - (a) “Like two sacred rivers flowing from paradise, the Bible and the Divine Tradition contain the Word of God...of the two, tradition is to us more clear and safe.” (Catholic Belief, by J. Faa Di Bruno, p. 33).
 - (b) The Bible alone gives us all that we need (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:3; Jude 3)
 - (c) We must not add or diminish from the word of God (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6)
 - (d) Following the doctrines of men makes void the Word of God (Matt. 15:9,13-14)
 - (e) One can read and understand the Bible for himself (John 5:39; Acts 17:11; Eph. 3:3,4)
- d) **Papal Authority**: The extensive authority of the Pope, as developed over time, differs from the decentralized leadership structure portrayed in the New Testament where elders shared leadership responsibilities in each congregation.
 - (1) The Vatican Council of 1870 declared the teaching of the Roman Pontiff was divinely endowed with infallibility.
 - (2) John 14:26- the apostles would be taught all things.
 - (3) John 16:12-13 – The apostles would be guided into all truth.
 - (4) Galatians 1:6-10 – Any teacher of any gospel different from the apostles’ is not of God and is condemned by God.
 - (5) 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – All Scripture is of God and useful for teaching, rebuking correcting and training in righteousness so

that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- e) **Veneration of Mary and Saints:** The veneration of Mary and the saints detracts from the exclusive worship of God, as emphasized in the New Testament.
 - (1) They teach she is a perpetual virgin, not acknowledging she had other children with her husband, Joseph (Matt. 13:55-56).
 - (2) Joseph had no union with Mary until Christ was born (Matt. 1:25).
 - (3) They teach she was sinless from birth (immaculate conception).
 - (4) Mary believed she needed a Savior! (Luke 1:47)
 - (5) They believe Mary is a mediator between us and Jesus.
 - (6) The bible says there's only one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ (1 Tim 2:5).
 - (7) They also believe saints (dead Christians) can also mediate for living people.
- f) **Purgatory and Indulgences:** The concepts of purgatory and indulgences, as taught by the Catholic Church, are not taught in the New Testament.
 - (1) Catholics who are not good enough to go Heaven at death go to a temporary place to be purged of their sins, hence purgatory.
 - (2) They say that indulgences can be bought to bring early release of souls from Purgatory. (Indulgence is a remission of God of temporal punishment that is obtained by the church. Indulgences can be applied to living or dead.)
 - (3) This is not a biblical teaching. After death comes judgment (Heb 9:27).
- g) **Transubstantiation:** The Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, which teaches that the bread and wine in the Eucharist become the actual body and blood of Christ, is a departure from the symbolic interpretations of the Last Supper.
- h) **Clerical Celibacy:** it is one of the teachings Paul said comes from deceitful spirits and demons: teaching marital abstinence (1 Tim 4:1-3).
- i) **Rituals & Holy Days:** The development of elaborate rituals and holy days, while having theological significance to the Catholics, differs in form and scope from the simple gatherings and practices depicted in the New Testament. They arrive at these rituals out of pure *conjecture*.
 - (1) Liturgical prayers (set prayers) – these are prayers found in a prayer book commemorating many different occasions. Priests pray these without any variation. They are recited or memorized.
 - (2) Blessings in forms of signs such as:
 - (a) Laying on of hands by the clergy
 - (b) Making the sign of the cross

- (c) Sprinkling holy water (which recalls “baptism”) on people or things
- (3) The scapular – a cloth on a leather string worn to protect from the one who wears it from hell.
- (4) Crucifixes – crosses with an image of Christ on it. These are worn or used as token or amulets for “protection” against evil.
- (5) Statues or icons of the Mary and various saints.
- (6) Candles to light in the name of people in front of statues and icons to venerate them and receive intercessory power.
- (7) Medals – medals with an imprint of Jesus, Mary and or the saints on it.
- (8) Prayer books and prayer cards
- (9) The rosary (prayers to Mary using beads), invoking a supposed power Mary has being the mother of Jesus.
- (10) **Catholic Holy Days:** None of these holidays are found in Scripture nor are we taught to observe them by God’s revealed will.
 - (a) Ash Wednesday: Ashes are put on your forehead reminding you are but dust.
 - (i) Catholics attend a special church service where ashes are applied to their foreheads in the shape of a cross.
 - (ii) These ashes are typically obtained by burning the palm leaves from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebration.
 - (iii) The act of receiving ashes symbolizes humility, repentance, and mortality, reminding believers of the biblical truth, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19).
 - (b) Lent: Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter.
 - (i) Abstinence from meat is a common practice during the season of Lent, which lasts for 40 days leading up to Easter.
 - (ii) On Ash Wednesday and all Fridays during Lent, Catholics are traditionally required to abstain from eating meat as an act of penance and self-discipline.
 - (iii) Additionally, Catholics are encouraged to abstain from meat on Fridays throughout the year, not just during Lent, as a reminder of Jesus' sacrifice on Good Friday.

- (iv) In addition to meat abstinence, Roman Catholics also observe fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, which involves limiting the quantity of food consumed.
 - (v) The exact dates of Lent can vary from year to year based on the lunar calendar.
 - (vi) It is approximately 40 days in duration.
 - (vii) It is a time of reflection, penance, and renewal.
- (c) Palm Sunday: Marks the beginning of Holy Week, commemorating Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. It takes place on the Sunday before Easter.
 - (i) Catholics are given palm fronds to wave around during the mass.
- (d) Good Friday: Observes the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and is a day of solemn reflection and penance.
- (e) Feast of Corpus Christi: Celebrates the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ, which is consecrated during Mass.
- (f) Feast of the Epiphany (January 6th): Commemorates the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus, representing the revelation of Christ to the Gentiles.
- (g) All Saints' Day (November 1st): Honors all saints, known and unknown, who have achieved heaven.
 - (i) It is a day to remember and pray for the intercession of the saints.
 - (ii) Many candles are lit in honor of the "saints".
- (h) All Souls' Day (November 2nd): A day to pray for the souls of the faithful departed who are undergoing purification in purgatory, awaiting entrance into heaven.
- (i) Easter: The Resurrection of Jesus.
 - (i) The Council of Nicaea determined when Easter should be celebrated, that is, on the Sunday following the full moon after the vernal equinox.
 - (ii) It is considered the most important Catholic holiday.
- (j) Feast of the Assumption (August 15th): Celebrates the belief that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was assumed body and soul into heaven.
- (k) Feast of the Immaculate Conception (December 8th): Commemorates the belief that Mary was conceived without original sin, preparing her to be the mother of Jesus.

- (l) Feast of the Annunciation (March 25th): Commemorates the announcement by the angel Gabriel to Mary that she would conceive and give birth to Jesus.
 - (m) Christmas (December 25): The birth of Jesus is to be religiously observed.
 - (i) The Bible never said that December 25th was the birth date of Christ.
 - j) **Doctrinal Development**: The gradual development of doctrinal formulations over centuries is a departure from the direct teachings of the apostles in the New Testament.
- D. How to Approach Catholics
 1. **9** Our approach to any person caught in a denomination is to have them seriously consider what the Bible says, and to help them believe and accept the Bible is God's word and the ultimate authority.
 - a) If God can get them to that point, it is just a matter of investment in that soul, in bible study, fellowship, and showing them the love God, before they become a believer.
 - b) With many denominations you want to specifically mention that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, not whatever they believe that replaces Jesus as the Way, Truth and Life.
 2. **10** Use the Bible, since they believe it is God's word. Help them see Jesus is the Only Way, not man's ideologies and opinions.
 3. Go through the Gospel Series with them, teaching them the Bible is the only authority.
 4. The Word of God study will expose:
 - a) Traditions are not above God's revealed truth in the bible (Matthew 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13).
 - b) Some Catholic false doctrine was prophesied in the first century (1 Tim 4:1-3).
 - (1) Prohibitions against marriage
 - (2) Abstinence from foods
 - c) Extra Scriptures:
 - (1) Don't call anyone Father (Matt 23:9). Jesus warns against titles and nomenclature among his people.
 - (2) Only God is Reverend (Psalm 111:9). Some want to carry this title. Only our God is worthy of it.
 - (3) Mary had other children, she's not a perpetual virgin. (Matt 13:55-56; Mark 6:3)
 - (4) No human other than Jesus can mediate between you and God, not even for confession of sins (1 Tim 2:5).
 5. **11** The Heart Study will show them how we cannot trust our own opinions or feelings to lead us to truth.
 6. The Gospel study will convict them on Jesus' death, burial and resurrection on their behalf.

7. It is important to be gentle and speak with compassion and understanding, not in a condemnatory way when sharing these truths. If you were a catholic, use that experience to sympathize with them.

V. **2 Eastern Orthodox Church – Bible Class/Podcast**

A. **Origin and History**

1. **3 Greek Orthodox**

- a) Origins: The Greek Orthodox Church traces its roots to the apostles and the early Christian communities in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, whereas the Catholic Church traces its roots to the western part of the Roman Empire.
 - (1) The Apostle Andrew is traditionally considered the founder of the Church in Byzantium (modern-day Istanbul).
 - (2) As does the catholic church, it has a long and convoluted history of doctrinal development.
 - (3) The roots of this doctrinal development can be seen in the letters of the apostolic fathers.
- b) Great Schism (1054): The Great Schism of 1054 marked a significant split between the Eastern Orthodox Church, (including the Greek & Russian Orthodox Church), and the Western Catholic Church. Key theological differences and issues of authority led to this separation.
 - (1) **The Iconoclastic Controversy** was indeed a significant theme revolving around the use of religious icons, particularly in the Eastern Christian Church.
 - (a) Iconoclasts vs. Iconophiles: The controversy divided the Christian world into two camps. The Iconoclasts ("icon-smashers") argued against the use of icons, believing that they promoted idolatry. The Iconophiles ("icon-lovers") defended the use of icons as aids to devotion and teaching.
 - (b) Definition of Icons: Icons are religious images or representations of Christ, the Virgin Mary, saints, and biblical events. The controversy centered on whether these icons should be venerated or considered as idols.
 - (2) Claim by the eastern church that the west had altered the Nicene Creed.
 - (3) Another major issue was the **authority of the Pope in Rome**. The Western Church, particularly the Papacy, asserted its supremacy over the entire Christian Church, including the Eastern Patriarchates, which resisted such claims. This power struggle contributed to the widening rift.
 - (4) Theological divisions persisted and deepened over the centuries. While both the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church share many core beliefs, differences in doctrine and practice remained, including the role of the Pope,

the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist (Western) versus leavened bread (Eastern), and the understanding of original sin.

- c) Byzantine Empire (4th - 15th Century): During the Byzantine Empire, the Greek Orthodox Church played a central role in the religious and cultural life of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium). It was the state religion, and theological debates and the establishment of the Nicene Creed were significant events during this period.
- d) Ottoman Empire (15th - 19th Century): The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 had a profound impact on the Greek Orthodox Church. It continued to exist under Ottoman rule, but with limitations and restrictions on religious freedom.
- e) Modern Era (20th Century - Present): The Greek Orthodox Church played a role in the Greek War of Independence in the 19th century and the establishment of the modern Greek state. In the 20th century, it experienced periods of growth and change.

2. **4 Russian Orthodox**

- a) Christianity's Introduction to Russia (10th Century): The roots of the Russian Orthodox Church can be traced back to the late 10th century when Christianity was introduced to the Kievan Rus, a loose federation of Slavic tribes. Princess Olga of Kiev is traditionally considered the first Russian ruler to convert to Christianity in 957.
- b) Baptism of Vladimir the Great (988): The pivotal moment in the church's early history was the baptism of Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev in 988, an event that marked the official conversion of the Kievan Rus to Christianity. This conversion was influenced by Byzantine Christianity, and the Russian Church initially fell under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.
- c) Elevation to Patriarchate (1589): The Russian Orthodox Church evolved under Mongol rule and the influence of the Byzantine Empire. In 1589, it was granted the status of a patriarchate, with the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia as its head. This marked a significant step toward ecclesiastical independence.
- d) Schism within the Church in the Imperial Era of Russia (17th Century): The Old Believer schism in the 17th century was a major internal challenge. It was sparked by reforms in liturgical practices and rituals introduced by Patriarch Nikon. Those who resisted these reforms became known as Old Believers and were persecuted by the state.
- e) Soviet Era
 - (1) Russian Revolution (1917): The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent rise of the Soviet Union led to a period of severe persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church. Many churches and monasteries were confiscated or destroyed, and clergy faced persecution.

- (2) Repression and Survival: The Russian Orthodox Church faced decades of repression under Soviet rule. Many clergy were executed or imprisoned, and religious practices were severely restricted. However, the church managed to survive in secret and underground, often with the support of devoted believers.
- f) Post-Soviet Revival:
 - (1) Fall of the Soviet Union (1991): With the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Russian Orthodox Church experienced a revival. Religious freedom was restored, and the church reemerged as a prominent institution in Russian society.
 - (2) Restoration and Growth: The post-Soviet era saw the restoration of many churches and monasteries, as well as the rapid growth of the Russian Orthodox Church. It became closely aligned with the Russian government under President Vladimir Putin's rule.
- g) The Russian Orthodox Church plays a significant role in the cultural and political life of modern Russia. It has become a symbol of Russian identity and nationalism.

B. Doctrine

1. **5** The Greek Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church share the core teachings and beliefs of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, however, there are some nuanced doctrinal and liturgical differences between the two. It's important to note that these differences are not matters of fundamental doctrine but often relate to liturgical practices and local customs.
2. **6 Truths** – like the Catholic church, the Eastern Orthodox church shares the following scriptural truths:
 - a) They believe in the godhead having three distinct persons: the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit.
 - b) They believe in the incarnation of The Son.
 - c) They believe in the authority of scripture, although they place tradition at the same level of authority as scripture.
 - d) They believe in the resurrection of the dead.
 - e) They believe in the second coming of Jesus.
 - f) They believe in regeneration and forgiveness of sins through baptism, although they practice infant baptism by sprinkling or pouring, and assign many other rites to baptism.
3. **7 Errors**
 - a) Doctrine and Practices: The Greek Orthodox Church adheres to the Nicene Creed and the Seven Ecumenical Councils (from 325 AD to 787 AD). It places strong emphasis on the veneration of icons, liturgical worship, and the sacraments, including the Eucharist.
 - (1) Sacraments “Holy Mysteries” of the Eastern Orthodox Church
 - (a) Initiation – Baptism (christening)
 - (i) Exorcism and renunciation – Before baptism, there is a renunciation of Satan, followed by an

exorcism prayer. This is a symbolic rejection of evil and a turning toward God.

- (ii) Triple immersion, representing the Holy Trinity
- (iii) Infant baptism is practiced since they also believe in original sin.

(b) Chrismation – Confirmation – differing from Catholicism, this is practiced immediately following baptism. Chrismation is administered by the anointing of the newly baptized person with holy chrism (consecrated oil), symbolizing the gift of the Holy Spirit. Chrismation is seen as the seal of the Holy Spirit.

(c) Eucharist (Holy Communion): The Eucharist is the central sacrament of the Eastern Orthodox Church. It is the partaking of the consecrated bread and wine, which Eastern Orthodox Christians believe become the actual body and blood of Christ. This sacrament is central to worship and spiritual nourishment.

(d) Confession (Repentance or Penance): Confession is the sacrament of repentance and reconciliation. Orthodox Christians confess their sins to a priest, who offers guidance and pronounces God's forgiveness. It is seen as a means of spiritual healing and renewal.

(e) Holy Unction (Anointing of the Sick): This sacrament involves the anointing of the sick or those in need of healing with holy oil. It is administered with prayers for physical and spiritual healing. Holy Unction is often performed during Holy Week.

(f) Holy Orders: Holy Orders is the sacrament through which men are ordained to the clergy, including bishops, priests, and deacons. It involves the laying on of hands by a bishop and is viewed as the bestowal of the grace and authority to serve the Church.

(g) Matrimony (Marriage): Matrimony is the sacrament of marriage. In the Eastern Orthodox Church, marriage is considered a sacred union blessed by God. The couple is joined together in a service that includes the exchange of rings and the sharing of a common cup, symbolizing their shared life.

(2) Church Fathers: The writings and teachings of early Church Fathers, such as St. Athanasius, St. Basil the Great, and St. John Chrysostom, hold significant authority in Eastern Orthodoxy. Their theological works and commentaries on Scripture are highly regarded and studied.

(3) Iconography: The veneration of icons (religious images) is a distinctive feature of Eastern Orthodoxy. Icons are considered windows to the divine and are used in worship and prayer. The

Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787 AD affirmed the use of icons in the Church.

- (4) **Liturgy:** The Eastern Orthodox liturgical tradition is known for its elaborate and highly structured worship services. The Divine Liturgy, especially the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, are central to the Church's worship. The liturgical calendar, including feast days and fasting periods, is carefully observed.
- (5) **Fasting and Abstinence:** In the Eastern Orthodox Church, fasting and abstinence are significant aspects of the liturgical calendar. There are several fasting periods throughout the year, with the most notable being Great Lent, which corresponds to the Roman Catholic Lenten season.
 - (a) During Great Lent, Eastern Orthodox Christians abstain from meat, dairy, eggs, and other animal products for the entirety of the fast. This period of strict fasting is accompanied by increased prayer, almsgiving, and participation in liturgical services. The fast ends with the celebration of Pascha (Easter).
 - (b) Apart from Great Lent, there are other fasting periods in the Eastern Orthodox Church, including Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year, fasting before major feast days, and the Advent fast leading up to Christmas.
 - (c) It's important to note that the specific rules and practices of fasting and abstinence can vary among individual Catholics and Orthodox Christians, as well as among different regional traditions within these larger denominations. Additionally, some individuals with health conditions or other circumstances may receive dispensations or modify their fasting practices with the guidance of their clergy.
- b) **Hierarchy:** The Church has a hierarchical structure led by bishops and archbishops, with the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople traditionally regarded as the "first among equals."
 - (1) They do not believe in papal authority.
 - (2) They believe the scriptures and tradition are the ultimate divine authority.
 - (3) The Catholic church adds papal authority to that which the orthodox church denies.
 - (4) **The Role of the Bishop:** The Eastern Orthodox Church places significant importance on the role of bishops as spiritual leaders and successors to the apostles. The authority of the bishop is central to the life of the local church.

- c) **8 Theology and Beliefs:** Greek Orthodox theology emphasizes *theosis*, the idea that believers can attain union with God. It also places a strong emphasis on the Holy Trinity, with Father, Son (Jesus Christ), and Holy Spirit as central to faith.
- (1) **Hesychasm:** Hesychasm is a mystical tradition within Eastern Orthodoxy that emphasizes inner stillness and prayer. Practitioners seek to encounter the Divine Light through silent prayer, often repeating the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."
 - (2) **Monasticism:** Monastic life holds a special place in Eastern Orthodoxy. Monasteries are centers of spiritual growth and preservation of tradition. Monks and nuns dedicate their lives to prayer, asceticism, and community living.
 - (3) **Sacred Music:** The Eastern Orthodox Church has a rich musical tradition, including hymnography and chants. Choral singing, often in the Byzantine or Znamenny chant tradition, is an integral part of worship.
 - (4) They believe in the eneration of Mary according to the Council of Ephesus (431 AD) where they affirmed the title "Theotokos" (Mother of God) to the Virgin Mary.
 - (5) They also believe in the veneration of saints.
 - (6) They believe in Apostolic succession through patriarchy, similar to how the Catholics do it through the pope.
 - (7) **Clerical Celibacy** – The Eastern Orthodox Church has a nuanced approach to clerical celibacy, and its practice differs from that of the Roman Catholic Church. Here are some key points regarding clerical celibacy in the Eastern Orthodox Church:
 - (a) **Bishops:** In the Eastern Orthodox Church, bishops are generally chosen from among the celibate clergy. This means that bishops are typically monks who have taken vows of celibacy. The rationale behind this practice is to maintain the bishop's focus on the spiritual and pastoral responsibilities of the episcopate without the added responsibilities of family life.
 - (b) **Priests:** The practice of clerical celibacy for priests is less strict in the Eastern Orthodox Church compared to the Roman Catholic Church. In many cases, married men can become priests, and married priests can continue to serve in their pastoral roles. However, there are conditions and expectations regarding marriage for priests:
 - (c) **Marriage Before Ordination:** In general, if a man wishes to become a priest in the Eastern Orthodox Church, he

is expected to be married before his ordination to the priesthood. Once ordained, he cannot marry.

- (d) **Celibacy Upon Ordination:** If a priest's wife should pass away, he is expected to remain celibate afterward. He may continue to serve as a priest but cannot remarry.
- (e) **Exception for Widowed Priests:** In some cases, widowed priests may be granted an exception to remarry, depending on the specific circumstances and the guidance of their bishop.
- (f) **Deacons:** Deacons in the Eastern Orthodox Church can be either married or celibate. Similar to priests, if a married deacon's wife passes away, he is expected to remain celibate afterward.
- (g) **Monastic Clergy:** Monastic clergy, such as monks and nuns, take vows of celibacy as part of their monastic commitment. Monks who are ordained as priests or bishops maintain their vow of celibacy.
- (h) **Local Variations:** Practices regarding clerical celibacy can vary among different Orthodox jurisdictions and regions. Some jurisdictions may have stricter rules, while others may be more lenient in certain circumstances.

- d) Contributions to Christian Thought and Culture: The Greek Orthodox Church has made significant contributions to Christian theology, philosophy, and liturgy. Many early Church Fathers, such as Athanasius and John Chrysostom, were Greek theologians.
- e) Contemporary Challenges: In the modern era, the Greek Orthodox Church faces challenges such as declining membership in some regions and adapting to changing societal norms.

C. **9** How to approach those in the Eastern Orthodox church:

1. Our approach to any person caught in a denomination is to have them seriously consider what the Bible says, and to help them believe and accept the Bible is God's word and the ultimate authority.
 - a) If God can get them to that point, it is just a matter of investment in that soul, in bible study, fellowship, and showing them the love God, before they become a believer.
 - b) With many denominations you want to specifically mention that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, not whatever they believe that replaces Jesus as the Way, Truth and Life.
2. **10** Use the Bible, since they believe it is God's word. Help them see Jesus is the Only Way, not man's ideologies and opinions.
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4. The Word of God study will expose:

- a) Traditions are not above God's revealed truth in the bible (Matthew 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13).
- b) Some Catholic false doctrine was prophesied in the first century (1 Tim 4:1-3).
 - (1) Prohibitions against marriage
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- c) Extra Scriptures:
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 - (3) Mary had other children, she's not a perpetual virgin. (Matt 13:55-56; Mark 6:3)
 - (4) No human other than Jesus can mediate between you and God, not even for confession of sins (1 Tim 2:5).
- 5. **11** The Heart Study will show them how we cannot trust our own opinions or feelings to lead us to truth.
- 6. The Gospel study will convict them on Jesus' death, burial and resurrection on their behalf.
- 7. It is important to be gentle and speak with compassion and understanding, not in a condemnatory way when sharing these truths. If you were a catholic, use that experience to sympathize with them.

VI. Protestantism – Protestant Reformation – 16th Century Onward

A. Lutheran – 1530

- 1. **2** Origins: The Lutheran Church was founded by Martin Luther in the early 16th century. In 1517, Luther famously posted his "95 Theses" on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, sparking the Protestant Reformation. His teachings emphasized salvation through faith alone, grace alone, and scripture alone, which challenged certain practices of the Roman Catholic Church at the time.
- 2. **3** Historical Events:
 - a) 1521: Luther is excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church and subsequently goes into hiding, during which he translates the New Testament into German.
 - b) 1525: The first Lutheran Mass is celebrated.
 - c) 1529: The term "Lutheran" is first used at the second Diet of Speyer.
 - (1) A *diet* is a historical assembly, for a variety of legislative and judicial purposes, including matters of governance, taxation, and foreign policy.
 - (2) The Diet of Worms in 1521 is a significant event in the history of the Lutheran Church. It was here that Martin Luther was asked to recant his teachings but famously refused, leading to his excommunication from the Roman Catholic Church.

- d) 1530, the *Augsburg Confession*, a key Lutheran doctrinal statement, was presented to the Holy Roman Emperor.
- e) 1648: *Treaty of Westphalia* grants Lutherans legal recognition within the Holy Roman Empire.
- f) 1741: First Lutheran church is established in the American colonies.
- g) 1820-1860s: Lutheran immigration to the United States increases, multiple synods formed.
 - (1) A *synod* is a council or assembly convened to discuss matters of doctrine, governance, or other issues related to the Church.
 - (2) The *synod* often has both administrative and doctrinal responsibilities, including the ordination of clergy, church discipline, and theological interpretation.
 - (3) Many Christian denominations, including Lutherans, Anglicans, and Orthodox, use the term "synod" to describe their ecclesiastical councils.

3. Key Beliefs:

- a) **4 Justification by Faith (*Sola Fide*)**: Lutherans believe that salvation is a free gift from God received through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - (1) **5 Ephesians 2:8-9 (CSB)** For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift — (9) not from works, so that no one can boast.
 - (2) According to the modern-day advocates of "faith alone" salvation, water baptism cannot be a requisite to salvation, because it is something "more than" faith.
 - (3) Martin Luther and the other reformers challenged the Catholic Church that sold indulgences and offered a "works-based" type of salvation. Martin Luther often taught that salvation was based on faith alone, and not received based upon a person's meritorious works. Martin Luther did not, however, take *faith alone* to mean that mere *mental assent* to Christ's deity was sufficient to obtain salvation. In fact, Luther's idea of faith alone does not conform to the modern-day idea that baptism cannot be required for salvation.
 - (4) **6** Martin Luther believed wholeheartedly in the necessity of water baptism as a requisite for salvation. (Luther, Martin (1978), *Luther's Large Catechism*, (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia) pp. 101-102)
 - (5) **7 Colossians 2:11-12 (CSB)** You were also circumcised in him with a circumcision not done with hands, by putting off the body of flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, (12) when you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

- (6) **8 James 2:22-24 (CSB)** You see that faith was active together with his works, and by works, faith was made complete, (23) and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God's friend. (24) You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.
- b) **9 Sacraments**: They recognize two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion).
- (1) A very reduced list from the Catholics and Orthodox Christians.
 - (2) But again, this concept of *sacrament* is not really in the bible.
 - (3) By their definition a *sacrament* is a venue by which we obtain God's grace.
 - (4) But Paul's definition of grace is not particularly tied to any one thing, just to Jesus Christ and the Gospel:
 - (5) **10 Romans 3:21-24 (CSB)** But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, attested by the Law and the Prophets. (22) The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, since there is no distinction. (23) For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; (24) they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.
- c) **11 Authority of Scripture** (*Sola Scriptura*): Lutherans hold the Bible as the highest authority in matters of faith and practice.
- (1) This is in keeping with the scriptures:
 - (2) **12 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (CSB)** All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, (17) so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
- d) **13 Two Kingdoms Doctrine**: Lutherans hold that God rules the earthly kingdom through government and laws and the heavenly kingdom through the Gospel.
- (1) Although it is true God uses human government to delegate authority:
 - (2) **14 Romans 13:1 (CSB)** Let everyone submit to the governing authorities, since there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are instituted by God.
 - (3) **15** Jesus is the ultimate ruler of heaven and earth for now:
 - (4) **Matthew 28:18 (CSB)** Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth."
 - (5) **Philippians 2:9-11 (CSB)** For this reason God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, (10) so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow — in heaven and on earth and under the earth — (11) and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- (6) **16** If anything, the two kingdoms are of darkness and light, not necessarily earthly rule and law, and God's rule. Earthly rule and law are powered by the kingdom of darkness:
- (7) **Colossians 1:13** - "He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son he loves."
- (8) **Ephesians 6:12** - "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens."
- (9) **Acts 26:18** - "To open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and **from the power of Satan to God**, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me."
- (10) The doctrine helps people understand there are two realms and the Christian lives with the tension of being a part of both, but to emphasize it as a doctrinal matter is to trivialize it a bit.
- e) **17 Law and Gospel**: Lutherans emphasize the need to rightly divide the Law, which shows humanity's sinfulness, and the Gospel, which delivers the good news of salvation in Christ.
 - (1) **18 2 Timothy 2:15 (CSB)** Be diligent to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth.
- f) **19 Priesthood of All Believers**: Lutherans believe that all Christians have direct access to God and are called to serve Him in various ways. That being said, they still believe some need ordination in order to administer the sacraments, so there is still a trace of the clergy/laity divide.
- g) **20 Eschatology**: While Lutherans hold diverse views on end-times theology, traditional Lutheran eschatology is *amillennial*, believing that Christ's reign is not a literal 1,000-year period as described in Revelation 20.
 - (1) This means that they believe that the thousand-year reign of Christ mentioned in Revelation 20 is symbolic of Christ's reign through his church now. Amillennialists do not believe that there will be a literal thousand-year period of peace and prosperity on earth before Christ's second coming.
 - (2) Amillennialists believe that the church is the kingdom of God on earth, and that it is growing and spreading the gospel until Christ returns. They believe that Christ will return at the end of the age to judge the living and the dead, and to establish his eternal kingdom.
 - (3) **21 Premillennialism** is the belief that Jesus Christ will return to earth before the millennium, a thousand-year period of peace and righteousness. Premillennialists believe that the millennium

will be a literal, thousand-year period of time in which Christ will reign on earth and Satan will be bound.

- (4) **22 Postmillennialism** is the belief that Jesus Christ will return to earth after the millennium. Postmillennialists believe that the church will gradually evangelize the world and bring about a period of peace and prosperity. They believe that Christ will return at the end of this period to judge the living and the dead.

4. **23 Key Deviations from Scripture:**

- a) **Infant Baptism:** Lutherans practice infant baptism, a tradition not explicitly outlined in the New Testament, which generally features adult believers being baptized.
- b) **Real Presence in Communion:** Lutherans believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, known as *consubstantiation*. This differs from the Catholic view of *transubstantiation* and the low-church view of *symbolism*, and it is a topic of theological debate based on New Testament texts like 1 Corinthians 11:23-29.
- c) **Liturgical Tradition:** Lutheranism retains some forms of liturgy and church hierarchy, which some other Protestant denominations believe are not strictly supported by the New Testament.
- d) **Cooperation with other Denominations:** Lutherans, especially in modern times, engage in *ecumenical* efforts, which some conservative Christians see as potentially compromising core beliefs.

5. **24 Worship:** Lutheran worship often includes liturgical elements, hymns, and a strong emphasis on the Word of God. The style of worship can vary within different Lutheran congregations.

6. **Creeds:** Lutherans affirm the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed as statements of their Christian faith.

7. **Role of Clergy:** Lutherans have pastors who are ordained and serve as spiritual leaders within their congregations.

- a) They administer sacraments and provide pastoral care. They use special vestments to set them apart from the laity.
- b) The Augsburg Confession, which is a foundational document of the Lutheran Church, states that "it is lawful for priests to marry." This view is based on the belief that celibacy is not required by Scripture and that marriage is a natural and good thing.
- c) Today, the vast majority of Lutheran clergy are married. In fact, many denominations encourage their clergy to marry, believing that it helps them to be more effective in their ministry.
- d) There are a few exceptions to this general rule. For example, some Lutheran denominations do not allow married clergy to be ordained as bishops. However, even in these denominations, married clergy are still able to serve as pastors.

8. **Denominational Diversity:** Over the centuries, Lutheranism has split into various denominations and synods, including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

America (ELCA), the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), and many others. Each may have slightly different doctrinal emphases and practices.

9. **25 Contemporary Movements:**

a) **Anabaptists:** The term "Anabaptist" comes from the Greek word "*anabaptizo*," which means "to baptize again." The Anabaptists are a Christian movement that originated in the 16th century during the time of the Protestant Reformation. They are most notably distinguished by their belief in adult baptism, as opposed to infant baptism, which was the norm in both the Catholic Church and many emerging Protestant denominations. The Anabaptists argued that baptism should be a conscious choice made by an individual old enough to understand its implications.

(1) Key Beliefs and Practices

- (a) Adult Baptism: One of the most distinctive features of Anabaptism is the belief in baptizing only those who have made a voluntary confession of faith.
- (b) Pacifism: Many Anabaptists are committed to a nonviolent way of life and often avoid military service.
- (c) Separation from the World: Anabaptists traditionally aim to live in distinct, disciplined communities separate from general society.
- (d) Church Autonomy: Anabaptists usually insist on the independence and autonomy of each local congregation.
- (e) Bible-Centered: Like other Reformation groups, they emphasize the authority of the Bible.

(2) Popular Anabaptist Groups still existing today:

(a) **26 Mennonites**

- (i) The Mennonites are a Christian Anabaptist denomination named after Menno Simons (1496–1561), a Frisian (coastal regions along the North Sea in what are now the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark) religious leader who followed the teachings of the earlier Swiss Anabaptists like Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz. The Anabaptist movement began in Switzerland around 1525 during the time of the Protestant Reformation. Menno Simons was a former Catholic priest who left the Catholic Church to join the Anabaptists. The Mennonites were formally organized later, based on his teachings and those of the early Anabaptists.

- (a) Around 1536, Menno Simons left the Catholic Church and joined the

Anabaptists, a group that had already been in existence for about a decade. His writings and leadership helped to coalesce various Anabaptist groups, and he was instrumental in shaping what later became the Mennonite Church. Although Martin Luther's writings were part of the broader religious landscape at that time, Menno Simons took a different path, one that emphasized adult baptism, pacifism, and separation from the world—views that were not aligned with Lutheran theology.

- (b) So, while Menno Simons and Martin Luther were contemporaries and both figures of the Protestant Reformation, their beliefs and the movements they led were distinct from each other.
- (ii) Beliefs and Practices: Mennonites emphasize the teachings of Jesus Christ as described in the New Testament. They believe in adult baptism, which is a distinct departure from infant baptism as practiced by the Catholic Church and some other Protestant denominations. They also hold pacifism in high regard, often avoiding military service and any form of violence. Mennonites also stress the importance of community, social justice, and living a simple life.
- (iii) Diversity within the Community: Over the centuries, Mennonites have split into various groups. In North America, there are several Mennonite groups with varying degrees of conservatism. The Old Order Mennonites, for example, live a lifestyle somewhat similar to the Amish, avoiding certain modern technologies and wearing plain clothes. On the other end of the spectrum, there are more modern Mennonite communities that engage fully with contemporary society.
- (iv) Geographical Spread: Originally rooted in Europe, Mennonites have a strong presence in North America, particularly in the United States and Canada. They have also spread to other

- parts of the world, including Latin America, Africa, and Asia.
- (v) Contributions to Society: The Mennonites are known for their focus on charitable works and community building. Their tradition of mutual aid is evident in their many contributions to social welfare, including education and healthcare. They are also known for agricultural expertise; in fact, Mennonite farmers are often credited with helping to develop sustainable agricultural practices in various parts of the world.
 - (vi) Relationship with Other Christian Groups: Mennonites share some similarities with other Protestant denominations, but their emphasis on adult baptism, pacifism, and community distinguishes them from mainstream Christianity. They also have a relationship with the Amish, who split from the Mennonites in the late 17th century over issues like shunning and the use of technology.
- (b) 27 Amish (Pennsylvania Dutch)**
- (i) The Amish Church is a Christian Anabaptist denomination that originated in the late 17th century in Switzerland and Alsace. The movement was founded by Jakob Ammann, after whom the community is named. Ammann was a Mennonite leader who sought stricter observance of Anabaptist principles, including the practice of shunning, known as "Meidung," and more conservative dress and lifestyle. His views led to a schism within the Mennonite community, and his followers became known as the Amish.
 - (ii) Key Beliefs and Practices
 - (a) Ordnung: This is a set of rules and guidelines, often unwritten, that govern everyday Amish life, including dress, technology, and behavior. Each Amish community has its own version of the Ordnung, making practices somewhat variable from one community to another.

- (b) Adult Baptism: Like other Anabaptists, the Amish believe in adult baptism. Typically, young adults are baptized between the ages of 16 and 24, often after a period of "Rumspringa," where they have the opportunity to experience life outside the Amish community.
- (c) Pacifism: The Amish are pacifists and conscientiously object to military service and other forms of violence.
- (d) Simple Living: The Amish are known for their simple, agrarian lifestyle. They often avoid or limit the use of modern technology, such as electricity and automobiles, in favor of more traditional methods.
- (e) Community and Mutual Aid: The Amish place a high value on community and mutual support, which includes collective barn-raising, quilting bees, and shared agricultural work.
- (f) Separation from the World: The Amish seek to live apart from the modern world, emphasizing the virtues of humility, modesty, and obedience.
- (iii) Geographic Presence: Originally from Europe, the Amish mainly migrated to North America in the 18th and 19th centuries to escape religious persecution and find fertile farmland. Today, they are primarily found in the United States, particularly in states like Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, although there are also communities in Canada.
- (iv) Distinctions from Other Christian Groups: While sharing some similarities with Mennonites and other Anabaptists, the Amish are distinct in their stricter separation from modern society and technology. They are also more conservative in their dress, typically wearing plain, handmade clothing.
- (v) Cultural Contributions: The Amish are well-known for their craftsmanship, including furniture-making and quilting, as well as for

their agricultural practices. They are also famous for their communal spirit, which extends to taking care of their own elderly and sick without relying on external welfare systems.

- b) **28 Moravian Brethren:** The Moravian Church, also known as the Moravian (Bohemian) Brethren or *Unitas Fratrum* ("Unity of the Brethren"), is one of the oldest Protestant denominations, with roots going back to the 15th century in what is now the Czech Republic. The movement began as part of the Hussite Reformation, inspired by the teachings of Czech theologian and reformer Jan Hus, who was burned at the stake for heresy in 1415.
- (1) Hus criticized the Catholic church's sale of indulgences and the clergy's moral integrity. Hus was deeply influenced by the writings of John Wycliffe, an English theologian.
 - (2) Hus challenged the supremacy of the Pope and argued that Christ, not the Pope, is the true head of the Church. This was considered a heretical viewpoint by the Catholic Church.
 - (3) Hus insisted that the Bible was the ultimate authority for Christian belief and practice, rather than the teachings of the Church hierarchy. This directly threatened the institutional power of the Church.
 - (4) **Key Beliefs and Practices**
 - (a) Ecumenical Spirit: The Moravians have been notable for their ecumenical openness and a focus on the essentials of faith over doctrinal rigidity.
 - (b) Missionary Zeal: One of the most missionary-minded churches, the Moravians were pioneers in sending missionaries to various parts of the world, including the Americas, Africa, and Asia.
 - (c) Community Life: The Moravians emphasize living in close-knit communities where faith is practiced as a shared experience. These communities often engage in group worship, singing, and educational activities.
 - (d) Worship and Music: Music plays an important role in Moravian worship. The church has contributed significantly to Christian hymnody.
 - (e) Simple Liturgy: Their worship services are typically simple and focused on Scripture reading, prayer, and music.
 - (5) **Historical Highlights**
 - (a) Early Persecution: The early Moravians, like the Hussites before them, faced significant persecution. Many were forced into hiding or exile.

- (b) Herrnhut Community: In the early 18th century, the Moravian Church experienced a revival under the leadership of Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf, who provided refuge for Moravians on his estate in Herrnhut, Germany. This community became the springboard for the modern Moravian Church.
- (c) First Protestant Missionaries: In the 1730s, the Moravians sent some of the first Protestant missionaries to the Caribbean, Greenland, Africa, and North America.
- (d) American Settlements: In the 18th century, Moravians established communities in America, notably Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and Salem, North Carolina.
- (6) Geographical Presence: Today, the Moravian Church has congregations around the world, including Europe, North America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Latin America.
- (7) Contributions to Society and Culture: The Moravians have been pioneers in education, often setting up schools wherever they have settled. They have also been notable for their early anti-slavery stance and their contributions to music and hymnody.

c) **29 Universalists**

- (1) The Universalist Church, historically known as the Universalist Church of America, is a Christian denomination that was founded on the belief in universal salvation, meaning that all people will ultimately be reconciled with God. This doctrine distinguishes Universalism from other Christian denominations that believe in eternal damnation for nonbelievers or sinners. The Universalist Church has undergone significant transformations over the years and is now largely merged with Unitarianism in the form of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) in the United States.
- (2) Key beliefs and practices
 - (a) Universal Salvation: The cornerstone belief of Universalism is that God's love extends to all people and that everyone will eventually achieve salvation.
 - (b) Inclusivity: Universalists have historically emphasized inclusivity and social justice, advocating for the rights of marginalized groups.
 - (c) Flexible Theology: Over time, Universalism has become more liberal and flexible in its theology, accommodating a range of religious and philosophical ideas.
 - (d) Human Dignity: Universalists place high value on the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their religious, ethnic, or social background.
 - (e) Authority: Ultimate authority lies within the individual.

- (3) Historical Highlights
 - (a) 18th Century Origins: Universalism as a distinct religious movement began in the late 18th century in America, although ideas about universal salvation can be traced back much earlier in Christian history.
 - (b) 19th Century Growth: The Universalist Church of America became an official denomination in 1793 and experienced significant growth during the 19th century, particularly in the northeastern United States.
 - (c) Merger with Unitarians: In 1961, the Universalist Church of America merged with the American Unitarian Association to form the Unitarian Universalist Association.
- (4) Geographical Presence: The Universalist Church was most prominent in the United States but had influence in other parts of the world as well. Today, Unitarian Universalist congregations, which continue the Universalist legacy to some extent, are primarily found in the United States, Canada, and various European countries.
- (5) Contributions to Society and Culture: The Universalist Church has been active in various social justice movements, including abolitionism, gender equality, and LGBTQ+ rights. The denomination's focus on universal love and salvation has made it a natural advocate for social reform.
- (6) Relationship with Other Christian Groups: Universalism has often been controversial within the broader Christian community because of its rejection of the doctrine of eternal damnation, and disregard for biblical authority.

B. Anglican – Church of England – 1534

1. **2** The Anglican Church emerged in the 16th century during the English Reformation.
 - a) It separated from the Roman Catholic Church, primarily due to political and theological factors.
 - b) King Henry VIII played a significant role in this separation when he sought to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon.
2. **3** Act of Supremacy (1534): In 1534, the English Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy, declaring the English monarch (initially Henry VIII) as the "Supreme Head on Earth" of the Church of England. This marked the formal establishment of the Church of England as a separate entity from the Roman Catholic Church.
3. Doctrinal Development: The Anglican Church retained many traditional Catholic practices and beliefs while introducing significant reforms.
 - a) The English Reformation under Henry VIII and later monarchs resulted in doctrinal shifts, such as the rejection of papal authority and the translation of the Bible into English (the King James Version).

- b) Elizabethan Settlement (Late 16th Century): Queen Elizabeth I's reign saw the Elizabethan Religious Settlement (1559), which sought to establish a moderate religious course for England.
- c) The Book of Common Prayer (revised in 1559) and the Thirty-Nine Articles (revised in 1563) became **foundational documents** of Anglican theology and worship.

(1) BCP – Book of Common Prayer

- (a) Origins and First Edition (1549)
 - (i) Created by Thomas Cranmer during King Edward VI's reign. (Archbishop of Canterbury)
 - (ii) Aimed to standardize liturgy and translate it into English.
 - (iii) Retained many Catholic rituals but in the vernacular language.
 - (b) Second Edition (1552)
 - (i) More overtly Protestant.
 - (ii) Introduced the "Black Rubric," clarifying kneeling during Communion did not imply Christ's real presence.
 - (c) Elizabethan Compromise (1559)
 - (i) Under Queen Elizabeth I.
 - (ii) Aimed for a middle ground between Catholic and Protestant factions.
 - (iii) Established the Anglican "middle way."
 - (d) Later Revisions (17th Century Onwards)
 - (i) Notably, the 1662 version is still widely used.
 - (ii) Modern revisions exist, focusing on updated language and inclusivity.
 - (e) Theological and Liturgical Significance
 - (i) Contains liturgies for sacraments, the Daily Office, and other rites.
 - (ii) Provides a structured way to worship.
- (2) 16 Noteworthy articles of The Thirty-Nine Articles**
- (a) Of Christ the Son of God Going Down into Hell: Christ descended into Hell after His death.
 - (b) Of the Sufficiency of the Scriptures: Scripture contains all necessary for salvation.
 - (c) Of Original or Birth Sin: All are born in sin, which deserves God's wrath.
 - (d) Of the Church: The visible church can err.
 - (e) Of the Authority of the Church: Church authority is subject to Scripture.
 - (f) Of the Authority of General Councils: Councils can err and are subject to Scripture.

- (g) Of Purgatory: Rejects the doctrine of Purgatory and related practices.
 - (h) Of Ministering in the Congregation: Only rightly ordained ministers can administer sacraments.
 - (i) Of Speaking in the Congregation: Worship and doctrine should be in the vernacular.
 - (j) Of the Sacraments: Defines sacraments and asserts only Baptism and Eucharist as necessary.
 - (k) Of the Unworthiness of Ministers: Effectiveness of sacraments is not tied to the worthiness of ministers.
 - (l) Of Baptism: Affirms the necessity and efficacy of baptism.
 - (m) Of the Lord's Supper: Affirms the nature of the Eucharist and denies Transubstantiation.
 - (n) Of the Marriage of Priests: Priests are allowed to marry.
 - (o) Of Excommunicate Persons: Excommunication should be exercised for open sin.
 - (p) Of the Traditions of the Church: Traditions must be in line with Scripture.
- d) The 17th century was marked by internal conflicts, including the English Civil War (1642–1651). These events led to the rise of different strands within Anglicanism, including the High Church (closer to Catholic traditions) and Low Church (emphasizing Protestant Reformed theology).
 - e) In the 19th century, the Oxford Movement aimed to bring the Church of England closer to its Catholic roots. This led to the development of Anglo-Catholicism, which emphasized the sacraments and apostolic succession but within the framework of Anglican theology.
 - f) In the modern era, the Anglican Church has continued to grapple with various theological, ethical, and social issues, including the ordination of women, LGBTQ+ rights, and interfaith relations.
4. Colonial Expansion: As the British Empire expanded, so did the Anglican Church. It played a crucial role in the establishment of the Church of England in the American colonies, which eventually became the Episcopal Church after the American Revolution.
 5. Modern Anglicanism: Today, Anglicanism is a worldwide communion of churches, including the Church of England, the Episcopal Church in the United States, and many others. We will take a look at the Episcopal Church's story later on. It remains a diverse tradition with a wide range of theological perspectives, from conservative to liberal, within its ranks.
 6. **4** The Plymouth Brethren, often simply referred to as the Brethren, are a Christian evangelical movement that originated in the early 19th century in Plymouth, England. The movement was not intended to create a new

denomination but rather to return to what its founders believed were the original practices and teachings of the New Testament church.

- a) Founders: The Plymouth Brethren movement is closely associated with several key figures, including John Nelson Darby, Anthony Norris Groves, and George Müller. John Nelson Darby, in particular, played a significant role in shaping the theological perspectives of the Brethren.
- b) Emphasis on Simplicity: The Plymouth Brethren emphasized simplicity in worship and church structure. They sought to distance themselves from what they saw as the formalism and ritualism of established denominations. Meetings were often characterized by a lack of clergy, and individuals would take active roles in worship services.
- c) Biblical Literalism: The Brethren held a strong commitment to the literal interpretation of the Bible, especially the New Testament. They believed in the autonomy of local congregations and placed a strong emphasis on studying the Scriptures.
- d) Dispensationalism: John Nelson Darby, a prominent member of the Plymouth Brethren, developed the theological framework known as dispensationalism. This system divides biblical history into distinct dispensations or time periods, each marked by God's specific plan and revelation. Dispensationalism had a significant influence on Protestant and Evangelical Churches.

(1) **5** example of a generic view of dispensationalism

e) **Eschatological Views Concerning Dispensationalism**

(1) **6** Amillennialism: believing that Christ's reign is not a literal 1,000-year period as described in Revelation 20.

(a) *Read Revelation 20 and point out the symbolic numerical references. Contrast these with the first 3 chapters which are literal letters, which also contain some symbolic messages.*

(b) This means that they believe that the thousand-year reign of Christ mentioned in Revelation 20 is symbolic of Christ's reign through his church now. Amillennialists do not believe that there will be a literal thousand-year period of peace and prosperity on earth before Christ's second coming.

(c) Amillennialists believe that the church is the kingdom of God on earth, and that it is growing and spreading the gospel until Christ returns. They believe that Christ will return at the end of the age to judge the living and the dead, and to establish his eternal kingdom.

(2) **7** Premillennialism is the belief that Jesus Christ will return to earth before the millennium, a thousand-year period of peace and righteousness. Premillennialists believe that the millennium

will be a literal, thousand-year period of time in which Christ will reign on earth and Satan will be bound.

- (3) **8 Postmillennialism** is the belief that Jesus Christ will return to earth after the millennium. Postmillennialists believe that the church will gradually evangelize the world and bring about a period of peace and prosperity. They believe that Christ will return at the end of this period to judge the living and the dead.

f) 9 Premillennialism

- (1) The origins of premillennialism can be traced back to the 2nd and third century, and it has evolved over centuries. Here is a brief history of its development:
- (2) Early Church Fathers: Some of the early church fathers, such as Papias and Justin Martyr, held views that could be considered precursors to premillennialism. They believed in a future earthly reign of Christ.
- (3) Augustine and Amillennialism: In the 4th and 5th centuries, Augustine of Hippo developed the amillennialist interpretation, which rejected the idea of a literal thousand-year earthly reign of Christ. His views became dominant within the Roman Catholic Church and influenced many Protestant traditions.
- (4) Medieval and Reformation Periods: While amillennialism dominated during the Middle Ages and the early Reformation period, there were voices within the Protestant Reformation, like some Anabaptist groups, who held premillennialist beliefs.
- (5) 19th Century Revival: Premillennialism experienced a revival in the 19th century, particularly in the United States. Influential figures like John Nelson Darby, a leader in the Plymouth Brethren movement, and Cyrus Scofield, who popularized **dispensational premillennialism** through his Scofield Reference Bible, contributed to its spread.
- (6) Dispensational Premillennialism: The form of premillennialism most commonly associated with a specific doctrine is dispensational premillennialism. It divides history into distinct dispensations and interprets the Bible, particularly prophetic texts, in a highly literal manner. This view gained prominence in certain evangelical and fundamentalist circles.
 - (a) **Dispensational Premillennialism** is a theological perspective on eschatology that has been embraced by several modern-day Christian denominations and groups, particularly within the evangelical and fundamentalist traditions.
 - (i) **Second Coming Before the Millennium**: Jesus Christ will return before the establishment of a 1,000-year earthly reign.

- (ii) **Physical Reign:** The millennium is a literal, future 1,000-year period where Christ reigns on Earth.
 - (b) **10 Israel and the Church**
 - (i) Distinction Between Israel and the Church: God has separate plans for Israel and the Church.
 - (ii) **Restoration of Israel:** National Israel will be restored and play a significant role in the end times.
 - (c) **11 Tribulation Period**
 - (i) Pre-Tribulation **Rapture:** Belief that the Church will be "raptured" or taken to heaven before the seven-year Tribulation period.
 - (ii) **Tribulation:** A future seven-year period characterized by significant suffering and divine judgments.
 - (d) **Eschatological Events**
 - (i) **Antichrist:** A global leader who will arise during the Tribulation, initially bringing peace but eventually showing his true, evil nature.
 - (ii) **Battle of Armageddon:** A final battle between the forces of good and evil.
 - (e) **Final Judgment and Eternity**
 - (i) **Final Judgment:** After the millennium, there will be a final judgment where individuals are sent to heaven or hell based on their acceptance or rejection of Christ.
 - (ii) **New Heaven and New Earth:** A new, perfect creation where believers will spend eternity with God.
- 7. Dispensational Premillennialism is a major doctrine in many evangelical churches: Methodists, Baptists, Pentecostals and Presbyterians.
- C. **12 Presbyterianism – Presbyterian Church – 1536**
 - 1. Origin:
 - a) **John Calvin:** One of the primary theologians that influenced Presbyterian thought was John Calvin. He did not directly establish Presbyterianism but his theological writings served as the foundation for Reformed churches.
 - b) **13** *Read Slide on how Calvin differed from Luther.*
 - c) **Scotland:** The Church of Scotland adopted a form of Calvinism in 1560, and John Knox, a disciple of Calvin, was instrumental in this. This is often considered the **birth of Presbyterianism** as a distinct entity.

- d) **Migration to America:** As settlers moved to the New World, they brought their Presbyterian beliefs with them. The first American Presbytery was established in Philadelphia in 1706.
- e) **Expansion:** Over time, Presbyterianism has grown and diversified, giving rise to various denominations both within and outside the United States, such as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), and many others around the globe.

2. Doctrine:

- a) **14 Sola Scriptura:** Like other Reformation movements, Presbyterians hold that the Bible is the ultimate authority in matters of faith and practice. With each of these 5 principles of the reformation they were protesting a particular catholic violation of scripture.
 - (1) **Sola Scriptura – Scripture Alone**
 - (a) As opposed to scripture, and man-made tradition being on equal footing.
 - (b) This is pretty much in line with what scripture teaches:
 - (c) *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16, CSB).*
 - (2) **Solus Christus – Christ Alone**
 - (a) As opposed to Christ, and Mary, and the saints, and the pope, and so on.
 - (b) Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man, and salvation is found only through Him.
 - (c) Very much in keeping with scripture as well.
 - (d) *"Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6, CSB).*
 - (3) **Sola Gratia – Grace Alone**
 - (a) As opposed to grace through sacraments and the sale of indulgences and confessions through priests, etc.
 - (b) Salvation comes solely through the grace of God, independent of human merit.
 - (c) *"He saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy—through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5, CSB).*
 - (4) **Sola Fide – Faith Alone**
 - (a) As opposed to being saved by meritorious works, like having to do a certain number of good deeds to be ushered into heaven, as if it were a competition.
 - (b) Salvation is received through faith in Jesus Christ alone, apart from works.

- (c) *"For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9, CSB).*
- (5) **Soli Deo Gloria – Glory to God Alone**
 - (a) No glory to man for anything he has done. We ought not to seek our own glory, as the pope and other leaders of the catholic church had done.
 - (b) All glory is due to God alone, both in life and in the outworking of salvation.
 - (c) *"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31, CSB).*
- b) **15 The Westminster Confession of Faith** is a Reformed confessional statement that was formulated by the Westminster Assembly, a council of theologians and laymen, between 1643 and 1646 in England. It is one of the most important and enduring confessional documents in Presbyterianism. Here are some of the tenets:
 - (1) **16 Predestination:** In line with Calvinist theology, many Presbyterians believe in predestination—that God has chosen who will be saved and who will be damned before the foundation of the world.
 - (a) The acronym "**TULIP**" is often used to summarize the Five Points of Calvinism, which is foundational for many in the Reformed and Presbyterian traditions. Here's a breakdown:
 - (b) T - Total Depravity: This teaches that every aspect of human nature is corrupted by sin, leaving people incapable of choosing God or doing good apart from divine intervention (Romans 3:10-18, CSB).
 - (i) **Romans 3:10-11 (CSB)** There is no one righteous, not even one.¹¹ There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.
 - (ii) This is probably the only true tenet of Calvinism!
 - (c) U - Unconditional Election: According to this point, God has chosen certain individuals for salvation based solely on His sovereign will, not on any merit or action on their part (Ephesians 1:4-5, CSB).
 - (i) **Ephesians 1:4-5 (CSB)** For **he chose us in him**, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him.⁵ He **predestined** us to be adopted as sons through

Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will...

- (a) Verse 5: the word predestined in the Greek is composite: foreordained, decided beforehand; predetermined, preordained. Beyond the horizon = beyond the limits of what you are able to see or perceive.
- (b) Rom 8:29 is similar.
- (ii) This tenet presents a number of problems with Scripture.
- (iii) Predestination contradicts the free will given by God.
 - (a) **John 3:16 (CSB):** "For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."
 - (b) **Revelation 3:20 (CSB):** "See! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."
- (iv) Predestination contradicts the fact we can lose our salvation.
 - (a) **Hebrews 10:26-27 (CSB):** "For if we deliberately go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire about to consume the adversaries."
 - (b) **Matthew 7:21-23 (CSB):** "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven."
- (v) Calvinists confuse *predetermination* with *predestination*.
- (vi) **17** The Jesus train will get to Heaven. If I want to go to heaven, I need to get on the Jesus train and stay on it! If I get off it, I am not going to make it to its destination.

- (vii) **18** Here's another chart that says the same thing explained with Scripture.
 - (a) The arrow is the Jesus train. All who get on it are predestined. All are called. But only the obedient are justified (stay on the train). Only the faithful reach the destination.
- (d) **19** L - Limited Atonement: This view holds that Christ's death on the cross was intended to atone specifically for the sins of the elect, not for everyone universally (John 10:11, CSB).
 - (i) **John 10:11 (CSB)** I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
 - (ii) This is understood since only those who accept Christ and his gift of atonement can receive forgiveness of sins.
 - (iii) I do have some reservations concerning this narrow interpretation since one of the OT sacrifices that is fulfilled in Christ is *Yom Kippur*, or The Day of Atonement. These are sins committed in ignorance. This can mean Jesus' blood was also shed for some who are not able to accept his sacrifice knowingly, like babies and children who die before they can commit, or those with limited cognition or understating.
 - (iv) Being Calvinists generally believe in original sin, I have to then disagree with their concept of *Limited Atonement*.
- (e) I - Irresistible Grace: This point teaches that when God extends His saving grace to an individual, that person will inevitably come to faith and repentance because the grace of God is effective and irresistible (John 6:44, CSB).
 - (i) **John 6:44 (CSB)** No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day.
 - (ii) We can quote this scripture along with:
 - (iii) **Revelation 3:20 (CSB)**: "See! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."
 - (iv) They present that although God knocks on everyone's door because He wants all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9), people

need to hear His voice and open then door for Jesus. This is God's will and man's will presented together.

- (f) P - Perseverance of the Saints: This final point asserts that those who are truly saved will persevere in their faith until the end, being kept secure by God's power (Philippians 1:6, CSB).
 - (i) **Philippians 1:6 (CSB)** I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.
 - (ii) This means they believe no one can lose their salvation.
 - (iii) Once saved, always saved? I think not:
 - (iv) **Hebrews 10:26-27 (CSB)**: "For if we deliberately go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire about to consume the adversaries."
 - (v) **Matthew 7:21-23 (CSB)**: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven."
- (2) **20 Covenant Theology**: Presbyterians often emphasize the concept of covenants as a means to understand God's relationship with humanity, from Adam to Christ.
- (3) **21 Polity**: A distinct feature is the "presbyterian" church governance, where a system of elders or "presbyters" governs the church at different levels—congregational, regional, and national.
- (4) **Sacraments**: They recognize two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper, as instituted by Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
- (5) **Eschatology**: While interpretations may vary, many Presbyterians believe in the Second Coming of Christ, resonating with your own belief that Jesus is coming back to take His believers to a new everlasting reality.
 - (a) **22** Presbyterian eschatology can vary, but the dominant view has traditionally been "amillennial," which interprets the "millennium" mentioned in Revelation 20 as a symbolic representation of Christ's present reign rather than a future, literal 1,000-year period on Earth. This view suggests that Christ's Second Coming will

occur after this symbolic "millennial" period, leading directly to the final judgment and the eternal state.

- (b) The Westminster Confession of Faith, a seminal doctrinal standard for many Presbyterian denominations, doesn't delve into specifics about the millennium. As such, some Presbyterians do hold "premillennial" or even "postmillennial" views, but these are generally less common within traditional Presbyterian circles.
- (c) **Amillennialism** often aligns more closely with Reformed theology and covenant theology, which are cornerstones of Presbyterian doctrine. Therefore, while there is some diversity of eschatological views within Presbyterianism, amillennialism is the most commonly held position.

D. **Episcopal** – 1609

1. Origins

- a) **2** The Episcopal Church has its roots in the **Church of England**, which itself emerged from the **Roman Catholic Church** during the **Protestant Reformation**. When English colonists came to North America, they brought their religious practices with them, essentially transplanting the Church of England to the colonies. After the American Revolution, it became politically and culturally necessary for the church in America to separate from its British counterpart. Hence, the Episcopal Church was formally established in 1789.
- b) **3** 1534: Church of England breaks from the Roman Catholic Church under King Henry VIII.
- c) 1607: The Church of England is established in Jamestown, Virginia.
- d) 1789: The Episcopal Church is formally founded in the United States.

2. Doctrine

- a) **4** The Episcopal Church places a heavy emphasis on the "three-legged stool" of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason, a concept attributed to Richard Hooker, a 16th-century Anglican theologian.
 - (1) Scripture: The Bible is considered the authoritative Word of God and serves as a guide for faith and practice.
 - (2) Tradition: The creeds, liturgy, and other historical elements of the faith are highly valued.
 - (3) Reason: Faith should be understood and practiced in a reasoned and thoughtful manner.
- b) This model suggests that Scripture, Tradition, and Reason are the three supports that uphold a balanced and sound theology. In the *Anglican tradition*, this has been a defining feature, providing a way to navigate complex theological issues.

- c) **5** The Episcopal Church practices two main sacraments—**Baptism** and the **Eucharist**—along with other rites like Confirmation, Marriage, Ordination, and Anointing of the Sick.
- d) Like other high churches, it believes in original sin and the need for infant baptism.
- e) It maintains a hierarchical structure similar to the Church of England, headed by bishops.
- f) The **Book of Common Prayer** and the **Thirty-Nine Articles** are central elements in Episcopal worship. They outline the form and content of the worship services and have been revised multiple times to adapt to changing circumstances and theological perspectives.
 - (1) It's worth noting that the importance of the Thirty-Nine Articles varies within the broader Anglican community, and they are not as central in the Episcopal Church in the United States as they might be in other Anglican bodies.
 - (2) The Episcopal Church has been generally more lenient in requiring strict adherence to the Articles. While they are a historical document included in the Book of Common Prayer, they are often considered more of a "historical formulary" than a strict set of doctrinal requirements in today's Episcopal Church.

3. Congregational

a) Origins

- (1) **6** As the church of England, The Anglican Church, was beginning to form in 1534, there were some dissenters who called themselves the **Puritans**.
- (2) The Puritans were a religious group that emerged in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, primarily in England. They sought to "purify" the Church of England from what they considered to be Roman Catholic practices, advocating for a more direct and unmediated relationship with God.
- (3) The Congregational tradition originated in England in the early 17th century as an offshoot of Puritanism. Unlike the Episcopal and Anglican traditions, which maintain a hierarchical structure of bishops and dioceses, Congregational churches are organized independently and govern themselves without such a hierarchy. **They identified as a "low church"**.
- (4) **7** 1620: Pilgrims, some of whom were Congregationalists, arrive on the Mayflower in Plymouth, Massachusetts.
- (5) 1630: The Puritans establish the Massachusetts Bay Colony and bring Congregationalism with them.

b) Doctrinal Points

- (1) **8 Local Church Autonomy:** One of the cornerstone beliefs in Congregationalism is the autonomy of the local church. Each

congregation is considered a fully independent entity capable of making its own decisions without external control from a higher ecclesiastical body.

- (a) This is very much in keeping with the scriptures:
 - (b) **Titus 1:5 (CSB)** The reason I left you in Crete was to set right what was left undone and, as I directed you, to appoint elders in every town.
 - (c) **1 Peter 5:2-3 (CSB)** Shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; not out of greed for money but eagerly; (3) not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.
- (2) **Priesthood of All Believers:** This principle asserts that each believer has direct access to God and can interpret Scripture, meaning that there is no strict clerical hierarchy separating the laity from a specialized priestly class.
- (a) Also very much in keeping with scripture:
 - (b) **1 Peter 2:9 (CSB)** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
 - (c) **Revelation 1:5-6 (CSB)** To him who loves us and has set us free from our sins by his blood, (6) and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father — to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- (3) **Congregational Polity:** Governance is conducted at the congregational level, often through democratic processes involving the church members. Major decisions like appointing ministers or deciding on doctrinal matters are typically voted upon by the congregation.
- (a) Scriptures are clear about how the church leadership should be set up.
 - (b) It is not a democratic process.
 - (c) Evangelists that have been ordained, typically by other elders, are the ones who appoint the local congregational leadership, like the elders and deacons.
 - (d) **Titus 1:5 (CSB)** The reason I left you in Crete was to set right what was left undone and, as I directed you, to appoint elders in every town.
- (4) **Scriptural Authority:** Like other Protestant traditions, Congregationalism places a heavy emphasis on the Bible as the ultimate authority in matters of faith and practice.
- (5) **Covenant Community:** Congregational churches often see themselves as covenantal communities, bound together by a

- mutual agreement to follow Christ and uphold specific practices and beliefs.
- (6) **Sacraments:** Congregationalists generally hold to two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion).
 - (a) This is a common thread we are seeing in the Protestant Churches as they become more "low church".
 - (b) However, the understanding and practice of these sacraments can vary widely among individual congregations.
 - (7) There is **no set liturgy** in the Congregational tradition, allowing each local church considerable freedom in how they conduct their worship services. You'll find a range of styles, from traditional hymns to contemporary praise and worship music.
 - (8) Since they hold to the basic tenets of the reformation, they continue to believe in original sin and the need to baptize infants.
 - (9) However, there are also Congregational churches that emphasize "**believer's baptism**," which is baptism following a personal profession of faith in Jesus Christ. These congregations reserve baptism for those old enough to understand and articulate their faith. They argue that the New Testament examples and commands regarding baptism are focused on those who have made a personal decision to follow Christ.
 - (a) Some Congregational churches focus on the covenantal aspect of original sin, viewing the relationship between God and humanity through the lens of covenant theology. In this context, original sin signifies a broken covenant that is restored through the new covenant in Jesus Christ.
 - (b) There are also congregations that offer both options, allowing parents to choose whether or not to have their infants baptized. In these cases, a "dedication" ceremony might be offered as an alternative to infant baptism. The child is dedicated to God, and the parents pledge to raise the child in a Christian home, but baptism is reserved for when the child is old enough to make a personal profession of faith.
 - (10) In the American context, the Congregational and Episcopal traditions have often existed side-by-side, sometimes influencing one another in various ways. For instance, the Episcopal Church in the United States has, in some cases, adopted a more "democratic" structure compared to its Anglican predecessors, reflecting the American cultural emphasis on individual liberty and self-governance.

c) Unitarians

- (1) **9** This is a movement that emerged from the congregational church around 1825.
- (2) Over time, some within the Congregationalist community began to question the doctrine of the Trinity. This led to theological disputes and eventually the formation of Unitarian congregations.
- (3) The Unitarian movement is a religious tradition that emerged primarily in Europe and later found a significant following in North America. It is characterized by a rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity and an emphasis on the oneness or unity of God. Here's a brief look at its origins and doctrine:
- (4) Origins
 - (a) **10 Reformation and After:** During the Protestant Reformation, some religious thinkers began questioning traditional doctrines, including the Trinity. The Polish Brethren and figures like Michael Servetus are early examples of those who held Unitarian beliefs.
 - (i) Michael Servetus (also known as Miguel Servet) was a Spanish physician and theologian born in 1511.
 - (ii) He is often cited as a proto-Unitarian figure, although he lived before the formal Unitarian movement came into being.
 - (iii) His most famous work, "Christianismi Restitutio" (The Restoration of Christianity), challenged traditional Christian views on the Trinity and the nature of Christ.
 - (b) **17th Century England:** Unitarianism became more organized in England in the 17th century amidst religious tolerance granted by the Act of Toleration in 1689.
 - (c) **19th Century America:** The movement gained significant traction in the United States in the 19th century, notably within the context of **Transcendentalism** and the works of figures like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Theodore Parker.
 - (i) Ralph Waldo Emerson was an American essayist, lecturer, philosopher, and poet who lived from 1803 to 1882. He started his career as a Unitarian minister but eventually broke away from the church. His ideas, however, had a profound and lasting impact on American Unitarianism.

- (ii) Emerson was a leading figure in the Transcendentalist movement, which had significant overlap with Unitarian circles. Transcendentalism emphasized individual intuition, the inherent goodness of people and nature, and the need for individual spiritual awakening—ideas that resonated with some Unitarians.
 - (iii) Theodore Parker questioned the authority of the Bible as the sole source of divine revelation. He advocated for what he called a "natural religion" that was intuitive and universal.
 - (iv) In a famous sermon of this title given in 1841, Parker argued that the moral essence of Christianity was permanent while the historical and doctrinal aspects were transient. This was highly controversial and led to his alienation from mainstream Unitarianism.
- (d) **Global Spread:** Over time, Unitarianism has spread to various parts of the world, and it often merges with or influences other religious traditions, including Universalism in the United States to form Unitarian Universalism.
- (5) Doctrine
 - (a) **11 Monotheism:** The cornerstone of Unitarian belief is the oneness of God, rejecting the traditional Christian concept of the Trinity.
 - (i) There are many scriptural texts that speak of God as a plural entity:
 - (ii) **Genesis 1:26:** "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.'"
 - (iii) **Genesis 3:22:** "The Lord God said, 'Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil...'"
 - (iv) **Genesis 11:7:** "Come, let's go down and there confuse their language so that they will not understand one another's speech."
 - (v) **Isaiah 6:8:** "Then I heard the voice of the Lord asking: 'Who will I send? Who will go for us?' I said: 'Here I am. Send me.'"
 - (vi) **Psalms 45:6-7** (quoted in **Hebrews 1:8-9**): "Your throne, God, is forever and ever; the scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of justice. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore

- God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness more than your companions."
- (b) **Jesus Christ:** In general, Unitarians view Jesus not as God incarnate but as a prophet, moral teacher, or exemplar.
 - (i) This is at odds with how Jesus talks about Himself in the New Testament.
 - (ii) **12** Jesus referred to himself as God's Son, as the ***I am:***
 - (iii) **John 8:24:** "Therefore I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I am *he*, you will die in your sins."
 - (a) In this passage and in the following one, the *he* is not in the original Greek, so it should read just *I am*.
 - (iv) **John 8:28:** "So Jesus said to them, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *he* and that I do nothing on my own. But just as the Father taught me, I say these things.'"
 - (v) **13 John 8:58:** "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.'"
 - (a) This third passage is especially significant because when Jesus says, "before Abraham was, I am," it's reminiscent of God's self-identification in Exodus 3:14, where God tells Moses, "I AM WHO I AM."
 - (b) This association between Jesus and the divine name of God from the Old Testament is a clear assertion of His divinity.
 - (c) The Jewish leaders' reaction in the following verse (they picked up stones to throw at Him) suggests they understood the gravity of His claim.
 - (c) **14 Reason and Rationality:** Unitarianism places a high value on rational inquiry and often encourages adherents to use reason in the interpretation of scriptures.
 - (i) Of course, this is something we would support as well, but we cannot let reason be the guiding factor since we may not understand the lofty reasons for some of God's sayings and therefore

we need to humbly accept the truth planted in us which often defies reason.

- (ii) **James 1:21 CSB** "Therefore, ridding yourselves of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, **humbly receive the implanted word**, which is able to save your souls."

- (iii) Reason and rationality are not enough to convince:

- (iv) **1 Corinthians 2:1-5 (CSB)** When I came to you, brothers and sisters, announcing the mystery of God to you, I did not come with brilliance of speech or wisdom. (2) I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. (3) I came to you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. (4) My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, (5) so that your faith might not be based on human wisdom but on God's power.

- (d) **Freedom of Conscience:** There's an emphasis on individual freedom in spiritual matters. The tradition often does not have a rigid set of doctrines, allowing for a variety of beliefs under its umbrella.

- (i) **1 Corinthians 10:23-24 (CSB)** "Everything is permissible," but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible," but not everything builds up. (24) No one is to seek his own good, but the good of the other person.

- (e) **Social Justice:** Many Unitarians are actively involved in social justice issues, drawing from a belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all people.

- (f) **Scripture:** While the Bible is considered an important text, its interpretation is not usually literal, and it is often read alongside other religious and philosophical texts.

- (i) **2 Timothy 3:16-17 (CSB)** All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, (17) so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

d) **15 Transcendentalists**

- (1) The Transcendentalist movement was a 19th-century intellectual and spiritual movement primarily centered in New England, United States. It emerged as a reaction against the

intellectual and religious orthodoxy of the day, including Unitarianism, which was itself a liberal form of Christianity.

(2) Origins

- (a) **16 Early Influences:** European Romanticism and the writings of figures like *Immanuel Kant* had a profound influence on the Transcendentalist thinkers.
- (b) **17 Boston, Massachusetts:** Transcendentalism found its epicenter in Boston, where Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered his famous "Divinity School Address" in 1838, challenging the Unitarian church.
- (c) **The Dial:** A journal called "The Dial" was established in 1840 by *Margaret Fuller* and served as the primary publication for Transcendentalist thought.
- (d) **Brook Farm and Fruitlands:** These were experimental communities aimed at living out Transcendentalist principles, although both were short-lived.

(3) Doctrine

- (a) **18** Since this movement is human-centric and not scripture-centric, none of these doctrinal points are found in scriptures and therefore are very refutable.
- (b) This is the beginning of what is called the *New Age Movement* or modern-day *witches*, characterized today by people who believe in healing stones, potions, and nature as a way to spirituality.
- (c) **The Over-Soul:** One of the key beliefs was in an ultimate spiritual reality or "Over-Soul" that transcended the empirical world and individual persons.
- (d) **Individualism and Self-Reliance:** Transcendentalists placed great emphasis on individual intuition as opposed to tradition or external authority. Emerson's essay "Self-Reliance" is a seminal work in this regard.
- (e) **Nature:** Nature was seen as a gateway to divine truth. Many Transcendentalists, like Henry David Thoreau, practiced simple living close to nature as exemplified in Thoreau's "Walden".
- (f) **Social Reform:** Transcendentalists were generally committed to social justice issues, including the abolition of slavery and women's rights.
- (g) **Non-Traditional Spirituality:** They often explored non-Christian religious and philosophical texts, drawing from Hinduism, Buddhism, and other world religions.
- (h) **Art and Literature:** They believed that artistic and literary expression could reveal deeper truths, and many were themselves poets, essayists, and critics.

- (i) **Optimism:** They often held a deeply optimistic view of human potential, believing that individuals could attain an ideal state of intellectual and moral development.
- 4. **2 Methodist** – 1739 – derived from the Episcopalian movement.
 - a) **3 Origins**
 - (1) Early Beginnings (1730s): The Methodist movement originated in England with a small group of students, including **John and Charles Wesley**. They were referred to as "Methodists" because of their methodical approach to spiritual and religious practices.
 - (a) Being students at Oxford, they sought to overcome the ritualism and formalism of the Episcopal church.
 - (b) The "Holy Clubs" were religious societies founded by John Wesley and his brother Charles during their time at Oxford University in the early 1730s. These societies were instrumental in the development and spread of the Methodist movement.
 - (2) Evangelical Outreach (1739): John Wesley began open-air preaching, reaching larger audiences. This marked the growth of the Methodist revival.
 - (3) Wesley's Three Simple Rules (1743): John Wesley formulated the General Rules of the Methodist Church which emphasized:
 - (a) Doing no harm.
 - (b) Doing good.
 - (c) Attending upon all the ordinances of God.
 - (d) **If we are teaching the scriptures, no "rules" need to be emphasized** other than being followers of Christ and imitating Him. This is why we include scriptures like this in our Word of God study, to make this point from the beginning that all we need is God's Word to direct us. The truth and path to righteousness is not found in us:
 - (i) **4 2 Peter 1:3 (CSB)** His divine power has **given us everything required for life and godliness** through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.
 - (a) This is speaking to the called. To those who recognize and acknowledge that by His power we have everything we require for this life and for godliness by His knowledge.
 - (ii) **5 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (CSB)** All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, (17) so that the man of God may be **complete, equipped for every good work**.

- (a) This training to completion is aimed only at the “man of God”, who considers the Scriptures profitable, not just anyone who may call himself a churchgoer or religious.
- (4) **6 Spread to America (late 1760s):** Philip Embury and Barbara Heck were among the first to establish a Methodist society in America. This led to further expansion of the movement in the New World.
- (5) **Formal Establishment (1784):** The Methodist Episcopal Church was formally established in America at the Christmas Conference, with Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury as its first bishops.
 - (a) Convened in Baltimore
 - (b) **7 The Book of Discipline** prepared by Wesley was formally adopted.
 - (c) This was his own revised versions of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer and a pared down version of the 39 articles along with a collection of guidelines for the Methodist societies, which evolved into the present Book of Discipline.
 - (d) The **Book of Discipline** is typically revised every four years during the UMC's General Conference, which is the denomination's top policymaking body. Changes reflect theological discussions, societal shifts, and administrative needs.
 - (e) This again presents the problem we addressed before. Are we as Christians to have another guide as to how we ought to be other than God's Word?
 - (i) Should we have a creed that needs revision on occasion, that should change and reflect fleeting cultural values?
 - (ii) As we read in 2 Peter 1:3 we've already received everything we need for life and godliness in what was delivered in the first century. Anything other than that reflects a value of man, not a value of God.
 - (iii) **8 Galatians 1:8-10 (CSB)** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, a curse be on him! (9) As we have said before, I now say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, a curse be on him! (10) For am I now trying to

persuade people, or God? Or am I striving to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

- (iv) **Traditions of Man** make void the word of God: **Mark 7:13 (CSB)** You nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down.

b) 9 Doctrine

(1) Belief in the Triune God:

- (a) Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- (b) Reference: Matthew 28:19 – "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

(2) Justification by Faith:

- (a) Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ alone.
- (b) This is doctrinal point they emphasize to dismiss baptism as needed for salvation. They believe justification comes by faith only, which is a contradiction to James 2:24.
- (c) Even though the gist of that is true, as we know from: **Ephesians 2:8** – "*For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift.*" We also understand from scripture that we are not justified by faith alone, as many Protestant denominations believe.
- (d) **10 James 2:24, 26 (CSB)** You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. (26) For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.
- (e) **Belief alone** doesn't get you forgiveness of sins and the indwelling of the Spirit, you need to take the steps of faith and obey the Gospel to receive its full effect in you.
- (f) John Wesley, though strongly advocating for baptism (including infant baptism) and seeing it as a means of grace, did not teach that it was absolutely necessary for salvation. He acknowledged the reality of God's grace working even outside the specific bounds of the sacraments.
- (g) The problem most Protestants have is reconciling forgiveness of sins from God outside of believing and being immersed for the forgiveness of sins as many bible passages relate, especially Acts 2:38.

(3) **11 Authority of Scripture:**

- (a) The Bible is the inspired word of God and the authoritative source for faith and practice.

- (b) Reference: **2 Timothy 3:16** – "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness."
- (c) Although many protestant denominations affirm the Scriptures authority, then why is it they have to resort to writing creeds, rules, and ordinances for their members?
- (4) Sacraments:
 - (a) Two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
 - (b) Let's remember that the idea of **sacraments** is a man-made construct. There is no such concept in scripture. Protestants believe sacraments are the venues of God's grace. So, they believe you get God's grace by doing these things.
 - (c) Let's talk about what they believe on **baptism** first.
 - (d) As many protestant denominations believe, methodists believe in *infant baptism* due to the belief of original sin, which they carried from Catholicism.
 - (i) **12** While the New Testament does not provide explicit instances of infant baptism, Methodists, like other liturgical denominations, infer the practice from scriptures that emphasize *household* baptisms (Acts 16:15; Acts 16:33) and Jesus' welcoming of children (Mark 10:14, "Let the little children come to me").
 - (ii) **Acts 16:15 CSB** After she and her household were baptized, she urged us, "If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.
 - (iii) **Acts 16:33 CSB** He took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds. Right away he and all his family were baptized.
 - (a) Those who were baptized were people who were able to have faith.
 - (b) Since only people who are capable of believing can respond in repentance (changing their minds and actions, a *prerequisite* to baptism – Acts 2:38), it follows these are the people capable of submitting to baptism.
 - (iv) **13 Mark 10:14 CSB** When Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them, **because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.**"

- (v) The context of this quote is not *salvation* or *baptism*, but of a responsive heart to God.
- (vi) If anything, this verse shows little children and infants are already citizens of God's Kingdom since they are *innocent of sin*. Consider this next passage:
- (vii) **14 Ezekiel 18:19-20 (CSB)** "Yet you ask, 'Why doesn't the son bear the punishment for the father's iniquity?' Since the son has done what is just and right, carefully observing all my statutes, he will certainly live. The person who sins is the one who will die. A son won't suffer punishment for the father's iniquity, and a father won't suffer punishment for the son's iniquity. The righteousness of the righteous person will be on him, and the wickedness of the wicked person will be on him."
- (e) Now let's touch on what they believe about the **Lord's Supper**.
 - (i) Historically, taking the Lord's supper has been a quarterly event for many Methodists.
 - (ii) Recently, there has been a movement within the United Methodist Church and other Methodist bodies in recent years to recover Wesley's emphasis on frequent Communion. Many churches now celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly, especially in more liturgical settings.
- (f) Many Protestant denominations take the Lord's Supper other than weekly.
- (g) What does the bible say about this?
- (h) There is a type of Lord's Supper in the Law of Moses.
 - (i) **15** The **showbread**, also known as the "bread of the Presence" or "bread of the face [of God]," was an important component of the worship rituals in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple of Jerusalem.
 - (ii) The showbread was placed on a gold-covered table, which stood in the Holy Place inside the tent of the Tabernacle, just outside the Holy of Holies (Exodus 25:23-30).
 - (iii) The bread was continually before the Lord and served as a symbol of God's everlasting covenant with His people and His constant provision.

- (iv) The showbread consisted of twelve loaves, made of fine flour. The number twelve likely represented the twelve tribes of Israel.
- (v) These loaves were arranged in two stacks on the table, with six loaves in each stack (Leviticus 24:5-6).
- (vi) Every Sabbath, the priests would replace the old loaves with new ones (Leviticus 24:8). The bread that was removed was considered holy.
- (vii) This replaced bread was to be eaten by the priests and only within the holy precincts, signifying their partaking in the sacred food set aside for God (Leviticus 24:9).
- (viii) From this type in the Old Testament we see there was a weekly ritual concerning the eating of this bread, emphasizing communion with God.
- (i) What about the New Testament?
 - (i) **16** Jesus, in the New Testament, refers to Himself as the "bread of life" (John 6:35), which can be seen as a deeper fulfillment of the symbolic presence of God in the showbread. Jesus is the one who provides spiritual sustenance and embodies God's presence among His people.
 - (ii) "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take and eat it; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them and said, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'" **(Matthew 26:26-28, CSB)**
 - (iii) In **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**, Paul recounts the institution of the Lord's Supper and provides some guidance on its observance. He states: "For **as often** as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." The phrase "as often as" indicates a recurring observance but doesn't specify an exact frequency.
 - (iv) **Acts 2:42** mentions the early believers devoting themselves to "the breaking of bread" along with prayer, fellowship, and the apostles'

teaching. While "the breaking of bread" might refer to regular meals, many scholars believe it also includes the observance of the Lord's Supper, especially in the context of Acts 20:7 where believers gather on the first day of the week to break bread.

- (v) **18 Acts 20:7:** "On the first day of the week, we assembled to break bread. Paul spoke to them, and since he was about to depart the next day, he kept on talking until midnight." This passage might indicate a weekly observance, at least in the Troas community, but it's not prescriptive for all churches.

c) 19 Divisions from the Methodists

- (1) 1784: Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC)
 - (a) Formed in the United States at the Christmas Conference.
 - (b) This was the primary Methodist body in the U.S. for several decades.
- (2) 1816: African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME)
 - (a) Richard Allen founded the AME in Philadelphia as a response to racial discrimination in the MEC.
- (3) 1820: African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ)
 - (a) Another breakaway due to racial discrimination, with James Varick becoming its first bishop.
- (4) 1830: Methodist Protestant Church
 - (a) Formed due to conflicts over the powers of bishops and the desire for a more congregational structure.
- (5) 1843: Wesleyan Methodist Church (later Wesleyan Church)
 - (a) Formed mainly because of objections to the MEC's stance on slavery.
 - (b) The Wesleyan Methodists took a strong abolitionist position.
- (6) 1844: Methodist Episcopal Church, South (MEC, S)
 - (a) The MEC split over the issue of slavery, leading to the formation of the MEC, S in the Southern U.S.
- (7) 1939: The Methodist Church
 - (a) The MEC, MEC, S, and Methodist Protestant Church reunited to form The Methodist Church.
- (8) 1968: The United Methodist Church (UMC)
 - (a) The United Methodist Church was formed from the merger of two denominations: The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

d) Salvation Army

- (1) **21** The Salvation Army was founded in the mid-19th century, in London, England, by William Booth and his wife, Catherine Booth. It emerged from the Methodist denomination, particularly from a group of Methodists known as the "Methodist Reformers."
- (2) Methodist Roots: **22** William Booth, a Methodist minister, and his wife Catherine were deeply committed to Christian evangelism and social reform. They became dissatisfied with what they saw as the formalism and lack of outreach in the Methodist Church of their time. As a result, they left the denomination and began their own ministry.
- (3) The East London Revival: In **23** 1865, the Booths started their work in the East End of London, a poverty-stricken area. They aimed to reach out to the marginalized and disadvantaged. Their ministry included street preaching, providing food and shelter, and addressing the spiritual and physical needs of the poor.
- (4) Formation of the Salvation Army: In 1878, **24** the organization was formally named the "Salvation Army." It was characterized by its military-style structure, with members referred to as "soldiers" and leaders as "officers." The use of uniforms, brass bands, and a strong focus on social work and evangelism became hallmarks of the Salvation Army.
- (5) Expansion: The Salvation Army expanded rapidly, both in the United Kingdom and internationally. It became known for its social services, including homeless shelters, soup kitchens, and addiction rehabilitation programs.
- (6) Doctrinal Beliefs: The Salvation Army is rooted in some traditional Christian beliefs and emphasizes salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. It is known for its commitment to social justice and caring for the poor and marginalized.
- (7) International Reach: Today, the Salvation Army operates in over 130 countries and continues its mission of "soup, soap, and salvation," providing practical assistance alongside spiritual guidance.
- (8) **Beliefs about salvation**
 - (a) **25** Their beliefs about salvation are in line with the majority of Protestant beliefs, particularly the Methodist Wesleyan-Arminian tradition.
 - (b) They believe in justification by faith only, emphasizing the need for repentance and conversion.
 - (c) Following the Wesleyan tradition, the Salvation Army believes in a second work of grace called sanctification.

where a believer is cleansed from inbred sin and is empowered to live a holy life.

- (d) They believe the Holy Spirit is given at the point of conversion. This is not associated with baptism, though.
 - (i) The scriptures clearly teach the gift of the Holy Spirit is given upon repentance and baptism (Acts 2:28).
 - (ii) Forgiveness of sins is synonymous with the receiving of the Holy Spirit.
 - (iii) **26 Titus 3:4-7 CSB** But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, (5) he saved us —not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy — through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. (6) He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior (7) so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.
 - (iv) This passage teaches our salvation was not accomplished by works of righteousness, but God's mercy through the work of regeneration and renewal of the Spirit that came through washing. The washing here is a hyperlink to baptism, which is how one is born-again (John 3:5)
 - (v) The Holy Spirit is the one who, by God's mercy, saves us through regeneration and renewal – this is the work of God.
 - (vi) Our part is repenting and obeying the command to be baptized to receive the Holy Spirit.
 - (vii) **27 Matthew 28:19 CSB** Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...
 - (viii) **Mark 16:16 CSB** Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.
- (9) **They don't practice any sacraments**, differing from traditional protestant beliefs.
 - (a) Unlike most Christian denominations, the Salvation Army does not practice the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. They believe that while these rituals

- can be meaningful, they are not essential for salvation or spiritual growth.
 - (b) Instead of formal sacraments, the Salvation Army speaks of "sacramental living." They believe that every moment of a believer's life can be a sacrament if lived in communion with God and service to others.
 - (c) Hence their emphasis on social justice and ministering to the poor and destitute.
- e) **2 Holiness Agitation (Holiness Movement) – 1880 – 1900**
 - (1) Early Influences (Late 18th Century - Early 19th Century): The Holiness Movement was influenced by the Methodist tradition, particularly the teachings of John Wesley. Wesley's emphasis on sanctification and Christian perfection laid the foundation for the Holiness Movement's focus on personal holiness and a deeper relationship with God.
 - (a) They were addressing lax morality among so called Christians.
 - (b) Wesley preached the importance of practicing Christianity and not just calling yourself a Christian because you go to some church.
 - (2) Second Great Awakening (Early 19th Century): The movement gained momentum during the Second Great Awakening in the United States, which was a period of religious revival and fervor. **3** Revivalists like Charles Finney and Phoebe Palmer played a significant role in promoting holiness teachings.
 - (a) **Phoebe Palmer's** "Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness" in New York City became a hub for Holiness Movement activities.
 - (b) **Charles Finney** was the promoter of the mourner's bench and calling upon people to repent of their sins and accept Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. This is where "accept Jesus into your heart" comes from.
 - (3) Camp Meetings and Conventions (Mid-19th Century): Holiness camp meetings and conventions were organized in various parts of the United States. These gatherings focused on the idea of entire sanctification, which meant being completely set apart for God's service and living a holy life. It was like a modern-day monastic movement without going away to a monastery.
 - (4) **Theology**
 - (a) Holiness churches are generally influenced by Wesleyan-Arminian theology, emphasizing free will in the salvation process and the possibility of apostasy (falling away from grace).

- (b) The movement emphasized the importance of the "second work of grace" or the "baptism of the Holy Spirit," which believers sought to experience for a deeper, holier life. This was often accompanied by speaking in tongues and other charismatic manifestations.
 - (c) Like other evangelical groups, Holiness churches often hold premillennial views about the end times and the second coming of Christ.
 - (d) Worship services often include expressive, emotive forms of worship, such as vocal testimonies, altar calls, and sometimes even speaking in tongues, although this is more associated with Pentecostalism.
 - (e) For a complete understanding of this "Baptism of the Holy Spirit", I have a study with that title in the New Member Packet under "Church Curriculum".
 - (f) There is also another study in that same folder titled "Tongues" by David Lusk.
 - (g) Let's just say many misunderstand the initial work and later ministry of the Holy Spirit as shown in the scriptures. Out of this misunderstanding, these Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements have developed.
- (5) The Baptism of the Holy Spirit**
- (a) **5 Luke 3:16 CSB** John answered them all, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I am is coming. I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
 - (b) **6 Acts 1:4-5 CSB** While he was with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise. "Which," he said, "you have heard me speak about; (5) for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days."
 - (c) So, the scriptures definitely speak of this *baptism of the Holy Spirit*. Was it a one-time event, or something that was repetitive?
 - (d) Notice how John and Jesus differentiated the baptism John was giving from the one Jesus would give. Jesus' baptism was with the Holy Spirit.
 - (e) **7** They were both referencing the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy: **Joel 2:28-29 CSB** After this I will pour out my Spirit on all humanity; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will have dreams,

- and your young men will see visions. (29) I will even pour out my Spirit on the male and female slaves in those days.
- (f) When was this prophecy fulfilled?
 - (g) **8 Acts 2:4 CSB** Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them.
 - (h) **9** On that fateful Day of Pentecost something happened that had never happened before. Even Peter, who stood up to preach, said: **Acts 2:16-17 CSB** ...this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: (17) “And it will be in the last days,” says God, “that I will pour out my Spirit on all people; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.”
 - (i) Peter confirms this prophecy was being fulfilled that very day. We all know how that sermon ended. It ended with the calling to repent and be baptized.
 - (j) **10 Acts 2:38-39 CSB** Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (39) For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”
 - (k) The baptism of the Holy Spirit, or the pouring out was done on that day, and each individual receives this gift when they obey the call to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.
 - (l) So, this baptism of the Holy Spirit, or the *pouring out* doesn’t happen again in scripture. It was a one-time historic even, like the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
 - (m) **11** Jesus doesn’t have to die on the cross each time we sin. He died once for all to provide forgiveness to all who come to Him: **Hebrews 7:27 CSB** He doesn’t need to offer sacrifices every day, as high priests do — first for their own sins, then for those of the people. He did this once for all time when he offered himself.
 - (n) Similarly, the Spirit was poured out on all flesh once. This gift is available to all who come to Christ seeking forgiveness. Once they are baptized with a penitent heart, they receive forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- (o) **12** The baptism of the Holy Spirit was not a **command** but a **promise** that was fulfilled 2000 years ago. Baptism in water for the forgiveness of sins is not a **promise** but a **command** to be obeyed by faith in Jesus Christ that leads to the fulfillment of the promised Holy Spirit for everyone who obeys it.
- (6) **Tongues and Miracles**
 - (a) **13** The Holy Spirit's work has two parts: supporting the initial apostolic ministry with miraculous signs and wonders, and supporting the later maturing of the church through non-miraculous fruit.
 - (b) **14** Notice who Jesus addresses here: **Luke 24:46-49 CSB** He also said to them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead the third day, (47) and repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (48) You are witnesses of these things. (49) And look, I am sending you what my Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high."
 - (c) **15** Jesus is addressing the apostles who were witnesses of these things. Being a witness was part of the apostolic qualifications in: **Acts 1:21-22 CSB** "Therefore, from among the men who have accompanied us during the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us — (22) beginning from the baptism of John until the day he was taken up from us — from among these, it is necessary that one become a witness with us of his resurrection."
 - (d) **16** It was the apostles who received the baptism of the Spirit in Acts 2, notice: **Acts 2:14 CSB** Peter stood up with the Eleven...
 - (e) And these statements were all made to the apostles: **John 14:26 CSB** But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.
 - (f) **John 16:13 CSB** When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come.
 - (g) This initial apostolic ministry received the empowerment as well as the indwelling of the Spirit to establish firmly the work of the apostles.

- (h) **17** To successfully conduct his ministry through the apostles who were unlearned fishermen, the Holy Spirit clothed them with the power of God, giving them knowledge, wisdom, faith, and the ability to:
 - (i) Speak in other tongues or languages as well as interpreting those languages.
 - (ii) Perform miracles such as: healing people, raising people from the dead...
 - (iii) Foresee the future (Prophecy)
 - (iv) Distinguish spirits.
 - (v) Drink poison and not die and be bitten by snakes and not die.
 - (vi) Pass on the ability to perform miracles to others through the laying on of their hands.
- (7) **18 Denominations** that arose from this movement:
 - (a) Church of God – 1886 – Merged Holiness and Pentecostal elements; governance is more centralized; strong emphasis on evangelism and missionary work.
 - (b) Fire-Baptized Holiness Church – 1896 – Was founded by Benjamin Hardin Irwin and emphasized not only the experience of sanctification but also the "baptism of fire," which Irwin described as a third experience following salvation and sanctification. This "baptism of fire" was seen as an empowering for service and witness.
 - (c) Nazarene Church – 1895 – Originated from the merging of several Holiness groups; emphasizes higher education with a network of Nazarene universities; missions-oriented.
 - (d) Pentecostal Holiness – 1898 – Combines Holiness and Pentecostal beliefs; emphasizes the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues.
 - (e) Assemblies of God – 1914
 - (i) The Assemblies of God teaches the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as a separate experience from salvation, often evidenced by speaking in tongues.
 - (ii) The Assemblies of God focuses on what it calls the "Fourfold Gospel," emphasizing Jesus as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and coming King.
 - (iii) Worship services are often characterized by a free and expressive form of worship, which may include speaking in tongues and other charismatic gifts of the Spirit.

- (8) The Holiness Movement contributed to the broader Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, which emerged in the early 20th century and also emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life.
- f) **Pentecostalism (Charismatic Movement)**
- (1) **19** Let's talk about and differentiate some movements that led up to Pentecostalism. The charismatic element of the holiness movement of the 19th century was not by any means unique to its era. Charismatic comes from the Greek *charis*, meaning gift.
- (2) Montanists: Emerging in the late 2nd century, Montanists emphasized the immediacy of the Holy Spirit and prophetic gifts.
- (a) They believed that the Holy Spirit spoke through their prophets, including their founder Montanus, and thus had a more direct line to divine revelation.
- (b) Montanus claimed to be the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit and believed that he, along with two female prophets named Prisca and Maximilla, received ongoing revelations from God.
- (c) We know that by the first century the whole word of God was delivered and there was no more active prophecy as the scripture says here:
- (i) **20 Jude 1:3 CSB** Dear friends, although I was eager to write you about the salvation we share, I found it necessary to write, appealing to you to contend for the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all.
- (ii) **21 Galatians 1:8 CSB** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, a curse be on him!
- (iii) **22 Revelation 22:18-19 CSB** I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. (19) And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city, which are written about in this book.
- (d) The Montanists emphasized the immediate and continued revelation of the Holy Spirit, giving birth to Charismatic movements like the Holiness and Pentecostal movements. They believed that the Holy Spirit was actively speaking through their prophets and

- providing new teachings and guidance for the Christian community.
- (e) **23** Montanists engaged in charismatic practices such as speaking in tongues, prophesying, and experiencing ecstasies. They believed that these manifestations were signs of the Spirit's presence and ongoing revelation.
 - (f) While there are similarities in terms of the emphasis on ongoing revelation and charismatic practices between the Montanists and the Pentecostal movements, it's essential to recognize that there is no direct historical connection between them. The Montanist movement existed in the early centuries of Christianity and faded over time.
 - (g) The Pentecostal and Charismatic movements of the 20th century emerged in a vastly different historical and theological context. Their development was influenced by various factors, including the Holiness Movement, revivalism, and a renewed interest in the Holy Spirit's work.
- (3) **24** Current Charismatics share some beliefs with Pentecostals, particularly regarding the Holy Spirit's empowerment and spiritual gifts. However, Charismatics often remain within their respective denominations rather than forming separate denominations.
- (a) The Charismatic movement is characterized by its ecumenical nature, as it transcends denominational boundaries. It has brought charismatic practices, such as speaking in tongues and healing, into traditionally non-charismatic churches.
 - (b) Many churches now incorporate charismatic worship and practices into their services.
- (4) **25** Azusa Street Revival – 1906-1909
- (a) The Pentecostal movement traces its beginnings to the early 20th century, with the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, California, in 1906. The revival was led by William J. Seymour, and it is considered the birthplace of modern Pentecostalism.
- (5) Theology
- (a) Pentecostals emphasize the importance of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit," often marked by speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*), as described in the book of Acts (Acts 2:1-4) in the Bible. They believe that these spiritual gifts, including prophecy and healing, are available to believers today.

- (b) **26 What are tongues?** Short study on Tongues as a Manifestation of the Empowerment of the Spirit
 - (i) In the first century, tongue speaking by the Holy Spirit was manifested in two ways:
 - (a) The Spirit enabled everyone to hear the same language.
 - (i) **27 Acts 2:4-6 CSB** Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them. (5) Now there were Jews staying in Jerusalem, devout people from every nation under heaven. (6) When this sound occurred, a crowd came together and was confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language.
 - (ii) **28 Acts 2:8-11 CSB** How is it that each of us can hear them in our own native language? (9) Parthians, Medes, Elamites; those who live in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, (10) Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts), (11) Cretans and Arabs — we hear them declaring the magnificent acts of God in our own tongues.”
 - (b) The spirit enabled individuals to speak multiple languages without having to learn them.
 - (i) **29 1 Co 12:7-10 CSB** A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good: (8) to one is given a message of wisdom through the Spirit, to another, a message of knowledge by the same Spirit, (9) to another, faith

- by the same Spirit, to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit, (10) to another, the performing of miracles, to another, prophecy, to another, distinguishing between spirits, to another, **different kinds of tongues**, to another, interpretation of tongues.
- (ii) There was also the gift of interpreting the tongues spoken, which shows how this gift of tongues was different from the one occurring in Acts 2 when the Baptism of the Holy Spirit took place. Further clarification that these were actual languages and not gibberish is here:
- (iii) **30 1 Co 14:9-10 CSB** In the same way, unless you use your tongue for **intelligible speech**, how will what is spoken be known? For you will be speaking into the air. (10) There are doubtless many different kinds of languages in the world, none is without meaning.
- (iv) **31 1 Co 14:27 CSB** If anyone speaks in a tongue, there are to be only two, or at the most three, each in turn, **and let someone interpret**.
- (c) Are miracles done today?
- (i) First of all, there are no known occurrences of any of the first century miracles being done today. Whenever someone claims to have done one it is quickly refuted and unable to be duplicated.
- (ii) What do Pentecostals claim as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit?
- (a) People speaking gibberish and claiming it is tongues.

- (b) People foaming at the mouth, which in the NT is associated with the possession of a demon.
 - (c) **32** People engaging in ecstatic behavior like yelling or dancing uncontrollably.
 - (d) People claiming to be healed from headaches, toothaches and other non-verifiable forms actual healings as done in the New Testament.
- (iii) The scriptures teach us the fruit of the Holy Spirit is what works through the Christian today:
- (iv) **33 Galatians 5:22-23 CSB** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things.
- (d) When did the miraculous works of the spirit cease?
 - (i) Paul hints the apostolic work of the Spirit would come to an end and that it was a sign of a church in infancy, i.e., not mature.
 - (ii) **34 1 Co 13:9-12 CSB** For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, (10) but when the perfect comes, the partial will come to an end. (11) When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put aside childish things. (12) For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, as I am fully known.
 - (iii) **35 Acts 8:15 CSB** After they went down there, they prayed for them so that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit because he had not yet come down on any of them.
 - (a) The apostles were sent to Samaria because the Holy Spirit had not come upon the Samaritans. They only had the indwelling of the Spirit that all believers have upon baptism (Acts 2:38).
 - (b) They are praying they "catch/receive" the Spirit (*lambano*). To be taken into possession by the Spirit.
 - (c) This indicates that although Philip was able to do miracles because the apostles laid their hands on him, he was

not able to give this gift to others. Only the apostles were able to do that.

- (iv) **36 Acts 8:16-17 CSB** (They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)
 (17) Then Peter and John **laid their hands on them**, and they received the Holy Spirit.
 - (a) Here Luke makes a parenthesis to explain to the readers the difference between the *indwelling* (passive receiving) of the Spirit vs. the empowerment (active possession) of the Spirit.
 - (b) Here's the crucial difference between the indwelling and the empowering of the Spirit. The Greek word translated as *came upon* or *fallen upon* is used to indicate a different action of the Spirit, in this case, the empowerment of the Spirit that resulted in miraculous action. This in rare cases occurred independently from the indwelling, as in the case of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-47) and Balaam's donkey (Numbers 22:28-34).
 - (c) Usually the believer would be baptized for the forgiveness of sins to allow for the indwelling of the Spirit, and then they were given the empowerment of the Spirit if necessary as we see in this case with the Samaritans and in the case of The Seven in Acts 6:1-6.
 - (d) The real promise Peter spoke of in his first Gospel sermon was the indwelling of the Spirit - Christ in us, the hope of glory (Col 1:27; 2 Co 1:21-22; Eph 1:13-14). The empowerment was necessary for the Spirit to reveal all the truth to the apostles and to confirm these were from God. The purpose of these miracles was to confirm God's word and therefore not a work of the Spirit today (1 Co 13:8-13; Mark 16:16-20).

- (v) **37 Acts 8:18 CSB** When Simon saw that **the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands**, he offered them money...
 - (vi) Do miracles occur today?
 - (a) I am not saying God cannot do miracles, God does what He pleases and myself and many others have witnessed God do miracles in our collective lives, just not through the agency of a person, as was done in the New Testament.
 - (b) **38 1 Co 13:13 CSB** Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love — but the greatest of these is love.
- (6) Worship Practices
 - (a) Pentecostal worship services are often characterized by energetic praise and worship, spontaneous prayer, and the belief in the immediate, tangible presence of the Holy Spirit during gatherings.
- (7) **39** Denominations among Pentecostals
 - (a) **Church of God in Christ (COGIC)**: Founded in 1907 by Bishop Charles Harrison Mason, the COGIC is a predominantly African American Pentecostal denomination. It has a strong emphasis on holiness and sanctification and is one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in the United States.
 - (b) **Assemblies of God**: Founded in the United States in 1914, the Assemblies of God is one of the largest and most influential Pentecostal denominations in the world. It emphasizes the baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues and operates on a fellowship system with local autonomy.
 - (c) **Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee)**: This denomination, commonly referred to as the Church of God, was founded in 1886 and is one of the oldest Pentecostal denominations. It emphasizes holiness and the full gospel message and has a global presence.
 - (d) **United Pentecostal Church International (UPCI)**: Founded in 1945, the UPCI is known for its Oneness theology, which rejects the traditional Christian doctrine of the Trinity and baptizes in the name of Jesus only. It places a strong emphasis on holiness and baptism in Jesus' name.
 - (e) **Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW)**: Founded in 1906, the PAW is one of the oldest Oneness Pentecostal

denominations. It has a diverse membership and focuses on the teachings of the apostolic faith.

- (f) **International Church of the Foursquare Gospel:** Founded by Aimee Semple McPherson in the 1920s, this denomination emphasizes the preaching of the "foursquare gospel," which includes Jesus as Savior, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, Healer, and Soon-Coming King. It has a charismatic emphasis.
- (g) **Church of God of Prophecy:** Founded in 1903, this Pentecostal denomination places a strong emphasis on prophecy and the spiritual gifts. It has a presence in various countries, including the United States.
- (h) **Full Gospel Church:** This denomination, often found in South Korea and other parts of Asia, is characterized by its charismatic worship and emphasis on the Holy Spirit's gifts.
- (i) These are just a few examples of the denominations that emerged from the Pentecostal movement. It's important to note that Pentecostalism is a diverse movement, and there are many smaller Pentecostal and charismatic groups, as well as independent churches and ministries, that share its theological emphases.

5. **Society of Friends (Quakers) – 1650**

a) Origins

- (1) **2** The Religious Society of Friends, commonly known as Quakers, is a Christian religious denomination that originated in England in the mid-17th century. The movement was founded by George Fox around 1650, during a period of religious upheaval and questioning.
- (2) **3** This Quaker movement emerged during a time when the established church was being questioned and alternative forms of spirituality were being explored. George Fox was a key early leader; he had a series of **religious experiences** that led him to break away from traditional religious authorities. Fox and the early Friends were dissatisfied with the ritualism and hierarchical structures of the Anglican Church.
 - (a) As a young man, Fox felt dissatisfied with the state of Christianity as practiced by the established church. He was disillusioned by the clergy's focus on outward rituals rather than inner spirituality.
 - (b) Fox often retreated into solitude to read the Bible and seek divine guidance. During these periods, he began to develop his concept of the **"Inner Light"** or "that of God

- in every man," a direct, individual experience of the Divine.
- (c) In one of his most pivotal experiences, Fox heard a voice which he took to be the voice of God, saying, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition." This revelation solidified his belief that individuals could have a direct experience of God without the need for clergy or sacraments.
 - (d) Fox had several "open visions," which were deeply spiritual experiences that often gave him insights into the nature of God and the universe. These visions further convinced him that traditional religious practices were not necessary for communion with God.
 - (i) **4 Colossians 2:18-19 (CSB)** Let no one disqualify you, insisting on ascetic practices and the worship of angels, claiming access to a visionary realm and inflated without cause by his unspiritual mind. He doesn't hold on to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and tendons, grows with growth from God.
 - (ii) **5 1 John 4:1 (CSB)** Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.
 - (e) **6** Fox's radical views and open-air preaching led to multiple instances of imprisonment. However, these experiences only strengthened his resolve and attracted more people to his cause.
 - (f) The term "Quaker" was initially a derisive label used to mock Fox and his followers for their tendency to "quake" or tremble during religious experiences. However, the term was eventually adopted by the group itself.
- (3) Fox's spiritual experiences and his commitment to the "Inner Light" shaped the core principles of Quakerism: the idea that everyone has a direct relationship with God, the rejection of established religious hierarchies, and the focus on simplicity, peace, and equality.
 - (4) **7** Fox's writings, including his journal, became an important part of Quaker theology, chronicling his spiritual journey and laying the groundwork for the Quaker movement. His teachings encouraged individuals to seek a personal relationship with God,

which was a radical idea in a time when religious authority was highly centralized.

- (a) It seems that the things Fox journaled about were more about a philosophy of living than walking in the footsteps of Jesus.
- (b) **8** We know what Jesus said about following traditions of men: **Mark 7:7-9 CSB** "They worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines human commands. (8) Abandoning the command of God, you hold on to human tradition." (9) He also said to them, "You have a fine way of invalidating God's command in order to set up your tradition!"
- (c) **9 Galatians 1:8 CSB** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, a curse be on him!

b) Practices

- (1) Quakers place a high value on the "Inner Light," the divine presence they believe exists within each individual. This concept informs their worship and decision-making processes.
- (2) Quakers traditionally advocate for a simple lifestyle and are often noted for their commitment to social justice, including gender and racial equality.
- (3) Many Quakers are known for their pacifist stance and have been conscientious objectors in times of war.
- (4) In their meetings for worship, Quakers often sit in silence, speaking only when moved by the Spirit to do so.
- (5) When making decisions, Quakers engage in a consensus-seeking process, aiming to reach an agreement in line with the will of God.
- (6) Quakers uphold testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship.

c) Impact

- (1) Quakers have played an important role in various social reform movements, such as the abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, and civil rights. Notable Quakers like William Penn, who founded Pennsylvania, left a lasting impact on the formation of the United States.
- (2) Today, Quaker communities are diverse and can be found globally. Their beliefs range from evangelical and conservative to liberal and universalist, reflecting the broad spectrum of theological thought within the Religious Society of Friends.

6. **Shakers – 1774**

- a) **11** Officially known as the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, emerged from a Christian religious tradition known as the

Quakers, or the Religious Society of Friends. The founder of the Shaker movement, Ann Lee, was originally a member of the Quaker community in England before she broke away to form the Shakers in the late 18th century.

b) Origins

- (1) It was founded by Ann Lee, who believed in celibacy and communal living. She and a small group of followers emigrated to the United States in 1774, escaping religious persecution, settling in New York.
- (2) She claimed to have had a series of visions and revelations, asserting that she was the female incarnation of Christ on Earth.
- (3) **12** This kind of vision goes way beyond just having visions – this borders on delusion. This was a woman disconnected with reality.

c) Beliefs and Practices

- (1) The Shakers believed in celibacy, communal living, and the equality of the sexes.
- (2) They practiced ecstatic worship, characterized by shaking and dancing, which gave them their nickname.
- (3) They also valued simplicity, hard work, and pacifism.

d) Expansion (19th Century): The Shaker communities expanded in the 19th century, particularly in the New England and Midwest regions of the United States. At their peak, there were about 6,000 Shakers living in 19 different communities.

e) Innovations: Shakers were known for their innovations in agriculture, craftsmanship, and design. They produced high-quality furniture, textiles, and wooden crafts, which are highly regarded today for their craftsmanship.

f) Decline (Late 19th Century): The Shaker movement faced challenges as their population declined due to celibacy and an inability to attract new members. They also faced pressure from external factors like the Industrial Revolution.

g) 20th Century and Beyond: By the mid-20th century, the Shaker population dwindled to a few members. However, their contributions to American culture, particularly in the fields of design and craft, continue to be celebrated.

h) Legacy: Shaker furniture and design principles are still influential in modern interior design. While the Shaker religious communities have largely disappeared, their legacy endures in their craftsmanship and commitment to simplicity and community.

7. **Evangelicalism – Evangelical Movement**

- a) **14** Evangelicalism is similar to charismatics; in that it is a movement that is ecumenical. It exists within many different denominations. It is not a

denomination within itself, but a movement that has certain characteristics which has risen in many different denominations.

- b) **15** The origins of Evangelicalism can be traced back to the Reformation period, although the movement itself took its most distinctive form during the 18th-century evangelical revivals in Europe and America. Key figures in the early development of Evangelicalism include **George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and John Wesley**.
- (1) First Great Awakening (1730s-1740s): This revivalist movement in the American colonies helped set the stage for Evangelicalism. Jonathan Edwards, famous for his sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," was a prominent figure during this time.
 - (2) Methodist Movement: Started by John Wesley in the mid-18th century, Methodism was a key influence in shaping Evangelical beliefs, emphasizing personal conversion and holiness.
 - (3) Second Great Awakening (1790s-1840s): Another important milestone for Evangelicalism in America, it spread the evangelical doctrine across denominations.
 - (4) 19th Century: Evangelicalism gained prominence in British and American religious life, emphasized by the spread of evangelical churches and Christian missions.
 - (5) **16** 20th Century: Evangelicalism took a more organized form with the founding of institutions like the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in 1942 in the United States. Billy Graham was a prominent figure during this period, and his evangelistic crusades drew large crowds.
- c) **17 Doctrine**
- (1) Conversionism: Central to evangelical doctrine is the belief in the necessity of being "born again" through a personal conversion experience.
 - (a) A lot can be said about this *conversion experience* expected from those professing evangelicals.
 - (b) Usually this is tied to some **emotional experience**, expressed in tears, some confession or some other story tied to some deeply *spiritual or religious* experience.
 - (c) The bible warns us against these experiences, which are not tied to faith, but to heart.
 - (d) **18 Colossians 2:18** CSB Let no one condemn you by delighting in ascetic practices and the worship of angels, claiming access to a **visionary realm**. Such people are inflated by empty notions of their **unspiritual mind**.
 - (e) Thus, *mysticism* is a religious experience that is based on feelings (subjective experience) as opposed to hard facts (objective experience):

- (a) Some who volunteer *humility* as a venue of spirituality may in fact be basing their religious experience on their feelings. Their fruit are shown in times of testing.
 - (b) Asceticism, or severe treatment of the body by abstention from indulgence contributes to ego inflation as oppose to honoring God.
 - (c) Angel worship, or elevating any other created being above God is also involved in the mystical experience (Heb_1:14).
 - (d) Dwelling on the unknown or building on that which is unseen is a type of mysticism (Deu_29:29).
 - (e) **Mysticism** is a growing movement not only in evangelicalism but in other denominations as well, particularly nowadays when we're moving towards a "touchy-feely, I own my own experience regardless of truth and you can't tell me I'm wrong" conviction we see in our culture.
- (f) Tent revival meetings and other campaign tactics are used to elicit an emotional response in a high pressure situation, usually a sermon calling for repentance, crowds crying or showing some other form of emotional high that tends to encourage someone to go on the mourners bench to confess their sins and pray Jesus into their heart.
- (2) **19 Biblicism**: A high regard for the Bible as the ultimate authority for faith and practice. Evangelicals hold to the inerrancy and infallibility of the Scriptures.
 - (a) Even though they claim the scriptures are the ultimate authority, they fail to consult them when it comes to matters of salvation, doctrine, and the life to come.
 - (b) They let man-made doctrine trump bible because they want to cave into cultural pressure as opposed to the word of God
 - (c) **2 Timothy 4:3-4 CSB** For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear what they

want to hear. (4) They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths.

- (3) **20 Activism:** The belief that the gospel must be expressed in efforts to evangelize the lost and engage in social reforms. There's often an emphasis on missionary work.
- (4) **Crucicentrism:** A focus on the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross for the salvation of humanity.
- (5) **Eschatology:** Many Evangelicals hold pre-millennial and dispensational views, believing in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the Rapture of the Church.

d) 21 Prominent evangelicals

- (1) **George Whitefield** (1714-1770): An English Anglican preacher who was one of the founding figures of Evangelicalism. He played a significant role in the First Great Awakening.
- (2) **Jonathan Edwards** (1703-1758): An American revivalist preacher, theologian, and philosopher. Edwards was instrumental in the First Great Awakening and is perhaps best known for his fire-and-brimstone sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."
- (3) **John Wesley** (1703-1791): Founder of the Methodist movement, Wesley emphasized personal faith and holiness. His ideas were foundational to Evangelicalism, particularly in England and America.
- (4) **22 Billy Graham** (1918-2018): An American evangelist who conducted large-scale missions, or "crusades," around the world. He was perhaps one of the most influential Evangelical figures of the 20th century.
- (5) **23 John Stott** (1921-2011): An English Anglican cleric who was a significant figure in the global Evangelical movement. He's known for works like "Basic Christianity."
- (6) **Francis Schaeffer** (1912-1984): An American Evangelical theologian who founded the L'Abri community in Switzerland and wrote extensively on theology, philosophy, and culture.
- (7) **24 Timothy Keller**: An American pastor and theologian, Keller is the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. He's known for works like "The Reason for God."
- (8) **Rick Warren**: Founding pastor of Saddleback Church, one of America's largest and best-known churches. He's the author of "The Purpose Driven Life," which has been a bestseller.
- (9) **25 Beth Moore**: An American evangelist, author, and Bible teacher. She's the founder of Living Proof Ministries and is particularly influential among Evangelical women.
- (10) **John Piper**: An American Reformed Baptist pastor and author who is the chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary. He's known for promoting a theology known as Christian Hedonism

through his Desiring God ministry. He's a renown theologian and an avid Calvinist.

- e) Evangelicalism is a cross-denominational movement, so it includes Baptists, Pentecostals, Methodists, and others, some of whom may be Calvinistic, and others who are not.

E. **Baptists** – 1611

1. **Historical Context**

- a) **2** The Baptist Church originated in the early 17th century in England. It emerged during a time of religious turmoil and dissent against the established Church of England.
- b) The Baptist church was not founded by John the Baptist. That is a very ignorant belief or association. Jesus' cousin, John, was not a Baptist. We can refer to him as John the baptizer since he immersed people in water for repentance.
- c) John Smyth and Thomas Helwys are two prominent figures in the early Baptist movement. Around 1609, they led a group of dissenters to the Netherlands to escape persecution in England. There, they established what is generally recognized as the first Baptist congregation.
 - (1) **3 John Smyth** was initially part of the Separatist movement, which sought to separate from the Church of England due to disagreements with its practices and doctrines.
 - (2) By 1609, while in Amsterdam with his congregation, Smyth began to question the legitimacy of his own baptism and that of his congregation, as they had been baptized as infants in the Church of England. He came to the conviction that baptism should be a conscious choice made by believers. Smyth then performed a self-baptism, followed by baptizing other willing members of his congregation. This act marked the beginning of the "Baptist" movement.
 - (3) An Anabaptist Beginning:
 - (4) In the Netherlands, Smyth and his followers had contact with the Mennonites, an Anabaptist group. Their interactions with the Mennonites further shaped Smyth's views on believer's baptism and church polity.
 - (a) Central to Anabaptist theology is the idea that baptism should be reserved for believers who can make a conscious confession of faith. The name "Anabaptist" itself means "rebaptizer", reflecting their practice of rebaptizing individuals who had been baptized as infants. Smyth adopted this view, moving away from infant baptism and championing the baptism of believers.
 - (b) The Anabaptists believed in the separation of church and state, arguing that the church should remain a

voluntary community of believers free from state interference. This influenced Smyth's perspective, aligning with his views on the autonomy of the local congregation.

- (c) Given the significant persecution the Anabaptists faced, they developed a theology of martyrdom and suffering for the faith. While Smyth himself did not face martyrdom, the idea of being willing to suffer for one's beliefs was something he and early Baptists would have resonated with.
- (5) While Smyth is known for emphasizing **believer's baptism**, he also emphasized the importance of personal conversion and the local congregation's autonomy.
- (6) **4 Thomas Helwys**, a close associate of Smyth, decided to return to England around 1611-1612 with a portion of the congregation. He believed it was crucial to witness to their faith in their home country, despite the risks of persecution.
- (7) One of Helwys' significant contributions was his advocacy for religious liberty. In his book "*A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity*" (1612), he argued for freedom of conscience and criticized King James I for religious persecution. **He believed that the king had no authority in spiritual matters and that everyone should be free to follow their own convictions in matters of faith.**
- (8) Helwys, like Smyth, emphasized believer's baptism, the autonomy of the local congregation, and the centrality of Scripture.
- d) In this beginning they did not call themselves Baptists, but Brethren, Disciples of Christ, Christians, or Believers. The name Baptist was first claimed in 1644 and they have owned it ever since.
- e) Helwys and some of his followers returned to England and set up the first Baptist church on English soil around 1612.
- f) **5** The Baptist faith spread to America in the 1630s, with Roger Williams, an early proponent of religious freedom, founding the first Baptist church in the American colonies in Providence, Rhode Island.

2. Doctrine

- a) **6 Baptism:** One of the defining characteristics of Baptists is their view on baptism. They believe in believer's baptism (as opposed to infant baptism), which means individuals should be baptized only after making a personal confession of faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism is performed by immersion, symbolizing the believer's death to sin and resurrection to a new life in Christ.
- (1) So far so good, right? But it doesn't end there. Here's the problem with the Baptist belief:

- (2) **7** Baptists believe that baptism is an **outward expression of an inward transformation**, symbolizing a believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. While baptism is a significant act of obedience and public profession of faith, the general Baptist stance is that it does not, in itself, bring about the forgiveness of sins. **It is only a church ordinance**, necessary for membership in the Baptist church. This is a major deviation of scripture!
- (3) For Baptists, the forgiveness of sins is obtained solely through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This faith leads to justification, regeneration, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Baptism follows this faith as an act of obedience and public proclamation.
- (4) They argue baptism cannot save them since it is a work of man, and they cite:
- (5) **8 Ephesians 2:8-9** For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift— not from works, so that no one can boast.
- (6) They read this as emphasizing that salvation (and thus forgiveness of sins) comes through faith and not by any human act or ritual, including baptism.
- (7) **9** However, **Acts 2:38** is a verse that shows baptism and forgiveness of sins are **tied together**: "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
- (8) So the Baptist argues that they get baptized *because of* the forgiveness of sins, not *for* the forgiveness of sins!
- (9) **10** In the Greek it reads "For (*eis*) the forgiveness of sins", not "because of (*e**pi*) the forgiveness of sins"
- (10) **Eis** - into, unto, to, towards.
- (11) Not only is the Greek clear here, but other passages make baptism and salvation inseparable:
 - (a) **11 1 Peter 3:21 CSB** Baptism, which corresponds to this, **now saves you** (not as the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...
 - (i) One is not saved until one is baptized.
 - (b) **12 Mark 16:16 CSB** Whoever **believes and is baptized will be saved**, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.
 - (i) One is not saved until one is baptized.
 - (c) **13 Matthew 28:19 CSB** Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...

- (i) One is not a disciple until one is baptized.
- (12) Nowhere in scripture do we read about baptism being an outward expression of an inward transformation.
- (13) **14** In baptism we join Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, Romans 6:3-4
 - (a) In baptism we are clothed with Christ – Galatian 3:27
 - (b) In baptism we call on His name – Acts 22:16
 - (c) In baptism we are made alive with Christ – Col 2:12-13
- b) **15** Priesthood of All Believers: Baptists emphasize the direct relationship between God and the individual, without the need for a mediating priest. This is a rejection of the separation of clergy and laity which the higher churches always appealed to.
- c) Autonomy of the Local Church: Baptist churches are typically independent and self-governing. They make decisions collectively through congregational polity. They do not hold onto a particular confession of faith, or man-made creed.
 - (1) They, however, do believe that cooperative conventions can shape their doctrinal beliefs as a whole while retaining autonomy at the congregational level.
 - (2) We know that by the first century the whole word of God was delivered and there was no more active prophecy or deliberation as to what the truth to follow was to be, as the scripture says here:
 - (i) **16 Jude 1:3 CSB** Dear friends, although I was eager to write you about the salvation we share, I found it necessary to write, appealing to you to contend for the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all.
 - (ii) **Galatians 1:8 CSB** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, a curse be on him!
 - (iii) **17 Revelation 22:18-19 CSB** I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. (19) And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city, which are written about in this book.
 - (3) Should we have beliefs that needs revision on occasion, that should change and reflect fleeting cultural values? Should conventions have authority to revise theology in the church? What does the bible say about this?

- (a) **18** As we read in **2 Peter 1:3** we've already received everything we need for life and godliness in what was delivered in the first century. Anything other than that reflects a value of man, not a value of God.
 - (b) **19** **Traditions of Men make void the word of God: Mark 7:13 (CSB)** You nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down.
- (4) Having conventions dictate church doctrine is not a scriptural practice since doctrine is supposed to be protected by the elders and the evangelists of each congregational, and not adopted from another body.
 - (a) **20 Titus 1:9:** "He (The elder) must hold to the faithful message as taught, so that he will be able both to encourage with sound teaching and to refute those who contradict it."
 - (b) **21** Elders must be vigilant against false teachings, as described in **Acts 20:28-31**, where Paul warns the Ephesian elders about fierce wolves (false teachers) that would come in among the flock.
 - (c) Evangelists are to gently instruct those who oppose the gospel, in hopes that God may grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth (**2 Timothy 2:25**).
- (5) **22** Here are some of the more popular conventions:
 - (a) **Southern Baptist Convention (SBC):** The largest Protestant denomination in the U.S., it was established in 1845. The SBC is known for its conservative theology and emphasis on missions.
 - (i) During the late 20th century, there was a significant shift within the SBC known as the "Conservative Resurgence" or "Fundamentalist Takeover." Beginning in the 1970s and solidifying in the 1980s, conservative leaders emphasized biblical inerrancy and opposed perceived liberal trends in the denomination's institutions. This movement led to changes in leadership, seminaries, and mission boards, ensuring a more conservative theological direction for the denomination.
 - (ii) The SBC has revised its **statement of faith**, the *Baptist Faith and Message*, several times (1925, 1963, 2000) to address theological and cultural issues and clarify the convention's stance.
 - (b) **American Baptist Churches USA:** Originating from the oldest Baptist association in the U.S., it's more

theologically diverse than the SBC and emphasizes both evangelism and social justice.

- (i) Historically, the American Baptist Churches USA (formerly Northern Baptist Convention) moved in a more ecumenical direction than some other Baptist bodies, engaging in interdenominational dialogues and activities.
 - (ii) This convention has been more involved in social justice issues, reflecting a broader theological and social perspective.
 - (iii) Some regions and churches within ABCUSA have adopted affirming stances toward LGBTQ+ individuals, supporting ordination and same-sex marriage. However, other regions and congregations remain conservative on these issues. The denomination, as a whole, allows individual churches and regions to determine their stance.
- (c) **Alliance of Baptists:** This group formed in 1987 after separating from the Southern Baptist Convention, primarily over theological and social issues. The Alliance of Baptists has been affirming of LGBTQ+ individuals for many years, supporting both their ordination and their relationships.
- (i) The Alliance of Baptists has taken a more progressive stance on many social issues. While they value the sanctity of life, they also emphasize the importance of reproductive justice, women's health, and the socio-economic factors that might lead to an abortion decision. They advocate for comprehensive reproductive health and rights, which includes but is not limited to access to safe and legal abortion.
- (d) **National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.:** One of the largest African American religious organizations in the U.S., emphasizing both spiritual and social uplift.
- (i) The Progressive National Baptist Convention emerged from the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. due to differences in leadership style and the Civil Rights Movement's involvement. Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders were part of this new convention, which

Do not be deceived: no sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, or males who have sex with males, (10) no thieves, greedy people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, or swindlers will inherit God's kingdom.

- (a) Homosexual behavior is considered unrighteous.
- (iii) **1 Timothy 1:9-10 (CSB)** We know that the law is not meant for a righteous person, but for the lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinful, for the unholy and irreverent, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, males who have sex with males, slave traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching.
 - (a) Homosexual behavior is considered lawless, rebellious, and ungodly.
- (iv) **Jude 1:7 (CSB)** In the same way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns committed sexual immorality and perversions, and serve as an example by undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.
 - (a) Sodom and Gomorrah's judgement, cities known for their lasciviousness and homosexual practices, is referred to as an example of what happens to those who engage in such practices.
- (b) So we can certainly see that the Bible's view is not a cultural or man-made view, since at the time homosexuality was already normalized into the Greek and Roman culture. It is immoral and unnatural according to God.
 - (i) A similar argument is made with those who want to redefine *gender*. They say gender is a human construct, but the argument has no biological or scientific basis.
 - (ii) Gender is biology, not just a matter of mind. You can be of any mind you want but the truth is biology has been written into your very genes.
 - (iii) Gender is a biological construct, not a human one.
- (c) Under attack is the family unit, what God uses to expand the truth into the world.

- (i) The LGBTQ agenda debases the godly institution of marriage and the dynamic of the family.
 - (ii) This directly attacks the core unit of the church.
 - (iii) This destabilizes society, introducing further dysfunction and immorality.
 - (iv) They may claim the family is a societal construct, but the reality we see even in nature is that it is a divine construct.
 - (d) Also under attack is the sanctity of life. This evil disguises itself as *social justice* by changing the definition of words like *murder* into *abortion*, sexual perversion, and homosexuality as *gay*, or *pride*, marriage equality instead of same-sex unions, etc.
 - d) **23** Bible-Centric: Baptists view the Bible as the ultimate authority in matters of faith and practice. However, as we've seen in other denominations, even though they may have this belief, they still hold on to man-made teachings that invalidate God's word among them, particularly when it comes to matters of life and death.
 - e) Calvinism and Baptists: Historically, many of the early Baptists, particularly those known as Particular Baptists in England, were indeed Calvinistic, adhering to the five points of Calvinism as articulated at the Synod of Dort in the 17th century.
 - (1) The five points, often remembered by the acronym **TULIP**, stand for Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints.
 - (a) We studied how biblical this theology is in a previous class. Suffice it to say that the only one that could have a biblical leg to stand on was Total Depravity, and even so the way some believe it is problematic when it comes to scripture.
 - (b) Some Baptist groups, like Reformed Baptists, fully embrace these points, while others may accept some and not others.
 - (2) In recent years, there has been a resurgence of Reformed theology, often referred to as the "New Calvinism," within various evangelical movements, including many Baptist churches. This has brought Calvinistic theology to the forefront of discussions within Baptist life.
3. **Seventh Day Adventists** – 1844
- a) Historical Context
 - (1) **24** The **Millerites** were not a formal denomination but rather a widespread group of believers who **followed the teachings of William Miller**, an **25** American Baptist preacher. Miller predicted that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ would occur

- between 1843 and 1844. **26** When this prediction did not come to pass, a period known as the "Great Disappointment" ensued.
- (2) In the aftermath of the Great Disappointment, various Millerite groups sought to understand what had happened and to reevaluate their beliefs. One of these groups began to emphasize the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday). Over time, this group coalesced and formally organized as the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863.
- (3) **27** They also believed in the imminent Second Coming of Jesus. Ellen G. White, a prominent figure in the movement, played a significant role in the formation of the SDA Church. Her writings are considered as inspired counsel by the church but are not seen as equivalent to the Bible.
- (a) Ellen G. White (1827-1915) was a co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is considered by the church to be a **prophetess**. Her influence on the denomination is profound, and she played a central role in shaping its doctrines, practices, and overall direction.
- (b) **28** Here are some key points regarding her influence:
- (i) **Visions and Prophetic Claims:** Beginning in her teenage years, White reported having visions from God that provided guidance and instruction for the early Adventist believers. Over her lifetime, she claimed to have had around 2,000 visions and dreams.
 - (ii) **Writings:** Ellen G. White was a prolific writer. Her published works encompass more than 100,000 pages, including books, articles, and letters. Some of her most well-known books include "Steps to Christ," "The Desire of Ages," and the five-volume "Conflict of the Ages" series. Her writings cover a broad range of topics, including theology, education, health, and prophecy.
 - (iii) **Role in Forming Doctrines:** White's visions and writings were instrumental in the formation and clarification of several distinctive SDA doctrines, such as the Investigative Judgment, the importance of the Sabbath, and health reform.
 - (iv) **Educational and Health Initiatives:** Inspired by her visions and guidance, the SDA Church established numerous schools, colleges, and health institutions. The emphasis on health, sometimes referred to as the "health message,"

- led to the church's advocacy for vegetarianism, temperance, and overall wellness.
- (v) **Leadership and Church Expansion:** Ellen White played a crucial role in the expansion and organizational establishment of the SDA Church, both in the U.S. and internationally. Her leadership and counsel were sought on many issues, from theological disputes to missionary endeavors.
 - (vi) **Current Influence:** While Ellen G. White passed away in 1915, her influence remains strong in the SDA Church. Her writings are frequently referenced in sermons, Bible studies, and church publications. The church considers her writings as a "lesser light" pointing to the "greater light" of the Bible. Though they do not hold the same authority as the Bible in SDA belief, they are viewed as inspired counsel.
 - (vii) **Controversies and Criticisms:** Over the years, there have been controversies surrounding Ellen G. White, especially concerning the originality of her writings. Some critics argue that she borrowed heavily from other authors without giving them credit. There have also been theological disagreements between the SDA Church and other Christian denominations regarding some of her teachings.
- (c) **29 Other key leaders in the SDA movement:**
- (i) **James White:** He was Ellen G. White's husband and played a pivotal role in the church's formation. James was a preacher, writer, and an organizer. He helped to consolidate various Adventist groups into a unified movement and played a role in establishing the church's publishing work.
 - (ii) **Joseph Bates:** He is often credited with introducing the seventh-day Sabbath observance to other early Adventist believers. Bates was a retired sea captain and became a Millerite preacher. He wrote a booklet titled "The Seventh Day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign," which had a significant influence on both James and Ellen White and other early Adventists.

- (iii) **30 J.N. Andrews:** A scholar and missionary, Andrews was the first official Seventh-day Adventist missionary sent overseas. He played a crucial role in establishing the church's theological foundations and was influential in its early organizational efforts.
- (iv) **Hiram Edson:** After the Great Disappointment in 1844, it was Edson who had a vision (or insight) in a cornfield that led to the development of the Adventist understanding of the heavenly sanctuary and Christ's ministry there, which became foundational for the church's doctrine of the Investigative Judgment.

b) Controversial Beliefs

- (1) **31 Investigative Judgment:** This doctrine proposes that Jesus entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844 to begin a process of investigative judgment.
 - (a) According to the book of Hebrews, Jesus entered the inner sanctuary after His sacrifice on the cross: **Hebrews 10:12 (CSB)** But this man, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.
 - (b) **Mark 16:19 (CSB)** So then after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.
 - (c) **Ephesians 1:20 (CSB)** He demonstrated this power in the Messiah by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavens.
 - (d) **Hebrews 6:19-20** indicates that Jesus entered the inner place behind the curtain as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever.
 - (e) Therefore, Jesus's entry into the inner sanctuary was after His ascension to heaven, which followed His resurrection. That happened in 33AD.
- (2) **32 Ellen G. White's Authority:** While the SDA Church claims the Bible as its only creed, Ellen G. White's writings hold a special authoritative status. Some critics feel that this emphasis might detract from the Bible's sole authority.
 - (a) **2 Timothy 3:16-17:** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
- (3) **33 Dietary Restrictions:** The SDA Church promotes a vegetarian diet and discourages the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and

certain "unclean" foods as described in Leviticus 11. Some argue that the New Testament provides freedom in such matters.

- (a) **1 Timothy 4:4-5 (CSB)** For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, (5) since it is sanctified by the word of God and by prayer.
 - (i) Only doctrines of demons advocate prohibition of foods.
 - (ii) The only thing we need to abstain from is blood and the meat of strangled animals. (Acts 15:20)
- (b) **Colossians 2:16-17 (CSB)** Therefore, don't let anyone judge you in regard to food and drink or in the matter of a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day. (17) These are a shadow of what was to come; the substance is Christ.
 - (i) This is a good passage to share with 7th Day Adventist, since it talks about all these matters of the Law as being a shadow of the reality that is in Christ Jesus.
- (4) **34 Sabbath Observance:** The SDA Church's emphasis on Saturday as the true Sabbath is seen by some as legalistic, especially given passages like Romans 14:5, CSB, which suggests flexibility in observing special days.
 - (a) We already mentioned how in Colossians 2:16 the Sabbath is referred to as a shadow of the reality which is in Christ Jesus. Therefore, the Sabbath is no longer to be observed as it was under the law.
 - (b) **Romans 14:5-6 (CSB)** One person judges one day to be more important than another day. Someone else judges every day to be the same. Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind. (6) Whoever observes the day, observes it for the honor of the Lord. Whoever eats, eats for the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; and whoever does not eat, it is for the Lord that he does not eat it, and he gives thanks to God.
 - (i) Even if somebody wanted to observe the Sabbath, in this passage, each person is encouraged to observe whatever they want in honor of the Lord, but not force that observation on anyone else.
- (5) **35 Annihilationism:** The SDA Church teaches that the wicked will be completely destroyed rather than eternally tormented. This view is not in keeping with Revelation 20:10, CSB being cited as evidence for eternal torment.

- (a) In the parable of the Sheep and the Goats, Jesus ends with this statement: **Matthew 25:46 (CSB)** And they will go away into **eternal punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life.
- (b) **Revelation 20:10 (CSB)** The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night **forever and ever**.
- (6) **36 Conditional Immortality:** This belief holds that the soul is not naturally immortal and only gains immortality through Christ. The scriptures do not teach such a thing:
 - (a) **John 5:28-29 (CSB)** Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice (29) and come out — those who have done good things, to the **resurrection of life**, but those who have done wicked things, to the **resurrection of condemnation**.
 - (b) **Acts 24:15 (CSB)** I have a hope in God, which these men themselves also accept, that there will be a **resurrection**, **both** of the righteous and the unrighteous.
 - (c) **Revelation 20:12-15 (CSB)** I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and **the dead were judged** according to their works by what was written in the books. (13) Then the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; each one was judged according to their works. (14) Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. (15) And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

VII. **Restoration Movement**

A. *The church in the wilderness*

1. **2** There's this idea of the **church in the wilderness**, obscured and persecuted by the looming grandeur of the Catholic and orthodox churches.
 - a) **3** As Jesus states in **Matthew 16:18 (CSB)**: "...I will build my church and the gates of hades will not overpower it..."
 - b) **4 Daniel 7:27 (CSB)** The kingdom, dominion, and greatness of the kingdoms under all of heaven will be given to the people, the holy ones of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will serve and obey him.
 - c) **5 Psalms 145:13 (CSB)** Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your rule is for all generations.

- d) So we know from these passages that once Jesus established His church in AD 33, precisely when the first 3000 were baptized in Acts 2, He began His kingdom which endures to this day and will continue until He returns.
 - e) As **Revelation 12:6** says, "The woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared by God..."
 - (1) The woman is a symbol for the church in this chapter, explaining how God provides support and protection to the church during its time in the wilderness until Jesus comes.
2. **6 Older non-Catholic Denominations** – As we try to trace the evolution of the church from its apostolic origins, we see there were other influential groups that were not caught up into Catholicism:
- a) Coptic Christians: Originating in Egypt, the Coptic Church became distinct from the Roman and Byzantine churches after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 over Christological differences. Still, they consider themselves deeply rooted in apostolic tradition and the Scriptures, although there is an element of *high church* to it, such as a pope who oversees the church and a degree of mysticism to their liturgy and tradition.
 - b) Ethiopian Orthodox Church: Similar to the Coptic Church, the Ethiopian Orthodox have ancient Christian roots and consider themselves to adhere closely to the Bible. They have a broader canon that includes books not in the Protestant or Catholic Bibles. Tradition says that the Ethiopian Eunuch of Acts 8 influenced this church.
 - c) Syriac Churches: These include the Church of the East and the Syriac Orthodox Church, both of which have ancient roots and have existed in some form since the early centuries of Christianity.
 - d) The Church of Christ was in the background, probably existing underground during this time of religious persecution. The Catholics call this their golden age, while the children of God call this the dark ages.
3. **7** A shred of light begins to appear for the general populace when the Scriptures are freed from captivity. Even though forces of evil tried taking the **sacred texts captive** under powerful forces, many undertook efforts to bring the sacred texts to the common people.
- a) John Wycliff – John Wycliffe, often called the "Morning Star of the Reformation," was an English theologian, philosopher, church reformer, and Oxford professor who lived from c. 1320s to December 31, 1384. He is best known for his role in pioneering the translation of the Bible into English and for his challenges to the Roman Catholic Church's doctrines and practices.
 - (1) **Bible Translation** – Wycliffe's most enduring contribution is the **translation of the Bible into English from the Latin Vulgate**. This was a revolutionary act since the Church insisted that the Bible be kept in Latin, which only educated clergy could understand.

- Wycliffe believed that all people should have access to the Scriptures, not just the clergy, and his followers, the Lollards, continued to copy and distribute these Bibles throughout England, promoting scriptural literacy among laypeople.
- (2) Wycliffe's ideas inspired the **Lollard movement**, which was named after the mumbled prayers of those who did not know Latin. Lollards challenged the church's teachings and sought to democratize religion by making the Bible available to the common man. They were one of the first groups to undertake systematic Bible distribution and are considered forerunners to the Protestant Reformation.
 - (3) Wycliffe's translation of the Bible into English had a profound impact on Church history and the development of the English language. His translation marked the first time the Bible was made available in the vernacular language of England, rather than Latin.
 - (a) Wycliffe's Bible, completed by him and his followers around 1382, was initially handwritten, as this work predated the invention of the printing press by over half a century. Despite being an unofficial translation and opposed by the Church, it was widely circulated among the people.
 - (b) The Church hierarchy, which held significant power and influence at the time, condemned Wycliffe's translation as heretical.
 - (i) The Council of Constance in 1415 declared Wycliffe a heretic, and his books were banned and burned.
 - (ii) The translation itself was not the only issue; Wycliffe's doctrinal positions, including his denial of transubstantiation and criticism of ecclesiastical corruption, were equally contentious.
 - (iii) Despite all this opposition, he continued to preach and write while under the protection of powerful patrons, which likely shielded him from being tried as a heretic during his lifetime. Wycliffe suffered a stroke in 1384 while saying Mass and died on December 31 of that year.
 - (c) Wycliffe's Bible influenced later translations and is often credited with contributing to the English Reformation. The use of English in religious contexts laid a foundation for future translations, including the Tyndale Bible in the 16th century, which was the first to be printed in English

and relied on original Hebrew and Greek texts rather than the Latin Vulgate.

b) William Tyndale

- (1) William Tyndale was an English scholar and theologian who lived in the 16th century. He was born around 1494 in Gloucestershire, England. Tyndale is best known for translating the Bible into English from its original languages, Hebrew and Greek, so that common people could read it for themselves. Prior to Tyndale's work, the Bible was largely unavailable to the average English person, as it was typically written in Latin and thus restricted to scholars and clergy.
- (2) Tyndale was originally ordained as a Catholic priest, which was the dominant religious institution in England at the time. However, his views increasingly diverged from the Roman Catholic Church, especially on issues like the authority of the Pope and the role of tradition in Christian faith. Inspired by the work of other reformers like Martin Luther, Tyndale became increasingly sympathetic to what would become Protestant beliefs.
- (3) Tyndale's passion for Scripture led him to undertake the risky endeavor of translating the Bible into English, a task that was illegal and considered heretical by the Catholic Church. This act clearly showed his belief in the ultimate authority of the Bible over church traditions or ecclesiastical hierarchies. His commitment to the Bible as the Word of God ultimately cost him his life. Tyndale was eventually charged with heresy. He was arrested in Antwerp (now in Belgium) in 1535 and executed by strangulation and burning at the stake in 1536.
- (4) His work laid the foundation for many subsequent English translations of the Bible, including the King James Version (KJV) published in 1611. Portions of Tyndale's translations are still evident in modern versions of the Bible.
 - (a) Tyndale's work began some years after Luther's, as he embarked on his English translation of the New Testament in the 1520s after Luther had already published his German translation of the Bible. The two reformers shared similar goals of making the scriptures accessible to the common people in their own languages and were both vehemently opposed by the ecclesiastical authorities for their efforts.
 - (b) Luther's work directly influenced Tyndale, who sought to do for the English-speaking population what Luther had done for German speakers. Tyndale sometimes used Luther's Bible and other works as resources, and

his translation of the New Testament was completed and printed in 1526. Tyndale's efforts complemented Luther's work in advocating for the importance of scripture and the principle of "sola scriptura" (scripture alone) in Christian life.

- (5) The significance of Tyndale's contributions cannot be overstated. He helped democratize access to the Scriptures, thereby transforming religious education and contributing to the Reformation. His courage and conviction in making the Bible accessible have had a lasting impact on Christianity and the English-speaking world.
4. Many other courageous souls dared to make the bible more accessible in their language which inspired many to search the scriptures for truth:
- a) Desiderius Erasmus: While not a translator of the Bible into a vernacular language, Erasmus produced a critical Greek text of the New Testament, "Novum Instrumentum omne," published in 1516. His work provided an essential textual basis for later translations, including those by Luther and Tyndale.
 - b) St. Jerome: In the late 4th and early 5th centuries, Jerome translated the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate), which served as the authoritative Scripture text for the Roman Catholic Church for many centuries.
 - c) Jan Hus: A predecessor to the Reformation, Hus was involved in the movement for using the vernacular in religious services in Bohemia during the early 15th century. His followers contributed to translations of the Bible into Czech.
 - d) Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples: In 1530, Lefèvre d'Étaples published a French translation of the Bible, which facilitated the spread of Reformation ideas in France.
 - e) Casiodoro de Reina: He was responsible for the first complete translation of the Bible into Spanish, known as the "Biblia del Oso" (Bear Bible), published in 1569.
 - f) Antonio Brucioli: Brucioli provided an Italian translation of the Bible in the 1530s, aiming to make the Scriptures accessible to the common people of Italy.
 - g) Cyril and Methodius: In the 9th century, these two brothers were the first to translate parts of the Bible into Old Church Slavonic, greatly influencing the religious and cultural development of all Slavic nations.
 - h) Saints Cyril and Methodius: These two Byzantine brothers are celebrated for their missionary work among the Slavic peoples of Great Moravia, during which they developed the Glagolitic alphabet and translated the Bible into Old Church Slavonic in the 9th century.
 - i) Johannes Gutenberg: Although not a translator, Gutenberg revolutionized Bible access by inventing the printing press with movable

type in the 15th century, which allowed for the mass production of the Bible, including Luther's German translation.

B. **Stone-Campbell Movement (Restoration Movement)** – 1793 – 1830

1. **8 Historical Roots**

- a) The Restoration Movement, also known as the Stone-Campbell Movement, began in the early 19th century as part of a broader effort among believers in the United States to restore the Christian Church to its apostolic roots as described in the New Testament. The movement sought to transcend the complex denominational structures and creeds which had evolved over the centuries, aiming to unify all Christians under one scriptural banner.
- b) The movement is generally recognized to have two primary strands that eventually united: the one led by **Barton W. Stone** in Kentucky and the other by **Thomas Campbell and his son Alexander Campbell** in Pennsylvania and Virginia. Both groups operated independently but were driven by the same goals.
- c) **9 Barton W. Stone** was a Presbyterian minister who broke away from formal Presbyterianism following the Cane Ridge Revival in Kentucky in 1801, which was part of the Second Great Awakening. This event was marked by large public gatherings of intense and emotional religious fervor. Stone emphasized the Bible as the only guide for church doctrine and practice and rejected the use of creeds as divisive and non-scriptural.
- d) Around the same time, in 1809, Thomas Campbell, also a Presbyterian minister, had begun to call for a restoration of the ancient faith and practices of the church. He and his son Alexander, who joined him in 1809, promoted the idea of Christian unity through a return to New Testament Christianity. They emphasized the importance of congregational autonomy and believer's baptism by immersion.
- e) In 1832, the two strands officially united with a handshake between Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell, symbolizing the coming together of their followers. They sought to "speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent" and called for unity based on scriptural authority alone. The followers of the movement typically were known as the **Disciples of Christ or Christian Churches**.
- f) The Movement's influence spread rapidly due to the American frontier's expansion and the religious freedom that the young nation offered. It has led to the establishment of several modern Christian denominations, which, despite some subsequent divisions, still share the early Restoration Movement's commitment to Christian unity and biblical authority. **The legacy of this movement continues to impact contemporary Christian thought and practice, especially in the United States.**

2. **10 The Rubric for the Restoration Movement**

- a) Biblical Study: They engaged in intensive study of the New Testament, using it as the blueprint for Christian practice and doctrine. Their approach was to interpret the New Testament in a way that they believed reflected the intentions and practices of the early church. They sought to deduce the organizational structure, worship practices, and doctrinal positions of the early church from a literal and principled interpretation of New Testament writings.
- (1) **2 Timothy 2:15 (CSB)** Be diligent to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth.
 - (2) **2 Timothy 1:13-14 (CSB)** Hold on to the pattern of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. (14) Guard the good deposit through the Holy Spirit who lives in us.
 - (3) **11 1 Timothy 6:3-4 (CSB)** If anyone teaches false doctrine and does not agree with the sound teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the teaching that promotes godliness, (4) he is conceited and understands nothing, but has an unhealthy interest in disputes and arguments over words.
- b) **12** Primitivism: This approach, known as "primitivism," involved an attempt to emulate the faith and practices of the early church, which they considered the golden age of Christianity. This meant stripping away traditions and doctrines that had been developed over the centuries and were not found in the New Testament.
- (1) **Mark 7:8-9 (CSB)** "Abandoning the command of God, you hold on to human tradition." (9) He also said to them, "You have a fine way of invalidating God's command in order to set up your tradition!"
- c) **13** Examination of Church History: They examined church history to critique contemporary practices that they felt diverged from the New Testament model. Their intent was to identify accretions to doctrine and practice that occurred over time and eliminate them to restore the church's original form. They were particularly interested in the writings of the early church fathers and the apostolic tradition as secondary to the authority of Scripture.
- d) Restoration of Ordinances: They emphasized the restoration of New Testament ordinances, particularly baptism and the Lord's Supper, to their original form. For example, they practiced baptism by *immersion* and sought to celebrate the Lord's Supper as a *weekly* communal meal, reflecting the account of Acts and the epistles.
- (1) Many had already been baptizing by sprinkling (*rhantizo*) or pouring (*cheo*), which was not the original form practiced in the New Testament (baptism), which means "to immerse or whelm with water."

- (2) The *type* of the Lord's Supper had been lost for lack of bible study and scriptural discernment.
 - (a) The idea that Jesus referring to Himself as the **Bread of Life** is the *antitype* of the Bread of the Presence in the Holy Place, which was eaten weekly (Leviticus 24:8-9).
 - (b) Likewise, when we eat of the bread and drink of the cup, in commemoration of Jesus, we do so following a weekly pattern (Mat 26:26-28; Acts 20:7).
- e) Sola Scriptura: The principle of "sola scriptura" (Scripture alone) was central to their movement. They rejected creeds and councils as authoritative and instead advocated for the Bible as the sole standard of faith. This often meant a rigorous and literal interpretation of New Testament texts.
 - (1) 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (CSB) All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, (17) so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
- f) Patternism: They adopted a **hermeneutic approach** sometimes called "patternism," which posited that the New Testament contained a clear **14** pattern for church organization and life. This pattern was to be followed as closely as possible, and any deviation from this pattern was seen as a corruption of the original church's purity.
 - (1) **15** Direct command:
 - (a) **Acts 10:42 (CSB)** He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be the judge of the living and the dead.
 - (b) **Acts 2:38 (CSB)** Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
 - (c) **Acts 10:48 (CSB)** He commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay for a few days.
 - (2) **16** Example:
 - (a) The idea of following examples is clearly shown in scripture:
 - (b) **1 Corinthians 10:6-11 (CSB)** **Now these things took place as examples for us**, so that we will not desire evil things as they did. (7) Don't become idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and got up to party. (8) Let us not commit sexual immorality as some of them did, and in a single day twenty-three thousand people died. (9) Let us not test Christ as some of them did and were destroyed by

snakes. (10) And don't grumble as some of them did, and were killed by the destroyer. (11) **These things happened to them as examples**, and they were written for our instruction, on whom the ends of the ages have come.

- (c) **Philippians 3:17 (CSB)** Join in imitating me, brothers and sisters, and pay careful attention to those who live **according to the example** you have in us.

(i) Worded as a command, here is an appeal to follow the examples given in the New Testament, particularly to how to live as a Christian. We find many here:

(ii) Ephesians 6:1-9 – Children, parents, masters and slaves

(iii) Galatians 6:1-10 – carrying one another's burdens

(iv) The examples we listed as to following the Lord's Supper in Acts 20:7

- (d) **1 Peter 2:21 (CSB)** For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, **leaving you an example**, that you should follow in his steps.

- (e) **Acts 2:42 (CSB)** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.

(3) **17 Inference:**

- (a) This requires putting two and two together from various passages in the bible. Knowing Jesus calls Himself the Bread of Life (John 6:35) and knowing from Leviticus 24:8-9 that the Bread of the Presence is a *type*, Jesus being its *antitype* (Col 2:17). The Bread was eaten weekly, which is why in Acts 20:7 we see them taking the supper on the first day of the week.

(i) Just like Jesus said **1 Co 11:25-26**, "...Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." (26) For **as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup**, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

(ii) How frequently is often? Weekly, according to Acts 20:7.

- (b) We don't use musical instruments in our assembly because we infer from 1 Co 11 that the purpose of the assembly is to instruct, convict, and build up by the preaching of the word, not to entertain and appeal to people's emotions.

- (i) **1 Corinthians 14:19 (CSB)** ...yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, **in order to teach others also**, than ten thousand words in a tongue.
- (ii) **1 Corinthians 14:23-25 (CSB)** If, therefore, the whole church assembles together and all are speaking in tongues and people who are outsiders or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your minds? (24) But if all are prophesying and some unbeliever or outsider comes in, he is convicted by all and is called to account by all. (25) The secrets of his heart will be revealed, and as a result he will fall facedown and worship God, proclaiming, "God is really among you."
- (iii) **1 Corinthians 14:26 (CSB)** What then, brothers and sisters? Whenever you come together, each one has a hymn, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Everything is to be done for building up.
- (iv) See also **1 Co 14:5, 12** ...building up...
- (v) **1 Corinthians 14:40 (CSB)** But everything is to be done decently and in order.
- (c) Although the premise of 1 Co 14 is to correct the behavior and motivation of those who were showing off their tongue speaking over the motivation to encourage, build up and instruct the church, we can infer from the principle that our assemblies are not a place to show off, entertain, or promote individuals other than our Lord Jesus Christ.
- g) **18 Debate and Publication:** Open debate and the publication of their ideas were also crucial to their method. Campbell, in particular, was known for his debates with religious leaders of other denominations. He also utilized periodicals like "The Christian Baptist" and "The Millennial Harbinger" to spread his views and engage with the religious ideas of his time.
- h) **Engagement with Contemporary Movements:** They were also in dialogue with other religious reformers across the Atlantic, who were similarly calling for a return to New Testament Christianity. The exchange of ideas between these groups could have informed their understanding of how Christianity was practiced in different contexts, including Europe.
- i) **Rational Interpretation:** The Enlightenment had influenced their approach to Scripture, emphasizing rationalism and a systematic

approach to interpretation. They applied logic and reason in their efforts to understand and apply the teachings of the New Testament.

- j) Unity in Essentials: They believed that the New Testament promoted a fundamental **unity in essential matters of faith** and allowed for **diversity in non-essentials**, which guided their approach to Christian fellowship and the organization of the church.
 - (1) What are the essentials? Doctrines of Life and Death: About salvation, church discipline, church organization and authority, etc.
 - (2) What are the non-essentials? How you organize your assemblies, how you practice your faith and your witnessing, how often you get together as a church, many other types of outreach you may do as a church, etc.
- 3. What does Restoration really mean?
 - a) **19** Is the church something we really need to restore? Doesn't restoration imply that something is defunct or not working well? Is the church in need of fixing? Or are we restoring ourselves to make sure we're in the church of Jesus?
 - b) Also, is the goal to be like the church was in the first century? There are many things we cannot restore, primarily the preliminary work of the Holy Spirit. So when we tell people we want to be like the church we read about in acts we will have problems since there are no miracles today.
 - c) Also, when we are old, we typically don't wish to be an infant anymore, we wish to go back to our 30's or 40's, which was an age of physical, emotional, and mental maturity, all around.
 - d) We don't want to be the infant church, but the maturing church.
 - e) **20** What is the correct theological philosophy behind Restoration?
 - (1) **21** Perceived Departure from Original Teachings: The notion of restoration is premised on the idea that the church had strayed from its New Testament roots through the accretion of traditions, hierarchical structures, and doctrinal innovations that were not found in the apostolic era. Philosophically, the goal was to strip away these layers to reveal and return to the simplicity and authenticity of early Christian worship and organization.
 - (2) Idealized Primitive Model: Restorationism holds an idealized view of the primitive church as a model of Christian unity and practice, based on its portrayal in the New Testament. The "restoration" sought is one that aligns with this ideal rather than suggesting that there was an inherent flaw in the original church.
 - (3) Historical Correction: The movement's leaders believed that human fallibility and historical circumstances had led the church

astray. Thus, the restoration aimed to correct these divergences, which they believed were due to human error over time rather than any deficiency in the original church itself.

- (4) Sola Scriptura: The principle of "sola scriptura" is **fundamental to the Restoration Movement's philosophy**. It holds that the Scriptures contain all that is necessary for salvation and church life, and thus any practice or belief not founded on Scripture should be reformed. "Restoration" is about aligning current practice with scriptural authority.
 - (5) Reform vs. Restoration: While "reform" suggests modifying existing structures to improve them, "restoration" is a more radical approach that seeks to replicate the original form. The philosophical stance here is that the original blueprint provided by the New Testament is the standard, and any deviation from that standard, no matter how ancient or traditional, needs to be corrected.
 - (6) Recovering Apostolic Purity: The movement philosophically asserts that the church's purity and potency are rooted in its adherence to the apostolic teachings as described in the New Testament, which is viewed as the most direct and uncorrupted expression of Christ's teachings and the apostolic witness.
- f) **22** What makes us the New Testament church is not necessarily how we dot our I's and cross our "t's", although that has a place, but if we are fulfilling, the two characteristics, Jesus says will show the world that we are his: that we love one another, and that we are united together.
- (1) **John 13:34-35 (CSB)** "I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. (35) **By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.**"
 - (2) **John 17:21-23 (CSB)** May they all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us, **so that the world may believe you sent me**. (22) I have given them the glory you have given me, so that they may be one as we are one. (23) I am in them and you are in me, so that they may be made completely one, **that the world may know** you have sent me and have loved them as you have loved me.
 - (3) These are the harder ones to fulfill; harder than dotting all our I's and crossing all our "t's".

C. **23** Mantras of the Restoration

1. "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." This mantra reflects the commitment to the Bible as the sole rule of faith and practice, advocating for silence on issues where the Bible does not specifically prescribe a practice or belief.

2. "No creed but Christ, no book but the Bible, no law but love, no name but the divine." This phrase encapsulates the rejection of human-made creeds and sectarian names in favor of a Christian identity based solely on the authority of the Bible and the love encapsulated in its teachings.
3. "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." Often associated with early Christian writers but popularized by the Restoration Movement, this statement emphasizes the importance of unity on core doctrines, freedom in matters of opinion, and love in every interaction.
4. "We are not the only Christians, but Christians only." This statement reflects the movement's desire to be part of the broader Christian community without claiming exclusive rights to salvation or Christian identity.
5. "Call Bible things by Bible names." This slogan encouraged the use of biblical terminology rather than denominational jargon, to prevent division and confusion among believers.
6. "Speak where the Bible speaks, be silent where the Bible is silent." Similar to the first mantra listed, this one also emphasizes a strict adherence to biblical instruction.
7. "Back to the Bible." This was a call for a radical return to the Scriptures as the foundation for teaching and practice, suggesting that Christianity had moved away from its roots.
8. "The Church of Jesus Christ restored." This confident assertion was used to convey the belief that the Restoration Movement had succeeded in re-establishing the original church as instituted by Christ and propagated by the apostles.

D. **24 Leaders:**

1. Thomas Campbell and Alexander Campbell:
 - a) Thomas Campbell, originally a Presbyterian minister from Ireland, migrated to the United States and began advocating for church unity and a return to apostolic Christianity. His "Declaration and Address" laid out the vision for what would become the Restoration Movement.
 - b) His son, Alexander Campbell, became the most influential leader in the movement. He was a prominent preacher, debater, and editor who articulated the movement's principles in publications like "The Christian Baptist" and "The Millennial Harbinger." Alexander's debates and publications were crucial in spreading the movement's ideas.
2. Barton W. Stone: Barton W. Stone was a Presbyterian minister who led a revival at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, which became one of the most famous events of the Second Great Awakening. He later broke with Presbyterianism and worked towards Christian unity based on the Bible alone, which led to the merging of his followers with those of the Campbells.
3. Walter Scott: Walter Scott was an evangelist and educator associated with the Campbell movement who is best known for his evangelistic innovation, the "five-finger exercise," which summarized the gospel into five points. Scott's efforts resulted in significant church growth in the American frontier.

4. "Raccoon" John Smith: An influential evangelist and one of the movement's most colorful characters, John Smith played a significant role in the unity of the Stone and Campbell movements. His common-sense approach and engaging speaking style helped to persuade many to join the Restoration Movement.
5. James O'Kelly: James O'Kelly was an early advocate for reform within the Methodist Episcopal Church, and after his efforts failed, he left to form the Republican Methodist Church, which later simply identified as Christian. His emphasis on biblical authority over denominational governance echoed key Restorationist principles.
6. Elias Smith: Elias Smith was active in New England and espoused the Christian Connexion, which rejected all denominational distinctions. He was known for his radical views on Christian freedom and his opposition to clerical authority.
7. Rice Haggard: Rice Haggard was a minister associated with the Christian Connexion who is credited with suggesting that the movement adopt the name "Christian" alone, emphasizing their identity as followers of Christ without denominational labels.

E. 25 Branches of the Restoration Movement

1. Disciples of Christ (Christian Church): This branch is one of the three major streams that emerged from the movement. It became known for its ecumenical efforts and willingness to engage in cooperative work with other denominations. It has traditionally been more accepting of ecumenical institutions and theological diversity.
2. **26** Churches of Christ: Members of the Churches of Christ sought to maintain a strict adherence to the New Testament patterns and typically opposed any practices not explicitly found in the New Testament. This included a cappella worship, as they did not use instrumental music, and a general avoidance of centralized denominational structures.
3. The Independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ: This fellowship aligns closely with the principles of the Restoration Movement but differs mainly in its acceptance of instrumental music in worship and a less rigid stance on certain organizational issues. They are independent congregations that are not part of a formal denomination and often participate in cooperative parachurch activities.
4. **27** Boston/Crossroads Movement – *Kip McKean*: The International Churches of Christ originated with a discipling movement that began in the 1970s with the Crossroads Church of Christ in Gainesville, Florida, and later shifted its central base to the Boston Church of Christ in the early 1980s. Under the leadership of **Kip McKean**, the Boston Church of Christ implemented an intense discipling program where each member was paired with a more mature Christian to be mentored or discipled. **28** At one point, McKean had declared himself a "world evangelist", even adding himself to the church timeline as a "restorer" of New Testament Christianity. Kip was fired from the organization and after the leadership structure crumbled, many of the branches believe in restored fellowship with the mainstream churches. After Kip McKean stepped down from

29 his leadership role in the ICOC, he continued to be active in Christian ministry and went on to initiate other movements:

- a) International Christian Church (ICC): In 2006, McKean helped to found the International Christian Churches, also known as the "SoldOut Discipling Movement", or "Remnant Group". This group sought to re-emphasize the practice of personal discipleship that was a hallmark of the early ICOC but with what McKean considered improvements to address criticisms and past mistakes.
- b) Sold Out Discipling Movement: The SoldOut Discipling Movement is the term used by McKean and his followers for the network of churches they have established globally. It emphasizes a high level of personal commitment, evangelism, and church planting, aiming to have a presence in every nation with a city of at least 100,000 people by the year 2020.
- c) Remnant Movement: The movement represents a restoration of the one-on-one discipling approach that McKean pioneered with the Boston Movement and later within the ICOC. This discipling involves close mentorship and accountability within the church community. McKean's Remnant Movement continues the practice of aggressive evangelism and rapid multiplication of churches, with a strong focus on creating a global network of committed disciples.

VIII. Cults

A. Definition

1. **2** A cult, in its broadest sense, refers to a social group defined by its unusual religious, spiritual, or philosophical beliefs, or by its common interest in a particular personality, object, or goal. This term is often used pejoratively to refer to groups that are considered to be unorthodox, extremist, or false under the umbrella of what is perceived as mainstream religion or society.
2. **3** Key Features:
 - a) **Authoritarian Leadership**: Cults are typically led by charismatic leaders who demand loyalty and often claim a special, exclusive ministry, revelation, or position of authority given by God.
 - (1) **Catholic church**. Remember how the pope claimed to have a special position given by God?
 - (2) **ICC**. Kip McKean claimed a special position and an exclusive ministry at the height of the ICC: World Evangelist.
 - (3) **Ellen G. White (SDA), Mary Baker Eddy (Christian Science), Charles Russel (JW), Joseph Smith (LDS)**. Not only claimed a special ministry but claimed to have direct revelation from God.
 - b) **Exclusive Doctrine**: They often have a unique doctrine or system of beliefs that deviates significantly from mainstream religious teachings. The leader's interpretations or revelations are seen as the ultimate truth, superseding all other teachings.
 - (1) **7th Day Adventists**

- (2) **Christian Science**
- (3) **Mormons**
- (4) **Jehovah Witnesses**
- (5) **ICC**
- (6) **Catholics**
- (7) **Hardline (Ultra Conservative) Churches of Christ**
- c) **Isolation:** Cults may isolate their members from family, friends, and the broader society. This can be physical isolation, but it can also be psychological, as members are encouraged or required to cut ties with those outside the group.
 - (1) Cutting financial ties, like closing bank accounts and cutting up credit cards.
 - (2) Keeping secrets from family or lying to them.
- d) **Manipulative and High-Control Practices:** Cults often employ manipulative and controlling practices, which can include psychological coercion, thought reform, and the use of fear and guilt to maintain control.
 - (1) **ICC.** *Discipleship* practices
 - (2) **Hardline (Ultra Conservative) Churches of Christ**
 - (3) **Scientology.** Employs high pressure tactics to discourage anyone leaving the group.
- e) **Exploitation:** This can be financial, physical, or emotional, where members are exploited for the benefit of the leader or the group's goals.
 - (1) **ICC.** Members were forced to tithe.
- f) **Exclusivity and Elitism:** Cults often promote a sense of exclusivity and elitism, teaching that they are the only path to salvation, enlightenment, or some other goal, and that all other belief systems are either flawed or outright wrong.
 - (1) **Jehovah Witnesses.** Claim they are the only ones who have the true way.
 - (2) **Catholicism.** At one point they claimed to be the only true church.
 - (3) **Mormons.** Claim to have the ultimate true revelation from Jesus for the Americas.

B. **4 Theological Fallout of Cults**

- 1. Devaluation of the Bible.
- 2. Devaluation of the nature of God.
- 3. Denial of the Trinity.
- 4. Devaluation of the Person of Christ.
- 5. Devaluation of the life and work of Christ.
- 6. Non-biblical teachings about the Holy Spirit.
- 7. Exalted view of human nature.
- 8. False basis of salvation.
- 9. Non-biblical teachings about the afterlife.

10. Demonic activity denied or overemphasized.
- C. **5 Sociological Fallout**
1. Deceptive recruiting practices.
 2. Dynamic and authoritarian leadership.
 3. Elitism.
 4. Cultic vocabulary.
 5. Alienation from family and friends.
 6. Legalism.
 7. Induced fatigue.
 8. Sanction oriented.
 9. Anti-intellectual.
 10. Thought stopping.
 11. No professional clergy.
 12. Doctrine in flux/false prophecies.
 13. Financial exploitation.
 14. Mind control.
- D. **Mormons – 1830**
1. **6** The Mormon Church, officially known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church), was founded in the early 19th century.
 2. **7** The LDS Church was founded by Joseph Smith in the 1820s in upstate New York. Smith claimed to have received visions from God, leading to the discovery and translation of the Book of Mormon, which he published in 1830. The Book of Mormon is considered by Mormons as another testament of Jesus Christ, complementary to the Bible.
 3. The LDS Church believes in the Bible and the Book of Mormon as sacred texts. It emphasizes continuous revelation, the importance of living prophets, and a distinctive set of doctrines, including the pre-mortal existence, three degrees of glory in the afterlife, and the potential for humans to become like God.
 4. The early history of the LDS Church was marked by significant persecution and migration. The Mormons were driven out of several states, culminating in the 1844 assassination of Joseph Smith. Brigham Young, a key follower of Smith, led the Mormons to the Salt Lake Valley in present-day Utah in 1847, where they established a strong and enduring community.
- 5. Why are they considered a cult?**
- a) **8** Some critics of the LDS Church point to its history of polygamy (discontinued by the mainstream LDS Church in 1890), its past racial policies (which were changed in 1978), and its hierarchical structure as reasons for labeling it a cult.
 - b) **Joseph Smith** behaved like a **cult leader**.
 - (1) Claimed to have divine revelation. He stated that he was chosen to restore the true church of Christ on earth, a claim that set him apart from mainstream Christianity.
 - (2) Smith introduced the Book of Mormon, which he claimed to have translated from golden plates revealed to him by an angel.

- No one but him and two others claimed to have seen the actual golden plates. Control of information is typical of cults.
- (3) Smith held absolute authority in the early LDS Church and was seen as a prophet, seer, and revelator. His charismatic leadership and the devotion of his followers often mirror characteristics seen in cult dynamics.
 - (4) Smith introduced doctrines and practices that were unconventional and controversial, such as polygamy and secret temple rites, typical of cults.
 - (5) Allegations and controversies surrounding Smith's personal life, including his practice of polygamy and his involvement in legal and financial issues, contributed to a perception of him as a cult leader.
- c) **9 Secretive and controversial practices** – The theological innovations introduced by Smith, such as the nature of God, pre-mortal existence, and the potential for humans to become gods, are significantly different from traditional Christian doctrines, leading some to view him as promoting a new religion rather than reforming Christianity.
- (1) The Book of Mormon as Scripture: The LDS Church considers the Book of Mormon to be another testament of Jesus Christ, alongside the Bible. This book, believed to be translated by Joseph Smith from golden plates, is not recognized as scripture in other Christian traditions.
 - (2) Additional Sacred Texts: Besides the Book of Mormon, the LDS Church also regards other writings as scripture, including the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. These texts include revelations to Joseph Smith and other church leaders, which are not part of the traditional Christian biblical canon.
 - (a) **Galatians 1:8 (CSB)** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, a curse be on him!
 - (i) This verse seems to be written especially for Mormons and Muslims! Two religions that started by a supposed revelation from an angel!
 - (b) **Revelation 22:18-19 (CSB)** I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. (19) And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city, which are written about in this book.

- (c) **Jude 1:3 (CSB)** I found it necessary to write, appealing to you to contend for the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all.
 - (d) These passages insinuate the closing of the canon of Scripture, meaning no additional scripture is to be added beyond the Bible.
- (3) Continuing Revelation and Prophets: Mormonism holds that God continues to reveal His will to living prophets, with the president of the LDS Church considered a prophet, seer, and revelator. They also claim apostolic succession. This concept of ongoing revelation is distinct from the belief in many Christian denominations that divine revelation concluded with the New Testament.
 - (a) **Hebrews 1:2 (CSB)** In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son. God has appointed him heir of all things and made the universe through him.
 - (b) **Acts 1:21-22 (CSB)** “Therefore, from among the men who have accompanied us during the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us — (22) beginning from the baptism of John until the day he was taken up from us — from among these, it is necessary that one become a witness with us of his resurrection.”
 - (c) **Revelation 2:2 (CSB)** I know your works, your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot tolerate evil people. You have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and you have found them to be liars.
 - (i) None today can perform the signs of an apostle
 - (ii) There is no apostolic succession. Only one person was chosen to replace Judas who abandoned his post (Acts 1:15-26).
 - (d) We can deduce this means that revelation concluded with Jesus Christ and the New Testament.
- (4) Pre-Mortal Existence: The LDS Church teaches that humans existed as spirits before being born into the world. This belief in a pre-mortal life is not found in traditional Christian doctrine.
 - (a) 1 Corinthians 15:46-47 speaks of the natural body coming before the spiritual.
 - (b) **1 Corinthians 15:46-47 (CSB)** However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, then the spiritual. (47) The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.
 - (c) This passage is understood to mean that human existence begins at earthly birth.

- (5) Exaltation and Becoming Like God: Mormons believe in the potential for humans to achieve exaltation in the celestial kingdom and become like God. This concept is not in alignment with mainstream Christian teachings regarding the nature of salvation and the afterlife.
- (a) **Isaiah 43:10 (CSB)** No god was formed before me, and there will be none after me.
 - (b) **Isaiah 44:6 (CSB)** I am the first and I am the last. There is no God but me.
 - (c) **Deuteronomy 4:35 (CSB)** You were shown these things so that you would know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him.
 - (d) This passage points out that there is only one God and no human can become a god.
- (6) **10 Temple Practices**: The LDS Church conducts special ceremonies in their temples, such as baptisms for the dead, celestial marriages, and endowment ceremonies. These practices are unique to Mormonism and are not found in traditional Christian scriptures or practices.
- (a) **Baptized for the dead?**
 - (i) A misinterpretation of **1 Corinthians 15:29 (CSB)**:
 - (ii) Otherwise what will they do who are being baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, then why are people baptized for them?
 - (iii) Better contextual translation from GWT: However, people are baptized because the dead will come back to life. What will they do? If the dead can't come back to life, why do people get baptized as if they can come back to life?
 - (iv) Instead of using "baptism *for* the dead" God's Word translators used "baptism *because of* (hyper) the dead". This makes contextual sense and is in keeping with everything else Paul talks about regarding salvation and baptism.
 - (v) **Hebrews 9:27 (CSB)** And just as it is appointed for people to die once — and after this, judgment...
 - (vi) Spiritual decisions are made during one's lifetime and not posthumously.
 - (b) **Celestial marriages?**
 - (i) Celestial marriage refers to a marriage ceremony performed in an LDS Temple, which members believe seals the marriage for time

and all eternity, not just "until death do you part."

- (ii) **Matthew 22:29-30 (CSB)** "You are mistaken, because you don't know the Scriptures or the power of God. (30) For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven."
- (iii) Marriage only occurs in this plane of existence. No marriage in heaven because we will be like the angels.

(c) Endowment ceremonies?

- (i) Very exclusive, elaborate, and secret ceremony guaranteeing qualified members a seat in the celestial kingdom. Only conducted in temples, it recreates the journey of man, and participants make a series of covenants. There are washings, anointings, and a special undergarment worn afterward to remind you of the ceremony.
 - (a) **Ephesians 2:8-9 (CSB)** For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift — (9) not from works, so that no one can boast.
 - (b) No human can guarantee you a place in heaven, only Jesus Christ who came from Heaven.
 - (c) Heaven is promised to anyone who is faithful unto death, not just an alite group.
 - (d) **John 3:16 (CSB)** For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.
 - (e) **Mark 7:8-9 (CSB)** Abandoning the command of God, you hold on to human tradition." 9 He also said to them, "You have a fine way of invalidating God's command in order to set up your tradition!
 - (f) Traditions of men only serve to distract us from the truth of God's Word.

E. **Church of Christ Scientist** – 1879

1. **11** The Church of Christ, Scientist, also known as Christian Science, was founded in the late 19th century by Mary Baker Eddy. It is not Christian, and there is no science.
2. **12** Mary Baker Eddy founded the Church of Christ, Scientist in 1879. She experienced a significant healing event in 1866, which she interpreted as a moment of spiritual revelation, leading her to study the Bible intensively.
3. In 1875, Mary Baker Eddy published this book, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" which, along with the Bible, is considered a central text in Christian Science. The book interprets the Bible and lays out the principles of Christian Science.
4. Christian Science views Jesus' healing works not as miracles in a supernatural sense but as applications of divine law, which they believe can be understood and practiced by all.
5. The church grew rapidly in the early 20th century, establishing branches worldwide. Its headquarters are in Boston, Massachusetts, with the famous Christian Science Publishing Society and the Christian Science Monitor newspaper.
6. **Why are they considered a cult?**
 - a) **13** Christian Science diverges significantly from traditional Christian doctrine, particularly in its interpretation of Jesus' healings, the nature of reality, and the rejection of traditional medicine in favor of prayer-based healing.
 - b) The central role and influence Mary Baker Eddy has is typical of a cult leader.
 - (1) Eddy is seen not just as a founder but as a key interpreter of Scripture. Her writings hold a quasi-scriptural authority.
 - (2) Her understanding of the Bible is the ultimate truth, and this exclusivity can be seen as a cult-like characteristic. Eddy claimed that her teachings revealed the true nature of Christianity and healing, which she believed had been lost since the early Christian church. This exclusivity, claiming a unique and superior understanding of religious truth, is often a trait attributed to cult leaders.
 - (3) She reinterpreted traditional Christian concepts such as the Trinity, Jesus' healings, and the nature of reality. This establishment of a new religious paradigm, centered around her interpretations and teachings, can be seen as a hallmark of a cult leader.
 - (4) Within the Church of Christ, Scientist, Eddy is revered in a way that goes beyond typical respect for religious founders. Her work and life are studied extensively, and her role as the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science is a central aspect of the church's identity.

- (5) Eddy established the Christian Science Publishing Society, which controlled the publication of her works and the church's teachings. This control over information dissemination is another feature often associated with cults.
- c) **14 Secretive and controversial practices**
- d) **The church's stance against traditional medical treatment**, advocating healing through prayer alone, has been a subject of controversy and criticism, particularly in cases involving the health and welfare of children.
 - (1) The reliance on prayer for healing, sometimes to the exclusion of medical care, has led to public criticism and legal challenges. Such controversial practices can contribute to the perception of a cult-like environment.
 - (2) **James 5:14-15** encourages the sick to call the elders of the church for prayer and anointing with oil, which is often interpreted as a recognition of both spiritual and practical (medical) care.
 - (3) The mainstream Christian interpretation usually acknowledges the role of faith and prayer in healing but also recognizes and often encourages the use of medical science and treatment.
- e) **Mary Baker Eddy taught that sin, sickness, and death are illusions** that can be overcome by understanding one's divine nature.
 - (1) **Romans 6:23** states, "For the wages of sin is death," and **1 John 1:8** notes, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."
 - (2) Traditional Christianity teaches that sin and its consequences (including death) are real and affect humanity, contrasting the Christian Science view of them as mere illusions.
- f) Christian Science Belief does not adhere to the traditional doctrine of deity (the Trinity), **viewing God more as a divine principle than a personal being**.
 - (1) Scriptural Reference: **Exodus 34:6-7 (CSB)** The LORD — the LORD is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth, (7) maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But he will not leave the guilty unpunished, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation.
 - (2) Explanation: This description of God's character directly contrasts with the idea of God as merely an impersonal principle. The characteristics listed in Exodus 34:6-7 are inherently personal and relational, aligning with the broader biblical portrayal of God as a being who engages intimately and personally with His creation.

- g) In Christian Science belief **Jesus is seen as a spiritual healer and moral teacher but not necessarily divine** in the same sense as traditional Christian belief.
 - (1) Scriptural Reference: **John 1:1,14** states that “the Word was God” and “the Word became flesh,” affirming the deity of Christ.
 - (2) Explanation: Traditional Christian doctrine holds that Jesus is both fully God and fully man, which differs from the Christian Science view of Jesus.
- h) Christian Science Belief **rejects the idea of Jesus’ atonement as a substitute for human sin**.
 - (1) Scriptural Reference:
 - (a) **1 Peter 2:24** states that “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree,” indicating a substitutionary atonement.
 - (b) **2 Corinthians 5:21 (CSB)** He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
 - (c) **Galatians 3:13 (CSB)** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.
 - (2) Explanation: Traditional Christianity teaches that Jesus’ death was a vicarious sacrifice for humanity’s sins, a concept not accepted in Christian Science theology.

F. **Jehovah’s Witnesses** – 1886

1. **3** Jehovah's Witnesses originated in the late 19th century in the United States. The movement was formed from a group known as **Bible Students**, led by **Charles Taze Russell**. Russell was born on February 16, 1852, and raised in a Presbyterian family. Dissatisfied with traditional Christian doctrines, particularly the concept of eternal damnation, he sought to understand the Bible differently.
2. **4** In 1870, at the age of 18, Russell formed a Bible study group in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This group scrutinized the interpretations and doctrines of mainstream Christianity, **focusing heavily on an analysis of the Bible and the end times**. Russell and his followers were especially interested in biblical chronology and prophecies, leading to **unique interpretations** about the second coming of Christ and the end times.
3. Russell began publishing a monthly religious journal, "**Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence**," in 1879. This publication, which later became "**The Watchtower**," played a crucial role in disseminating his views. The Bible Students expanded rapidly in the following decades, with Russell's teachings gaining a considerable following.
4. **5** After Russell's death in 1916, **Joseph Franklin Rutherford** took over the leadership of the Bible Students. Rutherford made **significant changes** to the group's doctrines and organizational structure. In 1931, under Rutherford's leadership, the group adopted the name "**Jehovah's Witnesses**" to distinguish

themselves from other Bible Student groups and to emphasize their belief in actively witnessing about Jehovah, the name they use for God.

5. **6 Why are they viewed as a cult?**

- a) Authoritarian Leadership: Jehovah's Witnesses have a centralized organizational structure with the Governing Body at the top, which interprets the Bible and sets doctrines. This centralized authority and the emphasis on strict adherence to the interpretations and directives from the Governing Body can be seen as cult-like by some.
- b) Exclusive Belief System: Jehovah's Witnesses believe they are the only true Christian religion and that salvation is limited to their members. This exclusivity can be seen as a hallmark of a cult.
- c) High Level of Control over Members' Lives: The organization dictates many aspects of members' lives, including their dress, grooming, entertainment choices, and associations with non-members. This level of control can be perceived as cult-like.
- d) Information Control: Jehovah's Witnesses are often discouraged from reading material that is critical of the organization, including news, books, or websites that are not produced by the Watchtower Society. This can be seen as a way to control information and prevent members from encountering viewpoints that might lead them to question their beliefs.
- e) Discouragement of Higher Education: Higher education is often discouraged within the organization, with the rationale being that it could expose members to worldly influences and ideas that conflict with their beliefs. This can limit members' exposure to different perspectives and potentially make it more challenging for them to leave and establish independent lives.
- f) End Times Focus: The emphasis on apocalyptic teachings, including the belief in an imminent Armageddon, is a characteristic often associated with cults. Jehovah's Witnesses have a history of making specific predictions about the end times that did not come to pass.
- g) Separation from Society: Members are often encouraged to separate themselves from the rest of society, including limiting their social interactions to within the faith. This separation can contribute to a cult-like perception.
- h) Intense Proselytization Efforts: The rigorous and systematic approach to evangelism, including door-to-door preaching, can be viewed as another cult-like characteristic. Though we may admire them for that, there is little value to the person who proselytizes by coercion.

6. **7 Why is Charles T Russel considered a cult leader? – Russelism**

- a) Authoritarian Leadership: Russell founded the *Bible Student* movement and exerted significant control over its teachings and practices. His authoritarian style and the emphasis on his interpretations of the Bible

as the definitive truth are characteristics that some associate with cult leaders.

- b) Unorthodox Doctrines: Russell introduced doctrines that were significantly different from mainstream Christian beliefs, such as denying the Trinity, the immortality of the soul, and eternal damnation. Such radical departures from traditional Christian theology can lead to perceptions of cultism.
- c) Predictions of the End Times: Russell made specific predictions about the end of the world and the second coming of Christ, including dates when these events were expected to occur. When these predictions failed to materialize, it led to disillusionment among some followers and reinforced the notion of him being a cult leader to critics.
- d) Exclusive Claim to Truth: Russell and his movement claimed a unique understanding of the Bible and positioned themselves as the only true Christians. This exclusivity is often a marker used by critics to label a group as a cult.
- e) Controversial Practices: Under Russell's leadership, the Bible Student movement adopted practices such as the refusal to celebrate birthdays and Christmas, which further separated them from mainstream Christianity and society. Such practices can contribute to perceptions of cultism.
- f) Control Over Followers: Russell's teachings and the organizational structure he established exerted considerable control over the lives of his followers. This level of control over personal and religious life is often cited as a characteristic of cults.

7. **8 Why is Joseph Franklin Rutherford considered a cult leader? – Rutherfordism**

- a) Authoritarian Leadership Style: Rutherford was known for his dictatorial leadership style. He centralized organizational control and made significant doctrinal changes, often without broad consensus. This kind of authoritarian control over a religious group is a trait commonly associated with cult leaders.
- b) Significant Doctrinal Changes: Rutherford introduced numerous doctrinal shifts that moved the group further away from mainstream Christianity. For instance, he developed the belief that Jesus' second coming occurred *invisibly* in 1914, a doctrine that was crucial to the identity of Jehovah's Witnesses.
- c) Restructuring the Organization: He reorganized the movement's structure, consolidating power and reducing the influence of local congregational elders. This restructuring allowed for tighter control from the central organization, a feature often noted in groups labeled as cults.
- d) Promotion of Exclusive Truth: Rutherford emphasized that salvation was only possible through his organization, fostering an us-versus-them mentality common in groups labeled as cults. This exclusivity, coupled

- with a strong emphasis on organizational loyalty, contributed to the perception of a cult-like atmosphere.
- e) Intensified End Times Focus: Rutherford amplified the movement's focus on apocalyptic teachings, including the imminent expectation of Armageddon. The intense focus on an impending end of the world is a characteristic often associated with cults.
 - f) Enforcement of Strict Codes of Conduct: Under Rutherford, the movement began enforcing strict moral and behavioral codes among its members. This level of control over personal lives is often seen as a hallmark of cult-like organizations.
 - g) Ostracism and Persecution of their own: Rutherford ostracized members who did not adhere to the new doctrines or who questioned his authority, leading to public shunning within the organization. Such practices of ostracism are frequently cited in discussions of cult-like behavior.
 - h) Persecution and Martyrdom Narrative: Rutherford's leadership during times of legal challenges and persecution, especially during World War II, helped to forge a narrative of martyrdom and persecution among Jehovah's Witnesses, reinforcing group solidarity and loyalty, which some interpret as cult-like dynamics.
8. **9 Secretive Practices and Teachings that are cultish.**
- a) Denial of the Trinity: Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe Jesus is part of the godhead.
 - (1) Scriptural Reference: Their New World Translation has **John 1:1** reading, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god".
 - (2) They believe Jesus is a lesser God, a God with a lowercase "g".
 - (3) The Greek structure, particularly the absence of the definite article (the) before "θεός" (God) in the second clause, is typically understood as a qualitative statement about the nature or essence of the Word, affirming its full deity.
 - (4) They believe Jesus is God's first Creation, citing Col 1:15.
 - (5) They believe Jesus was the archangel Micheal. They believe Michael is the pre-human Jesus.
 - (6) **Col 1:15**, which reads, "He is the image of the invisible God, the *firstborn* over all creation," is not saying Jesus was God's first creation. Instead, it is affirming His supremacy and preeminence over all creation. Firstborn in the Greek is *prototokos*, a compound word that can be rendered as *first to be produced*, as in *prototype*. This interpretation is supported by the broader context of Colossians 1, especially verses 16-17, which state that all things were created through Him and for Him, and He is before all things.

- (7) So if he is before all things and all things were created by Him, how can he be a creation?
- b) Jesus' Resurrection: Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus was resurrected, but not with his physical body. They teach that he was raised as a spirit being and then returned to heaven.
- (1) **1 Peter 3:18**: "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit." Jehovah's Witnesses interpret this verse to mean that Jesus was resurrected as a spirit creature rather than in his physical body.
 - (2) **1 Corinthians 15:45**: "So it is written: 'The first man Adam became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit." They argue that this verse indicates that Jesus, referred to as the last Adam, was raised as a spirit being, emphasizing the contrast between the physical nature of Adam and the spiritual nature of the resurrected Christ.
 - (3) Luke 24:31, 36-43: In these verses, where Jesus appears to his disciples after his resurrection and eats with them, Jehovah's Witnesses argue that Jesus materialized temporary physical bodies for these appearances, as opposed to having been resurrected with his original physical body.
 - (4) Such interpretations hold hostage the deeper meaning of those verses. They are not well thought out. They are superficial and arbitrary. The scriptures provide plenty of evidence to the contrary.
 - (5) **Luke 24:39**: "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." This verse is commonly cited to emphasize that Jesus appeared to his disciples in a physical body after his resurrection, directly addressing the idea that a spirit does not have a physical form.
 - (6) **John 20:27**: "Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.'" This account of Jesus inviting Thomas to touch his wounds is often used to argue that Jesus had a physical body after his resurrection.
 - (7) **Acts 2:31-32**: "He foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses." This verse is interpreted by many to mean that Jesus' physical body was resurrected, as it did not undergo decay.

- c) 144,000 Going to Heaven: They believe that exactly 144,000 faithful Christians go to heaven to rule with Christ, based on their interpretation of Revelation 14:1-3.
- (1) **Revelation 7:9-10**: "After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" This passage, which immediately follows the mention of the 144,000, is interpreted by many Christians as describing a separate, uncountable group of people who are also in heaven.
 - (2) **Hebrews 12:22-23**: "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect." This passage is sometimes cited as evidence of a heavenly hope for all believers, not just a select group.
 - (3) Identity of the 144,000: In **Revelation 7:4-8**, the 144,000 are described as being from the 12 tribes of Israel, which has led to different interpretations:
 - (a) Literal Israel: Some interpret this as literal ethnic Israelites who are specially chosen in the end times.
 - (b) Spiritual Israel: Many scholars and theologians see this as a reference to the entire people of God, including both Jews and Gentiles, representing the complete church or the spiritual Israel.
 - (4) Symbolic of a Larger Reality: The number 144,000 is often interpreted symbolically rather than literally. In biblical numerology, 12 is a significant number (representing the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles), and 1,000 signifies a large, complete quantity. Therefore, 144,000 (12 x 12 x 1,000) can symbolize a **complete, perfect number of God's people**.
- d) Jesus' Invisible Return in 1914: They believe that Jesus returned invisibly in 1914, a belief based on their interpretation of Bible chronology and Daniel 4:16.
- (1) The foundation of the 1914 doctrine is derived from an interpretation of the prophecy found in the Book of Daniel, particularly Daniel 4:16-17.
 - (a) This prophecy mentions a period of "seven times." Jehovah's Witnesses interpret these "seven times" as symbolic for 2,520 years, using the principle of a day for

- a year found in other biblical passages (such as Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34).
- (b) The prophecy has nothing to do with the Messiah's Return. It is about Nebuchadnezzar's punishment for not acknowledging God as Supreme.
 - (c) Start Date – Destruction of Jerusalem: They believe that this prophetic period began in 607 BCE, a date they claim marks the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Most historians and archaeologists, however, date the destruction of Jerusalem to 586 or 587 BCE.
 - (d) Calculation to 1914: Adding 2,520 years to 607 BCE brings us to 1914 CE. Jehovah's Witnesses interpret this year as the time when Jesus was installed as God's heavenly king, marking his "invisible" second coming and the beginning of the "last days" of this world system.
- (2) Originally, the Bible Student movement, from which Jehovah's Witnesses emerged, expected visible, earthly events to occur in 1914, including the rapture of the saints and the destruction of earthly kingdoms. When these events did not materialize, the interpretation was adjusted to view Jesus' return as an invisible, heavenly event.
- e) Annihilationism: Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in eternal suffering in hell but in annihilation for the wicked. They cite certain scriptures to support their interpretation:
- (1) Ecclesiastes 9:5: "For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten." They interpret this verse to mean that the dead are in a state of non-existence, with no consciousness or feeling.
 - (2) Psalms 37:20: "But the wicked will perish; the enemies of the Lord are like the glory of the pastures; they vanish—like smoke they vanish away." This is seen as indicating that the wicked will be completely destroyed, not eternally tormented.
 - (3) Matthew 10:28: "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." Jehovah's Witnesses understand the term "destroy" in this verse as indicating total extinction rather than eternal suffering.
 - (4) These are not adequately interpreted nor is the etymology adequately used to provide adequate scriptural context. The following scriptures provide additional context for proper exegesis:

- (5) Matthew 25:46: "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." This verse is commonly interpreted to mean that just as eternal life is everlasting, so too is the punishment for the wicked.
- (6) Revelation 14:11: "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name." This passage suggests ongoing, conscious torment rather than complete annihilation.
- (7) Mark 9:48: "Where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched." Jesus' words here are interpreted to imply an unending state of suffering, as the imagery of an undying worm and unquenchable fire signifies ongoing torment.
- (8) Revelation 20:10: "And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." This passage is interpreted to mean ongoing, eternal torment.
- (9) We don't have to get into the Greek to gain some insight into the fact that eternal destruction doesn't mean annihilation.

G. **7th Day Adventists** – SDA

1. **Why is William Miller considered a cult leader?** – Millerites

- a) End Times Predictions: Miller predicted that the Second Coming of Christ would occur between 1843 and 1844, a claim that attracted a significant following. The specific prediction of the world's end is a trait often associated with cult leaders.
- b) Millennialism: His focus on millennialism, which is the belief in a coming transformation of society, with Christ reigning for a thousand years, is a theme commonly found in groups labeled as cults.
- c) Authoritarian Interpretation of Scripture: Miller's method of biblical interpretation, which led him to his end-times prediction, was seen by many as unconventional and highly individualistic. Cult leaders often claim unique or authoritative interpretation of religious texts.
- d) Formation of a Distinct Group: The Millerite movement, formed around his teachings, was a distinct group separated from mainstream Christian denominations. This separateness can sometimes contribute to perceptions of a cult.
- e) Disillusionment and Fragmentation after Predictions Failed: The "Great Disappointment" of 1844, when Jesus did not return as Miller had predicted, led to disillusionment among his followers. The handling of failed prophecies and the subsequent fragmentation and reorganization of the group are dynamics often observed in cults.

- f) Charismatic Leadership: Miller's personal charisma and persuasive preaching attracted a large, devoted following. Charismatic leadership is a common feature in groups described as cults.

2. **Why is Ellen G. White considered a cult leader?**

- a) Prophetic Claims: White claimed to have received over 2,000 visions and dreams from God, which she said were revelations for the guidance and edification of the church. In religious groups often labeled as cults, leaders typically claim to have special, direct revelation or communication with the divine.
- b) Authoritative Writings: Her writings are held in high esteem within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, often considered an authoritative source of theological guidance and instruction. This level of authority given to a leader's writings can be perceived as a trait of cultic leadership.
- c) Unique Doctrinal Interpretations: White introduced several unique doctrines, including the "Investigative Judgment," which asserts that there is a heavenly review of earthly lives starting in 1844. Such distinctive doctrines, especially when they diverge significantly from mainstream Christianity, can contribute to perceptions of a cult.
- d) End Times Emphasis: The Seventh-day Adventist Church, influenced by White's teachings, has a strong focus on the Second Coming of Christ and the end times. A heightened focus on apocalyptic events is a characteristic often associated with cults.
- e) Lifestyle and Dietary Rules: White advocated for specific health and dietary guidelines, including vegetarianism and the avoidance of caffeine and alcohol. The imposition of strict lifestyle rules is a feature that some associate with cultic groups.
- f) Control and Authority within the Church: White's role in the formation and development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church gave her significant control and authority within the movement. Cult leaders are often characterized by their controlling influence over their followers.
- g) Exclusivity and Separatism: Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a recognized Christian denomination, its distinct beliefs and practices, as well as a sense of being a "remnant" with a special mission, can sometimes be viewed as separatist or exclusive, traits often attributed to cults.

3. **Secretive Practices and Teachings?**

- a) End Times Theology and the Investigative Judgment: The doctrine of the Investigative Judgment, which teaches that Christ began a process of judging the dead in 1844 to decide who will receive salvation, is unique to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This complex and distinct theological concept can be perceived as esoteric or secretive by those not familiar with it.
- b) Ellen G. White's Writings: As a co-founder and a prophetess of the church, Ellen G. White's extensive writings are highly regarded within

the Adventist community. Some might view the emphasis on her prophetic visions and writings as secretive or exclusive, especially when these writings are seen as holding a quasi-canonical status.

- c) Health and Dietary Laws: The church advocates a specific health message that includes adherence to a vegetarian diet, abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine. These practices, based on the teachings of Ellen G. White, might seem unusual or restrictive to outsiders.
- d) Sabbath Observance: Seventh-day Adventists strictly observe the Sabbath on Saturday, abstaining from secular work and activities from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday. This strict observance can be perceived as a form of separatism from mainstream society.
- e) Emphasis on Eschatology: The church's strong focus on eschatology (the study of end times) and apocalyptic events, as outlined in the books of Daniel and Revelation, can be viewed by some as an obsession with secretive or cryptic biblical prophecies.
- f) Educational and Healthcare Institutions: The church runs a worldwide network of educational and healthcare institutions, which some might mistakenly perceive as being secretive or insular. However, these institutions are generally open to the public and not exclusive to church members.
- g) Remnant Theology: The belief in being a "remnant" church with a special end-time message to the world can be seen as fostering an exclusive mindset, which is sometimes associated with cults.

H. **10 Moonies (Unification Church)** – The Unification Church, commonly known as the "Moonies," was founded by Sun Myung Moon in South Korea in the early 1950s. The origins of this religious movement are closely tied to the life and teachings of Moon himself.

1. Early Life of Sun Myung Moon: Born in 1920 in what is now North Korea, Moon claimed he had a vision of Jesus Christ when he was 16, during which Jesus asked him to complete the task of establishing God's kingdom on Earth and bringing peace to the world.
2. Formation of the Unification Church: In 1954, Moon formally established the **Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity** in Seoul, South Korea. This organization later came to be known as the **Unification Church**.
3. Teachings and Beliefs: The Unification Church's teachings, known as **the Divine Principle**, blend Christian theology with unique elements. These include the belief that Jesus' mission was incomplete due to his crucifixion and that Moon was the "Second Coming" tasked with completing this mission. The church also emphasizes the importance of the family unit and has been well-known for its mass wedding ceremonies.
4. Expansion and Controversy: In the 1960s and 1970s, the church expanded significantly, especially in the United States. However, it was also a period of controversy, with allegations of brainwashing and deceptive recruitment.

practices. The church's business enterprises and political activities further attracted scrutiny and criticism.

5. Legacy and Present Day: After Moon's death in 2012, his wife, Hak Ja Han, took over the leadership of the church. The Unification Church has seen various splits and the establishment of breakaway groups. It remains active but is far less prominent than in its heyday in the 1970s and 1980s.
6. **11 Why is Sun Myung Moon considered a cult leader?**
 - a) Charismatic Leadership: Moon exhibited a charismatic leadership style, positioning himself as a messianic figure with a divine mission. This kind of authoritative, central figure is often a characteristic of groups labeled as cults.
 - b) Exclusive Truth Claims: The Unification Church, under Moon, claimed exclusive access to spiritual truth. The church's teachings, known as the Divine Principle, presented Moon as the Messiah and the only one capable of completing Jesus Christ's mission. Such exclusive truth claims are typical of groups often labeled as cults.
 - c) Controversial Beliefs and Practices: The church's beliefs, particularly regarding Moon's role as the Messiah and its mass wedding ceremonies, were viewed as unconventional and controversial. The practice of arranging marriages for thousands of couples, often strangers to each other, was particularly noted for its deviation from mainstream social and religious norms.
 - d) Accusations of Brainwashing and Mind Control: The Unification Church faced allegations of using brainwashing and mind control techniques in its recruitment and retention of members. Former members and critics accused the church of manipulating members' thoughts and behaviors, a common accusation leveled against cults.
 - e) Isolation and Control: Reports of isolating members from their families and controlling various aspects of their lives, including personal relationships and financial decisions, contributed to the cult label. Such control over members' lives is a hallmark of cultic groups.
 - f) Economic Exploitation: The church's aggressive fundraising practices, often involving long hours of solicitation with minimal personal benefit to the members, were seen as exploitative. Economic exploitation is another characteristic often associated with cults.
 - g) Legal and Social Controversies: Moon's conviction for tax fraud in the United States in the 1980s and other legal issues, along with the church's political activities, raised questions about the organization's motives and methods.
7. **12 What are some of their practices and teachings that are considered cultish?**
 - a) Mass Wedding Ceremonies: One of the most publicized and distinctive practices of the Unification Church is the mass wedding or 'Blessing Ceremony.' In these events, thousands of couples are married simultaneously, often with Sun Myung Moon personally officiating.

Many of these couples are matched by church leaders, sometimes only meeting days before their wedding. This practice challenges conventional norms regarding marriage and personal choice.

- b) **13 Divine Principle and Unique Theological Views:** The church's core scripture, **the Divine Principle**, offers an interpretation of biblical events that is unique to the Unification Church. Key beliefs include the view that **Jesus' mission was incomplete** due to his crucifixion and that Sun Myung Moon is the Messiah who completes this mission. This **exclusivist** claim to spiritual truth is often a feature associated with cults.
- (1) The belief that Jesus' work on the cross was complete is a foundational doctrine in Christian theology, reflecting the concept of Jesus' sacrificial death as sufficient for the salvation of humanity.
 - (2) **John 19:30:** "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." This statement from Jesus on the cross is often interpreted as His declaration that His redemptive work was completed.
 - (3) **Hebrews 10:12-14:** "But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified." This passage emphasizes the sufficiency and completeness of Christ's sacrifice.
 - (4) **Romans 6:10:** "For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God." This verse underscores the finality of Jesus' sacrifice for sin.
- c) **Spiritual Indemnity:** The concept of 'indemnity' in the church's teachings involves members undergoing suffering or **making sacrifices to atone for humanity's historical sins**. This can sometimes translate into demanding work schedules, extensive fundraising activities, and a general emphasis on sacrificing personal comfort for the sake of spiritual goals.
- (1) The doctrine that human works or sacrifices cannot atone for humanity's sins is a central tenet of Christian theology.
 - (2) **Titus 3:5:** "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit." This verse emphasizes that salvation is due to God's mercy, not human righteousness or works.
 - (3) **Galatians 2:16:** "Know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the

law no one will be justified." This passage clearly distinguishes between faith in Christ and works of the law for justification.

- (4) **Colossians 2:13-14:** "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." This passage speaks to the completeness of forgiveness through Jesus' work on the cross.

- I. **Branch Davidians** –The Branch Davidians originated as a splinter group from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Their history is marked by several key phases and figures:
1. The Davidian Seventh-day Adventists (1930s): The roots of the Branch Davidians trace back to the Davidian movement, founded by Victor Houteff in the 1930s. Houteff was a Bulgarian immigrant and a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He claimed to have a new interpretation of the Bible, particularly the Book of Revelation, and wrote a tract entitled "The Shepherd's Rod," which outlined his doctrines. This led to a schism, and Houteff's followers became known as the Davidian Seventh-day Adventists.
 2. Establishment of Mount Carmel Center (Near Waco, Texas): Houteff and his followers established the Mount Carmel Center near Waco, Texas, in 1935. This served as the headquarters for the Davidian movement.
 3. Transition to Branch Davidians (1950s): After Victor Houteff's death in 1955, there was a power struggle within the Davidian community. Eventually, Benjamin Roden took leadership and formed an offshoot group, calling it the Branch Davidian Seventh-day Adventists, or simply the Branch Davidians. Roden introduced additional prophetic interpretations and emphasized the imminent return of Jesus Christ.
 4. Leadership of David Koresh (1980s-1993): The most infamous phase of the Branch Davidians began in the 1980s with the rise of David Koresh (born Vernon Wayne Howell). Koresh took control of the group in a contentious leadership battle. He claimed to be a prophet and had unique interpretations of the Bible, focusing heavily on the Book of Revelation and an impending apocalyptic confrontation.
 5. The 1993 Waco Siege: The Branch Davidians gained international notoriety in 1993 due to a 51-day standoff with federal agents at the Mount Carmel Center. This siege began after the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) attempted to execute a search warrant, leading to a shootout and the deaths of four agents and six Branch Davidians. The standoff ended tragically when the compound caught fire, resulting in the deaths of 76 people, including David Koresh and several children.
 6. The Branch Davidians still exist, although they are a much smaller group now than they were before the 1993 Waco siege. After the tragic events at Waco, the Branch Davidians went through a period of fragmentation and reorganization.
 7. Those who continue to identify as Branch Davidians typically hold onto some form of the group's original religious beliefs, which include Adventist and

Davidian teachings, along with interpretations specific to the leadership of Victor Houteff, Ben Roden, and David Koresh.

8. The modern Branch Davidians exist in small communities or as individual followers. They are not centralized and lack the cohesion that was seen under Koresh's leadership.
9. **Beliefs and practices considered cultish:**
 - a) Charismatic Leadership: David Koresh exercised charismatic and authoritarian control over the group. He claimed to be a prophet with a direct line of communication with God, and his interpretations of scripture were considered absolute and unquestionable. This kind of unquestioned authority and personal charisma is a common trait in groups labeled as cults.
 - b) Apocalyptic Beliefs: The Branch Davidians, under Koresh, had strong apocalyptic beliefs. They were focused on the imminent end of the world and believed in an impending confrontation between good and evil. Koresh's interpretation of the Book of Revelation played a central role in these beliefs.
 - c) Isolation: The group was relatively isolated from the broader community, both physically and socially. The Mount Carmel Center functioned as a compound where members lived communally, separate from the outside world. This isolation can create an echo chamber effect, reinforcing the group's beliefs and practices.
 - d) Control Over Members: There were reports of strict control over the lives of members, including their personal relationships, daily activities, and communication with the outside world. This level of control is often seen in groups described as cults.
 - e) Unconventional Sexual Practices: Koresh reportedly engaged in polygamous and possibly abusive relationships with several female members of the group, including minors. He claimed that this was a directive from God. Such practices, especially when involving coercion or minors, are considered highly problematic and cultish.
 - f) Armament and Confrontational Stance: The Branch Davidians under Koresh amassed a significant arsenal of firearms and were prepared for an armed confrontation with authorities. This militant aspect was atypical for a religious group and contributed to their classification as a cult by some observers.
 - g) Deviation from Mainstream Beliefs: While the Branch Davidians originated from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, their beliefs and practices significantly deviated from mainstream Christianity, which led to further classification as a cult.
- J. **Twelve Tribes** – The Twelve Tribes movement, also known as "The Community," originated in the early 1970s in Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA. The movement was founded by Gene Spriggs (later known as Yoneq) and his wife Marsha. Its roots are deeply intertwined with the Jesus Movement, a larger Christian **evangelical** movement

that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s, primarily among young people in the United States. They are known for their communal living, eschewing mainstream culture, and strict adherence to their interpretation of the Bible. They have faced criticism for their disciplinary practices and isolationist tendencies.

1. Early Beginnings in the Jesus Movement: The Jesus Movement was characterized by a radical commitment to the teachings of Jesus Christ, often including communal living, a return to a more primitive form of Christianity, and an emphasis on direct personal experience of God. Gene Spriggs, an early member of the movement, was influenced by these ideas.
2. Formation of the Light Brigade: In the early 1970s, Spriggs, along with his wife and others, formed a community in Chattanooga known as the "Light Brigade." This group focused on communal living and shared Christian practices, and they operated a coffee shop called the "Lighthouse" as a ministry tool.
3. Expansion and Evolution: The group evolved in its practices and beliefs and began to establish other communities. By the mid-1970s, they had relocated to Island Pond, Vermont, and began to be known as the Northeast Kingdom Community Church.
4. Development of Distinctive Practices: As the movement grew, it developed distinctive practices including communal living, the pooling of resources, and a focus on restoring what they saw as the biblical pattern of the church and Christian life. This included the establishment of communities that attempted to live out the teachings of the New Testament as literally as possible.
5. Name Change to Twelve Tribes: In the 1980s, the group formally adopted the name "Twelve Tribes," which reflects their belief in the restoration of the twelve tribes of Israel, a concept based on their interpretation of biblical prophecy.
6. **Why is Gene Spriggs considered a cult leader?**
 - a) Authoritarian Leadership: Cult leaders are typically characterized by their authoritarian control over their followers. Spriggs has been described as having significant control over the lives of community members, dictating not only spiritual beliefs but also personal and communal lifestyle choices.
 - b) Exclusive Truth Claims: Cults often claim to have exclusive access to truth or salvation. The Twelve Tribes communities, under Spriggs' leadership, have held that they are the true expression of Christianity, often viewing traditional Christian churches as apostate.
 - c) Isolation from Society: Spriggs advocated for a lifestyle that separates members from broader society, which is a common trait in cultic groups. Members of the Twelve Tribes communities often live communally and are encouraged to sever ties with those outside the community, including family members.
 - d) Rigid Lifestyle and Beliefs: The Twelve Tribes under Spriggs enforced a very strict lifestyle based on their interpretations of the Bible. This included communal living, pooled finances, specific roles for men and

women, communal child-rearing, and a strong emphasis on obedience to the community's teachings and leadership.

- e) Controversial Practices and Teachings: The movement has been criticized for practices such as strict child discipline, alleged child labor, and the shunning of members who leave or question the community. Such practices can be indicative of a cult-like environment.
- f) Allegations of Mind Control and Brainwashing: Former members and critics have accused the Twelve Tribes communities of using mind control and brainwashing techniques to maintain control over members, another hallmark of cultic groups.
- g) Charismatic Leadership: Spriggs, like many cult leaders, has been viewed as a charismatic figure who claims special insight or revelation from God, which he used to justify his teachings and the practices of the community.

7. What are some of their practices and teachings that are considered cultish?

- a) Communal Living: The Twelve Tribes communities live in a communal setting, where personal property is largely relinquished, and members share resources. This lifestyle is based on their interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles but is seen as extreme by many.
- b) Strict Hierarchical Structure: The group maintains a rigid hierarchical structure with leaders (often referred to as "elders") who have considerable authority over the lives of members. This can include decisions about marriage, child-rearing, and daily activities.
- c) Separation from Society: Members are encouraged to separate themselves from the broader society, which includes limiting interaction with non-members, often including family. This isolation can foster an us-versus-them mentality common in cults.
- d) Unique Interpretations of Scripture: The Twelve Tribes has its own unique interpretations of the Bible. For instance, they believe in restoring the twelve tribes of Israel and have a distinctive understanding of end-times prophecy.
- e) Control Over Personal Life Choices: Members' personal choices, including marriage, childbearing, and child-rearing, are often subject to approval and regulation by the community leadership.
- f) Allegations of Child Labor and Abuse: The group has faced allegations of child labor and strict, sometimes abusive, disciplinary practices. Such control over children's upbringing and alleged mistreatment are often cited in discussions of cult-like behavior.
- g) Shunning of Ex-Members: Former members who leave or are expelled from the community are often shunned, losing all contact with friends and family within the group. This practice of shunning is seen as a means of control, deterring members from leaving.

- h) Intense Work Ethic: Members often engage in long hours of labor for community businesses without personal financial gain, which critics argue is exploitative.
- i) End-Times Beliefs: The group has a specific belief in the imminent end of the world, which can create an intense and urgent atmosphere within the community, often used by cults to justify extreme practices.
- j) Exclusive Salvation: The Twelve Tribes teaches that salvation is exclusive to their community, a common characteristic of cults that claim a monopoly on spiritual truth.

K. **Children of God/The Family International** – The Children of God, also known as The Family International, is a religious group that originated in the late 1960s. It was founded by David Berg in 1968 in Huntington Beach, California. Berg, also known as Moses David, started this movement as a small communal group that espoused Christian values and sought to spread a message of love and salvation through Jesus Christ.

1. The group initially attracted a following among the counterculture youth of the time, emphasizing a radical commitment to religious beliefs and communal living. They were known for their fervent evangelism and unconventional practices, which included "flirty fishing" — using sexual relationships as a means of proselytizing.
2. Over the years, The Family International underwent various doctrinal and organizational changes, significantly shifting its practices and beliefs. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the movement was involved in controversies, including allegations of child abuse and brainwashing, leading to legal challenges and public scrutiny.
3. David Berg passed away in 1994, which led to further transformations within the group. His wife, Karen Zerby, known within the group as Queen Maria, took over leadership. Under her guidance, the movement attempted to rebrand and distance itself from some of its more controversial practices.
4. The Family International continues to exist today, although it has largely moved away from the communal living arrangements and extreme practices of its early years. The group now focuses on evangelical Christian mission work and humanitarian efforts, maintaining a presence in various countries around the world.
5. **What are some of their practices and teachings that are considered cultish?**
 - a) Authoritarian Leadership: David Berg, the founder, exerted absolute authority over the group. Members were encouraged to view him as a prophet and his writings as divinely inspired. This unquestioned loyalty to a charismatic leader is a common characteristic of cults.
 - b) Isolation: Members were often encouraged to sever ties with family and friends outside the group, leading to a strong sense of separation from the broader society. This isolation can increase the group's control over its members.
 - c) Communal Living: Especially in its early years, the group practiced communal living, where personal possessions were shared, and

individual autonomy was limited. This lifestyle was aimed at fostering a complete commitment to the group and its goals.

- d) Apocalyptic Beliefs: The group had a strong focus on the imminent end of the world and the second coming of Jesus Christ. This apocalyptic worldview often led to an urgent emphasis on evangelism and a disregard for secular education and careers.
- e) "Flirty Fishing": This controversial practice involved using sex as a tool for evangelism. Female members were encouraged to form intimate relationships with potential converts to bring them into the group. This practice was officially discontinued in the late 1980s but remains one of the most notorious aspects of the group's history.
- f) Strict Control of Information: The group controlled the information that members had access to, often discouraging or outright forbidding consumption of mainstream media or entertainment. This control over information flow is typical in cult-like organizations.
- g) Child Rearing Practices: There have been numerous allegations and some documented cases of child abuse within the group, particularly in its earlier years. The group's practices around the upbringing and education of children were often at odds with mainstream norms and sometimes the law.
- h) End-Time Prophecy and Doctrinal Eccentricities: The group's teachings often included unique interpretations of the Bible, with a heavy focus on prophecy and the end times. These teachings were considered unorthodox or heretical by mainstream Christian denominations.

L. **Heaven's Gate** – The Heaven's Gate religious movement, known for its tragic mass suicide in 1997, has its roots in the 1970s. It was founded by Marshall Applewhite and Bonnie Nettles in 1974.

1. Formation (1974): Marshall Applewhite, a music professor, and Bonnie Nettles, a nurse, met in 1972. They shared a common interest in mysticism and biblical prophecy. By 1974, they had formed what would eventually become Heaven's Gate. They believed they were the two witnesses described in the Book of Revelation and claimed to have been chosen to fulfill biblical prophecies.
2. Early Beliefs and Recruitment (1970s): Applewhite and Nettles, known as "Bo" and "Peep" among followers, initially focused on New Age interpretations of Christian scripture. They preached that they would be killed and then restored to life and transported onto a spaceship. This belief evolved over time into the notion that they would be directly taken to heaven (referred to as the "Next Level") by a spaceship.
3. Evolution of Beliefs: Over time, the group's beliefs became a unique blend of Christian millenarianism, New Age spiritualism, and science fiction. They held that the earth would be "recycled" (wiped clean, renewed, refurbished, and rejuvenated), and the only chance to survive was to leave it.
4. Isolation and Transformation (1980s-1990s): The group became increasingly reclusive, breaking ties with society and adopting strict codes of conduct. Their

beliefs also evolved to include aspects of conspiracy theories, space aliens, and the conviction that they would ascend to an extraterrestrial "kingdom of heaven".

5. Mass Suicide (March 1997): The group came to widespread public attention in March 1997 when police discovered the bodies of 39 members of the sect in a mansion in Rancho Santa Fe, California. They had participated in a mass suicide, believing that by leaving their bodily "containers," they would ascend to an alien spacecraft following the Comet Hale-Bopp.
6. There may still be a minimal online presence. Some reports indicated that a few individuals continued to maintain the group's website, preserving its teachings and beliefs for posterity. This, however, doesn't imply an active recruitment or functioning religious community.
7. There is no significant evidence of the group attempting to attract new members or engage in any communal activities similar to those before 1997.

M. **14 Heaven and Earth Ministries** – aka, World Mission Society Church of God, also known as **the Church of God**, a religious movement that originated in South Korea. This church is sometimes colloquially referred to in terms that include "Heaven and Earth," due to its teachings about God the Mother, who is believed to represent "heaven," and its focus on the earthly ministry.

1. Founding by Ahn Sahng-hong (1964): The World Mission Society Church of God (WMSCOG) was founded by Ahn Sahng-hong in 1964 in South Korea. Ahn, originally a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, broke away to form his own religious group.
2. Teachings: The church is known for its unique doctrines, which differ from mainstream Christian teachings. One of its most notable beliefs is the existence of God the Mother, also known as Heavenly Mother. They believe that Ahn Sahng-hong was the **Second Coming of Jesus** and that his teachings restore the truth of the early Church.
3. Growth and Expansion: After Ahn Sahng-hong's death in 1985, the church continued to grow under the leadership of **Zahng Gil-jah, who is regarded by the church as God the Mother**. The church has expanded its presence internationally and is known for its active missionary work and community services.
4. Controversy and Criticism: The World Mission Society Church of God has been the subject of controversy and criticism. Some former members and critics label it as a cult, critiquing its theological beliefs and practices. The church, however, defends its beliefs and practices as being biblically based.
5. This is the church that has been trying to reach out by relentlessly calling other churches under the guise of getting together to declare Christ as one group (ecumenism). However, this is a deceptive practice once you look into what the group really believes:
6. **What are some of their practices and teachings that are considered cultish?**
 - a) **15 Exclusive Belief in Ahn Sahng-hong as Christ**: WMSCOG teaches that their founder, Ahn Sahng-hong, is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, a

claim that is not recognized by mainstream Christian denominations. This exclusivist belief is often a hallmark of groups labeled as cults.

- b) **16 Belief in God the Mother:** They uniquely profess the existence of "God the Mother," identified as Zahng Gil-jah, alongside God the Father. This is a significant departure from traditional Christian doctrine, which typically acknowledges only a heavenly Father.
- c) **17 Sabbath Observance:** The church observes the Sabbath on Saturday, in line with the Fourth Commandment as they interpret it. They view Sabbath observance as crucial for salvation, which contrasts with the belief of many Christian denominations that view the Sabbath as a ceremonial law fulfilled in Christ.
 - (1) **Colossians 2:16 (CSB)** Therefore, don't let anyone judge you in regard to food and drink or in the matter of a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day.
 - (2) The Sabbath is referred to as a shadow of the reality which is in Christ Jesus. Therefore, the Sabbath is no longer to be observed as it was under the law.
 - (3) **Romans 14:5-6 (CSB)** One person judges one day to be more important than another day. Someone else judges every day to be the same. Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind.
 - (6) Whoever observes the day, observes it for the honor of the Lord. Whoever eats, eats for the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; and whoever does not eat, it is for the Lord that he does not eat it, and he gives thanks to God.
 - (4) Even if somebody wanted to observe the Sabbath, in this passage, each person is encouraged to observe whatever they want in honor of the Lord, but not force that observation on anyone else.
- d) **Baptism in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:** They practice baptism, which they consider a critical step for salvation. However, they believe that it must be done in the name of the Father (Jehovah), the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit (Ahn Sahng-hong).
 - (1) Although **Mat 28:19** does mention being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (not referring to Ahn Sahng-hong), other verses indicate baptism in the name of Jesus is sufficient.
 - (2) **Acts 2:38 (CSB)** Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - (3) **Acts 19:5 (CSB)** When they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.
 - (4) So anyone who says it can only be in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, or that it can only be in the name of Jesus, is placing their authority above that of the scriptures.

- e) Highly Structured and Authoritarian Leadership: The church is known for its hierarchical structure, with a strong emphasis on obedience to church leaders. This can include strict control over members' personal lives and decisions.
 - f) Intense Commitment and Time Demands: Members are often expected to devote a large amount of time to church activities, evangelism, and attending services. This intense commitment can lead to social isolation from non-members, including family.
 - g) Aggressive Proselytizing and Recruitment: The church is known for its vigorous missionary work, including targeting college campuses and other public spaces for recruitment. This aggressive evangelism has been a point of concern for some.
 - h) Control of Information and Behavioral Control: There are reports of controlling the flow of information within the church, discouraging members from accessing external sources of information about the church. Behavioral control can include strict rules regarding lifestyle, dress, and conduct.
 - i) End Times Teaching: Like many new religious movements, WMSCOG has a focus on apocalyptic prophecy, which can create a sense of urgency and fear among members.
 - (1) Importance of God the Mother for Salvation in the End Times: WMSCOG teaches that belief in God the Mother is crucial for salvation, especially in the end times.
 - (2) They reference **Revelation 22:17**, which says, "Both the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Anyone who hears should say, "Come!" And the one who is thirsty should come. Whoever desires should take the living water as a gift."
 - (3) The WMSCOG interprets the "bride" in this passage as God the Mother, whom they believe is necessary for receiving the "living water" or eternal life.
 - j) Allegations of Psychological Manipulation: Former members have reported psychological pressure, including guilt and fear-based tactics, to ensure loyalty and obedience.
- N. The Order of the Solar Temple – The Order of the Solar Temple, also known as the International Chivalric Organization of the Solar Tradition, originated in the late 20th century. Its roots are a mix of older esoteric beliefs, Rosicrucianism, and New Age spirituality. The Order was founded by Joseph Di Mambro and Luc Jouret in 1984. Here's a brief overview of its origins and development:
- 1. Background of Founders:
 - a) **Joseph Di Mambro**: Before founding the Order of the Solar Temple, Di Mambro was involved in other esoteric groups, including the Rosicrucian Order (AMORC).
 - b) **Luc Jouret**: Jouret, a Belgian homeopathic practitioner and lecturer, had a background in various esoteric and New Age movements.

2. Influences and Beliefs:
 - a) The Order's beliefs combined elements of Christianity, UFO conspiracy theories, New Age philosophy, and apocalyptic prophecy.
 - b) They believed in the second coming of Christ as a solar god-king and in the salvation of their members, leading them to a planet which orbits the star Sirius after their death or transformation.
 3. Rosicrucianism and Templar Tradition: The organization drew heavily from the traditions of the Knights Templar and the Rosicrucians, blending chivalric and mystical elements into their practices and hierarchy.
 4. International Growth: The group expanded internationally in the 1980s and early 1990s, attracting members in Switzerland, France, Canada, and other countries. Many of its members were affluent and included several influential figures.
 5. Tragic End: The Order of the Solar Temple is most infamous for the tragic mass suicides and murders in the mid-1990s. Between 1994 and 1997, the group was involved in the deaths of its members in Switzerland, France, and Canada, believed to be a part of their apocalyptic beliefs and rituals.
- O. **2 Word of Faith Movement (Prosperity Gospel/Theology)** – *The Word of Faith Movement*, commonly associated with the "Prosperity Gospel," has its origins in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This movement is characterized by a belief in the **power of faith and positive confession** to bring about **physical health, wealth, and prosperity**. It is also known as the *Health and Wealth Gospel/Theology*.
1. New Thought Influence: The Word of Faith Movement was significantly influenced by the ***New Thought philosophy***, which emerged in the 19th century. New Thought taught that *positive thinking* could bring about positive results in one's life, including health and wealth.
 2. **4 E.W. Kenyon:** A pivotal figure in the early development of the Word of Faith Movement was Essek William Kenyon (1867-1948). Kenyon's teachings combined elements of **New Thought with Pentecostalism**. He emphasized confession, faith, and the power of the spoken word. Many of his ideas laid the groundwork for what would later become the core teachings of the *Word of Faith Movement*.
 3. **5 Kenneth E. Hagin and Expansion:** The movement gained significant momentum through the ministry of Kenneth E. Hagin (1917-2003). He is often referred to as the "father" of the Word of Faith Movement. Hagin claimed to have received several **direct revelations from Jesus Christ**, which formed the basis of his teachings. He emphasized prosperity, healing, and the power of faith, teachings he claimed were revealed to him directly by Jesus.
 4. **6 Television and Media Proliferation:** With the advent of television and other media in the mid-20th century, Word of Faith preachers found a new platform to reach a wider audience. **Televangelists** like Oral Roberts, Joel Osteen, and Creflo Dollar have been influential in spreading the movement's teachings through the **cult of personality**.
 - a) **Joel Osteen** is often classified as a Prosperity Gospel preacher. Osteen, the senior pastor of Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas, is known for

his motivational speaking style and his messages that focus heavily on personal improvement and God's desire for individuals to prosper.

- (1) Osteen has faced criticism for not addressing the more challenging aspects of Christian theology, such as sin, repentance, and suffering. Critics argue that his focus on prosperity and success does not fully represent the breadth of the Christian gospel and Jesus' teachings.
- (2) Osteen does not heavily emphasize the "seed-faith" giving, where congregants are encouraged to give money with the expectation of material return. However, the overarching theme of prosperity and success in his teachings aligns him with the movement.

b) **Creflo Dollar** is another prominent figure often associated with the Prosperity Gospel. As the senior pastor of World Changers Church International in College Park, Georgia, Dollar's teachings are more explicitly aligned with key tenets of the Prosperity Gospel.

- (1) Wealth and Prosperity Teaching: Dollar is known for preaching that faith, especially faith expressed through giving, leads to financial blessing. He frequently teaches that prosperity is a sign of God's blessing and that believers have the right to expect wealth and health as part of their Christian walk.
- (2) "Seed-Faith" Giving: He strongly advocates for "seed-faith" giving, a practice where congregants are encouraged to give money ("sow a seed") with the expectation of receiving material wealth in return. This teaching is a cornerstone of Dollar's ministry and is a classic element of the Prosperity Gospel.
- (3) Criticism for Lifestyle and Theology: Dollar has faced significant criticism and controversy, particularly regarding his affluent lifestyle, which includes ownership of private jets and luxury homes. Critics argue that this lifestyle, funded by church members, is at odds with the teachings of Jesus about wealth and poverty.
- (4) Direct Revelation and Authority: Similar to other Prosperity Gospel preachers, Dollar has been known to claim direct revelation from God, giving his teachings an authoritative weight that discourages questioning or dissent among his followers.

c) **7-8 Other influential Prosperity Gospel preachers in the NY area:**

- (1) A.R. Bernard: Founder and senior pastor of the Christian Cultural Center in Brooklyn, New York. A.R. Bernard is known for his teachings that blend Christian principles with personal development. While not as overtly associated with the Prosperity Gospel as some others, some of his teachings on success and prosperity have been linked to the movement.

- (2) **9 David Oyedepo:** While based in Nigeria, Bishop David Oyedepo has significant influence in New York and among the Nigerian and West African immigrant communities in the U.S. He is the founder of the Living Faith Church Worldwide, also known as Winners' Chapel, and is known for his teachings on faith, prosperity, and success.
 - (3) **10 Joseph Prince:** Based in Singapore, Joseph Prince's ministry has a global reach, including in New York. As the senior pastor of New Creation Church, Prince is known for his teachings on grace and prosperity, which have been associated with the Prosperity Gospel.
- 5. **11 Critiques and Controversies:** The Prosperity Gospel has been criticized by many mainstream Christian denominations and theologians for its **materialistic emphasis** and divergence from traditional Christian teachings on suffering, poverty, and the nature of faith. Critics argue that it distorts the gospel message by overemphasizing wealth and health as indicators of faith and God's favor.
- 6. **Global Impact:** In recent decades, the movement has gained significant following in various parts of the world, particularly in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, where its message of financial and physical well-being appeals to many in economically challenging situations.
- 7. **12 What are some of their practices and teachings that are considered cultish?**
 - a) **"Name It and Claim It" Theology:** This practice, also known as "positive confession," involves believers speaking into existence what they desire, such as health, wealth, or success, by the power of their words and faith. Critics argue that this practice not only **misinterprets scriptures** about faith and confession but also places an **unhealthy emphasis on material wealth** and physical well-being as signs of God's favor.
 - b) **Health and Wealth as Evidence of Faith:** The teaching that true faith invariably leads to wealth and health is another controversial aspect. This doctrine implies that **poverty or illness is a result of lack of faith**, which many believe is contrary to the broader Christian teaching that **trials and sufferings can be part of the Christian journey**.
 - (1) **James 1:2-3 (CSB)** Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, (3) because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance.
 - (2) **Romans 5:3-4 (CSB)** ...we also boast in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, (4) endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope.
 - c) **"Seed-Faith" Giving:** This practice involves encouraging believers to give money ("sow a seed") **with the expectation of receiving material wealth in return**. Critics argue that this promotes a transactional view of God and exploits the faithful, particularly the poor and vulnerable, for financial gain.

- d) Personal Revelation and Authority: Some leaders in the Word of Faith Movement claim direct revelation from God, positioning their teachings on par with or even above Scripture. This can lead to authoritarian leadership and personal infallibility, where questioning the leaders or their teachings is discouraged, a hallmark of cultish behavior.
- e) Overemphasis on Spiritual Warfare: While spiritual warfare is a biblical concept, some within the movement have been criticized for an excessive focus on this aspect, attributing almost every challenge or problem to demons and spiritual attacks. This can lead to a neglect of practical wisdom, personal responsibility, and the complexity of life's issues.
- f) Prosperity as God's Will for All: The teaching that God's will for every believer is invariably prosperity and success can create unrealistic expectations and disillusionment, especially among those facing persistent struggles despite their faith.
- g) Selective Biblical Interpretation: Critics note that the Word of Faith Movement often selectively interprets scripture, emphasizing verses that seem to support their doctrines while ignoring the broader context of the Bible's teachings on suffering, humility, and the dangers of wealth.
 - (1) **13 3 John 1:2**: "Dear friend, I pray that you may prosper in every way and be in good health, just as your soul prospers."
 - (a) This verse is often cited as evidence that God wishes for believers to enjoy prosperity and good health.
 - (b) Contextually, in the Greek, the emphasis in John's letter is more likely on general well-being and success in various aspects of life, including spiritual life.
 - (c) Though God desires that for everyone, it is not a promise that everyone will enjoy this physically or materially. Key phrase, "just as your soul prospers".
 - (d) How does the soul prosper? Certainly not by loving money first:
 - (e) **Mark 8:36**: "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?"
 - (2) **Malachi 3:10**: "Bring the full tenth into the storehouse so that there may be food in my house. Test me in this way," says the Lord of Armies. "See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure."
 - (a) This verse is used to support the idea of "seed-faith" giving, where giving to the church is seen as a way to secure financial blessing from God.
 - (b) This is not the context of the verse at all. This was a challenge to the priests of the time who were too focus

on their own material wealth! What a way for them to turn this verse on its head!

- (3) **Luke 6:38:** "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you."
 - (a) This is often interpreted as a promise of material return on financial gifts to the church or ministry.
 - (b) The phrase "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over" was a common expression in the marketplace to describe a generous and full measure. The imagery here is of a vendor who generously fills a measure of grain beyond the standard, pressing and shaking it to make room for as much as possible, then adding even more until it overflows. This is used metaphorically to describe the abundance of blessings, including but not limited to material wealth, that comes from living a life in accordance with Jesus' teachings.
 - (c) It's about the attitude of giving without selfish motives and the principle that generosity leads to receiving blessings in various forms. These blessings can be material, but they are more broadly interpreted as including love, forgiveness, peace, joy, and spiritual fulfillment.
 - (d) The broader context of Luke 6 and the teachings of Jesus about love, forgiveness, and the principles of the Kingdom of God, is part of a larger discourse that includes the Beatitudes and teachings about loving enemies and judging others.
 - (e) Prosperity preachers turn this verse on its head without realizing true prosperity is spiritual and not limited to the physical.
- (4) **2 Corinthians 8:9:** "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: Although he was rich, for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich."
 - (a) This verse is sometimes used to suggest that Christ's sacrifice was meant to enable believers to become materially wealthy.
 - (b) How insulting to think Jesus became poor so we could be materially rich!
 - (c) Again, they miss the mark by giving "rich" such a narrow and superficial definition

- (d) People who eat up these false narratives are themselves prone to just find satisfaction in the material to their own spiritual demise.
- (5) **14 Philippians 4:19:** "And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."
 - (a) This verse is often quoted to assure believers that God will provide for their financial needs.
 - (b) It is very dangerous to create this false expectation in people and blaspheme God's name among the nations.
 - (c) People whose expectations are not met will cast dispersion on God's name and the church due to the false hopes incurred by these false prophets.
 - (d) Philippians 4:19 is part of a letter written by the Apostle Paul to the church in Philippi. In this letter, Paul is thanking the Philippians for their support while he was in prison. This verse is his assurance to them that God will meet their needs, as they have met his. The emphasis is on God's provision for needs, **not necessarily wants or desires for wealth and prosperity.**
 - (e) The term "need" in this verse is key. Biblical understanding of "need" tends to differ from modern interpretations, especially in the context of prosperity theology. "Need" in the Bible often refers to what is necessary for a godly and contented life, not the accumulation of wealth, luxury, or material possessions.
 - (f) Throughout his letters, Paul emphasizes contentment, simplicity, and reliance on God's provision. His own life was not marked by material wealth; in fact, he often experienced hardship, persecution, and lack. This stands in contrast to the idea that Christian faith is a means to material prosperity.
- (6) **Mark 10:29-30:** Jesus said, "Truly, I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life."
 - (a) This passage is sometimes used to suggest that sacrifices for the Gospel will be rewarded materially in this life.
 - (b) The addition of *persecutions* is what is being overlooked by the prosperity preachers! They certainly don't want to promise their audience this!

- (c) The context here is that when you are suffering because of the Gospel, not because of sin, your extended church family will become a large blessing to you to provide for what you need, not what you want.
 - (d) Ultimately it is eternal life that will satisfy our every *need* and *want*!
- P. **Raëlism** – Founded by **Claude Vorilhon** (Raël), this group believes that life on Earth was scientifically **created by a species of extraterrestrials**. It has attracted attention and controversy for its beliefs about extraterrestrials and its advocacy for **sexual liberation**.
 - 1. Also known as the Raëlian Movement, originating in France in the 1970s, it was the name taken by the founder, Claude Vorilhon, who later took the name Raël. The origins of Raëlism are deeply intertwined with Vorilhon's experiences and claims, which form the movement's core beliefs.
 - 2. Claude Vorilhon claimed he had a physical encounter with extraterrestrials in December 1973. He stated that an alien spacecraft landed near him in the French countryside, and he met an alien who came from the spacecraft.
 - 3. He claimed that the extraterrestrial being provided him with a series of messages. These messages, which he was instructed to disseminate to the people of Earth, included details about the origins of life on Earth and the role of these extraterrestrials, whom he referred to as the Elohim.
 - 4. According to Raël, the Elohim are advanced alien scientists responsible for creating humanity through genetic engineering. This creation narrative forms a central part of Raëlian belief, diverging significantly from traditional religious views on creation.
 - 5. Raël wrote several books detailing his experiences and the teachings he received from the Elohim. These texts are considered sacred in Raëlism and are used to propagate its teachings.
 - 6. **What are some practices considered cultish?**
 - a) Emphasis on Happiness and Geniocracy: Raëlians put a strong emphasis on the pursuit of happiness and advocate for a world government led by people with high levels of intelligence, a concept they call "geniocracy." This political aspect, especially the idea of a ruling elite based on intelligence, is seen as radical by many.
 - b) Baptism and Transmission of Cellular Plan: A significant ceremony in Raëlism is the "Transmission of the Cellular Plan," akin to a baptism, where individuals acknowledge the Elohim as their creators. This ceremony is a formal acceptance of Raëlian beliefs and a commitment to the movement.
 - c) Extravagant Gatherings and Symbols: Raëlians are known for their elaborate gatherings and the use of symbols like the Star of David intertwined with a swastika (although the swastika has since been modified due to its controversial nature). These symbols and gatherings, which are often flamboyant and public, contribute to their outsider status.

- d) Raëlism places a significant emphasis on sensualism: They celebrate sensuality, which is a distinctive and appealing aspect of its teachings and practices. This focus stems from the Raëlian belief that the body and its senses are gifts from the Elohim, the extraterrestrial beings who, according to Raëlian doctrine, created humanity.
 - (1) Sensual enjoyment is seen as a celebration of life and a way to honor the Elohim, who are believed to have created humans to experience joy and pleasure.
 - (2) Sensuality is not seen as opposed to spirituality but as an integral part of it. This contrasts with many religious traditions where sensuality is often viewed as something to be controlled or transcended.
- 7. **The Raëlian Movement is still active today.** Since its founding in the 1970s by Claude Vorilhon (Raël), it has maintained a presence, albeit with varying degrees of visibility and membership over the years. The movement has continued to spread its beliefs and practices globally, with members and groups in various countries.
 - a) The movement continues to organize public events, gatherings, and seminars to spread their beliefs and teachings. These events often include discussions about their views on extraterrestrial life, human cloning, and the celebration of sensuality and sexuality.
 - b) Like many religious and spiritual groups, Raëlians have adapted to the digital age, using websites and social media platforms to disseminate information and connect with interested individuals.
- 8. They do not use the Bible: The Raëlian Movement primarily bases its teachings and beliefs on the writings of Claude Vorilhon, known as Raël, rather than on traditional religious texts like the Bible. Raël's writings are considered the foundational texts of the movement and provide the core doctrines and beliefs of Raëlism.
 - a) Raël's books, often referred to as the Raëlian Scriptures, include "The Book Which Tells the Truth," "Extraterrestrials Took Me to Their Planet," and several others. These texts detail his claimed encounters with extraterrestrials and the messages he received from them.
 - b) The writings cover various topics, including the creation of life on Earth by extraterrestrials (the Elohim), views on sexuality and sensuality, global governance, and the future of humanity. They are regarded by Raëlians as the ultimate source of truth and guidance.
 - c) Over time, Raël has added to his teachings, addressing contemporary issues and expanding on his original messages. These updates are also considered part of the Raëlian doctrine.
 - d) Generally, Raëlism is critical of traditional religions, viewing them as misinterpretations of encounters with extraterrestrials. Raëlians believe that their understanding of these encounters is more accurate and enlightened.

9. Of course, the problem with any cult with beliefs like these is that you are left at the pure whims of this person claiming to know the truth with no logical or sound basis for their beliefs other than their opinions.
 - a) As opposed to the scriptures, where we have millennia of historical accounts, fulfilled prophecies, and the appearance of the Messiah along with His works to give us a solid case for trusting the words that are written.
 - b) No other human works can claim to have this backdrop of faith building, which is an important consideration when we are faced with what to believe.
 - c) We are trusting creatures, and we have a disposition to believe something. The devil and his angels know this, which they exploit to their advantage.
- Q. **15 Scientology** – Was Founded by **L. Ron Hubbard**, a science fiction writer. Scientology has been controversial due to its secretive nature, its treatment of critics and members wishing to leave the organization, and its classification by some governments as a commercial enterprise rather than a religion.
1. **16** The origins of Scientology trace back to the early 1950s. L. Ron Hubbard, an American author, developed from his ideas expressed in the book "Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health," published in 1950. Hubbard described **Dianetics** as a self-help approach aimed at addressing what he called the "reactive mind," which he believed was the source of psychological traumas and thereby the root of various physical and mental ailments.
 2. **17** In 1953, Hubbard transitioned these ideas into a more organized framework, establishing the **Church of Scientology**. Scientology encompasses a set of beliefs and practices that Hubbard claimed could improve an individual's mental and spiritual well-being.
 - a) Central to Scientology is the concept of the "thetan," which is akin to the soul and is considered the true identity of a person. The church offers various levels of spiritual counseling, known as "auditing," and courses to help individuals ascend to higher levels of spiritual awareness.
 3. **18 Why is it considered a cult?**
 - a) The Church of Scientology is known for its secretive nature, especially regarding its higher-level teachings and practices. Former members have reported that the church exercises a high degree of control over the lives of its adherents, including their personal relationships and financial decisions.
 - b) Critics point to the high costs associated with Scientology's auditing sessions and courses, which can run into thousands or even hundreds of thousands of dollars, as a method of exploitation.
 - c) The church has been involved in various legal disputes and controversies, including allegations of harassing critics and ex-members, and unethical business practices.

- d) There have been numerous allegations of psychological and physical abuses within the church, including mistreatment of staff and members, coercive fundraising practices, and inhumane working conditions for its Sea Org members.
 - e) Christianity teaches salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, whereas Scientology emphasizes personal improvement and spiritual progression through its practices.
- 4. **The scriptures play no role in scientology.**
 - a) The Bible is not used in the teachings or practices of Scientology. Scientology is based on the writings and teachings of its founder, L. Ron Hubbard, and it has its own unique set of scriptures and texts.
 - b) The central texts of Scientology are Hubbard's books, particularly "Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health" and other works that outline the beliefs, practices, and organizational policies of Scientology.
 - c) The core beliefs of Scientology revolve around the concepts of the *thetan* (akin to the soul), past lives, and a form of counseling known as auditing, which is intended to clear individuals of negative influences from past traumas.
 - d) Believe the Bible or believe anything!
- R. **NXIVM** – This organization, led by Keith Raniere, came into the spotlight for allegations of sex trafficking, forced labor, and racketeering.
- S. **Electronic Dance Music (EDM)** – Electronic Dance Music (EDM), a genre characterized by its rhythmic beats and electronic sound synthesis, has its roots in the 1970s and 1980s.
 - 1. Rave Culture (Late 1980s and 1990s): The rave scene, which began in Europe and spread globally, was integral to the growth of EDM. Large-scale parties, often held in secret locations and featuring DJs playing various electronic genres, became a cultural phenomenon. This period saw the emergence of sub-genres like trance, drum and bass, and jungle.
 - 2. Mainstream Acceptance and Global Spread (2000s onwards): In the 2000s, EDM began to gain significant mainstream popularity. Festivals like Electric Daisy Carnival and artists like David Guetta, Calvin Harris, and Avicii brought the genre to a broader audience, leading to its current status as a dominant force in the music industry.
- 3. **Why is it considered cultish?**
 - a) Intense Community Bonding: EDM culture is known for fostering a strong sense of community among its followers. This intense bonding, often centered around specific DJs, festivals, or sub-genres, can seem exclusive or overly devoted from an outside perspective.
 - b) Rave Culture and Lifestyle: The rave scene, closely associated with EDM, often involves immersive experiences that can last all night or even several days. The combination of music, dance, light shows, and sometimes the use of psychoactive substances can create an intense, escapist environment. This level of immersion and escapism can be perceived as cult-like.

- c) Dedicated Following of Artists and Genres: Some EDM artists and genres cultivate highly dedicated fan bases. Fans may travel great distances to attend concerts and festivals, collect memorabilia, and closely follow the activities of their favorite artists, which can be seen as cultish devotion.
 - d) Unique Cultural Symbols and Language: The EDM community has its own set of symbols, fashion, slang, and rituals (like specific dances or gestures at concerts). This unique cultural lexicon can appear secretive or exclusive to outsiders.
 - e) Repetition and Trance States: The repetitive beats and rhythms of EDM, especially in sub-genres like trance, are designed to induce a trance-like state in the listener. This aspect of the music, along with the communal experience of dancing and heightened emotional states, can resemble religious or cult-like rituals.
 - f) Criticism of Commercialization and Mainstreaming: As EDM has grown in popularity, some critics argue that it has become overly commercialized, with a focus on profit over artistic integrity. This commercial aspect, coupled with the intense devotion of fans, can contribute to the perception of the movement as cultish.
- T. **19 Wokeism/Liberal Progressivism** – The origins of "wokeism" can be traced back to the African-American Vernacular English expression "stay woke," which gained popularity in the 2010s. This phrase initially referred to an awareness of social injustices, particularly those related to racial issues. Over time, the term "woke" evolved to encompass a broader awareness of various social and political issues, including gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, and environmental concerns.
1. **20 Perception problems**
- a) The mainstream and corporate adoption of "woke" ideals has led to accusations of performative activism or "virtue signaling," where companies or individuals publicly support progressive causes more for appearance or profit than genuine commitment.
 - b) "Wokeism" has become a politically charged term, often used by conservative commentators and politicians to criticize progressive policies or viewpoints. This political weaponization has contributed to its negative perception, especially among those who oppose progressive ideologies.
 - c) Critics often perceive wokeism as promoting extreme viewpoints and being intolerant of dissenting opinions. This perception is partly due to high-profile incidents where individuals or groups were criticized or "canceled" for views or actions deemed offensive or insufficiently progressive.
 - d) Some argue that wokeism, through its mechanisms of social enforcement (like call-out culture or cancel culture), can stifle free speech and open debate. The fear of social or professional repercussions for expressing certain viewpoints can lead to a chilling effect on discourse.

- e) Complex social issues are sometimes reduced to overly simplistic narratives within woke discourse, which can lead to misunderstandings and polarizing positions.
 - f) The rise of wokeism has prompted backlash and the formation of counter-movements, which criticize its principles and methods. This backlash is sometimes fueled by broader social and political disagreements.
2. **21 How is wokeism like a cult?** - It's important to recognize that the use of the term "cult" in this context is often more metaphorical and is used to emphasize the perception of the dogmatic or rigid nature of these ideologies.
- (1) Strong Ideological Commitment: Cults are often characterized by strong, unwavering devotion to a particular set of beliefs. Similarly, some view "wokeism" as demanding strict adherence to its ideologies, such as views on social justice, race, and gender issues. This perceived intolerance for dissenting opinions can be likened to cult-like behavior.
 - (2) In-group and Out-group Dynamics: Cults typically have a clear in-group and out-group distinction, often demonizing those who are not part of the group. Wokeism similarly creates a divide between those who are "woke" (in-group) and those who are not, with the latter sometimes being labeled as ignorant or morally inferior.
 - (3) Censorship and Cancel Culture: The practice of shunning or ostracizing individuals who deviate from or question the accepted norms (often referred to as "cancel culture") is seen by some as akin to cult tactics, which often involve controlling members' behavior and thoughts, and punishing or ostracizing dissenters.
 - (4) Moral Absolutism: Cults often see the world in black-and-white terms. Wokeism also promotes a form of moral absolutism, where issues are seen in terms of clear right and wrong, with little room for nuance or differing perspectives.
 - (5) Emotional Appeal and Moral High Ground: Like cults, which often appeal to people's emotions and desire for a higher purpose, wokeism is sometimes seen as leveraging strong emotional appeals and positioning itself as morally superior, which can attract followers and discourage questioning.
 - (6) Utopian Vision: Cults often promise a utopian future. Wokeism promises a perfect society free of injustice and inequality, which is a hallmark of utopian thinking.

U. **Christian Nationalism/White Evangelicalism/Zionism**

- 1. **Christian Nationalism** is a complex and controversial ideology that blends aspects of Christianity with a strong sense of nationalism.

2. Not all Christians or conservatives support Christian Nationalism, and there's a wide range of beliefs within these groups.
3. Christian Nationalism can be divisive and is not universally accepted within Christian communities.
4. **Commonalities**
 - a) Political Engagement: Christian nationalism often involves a strong focus on political engagement and the belief that the United States should be governed by Christian principles. Many white evangelicals have been politically active, and their beliefs and votes have aligned with Christian nationalist agendas on issues such as religious freedom, abortion, and traditional family values.
 - b) National Identity: Christian nationalists often emphasize a strong national identity tied to Christianity, asserting that the United States has a unique and divinely ordained role in the world. Some white evangelicals have embraced this idea and see the U.S. as a Christian nation with a special mission.
 - c) Social Issues: Both white evangelicals and Christian nationalists share conservative views on various social issues, including opposition to same-sex marriage, abortion, and certain aspects of secularism. These shared values have sometimes led to collaboration on policy and political initiatives.
 - d) Controversial Figures: Certain high-profile white evangelical leaders and organizations have been associated with Christian nationalism, and they have played influential roles in shaping the movement. This association has garnered media attention and has been a subject of debate within the Christian community.
 - e) It's important to recognize that not all white evangelicals endorse Christian nationalism, and many are committed to a more traditional expression of their faith without strong ties to political nationalism.
5. **Zionism** is a separate and distinct ideology from both white evangelicalism and Christian nationalism, but there are some connections and intersections between them, particularly in the context of support for the State of Israel:
 - a) Christian Zionism: Christian Zionism is a theological and political movement that believes in the biblical significance of Israel and supports the return of Jews to their historical homeland. Many white evangelicals, influenced by certain interpretations of biblical prophecy, are strong supporters of Israel and its right to exist. This support often aligns with their religious beliefs and can sometimes be linked to a broader Christian nationalist worldview.
 - b) Political Influence: Some white evangelical and Christian nationalist groups have actively lobbied for U.S. policies that align with the interests of Israel, including financial aid and diplomatic support. Their motivations can vary, but they often see a strong and secure Israel as a key element in their theological and political worldview.

- c) Shared Concerns: While theologically distinct, both Christian nationalists and certain white evangelical groups may share concerns about perceived threats to religious freedom and values, both domestically and abroad. These shared concerns can sometimes lead to cooperation on issues related to Israel and the Middle East.
- d) It's important to emphasize that not all white evangelicals or Christian nationalists support Zionism, and there is a diversity of opinion within these groups. Additionally, Zionism itself is a multifaceted movement with different interpretations and political stances. The connections between these ideologies can be complex, and individuals' motivations may vary widely.

6. How is Christian nationalism, Zionism, and white evangelicalism perceived as a cult?

- a) Distinctive Beliefs and Practices: Movements like Christian nationalism, Zionism, and white evangelicalism often have distinctive beliefs and practices that set them apart from mainstream religious or political groups. This distinctiveness can sometimes be perceived as extreme or unorthodox, leading to the label of a "cult."
- b) Strong In-Group Identity: These groups often have a strong sense of in-group identity, which can include a belief in being chosen or having a special mission. This strong identity can lead to an us-versus-them mentality, where those outside the group are viewed differently, sometimes in a negative light.
- c) Perceived Authoritarianism: The perception of a cult can also stem from views on authority within these movements. If leadership is seen as overly authoritative, controlling, or infallible, it can raise concerns similar to those associated with cults.
- d) Political and Social Impact: Movements like Christian nationalism or Zionism are often involved in political and social realms, sometimes in ways that are controversial or divisive. This involvement can lead to criticism and the application of the "cult" label, especially by those who disagree with their positions.
- e) Media Representation and Public Discourse: The way these groups are represented in the media and public discourse can also contribute to their perception. Negative or sensational coverage can amplify perceptions of extremism or unorthodoxy.
- f) Historical and Cultural Context: The historical and cultural context of these movements also plays a role. For instance, the history of religious and political conflicts, both globally and within specific countries, can color the way these groups are viewed.

- 7. It's crucial to note that the use of the term "cult" in these contexts is often more reflective of societal attitudes and biases than of the actual characteristics of these groups. Moreover, within Christianity, there is a wide spectrum of beliefs and practices, and what may seem cult-like to some may be a matter of sincere

faith to others. As always, understanding and dialogue are key in navigating these complex issues.

- V. **Freemasonry** – The roots of the Masons go back at least to the late 16th century. It all apparently started when a prominent Scottish stonemason, William Schaw, oversaw the construction of the country's palaces. He issued a series of professional and personal guidelines for stonemasons, which inspired the organizational structure and code of conduct. These guidelines would later define the Freemasons.

1. **Origins**

- a) **William Schaw** played this pivotal role in the early development of Freemasonry, particularly in Scotland. He is often credited with laying down some of the earliest formal regulations for the organization and management of stonemasons' lodges, which would later evolve into what we recognize as Freemasonry today.
- b) **Schaw was the Master of Works to King James VI of Scotland** (who later became James I of England as well), a position that made him responsible for overseeing the construction and maintenance of royal buildings. In 1598 and 1599, Schaw issued two sets of statutes, known as the "**Schaw Statutes**," which are of great significance in the history of Freemasonry. These documents are among the earliest known Masonic texts.
 - (1) Regulation of Stonemason Lodges: The Schaw Statutes laid down rules for the operation of stonemason lodges in Scotland. They regulated everything from the qualifications for entering the craft to the duties of members, and they helped in standardizing the practices across different lodges.
 - (2) Introduction of Symbolic and Moral Practices: While the statutes primarily dealt with the practical aspects of stonemason work, they also introduced elements of moral and ethical behavior, which would later become central to the symbolic and philosophical aspects of Freemasonry.
 - (3) Foundation for Freemasonry Rituals: The Schaw Statutes laid a foundation for the development of Masonic rituals. They emphasized the importance of secret signs and passwords, a characteristic feature of later Masonic practices.
 - (4) Establishment of Hierarchical Structure: Schaw's statutes also helped establish a hierarchical structure within the lodges, which is a feature still seen in Freemasonry today.
- c) So Freemason roots are generally traced back to the stonemason guilds of medieval Europe. These guilds were responsible for building the great cathedrals and other significant structures of that era. Over time, these guilds began to accept members who were not actual stonemasons, evolving into more symbolic and philosophical societies.
- d) **The first Grand Lodge**, an association of lodges, was established in England in 1717. This marks the beginning of modern Freemasonry,

where the focus shifted significantly towards rituals and symbols, many of which were drawn from the architectural practices and tools of stonemasons. Freemasonry then spread to other countries, adapting to local cultures and legal systems.

2. Why are they perceived as a cult?

- a) Secrecy and Rituals: Freemasons have historically been secretive about their rituals and inner workings. This secrecy, along with their use of unique symbols, signs, and rituals, has led to misunderstandings and suspicion from outsiders.
- b) Exclusive Membership: The process of joining a Masonic lodge typically involves an invitation, a vetting process, and initiation rituals. This exclusivity can sometimes be interpreted as cult-like behavior.
- c) Influence and Power: There's a perception, whether accurate or not, that Freemasons hold significant influence in political and economic spheres. This has fueled conspiracy theories about the nature and intentions of the organization.
- d) Misunderstandings and Misinformation: Over the centuries, various groups and individuals have spread misinformation about Freemasonry, often linking it to various conspiracy theories. This misinformation has contributed to its cult-like image in some circles.
- e) Religious and Moral Beliefs: Some religious groups view Freemasonry's practices, which include oaths and allegorical plays based on biblical themes, as incompatible with their beliefs. This has led to tensions, particularly with certain Christian denominations.

3. What are their sacred texts?

- a) Their sacred texts are known as "Volume of Sacred Law" (VSL).
- b) The choice of the specific sacred text depends largely on the religious beliefs of the majority of the lodge members. In many lodges, especially those in predominantly Christian regions, the Christian Bible is used as the VSL. However, Freemasonry is non-denominational and not tied to any one religion, so it's not uncommon for other sacred texts to be used in different parts of the world or in lodges with a diverse membership.
- c) For example, a lodge with a significant number of Muslim members might use the Quran as its VSL. Similarly, the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) might be used in lodges with predominantly Jewish members, and other texts like the Bhagavad Gita or the Guru Granth Sahib could be used in lodges with Hindu or Sikh members, respectively.
- d) The use of a sacred text is meant to symbolize the presence of the divine and to act as a point of moral and spiritual reference for Masonic rituals and oaths. It's important to note, though, that while Freemasonry requires its members to believe in a Supreme Being, it does not endorse any particular religious viewpoint or dogma.

4. Freemasons are more of a power group, or union. That was the intention at the beginning, in the absence of unions. However, its influence and reach continue

to morph and change through the ages, reflecting the need for humans to belong and that without belonging to the church of Jesus, any other institution or organism makes for a poor guide and companion for a race of people created in the image of God.

- W. **22 Epilogue: Cults perpetrate the ultimate abuse and destruction of a human beings' identity and fulfillment** – Cults, particularly those that do not adhere to scriptural teachings, can pose significant risks to an individual's identity as a creation of God.

1. Distortion of Identity: Cults often teach doctrines that are contrary to the Biblical understanding of human identity.
 - a) According to the Bible, humans are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), with inherent value and purpose. However, cults may promote a distorted view of self-worth, either inflating the ego or diminishing one's sense of value, both of which are contrary to the biblical view of being fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14).
 - b) Cults follow the paradigm of the world which is about self-sufficiency and self-fulfillment found in seeking my own wisdom and identity in what makes me feel good.
 - c) This is the contrast created in Genesis when Cain left the Lord's presence to build a the first city of man, outside the counsel and leadership of God (Genesis 4).
2. Replacement of Divine Authority with Human Leadership: Cults typically elevate their leaders to a status equal to or above God, demanding unquestioning obedience.
 - a) This shifts a person's allegiance from God to human authority, directly opposing the scriptural command to "have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3).
 - b) Once allegiance is shifted, regard for spiritual health is abandoned and instead replaced with the need to fulfill the carnal self.
 - c) At this point you become a trash can where the spiritual forces of evil fill you up with as much trash as they can to weigh you down under all kinds of fantasies, conjectures, and philosophies.
3. Isolation from Community and Family: Cults often encourage separation from family and community, which can lead to a loss of one's foundational identity.
 - a) The Bible speaks to the importance of family and community in shaping one's faith and identity (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 3:13; 10:24-25).
 - (1) **Acts 2:42 (CSB)** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.
 - (2) **Hebrews 3:13 (CSB)** But encourage each other daily, while it is still called today, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception.
 - (3) **Hebrews 10:24-25 (CSB)** And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, (25) not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but

encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.

- b) Separating you from the people who can hold you accountable is part of Satan's plan to divide and conquer.
 - c) Once he gets you to disengage from the sound and loving principles of a Christian home, you feel free to be what you feel you are.
 - d) For people who did not receive love in their home this can seem like a freeing and accepting experience, where you feel you belong because people seek to understand you.
 - e) Of course, cults only provide the illusion of community and family, since their practices actually result in abuse, exploitation, and pillage of your humanity.
4. Manipulation of Beliefs: Cults frequently employ psychological manipulation to control members' beliefs and actions.
- a) This manipulation can lead individuals to question their faith and the teachings of the Bible, which is the Christian standard for truth (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
 - b) They will teach you things you will like, appealing to your sensuality and passions (2 Tim 4:3).
 - c) "For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions." **2 Tim 4:3 ESV**
5. Fear and Intimidation: Cults often use fear and intimidation to maintain control, which can overshadow a person's identity in Christ, who teaches love and freedom from fear (1 John 4:18; 2 Timothy 1:7).
- a) Though you may think you entered the cult of your own free will, soon you will find yourself trapped by a greater degree of control than you ever thought.
 - b) You realize that instead of love and real acceptance you have become a victim and sometimes even a slave.
 - c) **1 John 4:18 (CSB)** There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment. So the one who fears is not complete in love.
 - d) **2 Timothy 1:7 (CSB)** For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.
 - e) When God's Holy Spirit is absent, only fear, victimization, and slavery are left.
6. Spiritual Abuse: Cults can engage in spiritual abuse, using religious language or concepts in ways that are harmful and not aligned with scriptural teachings, undermining a person's understanding of God's character and love (Matthew 7:15).
- a) When the bible claims to be used in a cult, it is used to create fear and elicit reactions to pledge allegiance to the group, not to God.

- b) When Jesus is not the one being worshiped there is no sense of love or freedom, only coercion and discipline to follow blindly the group's ideologies or leader.
 - c) Instead of someone feeling like they are an important, active part of the group, they are made to feel unimportant and worthless unless they are being used (exploited) in some way.
 - d) The use of logic and reason goes out the window when you are spiritually abused. God encourages the use of the mind and of sound thinking to create awe and wonder. The more you read the scriptures the more your thinking gets profound.
 - e) In a cult there is no thinking or creativity. All such things are discouraged. This undermines you as a human being.
7. Scriptural references are crucial in identifying and countering the dangers posed by cults.
- a) The Bible warns against false teachers and doctrines (Matthew 7:15; 2 Peter 2:1) and emphasizes the importance of sound doctrine and discernment (1 John 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:3-4).
 - (1) **Matthew 7:15 (CSB)** Be on your guard against false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves.
 - (2) **2 Peter 2:1 (CSB)** There were indeed false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves.
 - b) It's essential to stay anchored in the Word of God and the community of believers to maintain a healthy and biblically sound identity.
 - (1) **1 John 4:1 (CSB)** Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.
 - (2) **2 Timothy 4:3-4 (CSB)** For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear what they want to hear. (4) They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths.

IX. **How False Doctrine Seeps In** – Written and copyright by Steven Francis Staten. This article is an overview of a book being written on the origins of the Sinner's Prayer.

A. Sinner's Prayer

- 1. The earliest notion of sinner's prayer is less than 500 years old. It wasn't formalized as a theology until around the time of Billy Graham.
- 2. No one in the Bible ever prayed for their initial salvation. They did however believe, repent, confess Jesus, and be immersed in water for the forgiveness of their sins. The sinner's prayer is an innovation that thwarts God's plan of salvation.

3. First, they replaced believers' baptism by immersion with infant baptism by sprinkling. Second, they later replaced baptism altogether with the "sinners' prayer" so that baptism is no longer even part of the plan of salvation. If you prayed the "sinners' prayer" for your salvation, you are still lost in your sins, because it is not what God said to do.
4. C.S. Lewis used the term "a great cataract of nonsense" to describe how people use a modern idea to construe Bible theology. One such example, perhaps the best example, is a conversion method called the Sinner's Prayer. It is more popularly known as the Four Spiritual Laws.
5. Lewis used this term to describe what happens when someone looks backward at the Bible based only on what he or she has known. Instead, an evangelical should first discern conversion practices from Scriptures and then consider the topic in light of two thousand years of other thinkers. As it is, a novel technique popularized through recent revivals has replaced the biblically sound practice.
6. Today, hundreds of millions hold to a belief system and salvation practice that no one had ever held until relatively recently. The notion that one can pray Jesus into his or her heart and that baptism is merely an outward sign are actually late developments. The prayer itself dates to the Billy Sunday era; however, the basis for talking in prayer for salvation goes back a few hundred years.
7. "Just accept Christ into your heart through prayer and he'll receive you. It doesn't matter what church you belong to or if you ever do good works. You'll be born again at the moment you receive Christ. He's at the door knocking. You don't even have to change bad habits, just trust Christ as Savior. God loves you and forgives you unconditionally. Anyone out there can be saved if they ... Accept Christ, now! Let us pray for Christ to now come into your heart."
8. Sound familiar? This method of conversion has had far-reaching effects worldwide as many have claimed this as the basis for their salvation. Yet, what is the historical significance of this conversion? How did the process of rebirth, which Jesus spoke of in John 3, evolve into praying him into one's heart? I believe it was an error germinating shortly after the Reformation, which eventually caused great ruin and dismay in Christendom. By supplying a brief documentation of its short, historical development, I hope to show how this error has served as "a great cataract of nonsense".
9. Although things weren't ideal after the Reformation, for the first time in over a thousand years the general populace was reading the Scriptures. By the early 1600s, one hundred years after the Reformation was initiated, there were various branches of European Christendom that followed national lines. For instance, Germans followed Martin Luther. There were also Calvinists (Presbyterian), the Church of England (Episcopalian), various branches of Anabaptists and, of course, the Roman church (Catholics). Most of these groups were trying to revive the waning faith of their already traditionalized denominations. However, a consensus had not been reached on issues like rebirth, baptism, or salvation--even between Protestants.

10. The majority still held to the validity of infant baptism even though they disagreed on its significance. Preachers tended to minimize baptism because people hid their lack of commitment behind sayings like "I am a baptized Lutheran and that's that." The influence of the preachers eventually led to the popular notion that one was forgiven at infant baptism but not yet reborn. Most Protestants were confused or ambivalent about the connection between rebirth and forgiveness.

B. The Great Awakening

1. The Great Awakening was the result of fantastic preaching occurring in Europe and the eastern colonies during the early to mid-1700s. Though ambivalent on the practice of baptism, Great Awakening preachers created an environment that made man aware of his need for an adult confession experience. The experiences that people sought were varied. Jonathan Edwards, George Whitfield and John Wesley furthered ideas of radical repentance and revival. Although there is much to be learned from their messages, they did not solve the problems of the practices associated with baptism and conversion.
2. Eventually, the following biblical passage written to and inspired for lukewarm Christians became a popular tool for the conversion of non-Christians:
3. "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:14-20)
4. This passage was written explicitly for lukewarm Christians. Now consider how a lecturer named John Webb misused this passage in the mid-1700s as a basis of evangelizing non-Christians:
5. "Here is a promise of Union to Christ; in these words, I will come in to him. i.e. If any Sinner will but hear my Voice and open the Door, and receive me by Faith, I will come into his Soul, and unite him to me, and make him a living member of that my mystical body of which I am the Head." (Christ's Suit to the Sinner, 14)
6. Preachers heavily relied on Revelation 3:20. By using the first-person tense while looking into the sinner's eyes, preachers began to speak for Jesus as they exhorted, "If you would just let me come in and dine with you, I would accept you." Even heathens who had never been baptized responded with the same or even greater sorrow than churchgoers. As a result, more and more preachers of Christendom concluded that baptism was merely an external matter--only an outward sign of an inward grace. In fact, Huldreich Zwingli put this idea forth for the very first time. Nowhere in church history was such a belief recorded. It only appears in Scripture when one begins with a *great cataract of nonsense*. In other words, it only appears in the New Testament through the imagination of readers influenced by this phenomenon.

C. The Mourner's Seat

1. A method originated during the 1730s or '40s, which was practically forgotten for about a hundred years. It is documented that in 1741 a minister named

Eleazar Wheelock had utilized a technique called the Mourner's Seat. As far as one can tell, he would target sinners by having them sit in the front bench (pew). During the course of his sermon "salvation was looming over their heads." Afterwards, the sinners were typically quite open to counsel and exhortation. In fact, as it turns out they were susceptible to whatever prescription the preaching doctor gave to them. According to eyewitnesses, false conversions were multiplied. Charles Wesley had some experience with this practice, but it took nearly a hundred years for this tactic to take hold.

D. Second Great Awakening (America)

1. In 1801 there was a sensational revival in Cane Ridge, Kentucky that lasted for weeks. Allegedly, people barked, rolled over in the aisles, and became delirious because there were long periods without food in the intense heat. It resulted in the extreme use and abuse of emotions as thousands left Kentucky with wild notions about rebirth. Today it is generally viewed as a mockery to Christianity.
2. The excesses in Cane Ridge produced expectations for preachers and those seeking religious experience. A Second Great Awakening, inferior to the first, was beginning in America. Preachers were enamored with the idea that they could cause (manipulate) people into conversion. One who witnessed such nineteenth century hysteria was J. V. Coombs who complained of the technique:
3. "The appeals, songs, prayers and the suggestion from the preacher drive many into the trance state. I can remember in my boyhood days seeing ten or twenty people lying unconscious upon the floor in the old country church. People called that conversion. Science knows it is mesmeric influence, self-hypnotism ... It is sad that Christianity is compelled to bear the folly of such movements." (J.V. Coombs, *Religious Delusions*, 92ff).
4. The Cane Ridge Meeting became the paradigm for revivalists for decades. A lawyer named Charles Finney came along a generation later to systemize the Cane Ridge experience through the use of Wheelock's Mourner's Seat and Scripture.

E. Charles Finney

1. It wasn't until about 1835 that Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875) emerged to champion the system utilized by Eleazar Wheelock. Shortly after his own conversion he left his law practice and would become a minister, a lecturer, a professor, and a traveling revivalist. He took the Mourner's Seat practice, which he called the Anxious Seat, and developed a theological system around it. Finney was straightforward about his purpose for this technique and wrote the following comment near the end of his life:
2. "The church has always felt it necessary to have something of this kind to answer this very purpose. In the days of the apostles, baptism answered this purpose. The gospel was preached to the people, and then all those who were willing to be on the side of Christ, were called out to be baptized. It held the place that the anxious seat does now as a public manifestation of their determination to be Christians."

3. Finney made many enemies because of this innovation. The Anxious Seat practice was considered to be a psychological technique that manipulated people to make a premature profession of faith. It was an emotional conversion influenced by some of the preachers' animal magnetism. Certainly, it was a precursor to the techniques used by many twentieth century televangelists.
4. In opposition to Finney's movement, John Nevin, a Protestant minister, wrote a book called The Anxious Bench. He intended to protect the denominations from this novel deviation. He called Finney's New Measures "heresy", a "Babel of extravagance", "fanaticism", and "quackery". He also said, "With a whirlwind in full view, we may be exhorted reasonably to consider and stand back from its destructive path." It turns out that Nevin was somewhat prophetic. The system that Finney admitted had replaced biblical baptism, is the vertebrae for the popular plan of salvation that was made normative in the twentieth century by the three Bills --- Billy Sunday, Billy Graham, and Bill Bright.

F. Dwight Moody and R. A. Torrey

1. However, it wasn't until the end of Finney's life that it became evident to everyone and himself that the Anxious Bench approach led to a high fallout rate. By the 1860s Dwight Moody (1837-1899) was the new apostle in American evangelicalism. He took Finney's system and modified it. Instead of calling for a public decision, which tended to be a response under pressure, he asked people to join him and his trained counselors in a room called the Inquiry Room. Though Moody's approach avoided some of the errors encountered in Finneyism, it was still a derivative or stepchild of the Anxious Bench system.
2. In the Inquiry Room the counselors asked the possible convert some questions, taught him from Scripture and then prayed with him. The idea that prayer was at the end of the process had been loosely associated with conversion in the 1700s. By the late 1800s it was standard technique for 'receiving Christ' as Moody's influence spread across both the United States and the United Kingdom. This was where a systematic Sinner's Prayer began but was not called as such until the time of Billy Sunday.
3. R. A. Torrey succeeded Moody's Chicago-based ministry after his death in 1899. He modified Moody's approach to include "on the spot" street conversions. Torrey popularized the idea of instant salvation with no strings attached, even though he never intended as much. Nonetheless, "Receive Christ, now, right here" became part of the norm. From that time on it became more common to think of salvation outside of church or a life of Lordship.

G. Billy Sunday and the Pacific Garden Mission

1. Meanwhile in Chicago, Billy Sunday, a well-known baseball player from Iowa, had been converted in the Pacific Garden Mission. The Mission was Chicago's most successful implementation of Moody's scheme. Eventually, Sunday left baseball to preach. He had great public charm and was one of the first to mix ideas of entertainment with ministry. By the early 1900s he had become a great well-known crusade leader. In his crusades he popularized the Finney-Moody method and included a bit of a circus touch. After fire and brimstone sermons,

heavy moralistic messages with political overtones, and humorous if not outlandish behavior, salvation was offered. Often it was associated with a prayer, and at other times a person was told they were saved because they simply walked down his tabernacle's "sawdust trail" to the front where he was standing. In time people were told they were saved because they publicly shook Sunday's hand, acknowledging that they would follow Christ.

2. Billy Sunday died in 1935 leaving behind hundreds of his imitators. More than anything else, Billy Sunday helped crusades become acceptable to all denominations, which eventually led to a change in their theology. Large religious bodies sold out on their reservations toward these new conversion practices to reap the benefits of potential converts from the crusades because of the allure of success.
3. Both Dwight Moody and Billy Sunday admitted they were somewhat ignorant of church history by the time they had already latched on to their perspectives. This is highly significant because the Anxious Seat phenomenon and offshoot practices were not rooted in Scripture nor in the early church.

H. Billy Graham, Bill Bright

1. Billy Graham and his crusades were the next step in the evolution of things. Billy Graham was converted in 1936 at a Sunday-styled crusade. By the late 1940s it was evident to many that Graham would be the champion of evangelicalism. His crusades summed up everything that had been done from the times of Charles Finney through Billy Sunday except that he added respectability that some of the others lacked. In the 1950s Graham's crusade counselors were using a prayer that had been sporadically used for some time. It began with a prayer from his Four Steps to Peace with God. The original four-step formula came during Billy Sunday's era called in a tract called *Four Things God Wants you to Know*. The altar call system of Graham had been refined by a precise protocol of music, trained counselors and a speaking technique all geared to help people 'accept Christ as Savior.'
2. In the late 1950s Bill Bright came up with the exact form of the currently popular *Four Spiritual Laws* so that the average believer could take the crusade experience into the living room of their neighbor. Of course, this method ended with the Sinner's Prayer. Those who responded to crusades and sermons could have the crusade experience at home when they prayed:
3. "Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be."
4. Later, in 1977 Billy Graham published a now famous work entitled, *How to Be Born Again*. For all the Scripture he used, he never once used the hallmark rebirth event in the second chapter of the book of Acts. The cataract (blind spot) kept him away from the most powerful conversion event in all Scripture. It is my guess that its emphasis on baptism and repentance for the forgiveness of sins was incompatible with his approach.

I. The Living Bible and Beyond

1. By the late 1960s it seemed that nearly every evangelical was printing some form of the Four Spiritual Laws in the last chapter of their books. Even a Bible was printed with this theology inserted into God's Word. Thus, in the 1960s, the Living Bible's translation became the translation of choice for the crusades as follows:
2. "Even in his own land and among his own people, the Jews, he was not accepted. Only a few welcomed and received him. But to all who received him, he gave the right to become children of God. **All they needed to do was to trust him to save them. All those who believe this are reborn!** --not a physical rebirth resulting from human passion or plan--but from the will of God." (John 1:11-13, *Living Bible*)
3. The bolded words have no support at all in the original Greek. They are a blatant insertion placed by presuppositions of the translator, Kenneth Taylor. I'm not sure that even the Jehovah's Witnesses have authored such a barefaced insertion in their corrupt Scriptures. In defense of Taylor's original motives, the Living Bible was created primarily with children in mind. However, the publishers should have corrected the misleading verse in the 1960s. They somewhat cleared it up in the newer LB in the 1990s, only after the damage has been done. For decades mainstream evangelicals were using the LB and circular reasoning to justify such a strong 'trusting moment' as salvation, never knowing their Bible was corrupted.
4. A whole international enterprise of publishers, universities and evangelistic associations were captivated by this method. The phrases, "Receive Christ," and "Trust Jesus as your personal savior," filled airwaves, sermons, and books. James Kennedy's Evangelism Explosion counselor-training program helped make this concept of conversion an international success. **Missionaries everywhere were trained with Sinner's Prayer theology.** Evangelicalism had the numbers, the money, the television personas of Graham and Kennedy and any attempt to purport a different plan of salvation would be decried as cultic and "heresy."
5. Most evangelicals are ignorant of where their practice came from or how Christians from other periods viewed biblical conversion. C.S. Lewis regarded it as chronological snobbery when we don't review our beliefs against the conclusions of others:
6. "Most of all, perhaps, we need intimate knowledge of the past. Not that the past has any magic about it, but because we cannot study the future, and yet need something to set against the present, to remind us that the basic assumptions have been quite different in different periods and that much which seems certain to the uneducated is merely temporary fashion. A man who has lived in many places is not likely to be deceived by the local errors of his native village; the scholar has lived in many times and is therefore in some degree immune from the great cataract of nonsense that pours from the press and the microphone of his own age." (Learning in Wartime, 1939)

7. While most do this unknowingly, evangelicals are skewing church auditoriums all over the world from a clear picture of conversion with a nonsensical practice.
- X. **Newer Cults and Denominations** – rebranding and rebooting old movements.
- A. **2 Community Church** – The "Community Church" movement is a notable development in modern Christianity, emphasizing a non-denominational approach and often focusing on practical, community-based activities.
1. Non-Denominational Focus: Community churches typically do not align with any specific Christian denomination. This allows them to attract a diverse congregation and focus on a broad Christian message rather than specific doctrinal differences.
 2. Community-Centric Approach: These churches place a strong emphasis on serving and engaging with their local communities. This can include outreach programs, charitable work, and community events, aiming to address local needs and foster a sense of belonging.
 3. Inclusive and Welcoming: The movement often emphasizes inclusivity, welcoming individuals from various backgrounds, beliefs, and walks of life. This inclusiveness extends to their worship styles, which can vary and often incorporate contemporary music and multimedia presentations.
 4. Biblical Teaching with Practical Application: While they base their teachings on the Bible, community churches often focus on practical applications of Christian principles in everyday life. This includes messages on personal growth, relationships, and moral living.
 5. Growth and Adaptability: Many community churches have seen significant growth, partly due to their adaptability and relevance to modern life. They often use technology and modern marketing techniques to reach wider audiences.
 6. Leadership and Structure: These churches may have different leadership structures compared to traditional denominations. While they have pastors and church staff, they often encourage active participation and leadership from the congregation.
 7. It's important to note that, while the community church movement shares common characteristics, each community church can be quite unique in its approach and practices, reflecting the needs and culture of its local community. This movement can be seen as a response to the evolving landscape of religious belief and practice, seeking to remain relevant and impactful in a rapidly changing world.
- B. **3 True North** – True North Church is a non-denominational Christian church located in Southern New Jersey.
1. It was founded in 2006 by Pastors Erich and Joanne Eisenhart with the vision of impacting individuals, families, and communities through the power of the Gospel.
 2. The church began with just five families in Mullica Hill, NJ, and has since grown significantly under the leadership of Pastor Jesse Eisenhart, who took over from his father in 2015.

3. The church is part of the **Assemblies of God** and holds specific core beliefs based on the Bible.
 - a) These beliefs include the inspiration of the Scriptures, the deity of Jesus Christ, the fall of man, and the salvation of man through Jesus Christ.
 - b) The church also emphasizes the importance of baptism in water, Holy Communion, the **baptism in the Holy Spirit**, and the physical evidence of this baptism through **speaking in tongues**.
 - c) Sanctification, the mission of the Church, and a divinely called ministry are other key tenets.
 - d) Additionally, the church believes in **divine healing**, the imminent return of Christ (the Blessed Hope), the **Millennial Reign of Christ**, the final judgment, and the expectation of new heavens and a new earth.
- C. **Holiness** – The Holiness Church is a denomination that is part of the Holiness movement. The Church of God, one of the largest Holiness denominations, has over 7 million members worldwide. The Church of the Nazarene, another prominent Holiness denomination, has over 2 million members in over 160 countries.
- D. **6 Scientism** – This is the belief that science and the scientific method are the best or only ways to render truth about the world and reality. It is a position in philosophy, not science, and asserts that the only knowledge we can have about reality are those that have been properly tested in the hard sciences (especially physics and chemistry).
 - a) The term “scientism” was originally defined to mean “methods and attitudes typical of or attributed to natural scientists”. However, some scholars, as well as political and religious leaders, have also adopted it as a pejorative term with the meaning “an exaggerated trust in the efficacy of the methods of natural science applied to all areas of investigation (as in philosophy, the social sciences, and the humanities)”.
 - b) The idea of scientism has been criticized by some scholars, philosophers, and social scientists. They argue that scientism is an exaggerated trust in the efficacy of the methods of natural science applied to all areas of investigation, including philosophy, social sciences, and humanities.
 - c) Scientism, often defined as the belief that scientific knowledge is the most authoritative or valuable form of knowledge, is sometimes seen as a substitute for religion for several reasons:
 - (1) **Authority and Explanation:** Scientism places science as the primary or only source of truth and understanding about the world. This can parallel the role of religion, which also seeks to explain the universe and our place in it. In scientism, scientific methods and evidence replace religious texts and spiritual experiences as the main source of knowledge.
 - (2) **Ethical and Moral Guidance:** Some proponents of scientism argue that science can provide moral and ethical guidance, traditionally a role filled by religion. They suggest that understanding human behavior and the natural world through science leads to more rational and effective moral decisions.

- (3) Meaning and Purpose: For some, scientism offers a sense of purpose and meaning in understanding the natural world and contributing to human progress through scientific endeavors. This aspect can fulfill a similar need in humans that religion often addresses – the need for meaning and purpose in life.
- (4) Community and Identity: The scientific community, with its shared values, practices, and understanding, can offer a sense of belonging and identity. This aspect of scientism can substitute the community aspect of religions, where congregations provide a sense of belonging and shared identity.
- (5) Criticisms and Concerns: Critics of scientism, including some religious and philosophical scholars, argue that it overlooks other valid forms of knowledge and human experience, such as moral intuition, artistic expression, and spiritual insight. They contend that scientism can become dogmatic, dismissing the value of these other forms of understanding.
- (6) Relation to Atheism and Secularism: Scientism is often associated with atheism and secularism. It is seen as a worldview that aligns with these perspectives by rejecting supernatural explanations or divine authorities, further positioning it as an alternative to traditional religious beliefs.
- (7) Diverse Perspectives within Christianity: Within Christianity, views on scientism vary. Some Christians see it as compatible with their faith, emphasizing that scientific understanding deepens their appreciation of God's creation. Others, however, view scientism as conflicting with Christian beliefs, particularly when it dismisses the possibility of the supernatural or divine revelation.

d) In summary, **scientism** is perceived as a substitute for religion by some due to its role in providing explanations about the universe, offering ethical guidance, giving a sense of purpose and community, and often aligning with secular or atheistic perspectives. However, it's also subject to criticism for potentially overlooking or undervaluing non-scientific forms of knowledge and experience.

E. **5 Nones** – The term "nones" refers to people who do not identify with any particular religion, church, or theological doctrine. This group has been growing in various parts of the world, particularly in more secular societies. Here are key aspects to understand about the "nones":

- 1. Diverse Beliefs and Attitudes: The "nones" are a diverse group. Some may be atheists or agnostics, while others believe in a higher power or spiritual force but do not subscribe to a specific religion. This category also includes people who are spiritual but not religious, meaning they engage in spiritual practices or hold spiritual beliefs without adhering to the doctrines of organized religion.

2. Reasons for Disaffiliation: The reasons for not identifying with a religion are varied. Some individuals may have philosophical or intellectual disagreements with religious teachings. Others might be disillusioned by institutional aspects of religion, such as clerical abuse scandals or perceived hypocrisy within religious organizations. Additionally, some people may feel that traditional religious practices and beliefs do not resonate with their personal experiences or modern societal values.
3. Demographic Trends: Research often shows that younger generations are more likely to be "nones." This trend is partly attributed to societal shifts towards secularization and the availability of diverse worldviews and philosophies due to globalization and the internet.
4. Cultural and Geographical Variations: The prevalence and characteristics of "nones" vary significantly across different cultures and regions. In some countries, particularly in Western Europe and North America, the percentage of "nones" is quite high and growing. In other parts of the world, religion remains a central part of cultural identity, and the number of "nones" is relatively low.
5. Impact on Society and Culture: The rise of the "nones" can have significant implications for society and culture. It may influence political and social attitudes, educational policies, and the role of religion in public life. For instance, increasing secularization may lead to more secular policies and a greater emphasis on pluralism and inclusivity in public discourse.
6. Spiritual but Not Religious: Some "nones" maintain a strong sense of spirituality, seeking personal growth and understanding through meditation, nature, art, and personal reflection. This form of spirituality is often more individualistic and less dogmatic than traditional religious practices.
7. Relationship with Organized Religion: While "nones" do not identify with organized religion, their attitudes towards it can range from indifferent or agnostic to actively critical. Some may participate in religious rituals for cultural or familial reasons despite not subscribing to the faith.
8. In summary, the "nones" represent a significant and growing demographic that is reshaping the religious and spiritual landscape. Their diverse beliefs and reasons for disaffiliation from organized religion reflect broader cultural and societal shifts, including secularization, individualism, and the questioning of traditional institutions.
9. **Are these "nones" more likely to be influenced by cults or cult-like ideologies like "wokeism"?** – The relationship between the "nones" (those who do not affiliate with any religion) and their susceptibility to cults or cult-like ideologies is complex and varies based on individual circumstances. There isn't a straightforward answer, but several factors can be considered:
 - a) Seeking Community and Meaning: One reason individuals might be attracted to cults is the human desire for community and a sense of belonging. "Nones," particularly those who feel a lack of connection or purpose, might be drawn to groups that offer a strong sense of community and clear answers to life's big questions.

- b) Skepticism Towards Traditional Institutions: "Nones" often exhibit skepticism towards traditional institutions, including religious ones. This skepticism might make them wary of all organized groups, including cults. However, it might also lead them to alternative groups that appear to challenge the status quo, which can include cult-like ideologies.
 - c) Individualism and Personal Beliefs: Many "nones" value individualism and personal exploration in spiritual or philosophical matters. This individualistic approach can provide resilience against the conformist and authoritarian tendencies of cults. On the other hand, it can also lead to a solitary search for meaning, which might make some susceptible to the promises of a charismatic leader or group.
 - d) Critical Thinking and Education: People who are well-educated and possess strong critical thinking skills are generally less susceptible to the manipulative tactics of cults. Since "nones" often include individuals who critically evaluate religious and spiritual claims, this critical mindset can offer some protection against cult-like ideologies.
 - e) Nature of Cult Recruitment: Cults often target individuals in transitional or vulnerable phases of their lives, regardless of their religious affiliation. Those who are experiencing personal crises, major life changes, or feelings of disillusionment might be more susceptible, whether they are "nones" or not.
 - f) Varied Definitions of Cults: It's important to note that the term "cult" can be subjective and is used in various ways. While it often refers to groups with extreme or harmful beliefs and practices, it can also be applied more broadly to any group with intense devotion to a particular idea or leader.
 - g) Increased Access to Information: In the digital age, many "nones" have access to a wealth of information and diverse viewpoints, which can provide a buffer against the insular and often manipulative information control typical of cults.
10. In conclusion, while "nones" might be seeking community or deeper meaning, which could potentially make them targets for cults, many factors, such as skepticism towards traditional institutions, individualistic values, critical thinking skills, and access to diverse information, can also provide them with resilience against cult-like ideologies. Like any demographic, the "nones" are not a monolithic group, and their susceptibility to cults would depend on a variety of individual factors.

F. **4 Deliverance** – The "deliverance" movement refers to a trend within certain segments of Christianity, particularly within Pentecostal and Charismatic circles, that emphasizes the practice of **deliverance ministry**. This practice involves the casting out of demons or evil spirits believed to be causing physical, emotional, or spiritual harm to individuals. Here are some key aspects of the deliverance movement:

1. Biblical Foundations: The deliverance movement draws its practices and beliefs from various passages in the Bible, particularly the New Testament, where Jesus

and the Apostles are depicted as casting out demons. These passages are seen as precedents for the ministry of deliverance.

2. Focus on Spiritual Warfare: A central tenet of the deliverance movement is the belief in spiritual warfare between the forces of God and the forces of evil (Satan and his demons). Deliverance ministry is seen as a crucial aspect of this warfare, helping individuals to be freed from demonic influence or oppression.
3. Symptoms of Demonic Influence: Proponents of deliverance ministry often believe that a wide range of problems, including certain illnesses, mental health issues, addictions, and various life struggles, can be the result of demonic influence. Deliverance is sought to address these issues.
4. Methods of Deliverance: Practices within deliverance ministry can vary but often include prayer, the use of religious symbols or artifacts, speaking in tongues, and commanding the demons to leave in the name of Jesus. The approach is often highly personal, and the intensity of the methods can vary.
5. Controversy and Criticism: The deliverance movement has been subject to criticism and controversy. Critics, including some within the broader Christian community, argue that the movement can lead to the misdiagnosis of mental health issues, potentially causing harm by diverting people from appropriate medical or psychological treatment. There are also concerns about the potential for spiritual abuse and manipulation.
6. Global Reach and Variation: The deliverance movement is not limited to a single denomination or geographic region. It has a significant presence in various parts of the world, particularly in Africa, Latin America, and some parts of North America and Europe. Practices and beliefs can vary significantly depending on cultural and denominational contexts.
7. Integration with Other Christian Practices: In many churches that participate in the deliverance movement, this ministry is integrated with other aspects of Christian worship and practice, such as prayer, preaching, and the sacraments.
8. Growing Popularity in Some Circles: Despite controversies, the deliverance movement has grown in popularity in certain circles, often appealing to individuals seeking direct and powerful experiences of God's intervention in their lives.
9. In summary, the deliverance movement in Christianity emphasizes the practice of casting out demons as a form of spiritual warfare and healing. While it finds support in certain biblical narratives and has a significant following, particularly in Pentecostal and Charismatic circles, it also faces criticism for its approaches and potential negative impacts. The movement highlights the diversity and complexity within contemporary Christian practices and beliefs.

G. Messianic Groups

1. Messianic Judaism: This is a religious movement that combines Christianity—most importantly, the belief that Jesus is the Messiah—with elements of Judaism and Jewish tradition. Its followers, known as Messianic Jews, consider themselves Jewish Christians. They observe both Jewish and Christian practices,

such as celebrating Jewish festivals along with Christian ones like Easter and Christmas.

2. Jews for Jesus: Founded in 1973, Jews for Jesus is one of the more well-known Messianic Jewish organizations. It specifically focuses on evangelism—particularly towards Jewish people—and maintains that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. They engage in outreach efforts to spread their belief in Jesus as the Messiah to the Jewish community.
3. Hebrew Christians: This term refers to Jews who have accepted Christ as the Messiah but still retain their cultural and ethnic identity as Jews. While similar to Messianic Jews, Hebrew Christians may not necessarily adopt Jewish rituals in their worship and might integrate more fully into traditional Christian denominations.
4. Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC): Established in the 1970s, the UMJC seeks to strengthen the Messianic Jewish community. They emphasize the importance of maintaining a Jewish lifestyle while believing in Jesus as the Messiah.
5. Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA): This organization represents a significant number of Messianic Jews in America. It focuses on uniting Jewish people who believe in Jesus, encouraging them to retain a strong Jewish identity in their faith in Christ.
6. Chosen People Ministries: Founded in 1894, this is one of the oldest Messianic organizations. It focuses on evangelism among Jewish people and provides community and worship services in a Jewish cultural context while acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah.
7. Black Israelites: The Black Israelite movement, also known as the Black Hebrew Israelite movement, encompasses various groups of African Americans who believe that they are the descendants of the ancient Israelites. This movement is diverse and not monolithic, with different groups holding a range of beliefs and practices. Here are some key points to understand about the Black Israelite movement:
 - a) Origins and Development: The movement originated in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It emerged as a response to the racial discrimination and identity struggles faced by African Americans. Early founders and leaders, like Frank Cherry and William Saunders Crowdy, claimed that African Americans were the true descendants of the Hebrews in the Bible.
 - b) Beliefs: The core belief of the movement is that African Americans, and sometimes other groups within the African diaspora, are the true descendants of the Biblical Israelites. This belief is used to reinterpret the Bible and historical events, often seeing the slavery and oppression of Black people as a parallel to the Israelites' enslavement and suffering in Egypt.
 - c) Diversity within the Movement: There is significant diversity within the Black Israelite movement. Some groups adhere closely to the teachings

of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), observing the Sabbath, dietary laws, and Jewish holidays. Others incorporate elements of Christianity, including the New Testament. Beliefs and practices can vary widely from group to group.

- d) Cultural and Religious Practices: In aligning themselves with what they believe to be their Israelite heritage, members of these groups often adopt Hebrew names, observe Jewish holidays, and adhere to certain dietary laws. Practices such as wearing specific types of clothing and the use of certain symbols are also common.
- e) Views on Racism and Social Justice: Many in the Black Israelite movement view their identity as a means to confront and address the history of racism and discrimination against African Americans. They often emphasize empowerment, racial pride, and social justice within the context of their religious beliefs.
- f) Controversy and Criticism: Some factions within the movement have been criticized for holding extremist views, including anti-Semitic and racist beliefs. These groups are often the most vocal and visible, leading to a public perception of the movement as being inherently radical or hate-based, though this does not represent the majority of those who identify with the broader Black Israelite belief system.
- g) Recognition and Relationship with Judaism: The Black Israelite movement is distinct from mainstream Jewish communities and is not recognized as Jewish by the larger Jewish community. Their beliefs and practices are self-identified and self-developed, separate from traditional Jewish theology and practice.
- h) Community and Identity: For many adherents, the Black Israelite identity provides a sense of community, heritage, and empowerment.
- i) Due to extremist views: it can be considered more cultish than a real religion with biblical views.

H. **7 Cafeteria Christianity** – "Cafeteria Christianity" is a term used to describe a form of religious belief and practice in which individuals pick and choose which elements of Christian doctrine, ethics, and practices they accept, much like selecting food in a cafeteria. This approach is characterized by its selective and individualistic nature. Here are some key aspects of this phenomenon:

1. Selective Adherence: Cafeteria Christians may embrace certain teachings of Christianity that resonate with them personally while disregarding others that they find difficult, irrelevant, or outdated. This selective adherence can apply to beliefs, moral teachings, religious practices, or aspects of church tradition.
2. Individualism: At the core of Cafeteria Christianity is a focus on individual choice and interpretation. Adherents may prioritize personal understanding and experience over traditional or communal interpretations of Christian teachings.
3. Response to Modernity and Pluralism: The rise of Cafeteria Christianity is often seen as a response to the pluralistic and secular nature of modern society, where individuals are exposed to a wide range of beliefs and values. In this

context, some Christians might feel more **comfortable** adopting an approach that allows them to reconcile their faith with contemporary cultural and ethical standards.

4. Criticism from Traditionalists: This approach is often criticized by those who adhere to a more traditional or orthodox interpretation of Christianity. Critics argue that Cafeteria Christianity **undermines the authority of scripture** and tradition, leading to a **diluted or distorted understanding of the faith**.
5. Theological and Moral Implications: Cafeteria Christianity raises questions about the nature of **religious authority**, interpretation of scripture, and the formation of moral and ethical beliefs. It challenges the notion of a monolithic or uniform Christianity, highlighting the diversity within the faith.
6. Eclecticism and Syncretism: This phenomenon can sometimes overlap with religious *eclecticism* or *syncretism*, where beliefs and practices from other religions or philosophies are **incorporated** into an individual's Christian practice.
7. Common in Western Christianity: Cafeteria Christianity is particularly noted in Western societies, where **individualism and subjective experience are highly valued**, and where there is significant religious freedom and diversity.
8. Impact on Religious Communities: This trend can impact Christian communities, leading to debates over doctrine, the role of the church, and how to address the needs of believers who may not fully adhere to traditional teachings.
9. In summary, Cafeteria Christianity reflects a highly individualistic approach to faith, where adherents pick and choose aspects of Christian doctrine and practice to follow.
 - a) This phenomenon highlights the tension between traditional religious authority and the desire for personal autonomy in matters of faith, particularly in modern, pluralistic societies.
 - b) It is a subject of debate within Christian communities, touching on broader issues of religious interpretation, authority, and the nature of belief.

XI. The Simplicity of The Gospel of Jesus Christ

- A. **HEAR THE GOSPEL** ""Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)
- B. **BELIEVE JESUS TO BE THE SON OF GOD**: "Then Philip said, 'If you believe with all you heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'" (Acts 8:37)
- C. **REPENT OF YOUR SINS**: ""Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38)
- D. **CONFESS JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD**: "And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'" (Acts 8:37)
- E. **BE BAPTIZED (IMMERSED) IN WATER**: "...both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him" (Acts 8:38)
- F. **LIFE-LONG FAITHFULNESS IS REQUIRED**: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." (Matthew 24:13)
- G. **WHAT HINDERS YOU FROM BEING JUST A CHRISTIAN?**