

World Religions

Outline:

- A. Definitions and Intro to the Topic.
- B. Christianity. What are we comparing these religions to?
 - 1. The Christian World View

Our outline of world religions: from those most distant in world view from Christianity to those most similar to Christianity.

- C. Eastern Religions
 - 1. Hinduism
 - 2. Buddhism
 - 3. Jaina, Taoism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Shinto
 - 4. New Age
- D. Other Monotheisms: Islam, Judaism, Bahai
- E. Scientology, Christian Science and other rather strange religions
- F. Pseudo-Christian Religions
 - 1. Mormonism
 - 2. Jehovah's Witness
- G. Other Christian Movements We Should Be Aware Of
 - 1. Roman Catholicism
 - 2. Seventh Day Adventism
 - 3. Pentacostalism

Suggested Reading:

The Universe Next Door. James Sire Intersivarsity Press

The Illustrated Guide to World Religions by Michael D. Coogan Oxford University Press.

Essay: Apologetics and the Christian World View J. Oakes

http://www.evidenceforchristianity.org/index.php?option=com_custom_content&task=view&id=5125

The Compact Guide to World Religions Dean C. Halverson.

Answering Islam Geissler and Saleeb

Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus Brown

The Qur'an

Mormonism: What Does the Evidence and Testimony Reveal? John Oakes

A. Definitions and Introduction to World Religions.

Religion:

Latin Comes from the word ligate which means to bind or tie. Meaning: to tie to the gods/ to connect with a higher power.

Webster: Any system of faith or worship: the outward manifestation of belief in a supreme or superior being.

From my SCI 110 lecture:

Religion is a belief in something

The belief is not necessarily substantiated by physical or material evidence

Religious knowledge is obtained through holy writings, authority, revelations and religious experiences

Religious believers have faith in such knowledge

Practical definition: I don't know what it is, but I can sure tell if it is one.

We will work without a set definition. For example, philosophy is not religion.

Are Buddhism, and Confucianism religions in that case?

We will NOT cover Postmodernism, Secular Humanism, Scientism/naturalism, Existentialism, Marxism Stoicism, Epicureanism, Neo-Platonism, etc. because these are philosophical or social movements.

There are so many other religions. Iglesia de Cristo (Philippines) Falun Gong (China) Unification Church (Sun Myung Moon) Paganism/Wicca We cannot consider them all. Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism,

What about "cults?"

Webster: 1. A cult is a particular ritual or system of worship. 2. Involves devoted or extravagant homage or adoration of some figure.

In American parlance the word cult has a very strong negative connotation.

The problem is that it is not well-defined and can be used as a weapon. Are the moonies a cult? Falun Gong? (denounced as an "evil cult" by Chinese government in 1999) Mormons?

We will avoid using the word cult in this class.

Other useful definitions:

Animism: Anima = spirit. A religious system which includes the belief that spirits inhabit inanimate objects and phenomena.

Polytheism: Poly = many. A belief that the universe is governed by a variety of gods.

Pantheism: Pan = all. A belief that a spirit fills the universe. In a sense, God is the universe and the universe is God.

Deism: A belief in a distant, uninvolved God who is creator, but does not interact with his creation. (Epicureanism)

Monotheism: A belief that the universe is created/governed by a single omnipotent/omniscient/omnipresent spiritual being.

Dualism: A belief that the universe is governed by nearly equally matched forces of good and evil. (Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Confucianism?)

Asceticism: a belief or practice that enlightenment or a close relationship with deity is obtained by an extreme denial of normal worldly pleasures and possessions. Associated with monasteries, monks, nuns and the like.

Mysticism: a belief or practice (which has been incorporated into all major world religions) which sees enlightenment and spiritual power coming through contemplation/meditation/direct personal experience of God. In some cases, such enlightenment is even gained through use of drugs, drumming, dance, etc. A highly individualized form of religion.

One important philosophy in our postmodern world:

All religions are more or less the same thing. They all are a different road to the same thing: finding and expressing the god-likeness in ourselves.

First, there is a grain of truth there. Why?

All man-made religion contains truth.

Similar ethical/moral stance? Some parallels for sure

Even some parallel thinking about God.

The Greeks discovered monotheism and even Hinduism has moved in that direction. New Age, and other religions “hijack” Christian ideas.

But, we will see that theologically, when we look at world view, this view makes no sense at all. If Hinduism is true, then Jesus is a liar, and a dangerous man. If

Christianity is true, then Muhammad was a liar and a deceiver. If Buddhism is true, then Christianity and Christian history makes no sense.

- ◆ **If Genesis 1:1 is true, then animism, polytheism, pantheism, dualism, naturalism, deism, postmodernism and every other ism is false.**
- ◆ **Conflicting world views cannot be accommodated with one another. Biblical theism is incompatible with all these other world views.**

How to treat other religions in general?

Find common ground.

Give respect where respect is due.

Acknowledge the good. Do not attack—especially do not attack those they honor greatly.

Introduce them to the Christian world view and begin to help them see where the fundamental differences lie.

Note: this is an outline of what Paul did in Acts 17.

- ◆ **Acts 17:16-34 Paul shares the gospel by arguing for the Christian World View.**
 - v. 22-23 Paul finds common ground.
 - v. 24-28 Paul argues for the superiority and the truth of the Christian world view as opposed to Epicureanism/panentheism and Stoicism/deism
 - v. 28 Paul quotes from Aretas a Stoic philosopher. “For we are his offspring.”
 - v. 29-31 Having laid the groundwork, Paul points them to Jesus.
 - v. 32-34 Some, but not all were converted.
- ◆ **God is Creator. He exists outside creation.**
 - Disproves pantheism/Stoicism.
- ◆ **God is close to us.**
 - Disproves deism/Epicureanism.
- ◆ **God is personal and has given us an individual purpose.**
- ◆ **God will bring all of us to judgment. Evil will be defeated**
 - Disproves dualism/Gnosticism.

**B. Christianity. What are we comparing these religions to?
The Christian World View**

Next: What is Christianity? The Christian world view.

What is a “Worldview”?

Quite simply, one's world view is the perspective one uses to process and interpret information received about the world. James W. Sire¹ put it this way, "A world view is a set of presuppositions (ie. assumptions) which we hold about the basic makeup of our world."

A. *Worldview definition*: “A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.” (James Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 4th ed., 2004)

Resources:

Sire, James W. *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*. 4th ed. Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter Varsity Press, 2004.

Copan, Paul. *True for You, But Not for Me*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1998.

N. T. Wright. *Simply Christian*. HarperOne 2006.

Alister McGrath. *Theology: The Basics*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2004.

1. Up to a point, we can understand Christian Theology by using Comparative Theology. From other religions, we can learn what God is **not**.

2. Until the 1960's or so, one could assume that nearly anyone we shared with had a Christian/theistic perspective, including the idea that there is a source of ultimate authority.

3. All this has changed. Today, when you share with people, you may come across a naturalist, a Buddhist pantheist, a Postmodern relativist or a New Age pantheist/dualist/mysticist/animist.

4. Yet, ironically, the American version of these things inevitably have hijacked much of Christian theology into their own personal theology.

-the idea that God is personal

The idea that God, if he exists, ought to be loving

-the idea that life really has purpose

-the idea that God is essentially good

-the idea that there is moral “good” and an ethical mandate to do good.

The idea that individual rights are “natural.”

¹ James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door* (InterVarsity Press, 1997)

-the idea that justice will prevail.

Much or all of which is not supported by the world view that they may think they believe in. These are self-contradictory beliefs which we ought to confront!

It is all pretty confusing!!!

My criteria for a "good" world view.

A. It is true. In other words, this world view is consistent with reality. It is consistent with what we know to be true based on our own experience. (It matches what we know about human beings, what we know from science, it works)

B. It answers satisfactorily the questions people really want answered.

from *The Universe Next Door*, slightly reworded:

1. What is prime reality? (or What is the ultimate cause? or What is the nature of God?)
2. What is the nature of external reality-the world around us?
3. What is a human being?
4. What happens to a person at death?
5. Why is it possible for us to know anything at all?
6. How do we know what is right and wrong?
7. What is the meaning of human history?

To these let me add:

8. What is my purpose?
9. What is our value?
10. What is the nature of my relationship, with the "prime reality?"

C. It causes those who hold to it to be better people than they would otherwise have been if they held to competing alternative world views.

How do we define better? We can probably use those criteria that most world religions have in common, at least in theory.

So, what is the Christian world view? I will attempt to describe it by a series of propositions, each of which will be expanded somewhat, using biblical passages by way of support.

1. The physical world is: a. real b. created out of nothing (ex nihilo) and c. essentially good.

Genesis chapters 1-3 is in my opinion the most brilliant little piece of philosophy I have ever read. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1). As the Hebrew writer put it (Hebrews 1:3), “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.” If this statement is true, then animism, polytheism, pantheism, dualism, naturalism, nihilism, and postmodernism are all proved untrue. Just as significant to the Christian world view is this: not only did God create the physical universe, but this creation was essentially good. The way God puts it in **Genesis 1:31, “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”** Eastern philosophy has the physical world to be an ephemeral illusion. Greek philosophy agrees, adding that the physical world is decaying and essentially evil. Naturalism agrees that it is real, but denies that there is a supernatural reality which created it. It certainly is not “good,” as such a description is meaningless in a random accidental universe. When God says his creation was good in its entirety, this does not deny the existence of evil. The question of evil will be addressed below.

2. There exists a parallel unseen spiritual reality which is not limited to or defined by the physical reality. Human beings have a spiritual aspect to their nature.

The fact that God, one who is “invisible,” created the universe establishes that there is a non-physical reality which is at least in some sense greater than the physical. The physical universe is real, but it is not all there is. Jesus confirmed this idea. **“God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24)** Acknowledging that there is a spiritual reality is not the same as dualism. **Dualism** has the world being governed by more or less evenly matched forces of good and evil. It is also not naturalistic monism, which denies the existence of spiritual reality entirely. We have a soul and a spirit. That we are created **“in the image of God” (Genesis 1:27)** is a spiritual rather than a physical claim. It is not a statement of our equality with God, but rather a description of our spiritual nature. **I have a body, but I am not a body. “I” exist, and “I” am not defined by the chemicals which compose my body.** Consciousness is not a mere epiphenomenon as naturalism requires. Our God-likeness has to do with our spiritual nature, our possession of a soul, our inherent understanding of good and evil, our ability to create and to love.

3. The creator of both the physical and spiritual realm is the God who is revealed and who reveals himself in the Bible.

Not only did God create the physical universe (Genesis 1), he also created the spiritual—the heavenly realms. In Colossians **1:15-16 Paul says of Jesus, “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things**

were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers of rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. God has made himself known to his people “from what has been made.” (Romans 1:20), but he has also revealed himself and his will in the Hebrew and Greek scripture. Most particularly, he has revealed himself through his Son, Jesus Christ; the image of God. “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.” (Hebrews 1:1-2). No one has ever seen God, but God the only Son who is at the Father’s side, has made him know.” (John 1:18) God has revealed himself to us through creation, through the Old and New Testaments and through the person Jesus Christ.

4. Human beings have both a physical and a spiritual nature, but the spiritual nature is more essential as it is eternal.

Our physical nature is obviously more apparent to us than our spiritual nature, but this fact is deceptive when compared to our ultimate reality. **Like Jesus said, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell.” (Luke 12:4-5)** As Paul put it, “We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. **For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:18)**

5. God cannot be easily defined but he can be characterized by certain qualities. God is love, God is just, God is holy, God is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent.

What God is he is fully and infinitely. God is not merely loving: he is love. Love defines and determines all his actions toward us. From a human perspective, this seems to conflict with his justice and his holiness. God is not merely just: he is justice. He is incapable of an unjust act, even if we feel his love and his justice are in apparent conflict. God is holy, in him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). These are facts about God. How does this affect our world view? In every way. Every act in our life and in the lives of our neighbors is subject to the justice of God. This has a profound effect of how we view our own lives and how we should respond to injustice. “Do not take revenge,... ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.” If God really is love, then this has an unfathomable effect on how we understand the events which surround our lives. All of them are either caused or permitted by an omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent God who acts toward all out of love.

6. Although all God’s creation, including the physical world is good, evil does exist. Such evil is the result of freedom of will given to created beings and their subsequent decision to use that freedom to “sin” (defined as transgressing the will of God).

This brings us back to Genesis. The story of Adam and Eve is the story of us. God gave us everything for our pleasure and enjoyment. Why? Because he loves us and

because he wants us to love him. But what did we all do? We rebelled and chose to do things which are unholy. **As Augustine put it, evil is not a thing in and of itself. If it were, that would be dualism. Rather evil is good which has been corrupted by free moral agents. Something which was created for good purposes is turned for evil.** Nothing God created is evil, but some of what God created is capable of doing evil. God gave us a choice. He asks us to **“choose life” (Deuteronomy 30:19)**, but many of us choose rebellion. The physical laws which are discoverable by science are not the only “natural laws.” There are moral laws as well, and they are as inescapable as the law of gravity. Rebellion against God’s holiness produces suffering in this world (Exodus 20:5-6), both on those who sin and on those around them. This is the answer to the “problem” of pain, suffering and evil.

7. Because of God’s justice and his holiness, those who choose to rebel against him will ultimately be judged and separated from God for eternity.

Not only does our choice to rebel and to sin bring on temporary physical and emotional suffering in this life, it also brings judgment in the world to come. “For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat.” (Romans 14:10) “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Hebrews 10:30-31). God cannot be mocked. He is patient and kind, and he wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4), but “the wages of sin is death.” Again, as with all the qualities of God, this fact is unavoidable. God does not change or compromise his holiness. **It has been said that God does not send people to hell, but he accepts their choice to rebel and be eternally separated from him.**

8. The solution to evil and its eternal consequences is provided by God through the atoning substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

This is the essence of the gospel. As was prophesied, “the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6) “By his wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5). “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8). God’s holiness and justice were not superseded or violated in this substitutionary death. “He did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies the man who has faith in Jesus.” (Romans 3:26). Biblically, this is a theological fact. How does this affect one’s world view? If this is true, then everything is different. Suffering makes sense. The existence of evil makes sense. Our innate and universal sense of justice makes sense as well. Yet, we can live as free men and women, not using our freedom as an excuse to do evil, but using this gift of freedom to love and serve others (paraphrasing Galatians 5:13-15) without living in constant fear of judgment when we fall short, as we inevitably will do.

Is it true?

Does it answer the questions people really care about?

Does accepting and adhering to this world view make us better than we otherwise would have been if we accepted a competing world view?

We will answer this, not by analyzing Christianity now, but by comparing it to other world religions.

C. Eastern Religions

1. Hinduism

2. Buddhism

3. Jaina, Taoism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Shinto

4. New Age

Eastern Religions: Pantheism. (except for Confucianism (dualist?), Shinto (animist?))

Pantheism. The universe is God, God is the universe. Therefore you are God and God is you. Pan all Theism God.

This is also called monism. (as opposed to dualism or theism)

One thing for sure, if this is true, then the Bible is not!!!

Genesis 1:1 Hebrews 11:3

God created the universe—both heaven and earth (Col 1:16)

The universe definitely is not God!

You definitely are not God!

1. Hinduism.

Founder: no one individual is responsible for founding this religion.

Hinduism is the national religion of India. Certain parts of the world which have come under strong political influence by the Indian culture contain elements of Hinduism in their religion. Early on, Hinduism was quite animistic. Later, it evolved into more of a pantheistic religion. It has always been polytheistic. It is very difficult to separate the caste system in India from the religious system of Hinduism because of its relationship to the reincarnation doctrine. Nevertheless, many “gurus” have attempted to transplant a westernized form of Hinduism in the western world (Transcendental Meditation, Hare Krishnas, guru Maharaj Ji, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (Transcendental Meditation) Hatha Yoga, etc....) As have Westerners (transcendentalism, Theosophy (Madame Blavatsky), Urantia, New Age, etc...) There is a strong tendency toward mysticism in most sects of Hinduism.

The principle religion of India.

Approximately 1,000,000,000 adherents.

Began as animism/polytheism

Evolved into polytheism/pantheism

Syncretistic. Hinduism is not really a single religion.

Principle gods in Hinduism. All are emanations of Brahman

Brahma Chief god of the pantheon.

**Shiva God of destruction. Worshipped
as a male phalus.**

Vishnu Preserver and protector.

Krishna The eighth emanation of Vishnu.

Rama Seventh incarnation of Vishnu. Hero of the Ramayana.

Devi Chief female deity. The power (shakti) that animates the cosmos.

Lakshmi Female consort of Vishnu. Goddess of prosperity.

Ganesh Elephant god. God of wisdom and intellect.

Shakti The divine mother

Kali Avatar of Shakti

Scriptures:

1. **Four Vedas.** Poems from around 1500-1200 BC. Originally transmitted orally. Written down around 500 BC. Oldest surviving manuscript 1300 AD. Very strong element of animism and polytheism. Thirty-three main gods. Gods of places and things. Nature worship. Rig Veda (1028 hymns in 10 books) Sama Veda (songs sung during sacrifices) Yajur Veda (priestly system), Atharva Veda.
2. **Brahmanas.** 1000-500 BC. These introduced the priestly system and the caste system. Explanations and instructions for sacrificial rituals.
3. **Upanishads.** 800-500 BC. 108 instructional religious poems. Philosophical treatises. More emphasis on meditation. Brahman has evolved into a pantheistic “god.” rather than an individual. Brahman the spiritual reality behind the unreal physical world. The world we observe is *maya*—an illusion. The soul is *Atman*, and Atman is part of Brahman. Therefore, we are in a sense deity. The concept of *karma* is developed, related to the concept of sin. Karma is a works salvation concept. Reincarnation became part of Hinduism. Note: none of this was in the Vedas.
4. **Baghavad Gita, Ramayana, etc.,** Epic poems from 200BC – 200 AD. At this point, two main gods, in addition to Brahman emerge in Hinduism. These are Vishnu and Shiva. A strong sensual element emerges. Vishnu and Shiva have undergone various incarnations. This is what the epics are about. Vishnu was incarnated as Rama and as Krishna. The stories are strongly mythological in tone, containing such things as monkey-people, gods intervening in wars (as in Greek mythology) and the like.
5. **Sutras.** Rules, doctrines, rituals, commentaries on the Vedas. Attempting to bring together the various aspects of Hinduism.
6. **Puranas.** The Bible of the common people of India. Various myths, fables and legends concerning local gods and the like. Totally unbelievable. You will not find Hindus in the Western world using these.

Important words/concepts for understanding Hinduism:

Brahman universal soul

Atman soul, essence atman is part of a brahman.

Maya illusion

Reincarnation a disincarnated soul enters a new body, starting a new existence (samsara)

Shakti power

Karma a principle of cause and effect

Nirvana oneness with brahman

Dharma righteousness, teaching

Clearly, Hinduism can be a confusing religion. The chief aspects to be aware of in Western world are reincarnation, pantheism, meditation and mysticism.

The Hindu World View:

Maya. The physical world is an illusion. The physical world is evil. Suffering is an illusion.

Brahman. Universal soul. Pantheism.

Atman (soul). When we die, atman is swallowed up in Brahman

The goal: Escape cycle of karma and reincarnation

Nirvana; oneness with the universal soul which is within yourself.

The Hindu world view has man looking inward, not outward.

The Caste System:

A historical remnant of the Vedic system and the interaction between the Aryans and the natives of the subcontinent

Brahmins the priestly (Aryan) class

Kshatriyas The ruling class. Kings, landlords, warriors.

Vaishyas merchants

Shudras servant/trade classes

Untouchables literally out castes. No caste Dhalit the most common name in India.

Question: Did the caste system create Hinduism or did Hinduism create the caste system?

Question? Can Hinduism exist without the caste system? Can real Hinduism exist outside India?

Summary:

1. Hindu scriptures are not defensible as “inspired” in the same sense as the Bible. They contain much of what is clearly myth, fable etc.
2. One will find a significant amount of self-contradiction in Hindu faith as the religion has evolved extremely over time.

3. Although they may sound very pious, the essence of Hinduism is self-centered, as Hindus believe they are deity. There is a strong emphasis on self-realization.
4. The New Age movement is essentially an offshoot of Hindu religion.

Hinduism in the West:

Yogic practices Hatha Yoga

Gurus (teacher), yogi (practitioners), sadhu (holy men)

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi Transcendental Meditation

Hare Krishna

Hinduism and Time/ Hindu Cosmology

Time is cyclic. There is a “wheel of time.”

World is cyclically created by Brahma, sustained by Vishnu and destroyed by Shiva.

Creative/destructive cycles called Yugas

One cycle of time is a maha yuga = 4,320,000 years

- Satya yuga (Krita yuga):- 1,728,000 Human years (already past)
- Treta yuga:- 1,296,000 Human years (already past)
- Dwapar yuga:- 864,000 Human years (already past)
- Kali yuga:- 432,000 Human years (5,110 years have passed; 426,890 years remain). *Kaliyuga* started in 3,102 B.C.; CE 2008 corresponds to *Kaliyuga* year 5,110

1000 maha yuga = 1 brahma “day” = 1 kalpa

2 kalpa = 1 full brahma day

365 brahma days = 1 brahma year = 1 full cycle = 311 trillion years

One full cycle = 100 “Brahma years” 311 trillion years.

Then Brahma himself dies and is reborn

Many different levels of heavens/worlds/hells

These levels are horizontal (flat)

The physical world is illusory and it is evil

Lower levels are even more evil than ours

Popular Hindu Cosmology: **The earth is on the back of four elephants standing on top of a turtle, encircled by a serpent, swimming in a sea of milk...**

The Sutras

Is the Hindu World View a good one?

Is it true?

Hindu cosmology (cyclic time, earth on the back of four elephants on a turtle swimming in a bowl of milk) is patently false.

The physical world is real and it is good.

Evil is NOT an illusion

Does it answer the important questions?

It does better than postmodernism or naturalism! But what is our purpose?

To disappear? What is our value, as individuals? None?

Does accepting this world view make one a better person?

- Debatable. Better than naturalism. Karma. Self-focus and dispassion are not helpful.
- Suffering is not real.
- Evil is not real.

Note: Christian groups do the lion's share of benevolent work in India. Why? Because we have a better world view! The Christian response to suffering is compassion.

New Age Religion

Is it:

Palm reading? Channeling? Seances? Meditation? Reincarnation?

Occultism? Gurus? Paganism? Gnosticism? Mother Goddess worship?

Yes... all the above, and more!

So, what is it, in essence? It is a syncretistic conjoining of many popular religious beliefs, but its essence is pantheism, inspired by Hinduism.

- You are God, I am God, the trees are God, we all are God!
- New Age is Western pantheism
- New Age is a syncretistic blend of Gnosticism, Hinduism, Spiritualism, Mysticism, Buddhism and Paganism.
- New Age is Monism! God is everything I am God!!!

“Once we begin to see that we are all God, then I think the whole purpose of life is to re-own the God-likeness within us.”

- Start with a shaker of the occult
Transcendentalism Ralph Waldo Emerson Truth through human intuition.
Theosophy (divine wisdom) Madame Blavatzky.
I AM mysticism Guy Ballard Ascended Masters “channeled” through Ballard.
- Stir in some Hinduism
All of these relied heavily on Hindu theology and practice.
Reincarnation
Pantheism
Meditation (but New Age does not seek to escape the world...no asceticism)
- Combine with Greek Philosophy/Gnosticism/Mystery Religion
 - Man has a spark of the divine
 - Need a guru to initiate you into “deeper truths”Interpret the Bible allegorically-let it tell a story
- Add just a touch of paganism

Mother Goddess/the divine female/priestesses/feminism

- Combine it all together with a Post-modern reaction to scientific materialism/rationalism
 - Experiential religion
 - No sin (because we are god)

You get the ultimate man-made (Western) religion. All religion is truth.

This is very appealing. I wish it was true!

Enlightenment is realizing the truth that you are God.
There is no sin. Sin (if it exists) is ignorance.
The goal is self-realization.

Quotes from Deepak Chopra:

“Holding on to anything is like holding on to your breath. You will suffocate. The only way to get anything in the physical universe is by letting go of it. Let go & it will be yours forever.”

— [Deepak Chopra](#)

“Walk with those seeking truth... RUN FROM THOSE WHO THINK THEY'VE FOUND IT. ”

— [Deepak Chopra](#)

“There is no holy life. There is no war between good and evil. There is no sin and no redemption. None of these things matter to the real you. But they all matter hugely to the false you, the one who believes in the separate self. You have tried to take your separate self, with all its loneliness and anxiety and pride, to the door of enlightenment. But it will never go through, because it is a ghost.”

—[Deepak Chopra](#)

Response to New Age Religion

- New Agers claim their religion is reasonable, but it is not.

Their revelation through channeling is self-contradictory. No two new age teachers will agree on even the most basic theology or practice.

All religions are not the same

Christianity: One triune God. A personal God.

Islam: One impersonal God. Predestination. God cannot have a son.

Hinduism: Many gods, pantheism

Buddhism: No god—God is irrelevant

Zoroastrianism: Dualism—good vs evil

Confucianism: Polytheism

Jesus: We are not God. We definitely do have a sin problem. Reincarnation is false hope. "Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment." Hebrews 9:27

BUDDHISM

Founder: Gautama Siddhartha (Buddha). Northern India, 567-487 BC.

Location: Sri Lanka, Nepal, China, Tibet, Japan, Korea, Viet Nam, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar/Burma. Very few in India!

Approximately 400,000,000 worldwide

Life of Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha): Born of a wealthy family. He left home and his inheritance to pursue an ascetic life. He later claimed to have a vision, because of which he rejected asceticism. His movement was a negative response, both to asceticism (Jaina) and to priestism/ritualism (Hinduism). He proposed a middle path of righteous living, including the four noble truths and the eight fold path to enlightenment, much of which we might find ourselves agreeing with. He did not claim to be God or to work miracles, but to have a wise path to living a spiritual life.

For 300 years, Buddhism existed only in India. Then King Ashoka (274-232 BC) who conquered almost all of the Indian subcontinent, became a devout Buddhist. Buddhism became the dominant form on Hinduism in India. Ashoka sent missionaries to Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Burma, Thailand.

Mahayana Buddhism (see below) entered China in 1st century AD.

Subsequently, Buddhism faded and disappeared in India, after about 1100-1200 AD.!

Doctrines:

The Four Noble Truths of Siddhartha:

Suffering is not getting what one wants.

The cause of suffering is desire which leads to rebirth.

The way to end suffering is to end desire.

The way to the end of desire and of suffering is the eight-fold path.

Note: Buddhism encourages dispassion, not compassion.

The eight-fold path to bodhi/nirvana/dharma/lack of suffering:

- ◆ **Right viewpoint (the four noble truths...the universe is illusory).**
- ◆ **Right thought.**

- ◆ **Right speech.**
- ◆ **Right actions.**
- ◆ **Right livelihood**
- ◆ **Right effort**
- ◆ **Right mindfulness**
- ◆ **Right meditation**

Through this path we achieve nirvana/enlightenment and freedom from karma

Important word for understanding Buddhist thinking:

- ◆ **Nirvana** awakened state, lack of suffering.
- ◆ **Bodhi** awakenment, enlightenment.
- ◆ **Bodhisattva** an awakened being.
- ◆ **Dharma** the Buddha's teachings.
- ◆ **Sangha** the Buddhist community of monks and nuns.
- ◆ **Maitreya** the second coming of Buddha prophesied.

The goal of Buddhism:

The goal of Buddhism is nirvana: as state of non-beingness—to lose one's individuality, which was an illusion in the first place.

Buddhist Theology

The nature of God was not important to Gautama. Buddha was formally agnostic.

Probably he was pantheistic in his thinking, but one can be a pantheist, a deist or even an atheist and be a Buddhist.

Buddhism is divided into many main sects with widely varying teachings. The two chief divisions are:

Mahayana—greater vehicle. Mysticism stressed. Many Boddhisatvas (incarnations of Buddha). Many gods/Buddhas. Idolatry common. China, Korea and Japan. This form bears little resemblance to the teachings of Buddha. Enlightenment is available for all people.

Mahayana Buddhists may see Jesus as a great Boddhisatva.

Theravada (Hinayana)—lesser vehicle. Asceticism more common. The most pious saints reach nirvana. Closer to the original teachings of Buddha. Sri Lanka, Burma/Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia. Less polytheistic, closer to original Buddhism? Enlightenment only available to the very committed few. The ideal is an arahat—an individual seeking his own enlightenment.

Vajrayana (diamond vehicle)/Tantric Buddhism Tibet. Strong emphasis on asceticism, ritual, chanting, meditation, occultic power. Dalai Lama.

Others: Zen (Japan), Pure Land/Jodo (one enters the Pure Land by repeating “Namu-Amida-Butsu”),

There are many “folk” Buddhists. They cling to animistic practices and have Buddhism as a part of their belief/religion.

Buddhist Scriptures

For Theravada/Hinayana Buddhism (South Asia) the principle scripture is the

Tipitaka (three baskets) The tradition is that Buddha’s sayings were written on palm leaves and put in three baskets.

Vanaya Pitaka Discipline basket regulations for monks

Sutta Pitaka Discourse basket Sayings of Buddha. Perhaps closest to original teachings we have.

Abbidhamma Pitaka Special teaching basket Advanced, more philosophical.

Mahayana (Chinese) Buddhist scriptures

Jatakas lives past lives of ‘Buddha

Agama limbs

Prajna-Paramita perfect wisdom

Sutra Pitaka

Tantra

Vinaya

Etc. Many more.

Tibetan/Tantric Buddhism has still another canon

Buddhist Cosmology

Like Jaina, Hinduism, a vertical cosmology, with multiple levels/earths/heavens/lokahs

31 planes of existence, each with 3 realms.

Higher ones more blissful, lower ones more like hell.

Endless cycle of time Cosmic wheel.

Modern Buddhism—as opposed to Buddha’s teaching—has many gods, myths, animism, etc.

Is Buddhism a good world view?

Is it true that the world is an illusion?

Is it true that time is like a cycle—that the universe is eternal?

Is it good to practice dispassion rather than compassion?

Reaching out to Buddhists:

We have much common ground! Start there.

Confront them with the life, the sayings, the claims and the prophecies about Jesus.

JAIN/JAINISM

Founders: **Parshva**, about 750 BC, and **Mahavira**, 599-527 BC.

Mahavira was a contemporary of Gautama Buddha in India (Buddha 567-487 BC). He was the last of a line of gurus, including Parshva.

Location: Several million followers, mostly in India.

Very strong emphasis on asceticism

Siddhartha may have been a follower before finding a middle way.

We are souls trapped in a body. The goal: escape the body to reach nirvana through ascetic practices.

Reincarnation

Karma

Pantheistic

Most important concept: Ahimsa non-injury

Scriptures:

Their “Bible” is the Agama, which consists of many parts

1. **Purvas.** Fourteen texts. Teachings of the 24 gurus. All lost
2. **Angas.** Twelve sets of teachings. Teachings of Mahavira All originals lost. Reconstitute around 600-900 AD from oral tradition.
3. Many other scriptures. The content of Jaina scripture varies widely.
- 4.

Much of the content of these are obviously mythical.

Jaina Sects

Digambaras: Monks are nude, only males can reach enlightenment.

Shvetambaras: Wear white robes. Women can be ordained as nuns.

A five-fold path to righteousness. Nonviolence Truthfulness Non-stealing Chastity Non-possession/Non-attachment

Jainism clearly has roots in Hinduism, but it rejected the priestly class in lieu of a personal righteousness.

The heart of Jainism is asceticism—achieving enlightenment through denying the physical self. The ultimate good is to starve yourself to death.
Karma/works salvation. Reincarnation,
Devoted Jains breathe through a cloth to avoid killing bugs.

New monks are given a broom to sweep the street in front of them for the same reason.

Cosmology:

These scriptures teach:

1. The earth is the center of the universe. Two suns and two moons.
2. The earth has existed forever.
3. Pantheistic. Everything has soul—even water has soul.
4. Many gods.

A very strongly philosophical tendency.

A very strange cosmology. The universe is an infinitely repeating pattern of cycles of time.

One of the gurus lived 70 trillion years and was 3000 ft. tall.

The earth is the center of the universe

The universe has existed forever.

A cyclic wheel of time.

Utsarpini: A period of progressive happiness and purity. Time spans ages and sizes of people get much larger.

Avsarpini: A period of progressive sorrow and immorality. Time spans, ages and sizes of people get much smaller.

Great teachers in the past lived for millions or billions of years and were thousands of meters tall.

In the future, people will be even less religious, smaller and live shorter time.

An extremely complicated cosmology with multiple levels of worlds/heavens.

Question: Is the earth the center of the universe?

Is the universe eternal?

Does extreme asceticism create better people?

Sikhism

Founder: Nanak 1469-1538 AD, in Punjab province in India.

The religion Nanak founded has every appearance of being an attempt to forge a philosophical/religious bridge between Islam and Hinduism. Nanak claims to have had a vision, after which he declared "There is no Hindu and no Muslim." Nanak worked no miracles. He did not claim deity, but to have a better way to God.

Location: Tens of millions, mostly in Northwest India, centered around Gujarat and Punjab province and its capital in Amritsar where the Golden Temple is located.

Scriptures:

1. The Adi Ganth, or the Ganth. Written down in 1604 AD by Arjun, the fifth of the great gurus of the Sikh religion. The writings of Nanak, Arjun and other early Sikh gurus, and even some by non-Sikhs. Hymns, doctrines and a prayer book.
2. The Ganth of the Tenth King. Writings of the last of the "great gurus," Guru Gobind Singh.
3. The Janamsakhis Legends. These are obviously mythical stories of supposed miracles which Nanak worked. In fact, Nanak did not claim to be able to work miracles.

From the Ganth of the Tenth King: "The temple and the mosque are one, so too, are puja (Hindu worship) and [Muslim] prostration."

Doctrines:

1. Monotheistic.
2. Opposed to religious formalism, priests, religious divisions.
3. The word Sikh literally means learner or disciple.
4. Strong opposition to idolatry.
5. Strong opposition to asceticism.
6. Baptism in sugar water holding a two-edged dagger.
7. Works salvation. "Sin and sorrow are destroyed by hearkening."

Several of the original gurus were martyred by the Hindus. Sikhs have traditionally been very militaristic. They can be thought of as the exact opposite of the Jains. Sikh militants killed Mohatma Gandhi and Indhira Gandhi.

Question: What is the basis for believing the Adi Ganth is inspired?

Question: Are we saved by works?

CONFUCIANISM

Founder: Confucius Kung Fu Tze (master Kung) 551-478 BC in China.

Location: primarily in China, although strong Confucian influence can be found in Korea and Viet Nam.

Confucius: A government bureaucrat who became known in his own time as a great teacher. Confucius never made claims of deity or to work miracles. He was just a “good teacher.”

1. Not a religious leader—he accepted the religious superstition of his day as sufficient.
2. Agnostic—“Keep aloof from spiritual matters, but perform the ceremony correctly.”
3. Utilitarian, conservative philosophy. Each person should accept his position in society for righteousness and stability. Strong emphasis on proper government, training for holding government office.
4. Ancestor worship stressed.
5. Later Confucian philosophy involved emphasis on *ying* and *yang*—the competing balance between good vs. evil, physical vs. spiritual, hate vs. love.

The most important concept, to understand Confucius is Jen Jen = ideal humanity. He taught that we should discover our inner goodness—moral perfection. This is a Chinese humanism.

Scriptures:

- A. The five great books. Ching = classic.
 1. I-Ching 1000 BC. Book of divination, magic. Ying/Yang cosmology
Literally: Book of Changes
 2. Shu-Ching. History, ancient documents, speeches.
 3. Shih-Ching 800-600 BC. Poetry used extensively by Confucius. Customs concerning courtship, marriage, war, agriculture, feasts, sacrifices, etc..
 4. Li Chi. Book of ceremonial rites and etiquette. 200 BC – 200 AD.
 5. Ch’un Chiu. History of one Chinese province. Collected by Confucius?
- B. The four great books.
 1. Lun Yu. “The Analects of Confucius.” Written down 400 BC. The sayings of Confucius, especially on ethics and government.
 2. Meng Tzu. Written by Mencius, 371-289 BC. Mencius helped to make Confucius’ teachings a national philosophy in China. Treatises on good government and the essential goodness of humans.
 3. Ta Hsueh. (Great learning) Unknown author around 350 BC. Philosophy of the self-made man and the ideal leader.
 4. Chung-Yung Written by Tfu Su, grandson of Confucius. Harmonious development of human nature, decorum, sincerity, other virtues.

Note: historically, there were three major competing philosophical systems in China: Taoism, Moism and Confucianism. Confucianism won out eventually as more practical.

Theology: God = Heaven = impersonal moral power/principle.

In reality, because of the influence of I Ching, China is in many ways dualist.

For 2000 years the reading and memorizing of the works of Confucius was the basis for rising in the government bureaucracy in China.

TAOISM

Founder: Lao Tzu—a contemporary of Confucius. Lao Tzu has a somewhat obscure background.

Location: Principally in China. The second most influential religion/philosophy in China, behind Confucianism.

Scripture:

The scripture of Taoism is massive The Tao Tsang. With 1200 volumes. By far the most important is the

Tao Te Ching. Tao = way Te = power Ching = teaching

Basic doctrine: Through non-involvement and withdrawal, we come to know god/deity. Emphasis on self-interest, asceticism.

Commonly said of Taoists: “He would not pluck so much as a hair out of his head for the benefit of his fellow man.”

The ethical ideal of Taoism is wu-wei = effortless action or active non-striving.

Pantheistic: God found through contemplating nature. “Sitting in forgetfulness.”
A strong emphasis on mysticism and magic.

Modern Taoism: gods, genii, immortals. Lao Tzu declared a god in 666AD. Deities of the kitchen, city, fire, disease, etc. Taoism has evolved into a kind of animism in China.

There are two flavors of Taoism: philosophical (meditation, religious speculation) and religious/occult (exorcism, astrology, gaining long life, etc.)

A quote from the Tao Te Ching:

Tao called Tao is not Tao

Names can name no lasting name.

Nameless: the origin of heaven and earth.

Naming: the mother of ten thousand things.

Empty of desire, perceive mystery.

Filled with desire, perceive manifestations....

The entrance of the Mysterious Female
Is called the root of Heaven and Earth
Endless flow of inexhaustible energy....

Great Tao overflows to the left, to the right.
All beings owe their life to it, and do not depart from it.
It acts without a name. It clothes and nourishes all beings...

The ideas of Feng shui (from burial practices) Qi (chi) and ying/yang are all found in religious Taoism.

Therefore it is best to bury the dead deep in dry land, and shallow in smooth plains. The Book says once the depth is properly achieved, feng shui will complete itself. The qi of yin and yang flows out and thus becomes wind...

SHINTO

The national religion of Japan.

Origin: obscure. Like Hinduism, Shinto was not founded, but evolved from animistic beginnings. Shinto is the naturalistic/animistic religion of ancient Japan. Its teachings are based on mythology. Many Japanese are at the same time Buddhist and Shinto without seeing any real contradiction. Many worship at the temple (Buddhism) at certain religious festivals, but maintain shrines (Shinto) in their homes. Shinto is a religion of ritual and tradition.

Scripture? Possibly the Warongo. Written 1669 by Sawada Gennai. Oracles of the gods. The "God of Heaven" is a nebulous super-god. Pantheistic.

An excerpt from a Shinto "scripture.":

Some time later the brother of Ameratsu, named his Brave-Swift-Impetuous-Male-Augustness did a number of things which caused grave offense and fright to the sun goddess. For example, he caused damage to be done to the rice fields, and he also flayed backward a "heavenly piebald horse" and flung it through the roof of the hall where Aneratsu was weaving garments for the gods....

Japanese emperors are literally descended from the gods.
Worship at simple shrines with priests and idols.

BAHAI

Founder: Baha-ullah "The Glory of God" (Mirza Husain Ali) (1817-1892) and The Bab "The Gate" (Sayyid Ali Muhammad Shirazi) (1819-1850)

Location: About 6 million in Iran, Iraq, small communities across the Middle East, Europe, India, the US etc.

The Bab is more or less the John the Baptist of Bahai. He claimed to be the forerunner of “One greater than himself” who was to come after him. He started a religious movement in 1844 which spread rapidly in Iran, but which was extremely persecuted. His religious movement could be thought of as a reform movement within Islam. He was martyred in 1850.

Baha-ullah was a Babi—a wealthy follower of the Bab. He was imprisoned, and in 1852 he claims to have received a vision, while in prison, of a divine woman who declared him to be “The Beauty of God amongst you.” Narrowly escaping execution, he was exiled to Bagdadh, where, in 1863 he officially pronounced himself to be the fulfillment of the Bab’s prophecy of one who would come after him. Baha-ullah spent most of the rest of his life in prisons or in house arrest in Adrianople, Istanbul and Acre.

Scriptures:

1. The Kitab-I-Aqdas (the Most Holy Book). Written by Baha-ullah. A collection of teachings, laws and principles to be obeyed by his followers, as well as instructions for organizing the Bahai religion.
2. The Kitab-I-Iqan (Book of Certitude). The nature of religion and how the Bahai faith is the fulfillment in present day of prophecies of other religions.
3. The Seven Valleys and The Four Valleys. Mystical treatises written while Baha-ullah was influenced by Sufi mystics.
4. The Hidden Words. Aphorisms on spiritual and ethical themes.
5. etc... Baha-ullah wrote extensively.

Teachings:

1. Baha-ullah is the last in a line of prophets from Moses to Buddha, Jesus Christ and Muhammad. (sound familiar?) The vision of Baha-ullah in prison is analogous to Moses at the burning bush, Buddha under the Bodhi tree, Christ when the dove fell on him or Mohammad when Gabriel appeared to him in the cave.
2. Baha-ullah did no miracles. He did not claim to be deity, but to be a prophet, spoken of by other scriptures, including the New Testament.
3. Baha-ullah is the ultimate and the last prophet—the one toward whom all others pointed.
4. The Bahai faith is the one which will unify all world religions, as it is the culmination of all these faiths.
5. Strong emphasis on good works, taking care of the poor, education, the rights of women, political justice.
6. A rejection of a priestly class, religious trappings in general.
7. Worship in shrines. Many are 9-sided as the symbol of the Bahai is the 9-sided star.
8. Monotheistic

9. The three core teachings are the unity of God, the unity of religions and the unity of humankind.

Unfortunately, the unity of religions is difficult to maintain, given the facts about different religions.

Attempts to “prove” that Bahauallah is the fulfillment of biblical prophecy:

1. Daniel 8:13-14 says "Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, 'How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?' He said to me, 'It will take 2300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated.'" Baha'is claim that this prophecy was fulfilled with the ministry of the Bab.

To quote: *That is to say, how long will this misfortune, this ruin, this abasement and degradation last? meaning, when will be the dawn of the Manifestation? Then he answered, "Two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Briefly, the purport of this passage is that he appoints two thousand three hundred years, for in the text of the Bible each day is a year. Then from the date of the issuing of the edict of Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem until the day of the birth of Christ there are 456 years, and from the birth of Christ until the day of the manifestation of the Bab there are 1844 years. When you add 456 years to this number it makes 2300 years.*

There is a problem with this interpretation. First of all, there is the fact that the beginning point of these 2300 years makes no sense. The prophecy points to a beginning of the desecration of the temple. The date this person uses is one on which it was decreed that Jerusalem should be rebuilt. This makes no sense at all. The attempted interpretation of Daniel 8 amounts to counting back from 1844 (a year that the person known as the Bab began his ministry) by 2300 years and looking around for the closest significant date and arbitrarily making this a fulfillment of this prophecy.

Another reason this interpretation does not make sense, is that prophecy is about the desolation of the temple which happened at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. In fact, the desecration of the temple happened in Nov. 167 BC and the rededication of the temple happened Dec. 25, 164 BC, 1150 days (2300 evenings and days) after the desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes. I can say a lot more about the actual meaning of Daniel 8. You can find this in my book Daniel, Prophet to the Nations (www.ipibooks.com) Claiming that Daniel 8:13-14 is a prophecy of the ministry of the Bab is a completely spurious claim. Nothing the Bab did even remotely matches the context of Daniel 8, which is about the Greek persecutions of the Jews.

2. Revelation 11:3 says, "And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1260 days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth." Baha'is claim that this is a prophecy of the ministry of Baha-ullah. As in Daniel 8, they claim that the days are years. They claim that Rev 11:3 is a prophecy that the time between the Hejira of Muhammad (his journey from Mecca to Medina) to the time of the ministry of Baha-ullah would be 1260 years. Where did they get this? Again, it is a matter of starting with the ministry of Baha-ulla, counting back 1260 years, and seeing if anything significant happened at that time, then claiming it is a prophecy of this. The Hejira of Muhammad happened in the year AD 622. If we add 1260 years, this will be the year 1882. This is the year that one of the printed texts of the writings of Baha-ullah was published. OK, so we have this coincidence, but if we look at the text of Revelation, is there even the slightest indication that it is talking about the length of time between the Muslim Hejira and the writings of Baha-ullah? The very idea that the Christian scripture would be a prophecy about a person who denied that Jesus is the Son of God and that he was crucified for our sins is really quite ludicrous. In what sense was the Holy City of Jerusalem trampled for that particular stretch of time (AD 622-1882)? This makes absolutely no sense. It is a clear case of reading a random scripture and doing math until a possible coincidence is found, with no consideration at all for the biblical context.

The Baha'i interpreter tells us that the two witnesses are the two laws of Muhammad and of Baha-ullah, without any justification at all for that interpretation within the passage. There is not

the slightest indication in the passage that it is discussing two Laws. Even if it were (which it is not!), then implying that the Christian scripture has a prophecy of the anti-Christian Qur'an, which denies the deity of Jesus is truly outrageous.

ZOROASTRIANISM

Founder: Zoroaster (Zarathustra)

Although his character has been highly mythologized, Zoroaster is almost certainly an historical figure who lived somewhere around 600 BC in Persia.

Region of the world: Zoroastrianism was formerly the dominant religion in Persia. Since the conquest of the Muslims, it has become a minor religion, mainly in Iran and India.

Scriptures:

1. The Avesta and the Zand. Sayings of Zoroaster. Most are now lost.
2. The Gathas. Sayings of Zoroaster which were not lost.
3. Later writings: The Bindahish—mythology and history. The Dinkard—commentary, doctrines, history, traditions. Written hundreds of years after Zarathustra.

Beliefs:

Zoroaster did not claim deity or to work miracles. Semi-monotheistic worship of Ahura Mazda in fire temples. Ahura Mazda is in a sense a fire god.

Other gods: Mithra, Anahita

Strong emphasis on the battle between good and evil. The now defunct Manichean religion, which was important during the time of the early church, was similar to Zoroastrianism.

JUDAISM

15 million Jews throughout the world (Mostly in the U.S., Israel & former USSR)

Orthodox -2 million

Conservative – 4.5 million

Reformed 3.75 million

Unaffiliated & Secular – 4.5 million

Jews makes up 83% of Israel's population

More **Jews live in the U.S.** than in Israel!

A higher proportion of American Jews are religious (i.e., practice Judaism or profess some form of belief in Judaism) than in Israel!

Cultural Division:

Sephardic (Spain, Palestine, Mediterranean) vs

Ashkenazi (Eastern European, may still speak Yiddish)

History of Judaism post-Old Testament

333-164BC – Greek Period – Hellenization of Holy Land;

164-63 BC Maccabean Period Brief period of Jewish independence. Rise of the Hasidim rise of Synagogue & religious parties (Sadducees, Essenes, Pharisees)

63BC-630AD – Roman period

70AD – Jewish War results in the destruction of Herod's Temple, Sanhedrin & sacrificial system. Pharisees become dominant force in Judaism. Council of Jamnia AD 91 solidifies this position. Synagogue system replaces Temple Judaism.

132AD – Judean revolt under Bar Kochba sparked by Roman Emperor Hadrian's building city Aelia Capitolina on top of ruins of Jerusalem. Jews banned from Jerusalem; circumcision of converts forbidden

200-640AD – Period of intense persecution mainly from the Christians, especially after Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire

634-1096AD – Age of the Gaons – Muslim conquests bring many Jews under Islamic domain, improving quality of life considerably

1096AD – Crusades specifically target Jews; they are looted & murdered en masse

1290- Jews expelled from England, not returning until 1650

12th and 13th centuries Rise of Kabbalism Jewish Mysticism.

1348 – Jews accused of poisoning wells and causing the Black Death. (This resulted in many gruesome massacres across Europe.)

1348-1517 – Jewish Influence – After the massacres, Jews allowed to return to their cities, many becoming moneylenders.

1492 – Jews in Spain offered choice of converting to Christianity or leaving the country.

1517-1700 – Europe in Ferment – Period started with a era of tolerance as authorities viewed Jews as useful. Massacres in 1648 & 1649 devastated the Jews in Poland & the Ukraine.

1700's-Present – Large numbers migrated to the Americas, fleeing pogroms.

1880's – Strong Aryan, anti-semitic movements began in France

WWII – Extermination of 1/3 of world's Jewish population – 6 million murdered

1948 – Zionists pushed for & received the State of Israel for the Jews to have a country once more. Battle for this territory still rages today

Jewish Sects in 1st Century AD

Pharisees

Descended from the Hasidim Holy Ones in 2nd Century BC

Represented more of the common people

Stressed holiness of life; created a body of laws to prevent people from breaking laws ('hedging')

Not as strict as the Essenes

Created the oral law; eventually became the Talmud

Unlike the Sadducees, they strongly resisted the Hellenistic culture

Emerged as the dominant group after 70AD

Saducees

Composed of wealthy aristocrats & priests
Relied only on the Torah Genesis-Deuteronomy
More willing to compromise with Greeks and Romans
Rejected the doctrine of the Resurrection
Most members of the Sanhedrin were Sadducees
Disappeared with Jerusalem destruction in 70AD

Essenes

Ascetic, monastic sect; removed themselves from daily life to prevent being polluted by the corrupt world
Rejected priesthood in Jerusalem as corrupt
No personal possessions, very strict observation of community & Sabbath rules
Devoted themselves to study, with a focus on moral & ethical learning
Qumran sect is best known of this group; the Dead Sea Scrolls were widely believed to be their work
Was John the Baptist was an Essene? No!

Zealots

Jewish anti-Roman groups using both political & military tactics. Many factions. Began in 6AD by Judas Maccabees based on inspiration of Phinehas (Numbers 25:11)
“Sicarii” (‘Dagger-men’) most extreme branch; carried short daggers, stabbing their enemies in broad daylight .
Responsible for the Jewish War, which led to the destruction of the Temple
Simon the Zealot’ an apostle. Barabbas a zealot
Acts 21:38 – ‘4,000 Assassins’ – ‘4,000 Terrorists’
Last Zealot Stronghold, Masada, fell in May 74AD

Modern Judaism:

Most obvious division today is between Orthodox & Progressive (Conservative and Reform) Jews
Orthodox Jews adhere to a very strict biblical & oral law (Talmud).
Diligently follow Sabbatical laws & Kosher regulations. (In their own eyes no other Jews are really Jews.)
Messianic movements have come from within Orthodox. Menachem Mendel Schneerson, for example

Reformed Judaism

Began in Germany in the 18th Century

Influenced by the Enlightenment

Adapted to local culture. Willing to compromise traditions

Stress scientific inquiry and critical evaluation some reject the Torah as factual & binding

Changes in ritual law & worship, dietary laws abandoned more “people friendly”

Kabbalah (Mystical Judaism)

Branch of Judaism; meaning ‘Received Tradition’

Claims to be the oldest religion; with origins dating back to Adam & Abraham

Came to prominence in the 12th and 13th centuries in France and Spain.

Possesses secret & mystic “truths” Esoteric belief.

Claims to hold the long-hidden keys to the secrets of the universe & mysteries of the human heart & soul

Many similarities to Gnostic movements

Isaac Newton, Madonna, Britney Spears, Paris Hilton, Demi Moore, Ashton

Kutcher, Mick Jagger claim to be Kabbalists.

Kosher/Dietary Laws

Kosher – Fit or clean according to Jewish dietary laws

Regulations found in the Torah (Lev 11, Deut 14), but many more added through traditions

Meat & dairy products can’t be eaten together. (Many households have 2 sets of dishes to prevent any contact

Jewish hotels have 2 kitchens to prevent contamination

Animals must be slaughtered & prepared by a ‘shochet’, trained & ordained in the kosher regulations

Orthodox Jews follow these regulations meticulously; average Jews do not

Synagogue

Place of Jewish communal worship, reading of scripture and prayer

Most Jews are members of a Synagogue although that does not mean that they regularly attend

Since 70AD (Destruction of the Temple), this has been the center of both religious & cultural life

ISLAM (literally, submit the will in Arabic)

Founder: Muhammad. About 570 – 632 AD, in Mecca, in modern Saudi Arabia.

Location: Northern Africa, almost the entire Middle East, Pakistan Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Albania, Indonesia and the Philippines, with scatterings elsewhere.

Approximately 1.6 billion total adherants.

At the age of 40, Muhammad claims to have received a vision in which he was called by the angel Gabriel to be a prophet. He had very little success for several years, converting only a small group of disciples primarily from his own clan. Expelled from Mecca for his religious beliefs in 622 AD, he went to Medina. This trip, known as the Hegira, is very important to Muslims. After acceptance at Medina, he began to make a number of conversions. He massacred many Jews in Medina. He sponsored piratical raids on caravans from Mecca out of a spirit of revenge, and to finance his government. Eventually he conquered Mecca and established it as his religious capital. Eventually, as his wealth increased, Muhammad had 15 wives. He died in 632 AD, having conquered much of the Arabian peninsula.

Religious background:

The Arab people were involved in pagan religion, worshiping many idols. In Mecca there were four main pagan gods: Allah, Allat, al Uzza and Manat. Allah was worshiped as an idol at a black meteorite in what is known as the Ka'bah. Mohammad raised Allah to be the chief, and eventually the only god. Muslims still worship at the idol/black rock in the Ka'bah in their famous pilgrimages. Despite public claims to the contrary, Islam has its roots in idolatry.

Scriptures: The Qur'an (Koran) Written all or in part by Muhammad. The original has been edited extensively over the years. Nevertheless, there is a strong link back to the original writings of Muhammad.

Hadith: Memorized sayings of Muhammad and interpretations of the early caliphs such as Ali, Uthman.

$\frac{3}{4}$ the length of the New Testament

Written in 114 "suras" treatises arranged in order from longest to shortest.

No clear order to the suras in terms of chronological order or teaching.

Very repetitious. Apparently, when Muhammad wrote, he did not have in mind to create a single compiled book.

Three apparent periods for the writing of the Koran which are reflected in the content and philosophy of the writings.

1. Early Meccan period. Arguments for there being only one god—for Allah being that one god.
2. Mecca/Medina period. Muhammad had more exposure to Judaism. Seeks to make Allah equivalent to the God of the Old Testament. Stories about Abraham, Moses, Noah, etc.
3. Later Medina period. Muhammad has massacred many Jews. Islam is now a religion to stand on its own. Muhammad wants a book uniquely for the Arabs which would be equivalent to the Bible. Abraham called a Muslim. Hints that eventually Islam would be the enemy, not the friend of "peoples of the book." (Jews or Christians). Ex: Surah 5:63 God turns some Jews into apes and pigs.

Scientific blunders:

1. Surah 21:33. The sun orbits the earth.
2. Surah 12 mentions 11 planets.
3. Surah 34:9, Surah 52:44 A piece of the sky falls and kills someone.
4. Surah 34:11 King David makes an iron coat of mail.

Doctrines:

1. Praying toward the Ka'bah five times a day. Originally, Muslims prayed toward Jerusalem, but later Muhammad changed that. All good Muslims must make a pilgrimage to Mecca at some time in their life. Observance of Ramadan, a month of fasting, in which they eat no food from sunrise to sunset.
2. Monotheism very strongly emphasized.
3. No priests, no idols, no alcohol, pork.
4. Predestination. Allah leads astray who he will. No free will.
5. Judgement, heaven and hell, somewhat similar to the New Testament, except heaven is a very sensuous place with men waited on by beautiful virgins, eating food like a banquet, etc.
6. The prophets never sinned. Muslims refuse to accept that Noah got drunk. (Genesis 9:21).
7. Jesus was a prophet, similar to Mohammad, but definitely not a savior. He was *not* killed on a cross.
8. Muhammad is the fulfillment of John 14:16,17, the comforter who God was to send. Muhammad the greatest and final prophet.
9. Works "salvation." We are saved by our own righteous life. Allah primarily a god of justice, not of love.
10. The doctrine of jihad, or holy war for Allah. Death in jihad is a sure means to going to heaven.
11. In fairness, some of the worst aspects of modern Islam are not in the Qur'an—for example horrendous treatment of women.

Sects:

1. Sunni. The orthodox sect. Most Moslems are Sunni. Followed the caliphs, not the family line of Muhammad.
2. Shia. Only Muhammad's direct descendents can lead the true Muslims. They are waiting for a sort of second return of Muhammad's descendents to earth: the Mahdi—sort of like a Messiah concept. Iran, Lebanon, scatterings in other Moslem countries.

These two groups are surprisingly similar in doctrine, and even in practice. Islam is much more united than "Christianity."

3. Sufis. Moslem mystics and ascetics.

VARIOUS STRANGE RELIGIONS

Christian Science, Mormonism, Scientology [Unification Church, Iglesia de Cristo (Philippines) and many more we will not cover]

Christian Science

One of several “Mind Science” religions from 19th and early 20th century. (United Church of Religious Science, Unity School of Christianity) All accept the “Law of Attraction” The idea that our thoughts can attract the things that we want. The power of positive thinking is a modern version of this.

Founder and chief prophet: Mary Baker Eddy 1821-1910

Headquarters in Boston. Less than 1,000,000 adherents. (4 million at peak)

Influenced by Phineas Quimby and the “New Thought” movement.

Quimby: God is “Universal Wisdom and Intelligence.” God is “Presence.” God is “Loving Principle.” Occultist and Spiritualist Essentially pantheistic.

Emphasis on disease, spiritualism. Disease is an “error, created not by God, but by man.” No false beliefs → no disease.

Mary Baker Eddy

“She was subject from infancy to convulsive attacks of a hysterical nature and had many nervous fits.”

Clairvoyance, spiritualism, occult

“Cured” by Quimby (but symptoms soon returned)

“The works I have written on Christian Science contain absolute Truth.”

Christian Science is neither Christian nor is it science

Science?

1990's 18 documented cases of children suffering preventable death because parents refused to take them to a doctor. Convictions on child endangerment and even manslaughter charges.

Zero scientific verification

Christian?

Jesus was a mere man. He is an embodiment of the “Christ Principle.” He is “the highest possible Inner consciousness.”

He did not die on the cross.

He did not resurrect from the dead.

Theology of Christian Science

Jesus is “divine mind.”

Jesus was a mere human, but an expression of Christhood.

Salvation is release from ignorance.

Sin, evil, sickness and even death are illusions which are conquered by denying them.

Q: Will denying cancer make it go away?

The trinity is "Life, Truth and Love."
No hell.

Scripture of Christian Science:

Science and Health

One must use "Science and Health with Key to the Scripture" to properly interpret the Bible.

Interpreted the Bible esoterically. Cannot take the miracles, resurrection and so forth literally.

"The cause of all so-called disease is mental, a mortal fear, a mistaken belief of conviction of the necessity and power of ill health.

New York Sun Dec 19, 1898, Eddy "challenged the world to disprove" that she had healed a variety of serious illnesses, including cancer

Dr Charles A. Reed (later president of AMA) offered to present similar cases for her to heal, which she politely declined.

"If she by her Christian Science, shall cure any one of them, I shall proclaim her omnipotence from the housetops; and, if she shall cure all or even half of them, I shall cheerfully crawl upon my hands and knees that I may but touch the hem of her walking dress."

Scientology

Founder L. Ron Hubbard

A science fiction writer who took his fiction seriously.

Wrote *Dianetics The Modern Science of Mental Health*, 1950

Established Church of Scientology, 1954.

Tom Cruise, 2006; "Psychology is pseudoscience."

John Oakes, 2006: "Scientology is pseudoscience."

Theology of Scientology

Men are "Thetans" (immortal spirits)

God is "All Theta," "The eighth dynamic."

Our problem is our "engrams."

Engrams are stored impressions in the reactive (vs analytic) mind of painful experiences carried over from past lives (and during gestation in our mother).

The goal: eliminate your engrams so that you can realize your true nature.

"Man is not the limited and pitiful body and ego he mistakenly imagines himself to be.

He is a thetan whose fundamental nature is basically good and divine. He is not morally fallen; rather he is simply ignorant of his own perfection. His only fall was into matter, not sin."

Scripture of Scientology:

All L. Ron Hubbard's non-science fiction books. But especially Dianetics.

The "Science" of Scientology:

The solution to engrams is "Auditing"

Involves using an electropsychometer to discover the engrams in the "pre-clear."

The electropsychometer is a pair of electrodes which detect changes in conductivity when certain questions are asked by a trained auditor. Auditor guides the pre-clear to discharge the harmful energy from the engram.

All this costs a lot of money. This is a religious scam; plain and simple.

Scientology: Jesus was "a shade above clear."

Jesus: John 8:46 "Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?"

MORMONISM **or** **THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF THE LATTER DAY SAINTS**

MORMONISM (The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints)

Founder: Joseph Smith (1805 - 1844)

HISTORY:

Joseph Smith

Born in Vermont, 1805, raised in rural New York State.

Not known for holding a regular job

Turned to scamming people. Was a religious charlatan.

Divining, dousing treasure hunting

Arrested and convicted of scamming people out of money for finding treasure

Used "magic stones" to find buried treasure.

Dreamed about a large ancient buried treasure near Palmyra New York and got a number of people to pay to support his treasure hunt.

When he could not make sufficient money from treasure hunting, turned to religious pseudo-Christian scams, much like supposed faith healers today.

In 1823, Joseph Smith said he was visited by an angel named Moroni, who told him of an ancient record containing God's dealings with the former inhabitants of the American continent.

Claimed to have a vision and to receive a direct commission from The Father and the Son, Jesus Christ.

Claimed to have found golden tablets buried under ground in 1927 on which was inscribed in a kind of Egyptian writing (which never existed) the Book of Mormon.

Translated them by putting his head inside a hat and holding the same magic rocks which he now called the Urim and the Thummim (he used to search for buried treasure.

Never produced these supposed golden tablets for the public.

His translation complete, Joseph had one further use of the golden plates. To assure skeptics that the plates did, indeed, exist, he showed them to several trusted witnesses, who signed statements affirming that they had beheld the plates. In preparation for viewing the plates, the chosen witnesses prayed for several hours. After lengthy praying, one witness reported that he saw only an empty box. Joseph sent him out for additional prayer, after which the golden plates were fully visible to the witness.

Joseph later announced that he had returned the plates to the angel who had first led him to them. The angel took them off to eternity

Book of Mormon is a grade B historical fantasy novel with many passages stolen directly from the Old Testament, especially from Isaiah. Written in pseudo King James English.

Original version had thousands of grammar and spelling errors.

Every single original witness to the golden tablets, eventually left the Mormon cult.

Mormon movement grew rapidly, moved to Kirtland, Ohio; Independence, Missouri and Far West, Missouri. Finally it would find a resting place in Nauvoo, Illinois between 1839-1844. Joseph Smith became Mayor and general. Took on a number of other wives, including stealing wives from some other leaders in the movement.

Sidney Rigdon became sort of his right hand man on teaching of Mormonism.

Rigdon a major figure in the Restoration Movement, under leadership of Alexander Campbell.

Into speaking in tongues, other gifts, left Disciples of Christ movement → became part of Mormonism.

Rigdon's influence: repentance and baptism for forgiveness of sins part of Mormonism.

Persecution at Nauvoo, II became intense, Smith arrested, killed in a shootout at a jail in nearby Carthage Illinois.

Movement scattered, many moved to Independence Missouri (forming the "Reformed Mormons), others followed Brigham young to Salt Lake City, Utah.

MORMON SCRIPTURES

A. THE BOOK OF MORMON

Supposedly translated from "Reformed Egyptian" (Mormon 9:32)

Mormon 8:18 "Don't demand to see the plates or you will be killed."

Originally published in 1830.

Went through several early editions. The original is not generally available. It was filled with blatant spelling and grammatical errors.

A grade B religious fantasy about a group of Jews—the Jaredites—who left Mesopotamia about 2000 BC, crossed the Atlantic ocean in eight cubic shaped boats with one hole in the bottom, one in the top and no windows.! After over 1000 years, the Jaredites were destroyed by the Lamanites—the native Americans.

Another "lost tribe" of Jews—the Nephites—migrated as well to New World around 600 BC.

The apparent scene of the book of Mormon is Central America.

Describes many tribes, wars in which over two million soldiers are killed and large cities, none of which exist.

No archaeological discovery supports any of the events in the Book of Mormon. Book of Mormon has cows and horses in Central America when there were none. (Enos 1:21). Silk in the New World in 600 BC (Ether 7:9) Even elephants (Eth 9:19).

Baptism in the name of Jesus for forgiveness taught in 600 BC!

Jesus came and preached to these people after being resurrected (3 Nephi 9).

Statements by the Smithsonian Institution and the National Geographic Society:
"The Smithsonian Institution has never used the Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archaeologists see no connection between the archaeology of the New World and the subject matter of the Book."

Official Statement, 1979

"Neither representatives of the National Geographic Society nor, to my knowledge, archaeologists connected with any other institution or equal prestige have ever used the Book of Mormon in locating historic ruins in Middle America or elsewhere."
Dr. Neal Judd

Many of the really strange Mormon doctrines are not found in the Book of Mormon

B. Doctrine and Covenants

This is a collections of the supposed revelations of Joseph Smith, with a small number of other revelations added after he died.

138 sections.

Most of them are revelations to Smith (from Father, Jesus, Moroni, John the Baptist, etc.)

From section 125 on, they are in first person. Smith feels he can now speak personally as an inspired speaker.

The main teachings of D & C are listed below

C. PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

Moses Interpolations to Genesis

Book of Abraham (A blatantly fraudulent "translation" of Egyptian burial scrolls bought by Joseph Smith)

Joseph Smith A History Joseph's own account of his life.

Articles of Faith. (A creed written by Smith)

Mormons believe in progressive revelation. The Doctrine and Covenants can be added to.

Here is where the strange doctrines of Mormonism are found.

C. THE BIBLE (so long as it is properly interpreted by the Mormon priesthood)

Mormons only use the King James version because the BOM includes excerpts from the KJV.

TEACHINGS OF MORMONISM

1. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are three separate gods.

Joseph Smith gave what is his most famous speech, known as the King Follett discourse, on April 7, 1844. In the speech he declared, "I will preach on the plurality of Gods. I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods."²

2. There are many gods. *D&C 76:58, Abraham 3.*

3. The Father and the Son, in heaven, have physical flesh-and-blood bodies. *D&C 130:1-3, 32.*

4. Eternal Progression. Humans in the highest level of the celestial kingdom can be glorified and become gods, eventually even being over a planet of their own. *D&C 93, 139:10, Abraham 3.*

In April, 1844 Joseph Smith preached his most famous sermon in front of an estimated crowd of 20,000. "God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!... I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil so that you may see...He was once a man like us; yea that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did...Here, then is eternal life... you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves,...the same as all Gods have done before you."³

5. Jesus and Satan were spiritual brothers. *Abraham 3:25-28.*

Milton Hunter of the Council of the Seventy said, "The appointment of Jesus to be the Savior of the world was contested by one of the other sons of God. He was called

² Compiled by Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 370.

³ Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:303–5 *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 345–46)

Lucifer, son of the morning. Haughty, ambitious, and covetous of power and glory, this spirit-brother of Jesus desperately tried to become the Savior of mankind."⁴

6. God has a mother—our Mother in Heaven.

The doctrine of a Heavenly Mother is still found in Mormonism today. Early Mormon teachers traced the teaching back to Joseph Smith, although we do not find it stated directly in his writings. That Smith originated this teaching is implied in the official Latter Day Saint church history which quotes Smith as saying, "Come to me; here's the mysteries man hath not seen, Here's our Father in heaven, and Mother, the Queen."⁵ Brigham Young said that he "would not worship a God who had not a father; and I do not know that he would if he had not a mother; the one would be as absurd as the other."⁶

7. There was a complete falling away of the Church soon after apostolic times. Joseph Smith reestablished the Kingdom of God on earth in 1830. *D&C* 21.

8. Revived Levitical Priesthood. *D&C* 13:1f.

9. Revived Melchizedek Priesthood. *D&C* 68:15f.

10. Three Kingdoms of God: the celestial, terrestrial and telestial. *D&C* 76.

11. Baptism for the dead. *D&C* 124:29, 128.

12. Pre-existence of human souls that determines their station in life. *D&C* 138:56.

In April, 1844, Smith taught:

"[T]he soul—the mind of man—the immortal spirit. Where did it come from? All learned men and doctors of divinity say that God created it in the beginning; but it is not so: the very idea lessens man in my estimation.... We say that God himself is a self-existent being.... Man does exist upon the same principles.... [The Bible] does not say in the Hebrew that God created the spirit of man. It says 'God made man out of the earth and put into him Adam's spirit, and so became a living body.' The mind or the intelligence which man possesses is co-equal with God himself.... Is it logical to say that the intelligence of spirits is immortal, and yet that it had a beginning? The intelligence of spirits had not beginning, neither will it have an end. That is good logic. That which has a beginning may have an end. There never was a time when there were not spirits; for they are co-equal [co-eternal] with our Father in heaven."⁷

⁴ Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel Through the Ages*, (Steven and Walls: Salt Lake City, 1945) p. 15.

⁵ Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:254)

⁶ Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 9 p. 286.

⁷ Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, vol. 6 p. 302-317.

13. Celestial (eternal) marriage, Celestial families. Still believed by Mormons, although its sister doctrine polygamy has been abandoned. *D&C* 131, 132

14. Plural marriage (polygamy). Not officially practiced by the Utah church since 1890. *D&C* 131, 132.

Mormon apostle and later counselor to Brigham Young in the church's First Presidency Jedediah M. Grant said, "The grand reason why the gentiles and philosophers of his school persecuted Jesus Christ, was because he had so many wives; there were Elizabeth, and Mary, and a host of others that followed him." He goes on to say, "The grand reason of the burst of public sentiment in anathemas upon Christ and his disciples, causing crucifixion, was evidently based upon polygamy, according to the testimony of the philosophers who rose in that age. A belief in the plurality of wives caused the persecution of Jesus and his followers. We might almost think they were 'Mormons'"⁸

15. Nearly everyone goes to one of three levels of heaven: the celestial, terrestrial and telestial (this was described as virtual Universalism above). *D&C* 76.

16. Miracles such as modern day revelation, prophecies, tongues, etc. are still in effect. , *Articles of the Faith* 7.

17. Jesus was conceived through God having sexual relations with Mary. This makes God the Father a polygamist. Most modern Mormons do not accept this belief.

Brigham Young said, "That very babe that was cradled in the manger was begotten, not by Joseph, the husband of Mary, but by another Being. Do you inquire by whom? He was begotten by God our heavenly Father, by the process known to nature—just as men now create children."⁹

He also said, "When our father Adam came into the Garden of Eden he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is Michael, the Archangel, the Ancient of Days! About whom holy men have written and spoken—He is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do."¹⁰

18. People with darker skins are cursed—especially blacks. *Moses* 7:8-11, *Abraham* 1:22. Blacks and especially Indians are degenerate humans. *Mormon* 5:15. "Indians are dark filthy and loathsome." 1 *Nephi* 11:13. "Dark people are sinful." 2 *Nephi* 5:21. Dark skin is loathsome. Those who marry the dark skinned are cursed. Blacks were only admitted to the Levitical and Melchizedek priesthoods upon a later revelation in 1979. *D&C* 139.

19. The Book of Mormon, Doctrines and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price are inspired by God. *Articles of Faith* 8.

⁸ Compiled by Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 1, p. 345-46.

⁹ *New York Tribune*, July 21, 1865

¹⁰ *Journal of Discourses*, 1 50.

20. Joseph Smith is a prophet, seer and revelator

21. There are many planets, with advanced spiritual beings—gods—over them. *D&C 93, Moses 1:23, 29, 33.*

22. God's throne is near the great star Kolob which circulates every one thousand years. *Abraham 3:1f.*

23. The universe is formed of pre-existing material. The physical universe is eternal. *Abraham 3:24.*

24. "Great and precious promises" have been removed by wicked men from the Bible, so that it is not complete, which is why the Book of Mormon is needed. 1 Nephi 13:26-27. Scriptures to bear in mind: Galatians 1:6-9, 2 Thess 2:5-12, 1 John 2:18-23

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE WITH A MORMON

Their belief is based on emotion, not on rational knowledge.

"All I know is that Joseph Smith is a prophet and the Book of Mormon is the Word of God."

Showing "proof" that the book of Mormon is not inspired may not help.

You might be surprised that they may be more outwardly righteous than you would expect.

Get them to make a clear statement that the Bible is the Word of God, and begin studying the Bible.

The Word of God

What books are identified as the words of God ? 2 Nephi 29:13

"..words of the Jews" The Bible

" words of the lost tribes of Israel" Lost books?

"...words of the Nephites" Book of Mormon

What does "...they both shall be established in one" mean? 1 Nephi 13:41

What are the "Plain and precious things" that were taken from the Bible? 1 Nephi 13:28

Do the Bible and the Book of Mormon have to be in harmony with each other?

What are the two sticks in Ezekiel 37:15-22

What version of the Bible do you accept as the inspired word of God?

Does God's word in the Book of Mormon ever contradict God's word in the Bible?

Would there ever be any reason to reject the Bible as God's word?

Infinite and Eternal Atonement

Alma 34:14 / Hebrews 10:1

Atonement Shadow	Atonement applied
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Book of Mormon</u></p> <p>Mosiah 16:14 (148 BC) 2 Nephi 25:24-27 (545 BC) Alma 33:19-22 (74 BC) Mosiah 12:31-13:28 (148 BC) Alma 25:15 (77 BC)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>The Old Testament</u></p> <p>Genesis 12:3 (1500 BC) Numbers 21:4-9 (1500 BC) Isaiah 53:4-7 (701 BC) Exodus 12:1 (1500 BC) Leviticus 4 (1500 BC)</p> <p>(Hebrews 10:1, Galatians 3:24)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Book of Mormon</u></p> <p>Mosiah 4:2,3 (124 BC) Jacob 4:11 (421 BC) Jarom 1:11 (399 BC) Jacob 7 (421 BC) Alma 7:14 (83 BC)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>The New Testament</u></p> <p>Galatians 3:8 (AD 49) John 3:14, 12:32 (AD 85-90) 1 Peter 2:21-25 (AD 64) 1 Corinthians 5:7 (AD 54) Hebrews 9 (AD 60-69)</p> <p>(Galatians 3:19,23, Colossians 2:14)</p>

The Mystery

Ephesians 1:9,10 The mystery....to be put into effect when the times have reached their fulfillment.

Ephesians 3:3-5 The mystery....which was not make known to men in other generations

Ephesians 3:6 The mystery....the gospel....the promise in Christ Jesus

Ephesians 3:9 The mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God.

The Plan of Redemption

Atonement in Christ before the foundation of the world

Law of Moses	1500-400 BC	+	New Testament
Leviticus 16 Animal Sacrifices Exodus 20:8 Keep the Sabbath			Hebrews 9:11-14 Colossians 2:14-16
<u>Book of Mormon</u>			
Jarom 1:5,11 Law of Moses / Sabbath 2 Nephi 25:24-27 Belief in Christ Mosiah 4:2 Atonement Applied Alma 7:14 Baptism for Remission of Sin Alma 46:15 Christian	399 BC 545 BC 124 BC 83 BC 73 BC		Jn 3:16 Belief Rom 3:25 Atonement Acts 2:38 Baptism Acts 11:26 Christian

What arrangement did God make for atonement under the Law of Moses?

What did the Nephites command in regard to atonement?

What event fulfilled the Law of Moses?

The Patriarchs	 MT SINAI	Law of Moses	+	New Testament
Adam / Eve Cain / Abel Noah / Ark		Ex 20 Ten Commandments Nu 3:10 Temple / Priesthood Animal sacrifices		2Co 3:6 Spirit of Law 2Pet 2:5 All Believers Heb 10:8-10 Crucifixion

Were those under the Law of Moses required to build an ark? Yes / No

Was Noah required to offer animal sacrifice for sin? Yes / No

Are Christians required to keep the Law of Moses? Yes / No

Were those under the Law of Moses required to accept the Atonement of Christ? Yes / No

JEHOVAH'S WITNESS

Background and History.

Founded by Charles Taze Russel

Russel was influenced by the Millerite/Adventist movement (led to the 7th Day Adventist Church)

The Adventist/Millerite movement began in the 1830's

William Miller used Daniel 8:14 and Daniel 9:25 (a very odd connection) to calculate that the millennial reign would come on October 22, 1844.

Emphasis on the immanent return of Jesus Christ to the Earth.

Russel founded his own cult-like movement.

- a. Strong emphasis that only his followers are saved.
- b. Use of language unique to his religious movement (Jehovah, etc.)

Taught the invisible return of Jesus in 1874

Predicted the rapture in 1878

Began Zion's Watchtower publication 1879.

Rejected the trinity in 1882

Predicted the End of the World in 1914, also using Daniel 8:14 and Supported by a false reading of Matthew 24:3)

When that did not happen, said we have entered the Investigative Judgement.

Very controversial. Made a lot of money from his movement. Accused of numerous scams.

Sold “miracle wheat” through the Watchtower organization. A scam which made him quite a bit of money. Was sued over this.

Was divorced by his wife for marital unfaithfulness.

Died 1916

Later, the JW movement basically disowned Russel and do not acknowledge him as the founder of their religion—more for theological reasons than because of his scandals.

The Watchtower Society became the all-powerful, controlling influence in the Religion. One Watchtower publication went so far as to say “We recognize not only Jehovah God as our father, but his organization (The Watchtower Society) as our mother.”

Succeeded by Joseph “Judge” Rutherford. Hired to keep Russel out of jail.

Continued the policies of Russel, increased organization of the Watchtower Society, making it into the all-powerful organization it now is.

Very strong emphasis on indoctrination into the teachings of the church and the requirement that all members go door-to-door to go to heaven.

Rutherford predicted Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would rise from the grave in 1925.

Watchtower Society predicted 1975 will be the year of Armageddon and the beginning of the 1000 year reign.

The church has continued to grow rapidly ever since it was founded. 2/3 of members are outside the US at this point. Total membership: 7.8 million.

Fundamental beliefs of JW movement:

1. Jesus Christ is the archangel Michael. He definitely is not deity. He is a very powerful created being. He was not raised from the dead in a physical body.
2. The Holy Spirit is definitely not a person and is definitely not God. It is a force for good, rather than part of God.
3. The only true and acceptable name for God is Jehovah. Those who do not use the name Jehovah are not true Christians.
4. Only faithful JW members will be in heaven with Jehovah. (144,000 of Revelation 7.)
5. There is no such thing as Hell as a place of torment for those who are not saved. Those who are not saved when they die simply cease to exist. All go to a common grave called hell when they die. There is no such thing as a soul without a body. “Man does not **have** a soul. He **is** a soul. Therefore there is no consciousness at all after death without a body. Even Jesus was mortal. Soul sleep.
6. Very soon after Jesus ascended to heaven, the true church became completely apostate. There were no true Christians at all until God’s “Faithful and Discreet Servant” Charles Russel came to call people back to the true gospel. (Nowadays, JW’s would emphasize the Watchtower Society as the Faithful and Discreet Servant, not Russel)
7. As with most Adventist groups, there is a strong emphasis on obeying selected Old Testament laws (they are totally inconsistent—seemingly arbitrary on this)
 - a. no eating of blood, no transfusions accepted, even to save a life.
8. Miscellaneous odd doctrines which JW’s use to make themselves different from everyone else.

- b. All celebrations and holidays not specifically mentioned in the Bible are sinful. Birthdays, Anniversaries, Christmas, Easter, etc.
- c. Complete refusal to serve in the armed forces of whatever country they live in. This creates huge problems in some countries.
- d. Christians cannot wear a cross, because it is a pagan symbol. “No biblical evidence even intimates that Jesus died on a cross.” “Jesus most likely was executed on an upright stake without any crossbeam.” (John 20:25)
- e. Cannot pledge allegiance to the flag.

THE WATCHTOWER SOCIETY

JW’s call the Watchtower Society the “faithful and discreet slave” of Matthew 24:45-47 (faithful and wise servant)

Ie WS is the fulfillment of this prophecy (used to apply this to Russel)

“Unless we are in touch with this channel of communication (The Watchtower Society) that God is using, we will not progress along the road to life, no matter how much Bible reading we do” Wow!!!

Not only do we find that people cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see also that if anyone lays the *Scripture Studies* aside, even after he has used them, after he has become familiar with them, after he has read them for ten years—if he then lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness. On the other hand, if he had merely read the *Scripture Studies* with their references, and had not read a page of the Bible, as such, he would be in the light at the end of the two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures. (*Witness of Jehovah, 1988, p.33*)

1969 edition of the Watchtower mag: God’s faithful and discreet slave is God’s sole “channel of communication to His people.”

Other quotes from the WS:

“God has not arranged the [His] word to speak independently or to shine forth life-giving truths by itself. It is through his organization God provides this light”

“Avoid independent thinking... questioning the counsel that is provided by God’s visible organization.

If we have love for Jehovah and for the organization of his people, we shall not be suspicious, but shall, as the Bible says, “believe all things,” all things that The Watchtower brings out.”

Vs. Acts 17:11 Let us never become like this!

Early JW movement: Charles Russel was the sole interpreter of the Bible

Now: The Watchtower is the sole legitimate interpreter of the Bible.

THE NEW WORLD TRANSLATION

JW’s have their own translation which they use so as to avoid some of the obvious problems and contradictions between their beliefs and the Bible.

Most famous example:

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was a god. No support for this translation;

Faithful and discreet slave vs faithful and wise servant

Nevertheless: I suggest you let them use their bogus translation and work with that.

REFUTING FALSE DOCTRINES OF JW’S

- I. Jesus is not God. Jesus is the first and highest of created beings. Jesus is an angel. He is *the* archangel Michael. (“Michael the great prince is none other than Jesus Christ Himself” (*The Watchtower, Dec, 1984, p 29.*) (Daniel 10:1,13, 12:1)

This is the Arian heresy Arius

J. W. proof-texts:

Jn 1:1 In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was a god.

Jn 3:16 “Jehovah’s first creation was his only begotten Son” (an attempt to preempt Jn 1:14)

Rev 3:14 the beginning of (The ruler of)the creation of God (a mistranslation)

Coll 1:15-17 The first-born of (NIV over) all creation.... By means of him all *other* things have been created (they insert the word other)

Jn 14:28 The Father is greater than I

Jn 20:17 My God

1 Cor 15:28 the head of Christ is God.

Claim: Jesus is never worshipped in the NT

Jesus is never called Jehovah, so he is not God, because Jehovah is the only name of God.

Answer:

Compare Coll 1:16 to Hebrews 2:10

Besides, just look at Coll 1:16 all things were created by Christ....all things were created by him and for him.

Heb 1:2 the entire universe

OT: God is the creator

NT: Jesus is the creator Jesus is God.

Jn 8:58 Before Abraham was born, I AM (Exodus 3:14)
...they picked up stones to stone him.

Jn 10:30 I and the Father are one. Clear enough? Read through vs. 33.

Coll 2:9 The fullness of deity lives in bodily form.

(NWT: Because it was in him that all the fullness of the divine
quality dwells bodily)

Not one single Greek scholar will support the NWT

Jn 20:28 My Lord and my God.

Titus 2:13 Our great God and savior, Jesus Christ

(NWT: the Great God and of the savior of us, Jesus Christ)

Is 43:11 God says that only he saves

God our savior and Jesus Christ our savior used interchangeable in Titus

Phil 2:5,6 Who being in very nature God, ...

Zech 12:10 They will look on me, the one they have pierced...

(NWT look to the one whom they pierced)

Isaiah 9:6,7

(if time... Heb 1:6 angels are commanded to worship (proskuneo) Jesus.)

II. The Holy Spirit is not deity or part of God. It is a force for good.

“The Holy Spirit is not a person, but is a powerful force that God causes to emanate from himself to accomplish his holy will” (*Reasoning from the Scriptures, 1989, p 381*)

The HS can be likened to electricity, “a force that can be adapted to perform a great variety of operations.” (*Should You Believe in the Trinity?*, 1989, p.20),

Naturally, if JW’s deny deity to Christ, they have to do so with the Holy Spirit as well.

Arguments:

HS never given a name.

Mark 1:10, Acts 2 etc. describe the HS coming on people with power—allowing people to work miracles, filling people up. Can a person fill someone up? (answer: Eph 3:19 filled with God)

Genesis 1:2 NWT “God’s active force was working to shape the earth”

Answers?

1 Cor 2:10 The Spirit searches all things.

Eph 4:30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor 12:11 The Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to each one individually just as He wills.

Jn 14:16 ...another helper, that He may be with you forever...

Jn 16:5,f ... the Counselor... I will send him to you... When he comes, he will convict the world

Matthew 28:18 ...in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. JW’s make a big deal out of the HS not having a name....

Acts 13:2 The HS says Set apart for Me Barnabus and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

Acts 16:6 The HS forbids Paul to preach

Acts 8:29 The HS told Philip to speak to the Ethiopian.

Matthew 12:32 Anyone who speaks against (blasphemes) the HS will not be forgiven. Can you blaspheme a force? (besides, God Rev 13:6 and Jesus Matt 27:39 can be blasphemed)

III. Jehovah is the only legitimate name for God, both in NT and OT
Proof-texts:

Ezekiel 39:6 “People will have to know that I am Jehovah.”

Matthew 6:9 Our Father in heaven, praised be your name.

Exodus 3:15 ...This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.

Romans 10:13 “Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved”

JW’s: Those who do not call God his proper name, Jehovah, are not saved!
(a familiar cult methodology)

...and by the way, Jesus is never called Jehovah in the OT or the NT, so this is further proof that he is not God.

a. Response to these passages: to the ancients, the name of a person was taken as a personification of the person. “Halt in the name of the king”

b. The word Jehovah is never used in either the OT or the NT

YHWH plus the vowels for ADONAI (Lord) = YAHOWAH

Went into Yiddish, then into German as Jehovah.

c. God has many other names in the OT Elohim, Adonai, etc.
(JW’s claim superstitious Jews selectively took YHWH out without any evidence at all)

- d. God is never called YHWH even once in the NT. (Father, God, Lord, etc. Jesus never called his Father Jehovah. (Abba, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit)
- e. Get this.... JW's claim that the early church changed all the references to YHWH in the New Testament. This one is absolutely ridiculous. We have manuscripts from AD 125

IV. There is no punishment in hell.

JW's claim that there is no conscious existence after death. There is no soul apart from the physical body. This even applies to Jesus. God will re-create us at a later time to live in a new physical body. All go to a common "Hell" upon death to experience soul-sleep.

Some, 144,000 JW's (the "anointed class", the "little flock" of Luke 12:32) will live with God as spiritual beings, in heaven (Rev 7:4)

The other (my "other sheep" of John 10:16) JW's will live on a physical paradise earth.

Proof-text: Matthew 6:10 Your kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven NWT: "Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth."

Proof-text: Ecclesiastes 9:5 "the dead know nothing"

Everyone else will simply cease to exist.

Example: NWT Luke 23:43 I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise (vs. I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise)

Matthew 25:46 NWT "And these will depart into everlasting cutting-off" vs depart into eternal punishment.

Note: eternal life and eternal punishment use the same words.

Answer?

Rev 14:9-12 smoke of their torment rises forever and ever.

Vs 13 Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Blessing and punishment are laid alongside one another.

Mark 9:44 What does this mean if hell does not involve punishment.

Daniel 12:2 How can you have one without the other.

Luke 12:46-48 Degrees of punishment. If there is no punishment, how can there be degrees of punishment?

Luke 16:19-28 torment = pain.

V. Salvation:

Salvation impossible apart from total obedience to the Watchtower Society and participation in the programs of the Society (such as going door-to-door).

“To get one’s name written in the Book of Life will depend on one’s works” (*The Watchtower*, 1 April, 1947, p 204)

“...working hard for the reward of eternal life.” (*The Watchtower*, 15 Aug, 1972, p 491)

Only the anointed are born again

Others are recreated and based on their performance during the 1000 year reign of Christ will earn eternal life in a physical paradise on earth.

7th Day Adventism

Grew out of Millerite Adventist movement in the 1840s

Miller prophesied that Jesus Christ would come back October 22, 1844 (based on a misinterpretation of Daniel 8:14-16 2300 evenings and mornings.)

Thousands quit their jobs, preached the Advent of Jesus and waited. When it did not happen the movement scattered, forming a number of small groups (one of which led to Jehovah's Witness Church, another of which led to 7th Day Adventist movement).

Some taught that the date 1844 was correct, but that Jesus came back silently, entering the heavenly tabernacle, beginning the "Investigative Judgement"

Adventists see themselves as NT church restorationists—as inheritors of the tradition of the Waldenses, Puritans, Anabaptists and other reformer/restorationist sects.

"7th Day" sect Founded by Ellen G. White—the chief prophetess of this movement 1860s and her husband.

Ellen G. White claimed to be a modern-day prophet. her writings are considered "a continuing and authoritative source of truth"

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

Health

At the age of nine, White sustained a blow to the head from a rock thrown at her. It is frequently interpreted from various speculations on the incident that Ellen White spent three weeks in a [coma](#) and that a brain trauma might explain her visions.^[32] Individuals with epilepsy have also been found to have delusions and hallucinations in relationship to God.

Abnormalities in the hippocampus are associated with religiosity in refractory epileptic patients similar to Ellen G. White.

Plagiarism

While the Adventist church has no mechanism for canonizing a person's writings or elevating a "prophet" into sainthood (as the Catholic Church does), they have their own system which accomplishes the same effect, by protecting and promoting the perception of Ellen White as a "true" prophet. The core of Seventh-day Adventist doctrine came directly from the "visions" of Ellen White and are still espoused officially by the church, as evidenced by their current teachings and official positions.

Ellen White copied generously, in some cases chapter and verse and word for word from other writers of her day, while calling these writings "hers" and saying emphatically that they were revealed to her by god-given visions. The Phoenix Sun Times and other newspapers in 1975 reported documentation that the church leadership, particularly the executors of the Ellen G. White Estate (all of whom are church officials) have known about her copious plagiarism for years.

Emphasis:

Worship on the 7th Day (obviously)

Carrying of certain OT laws into NT Christianity: especially the Sabbath.

Strong emphasis on healthy eating, vegetarianism. Abstinence from pork and shellfish for sure (based on OT laws)

Do not believe in hell, but that after judgement, the lost are annihilated.

Soul Sleep. No consciousness outside a physical body. (The last two are like JW's)

Emphasis on premillennialism (Jesus coming back and reigning on the earth for 1000 years before final judgment)

17+ million members.

Response to Adventism;

1. Probably the day of worship is not a salvation issue, but...

a. We know from the New Testament that the church worshipped on Sunday: the "eighth day."

Acts 20:7 Rev 1:10 "On the Lord's Day" (which all scholars agree is Sunday). Paul met with the Jews in synagogue on Sabbath, and with the church on Sunday.

b. All the evidence is unanimous that the early church worshipped on Sunday. There is absolutely no doubt about this.

2. The idea that we, as Christians, are subject to or required to obey selected laws of Moses is not biblical.

Galatians 2:21 If righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing.

Gal 3:10-12 Those who rely on observing the law are under a curse.

Gal 5:2-4 You have fallen away from grace.

Colossians 2:13-23

By the way, you might want to be aware that Adventists teach immersion baptism of adults for salvation.

Roman Catholicism

A ridiculously brief history of Catholicism:

The history of the Christian church can be summarized as the gradual corruption of primitive Christianity into a paganized, hierarchical, Roman Catholic Church.

Interestingly, Catholics can legitimately claim that their church traces back to the original church established by the apostles. Most “Christians” cannot legitimately make that claim.

If we stick to theology rather than practice, Catholics are in many ways closer to true Christianity than many Protestants. The deny predestination, once saved, always saved, pray Jesus into your heart, etc.

Catholics: Good at orthodoxy (correct teaching) Bad at orthopraxy (correct practice)

1. Source of authority: 1. The Church, 2. tradition (which is known as the “rule of faith” and 3. Scripture but in the final analysis, the church.

Mark 7:1-13 “You nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down.”

2. Apostolic (papal) authority. Matthew 16:17-19. You are Peter (rock, stone, *petros*) and on this rock (bedrock, large rock, *petra*) The “rock” that the church will be built on is not Peter. It is the confession and the fact that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God.

3. False teachings:

a. Prayer to God through Mary and the saints. 1 Timothy 2:5

b. Original Sin. → Infant Baptism Ezekiel 18:19-20

c. Transubstantiation. (The elements in the Lord’s Supper literally become flesh and blood)

d. Lord’s Supper is a sacrifice. Luke 22:19 “Do this in remembrance of me.”

e. Immaculate Conception. (Mary was born from a virgin as well)

f. Sacramentalism. Power in the act rather than in faith and repentance.

g. Not all Christians are priests 1 Peter 2:9 2 Corinthians 5:17-20.

h. Purgatory. Works salvation, indulgences.

i. Salvation is found, not “in Christ” but in the church. Irenaeus: She [ie. the church] is the entrance to life; all others are thieves and robbers.

It is this last point which is the key to understanding Catholicism. The institution of the church is the mode of grace and salvation.

This is the source of the idea of sacrament.

It is why they think people are not saved outside the Catholic Church.

RC sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Lord Supper/Eucharist, Confession/Penance, Marriage, Holy Orders (ordination of priests), Extreme Unction/Last Rites

4. Traditions taught which cause Catholics to nullify the word of God.

- a. Church calendar**
- b. Statues, icons, vestments**
- c. Celibacy of priests**
- d. Monks, nuns**
- e. Popes, cardinals, archbishops, etc.**

Suggestion: We need to know church history. When did such teachings enter the church

Reaching out to Catholics: Find common ground.

We accept the Nicene Creed, but reject the innovations of Protestantism.

Establish that the Bible is the Word of God and the only authority for truth.

Pentecostalism/Charismatic Movement

History of Pentecostalism:

Grew out of the Holiness Revival Movement in the 1890s. For example Moody, Spurgeon and so forth. Holiness leaders such as Charles Cullis, John Alexander Dowie, and Albert B. Simpson established healing missions across the U.S. They, like other holiness advocates, believed a new, miraculous era of the spirit was coming which would end in the second coming of Christ.

Early pioneers: Charles Parham. Topeka Bible School, January, 1901. Students spoke in tongues. Moved to Houston. Trained William Seymour.

According to many, the Pentecostal movement began April 9, 1906 in Asuza, California, under leadership of William Seymour.

Interracial, No order of service. Entirely spontaneous. People share a word of prophecy, a tongue, fall in the Spirit, etc.

Broke out in tongues. Extremely emotional. Spread like wildfire.

Initially, believers thought that learning foreign languages by Christians would no longer be necessary. This did not turn out to be true.

Most early groups were Methodist/Wesleyan. This led to the Reformed Pentacostal group of churches as a reaction.

1914 All-white group of ministers formed the Assemblies of God as Reformed Pentecostal.

1913 Jesus' name baptism only. Rejected trinitarianism. HS baptism essential for salvation. (modalism)

Pentecostal Churches:

Church of God, Church of God in Christ, Pentecostal Holiness Church (Wesleyan, Methodistic)

Assemblies of God, International Church of the Four Square Gospel (Reformed, Baptist)

United Pentecostal Church International, Assemblies of the World (Oneness, modalistic, deny the trinity)

Many more: Apostolic Faith Church, Faith Tabernacle, Word of Faith, Kingdom Now, etc....

1998 11,000 Pentecostal denominations. Today, about 200 million worldwide, especially in the Third World.

AOG 1998 57 million.

What do all these groups share in common?

Experiential/emotional Christianity.

Eschatological focus. Discussion of end times is a MAJOR part of their preaching and teaching.

Emphasis: Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Whether this is a requirement for salvation (it is for some, and not for others) it is the thing they talk about the most.

“Fundamentalists.” (young earth creationists, very literal interpretation of the Bible, inerrancy of the Bible, tend to have very conservative rules of clothing, drinking, etc.)

Pentecostalism ≠ Charismatic. Charismatic is a broader term, applying to those who believe in modern miraculous gifts in general, including those in the denominations..

1960s and 70s, many in Protestantism and Catholicism began to accept Holy Spirit gifts as normative, but did not leave their denominations. Together with the Pentacostals, they form what is known as the Charismatic Movement.

As many as 400 million (¼ of all Christians)

History of Gifts of the Spirit/Speaking in Tongues

"In ancient times the practice of speaking in unintelligible languages during religious ecstasy was not unknown. From eleventh-century B.C. Egypt come reports of ecstatic speech, and later in the Greek world the prophetess of Delphi and the Sibylline oracle priestess spoke in unknown tongues. Amongst the Graeco-Roman mystery religions, the Dionysian Cult was known for this practice. Hindu and other examples have been noted as well.

From this we know that glossolalia can be a general phenomenon created by religious excitement.

Some of the early church fathers mention miraculous gifts in the church. Irenaeus (d.c. 200) and Tertullian (d. 200), but speaking in tongues is virtually not mentioned at all. Chrysostom (d. 407) disapproved, and Augustine (d. 430) declared that the gift was only for New Testament times.

The Montanist movement of the late second century included prophetesses, claims of new revelation, speaking in tongues, and an ascetical and legalistic outlook; the movement was declared heretical by the official church and speaking in tongues seems to have been rare in the church after this time.

During the middle ages speaking in tongues were reported in monasteries of the Orthodox church.

In the seventeenth century it seems to have been practiced in France amongst the Huguenots (Protestants) and the Jansenists (pietistic Catholics).

In the nineteenth century glossolalia was practiced in America amongst the Shakers and Mormons.

What should our response be?

I. Doctrinal response. (the typical CoC response)

II. Emphasize the legitimate role of the Holy Spirit in Christianity. Allow ourselves to be influenced, at least to some extent, by these people to a more balanced Christianity.

I. Doctrinal response.

The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were given by the laying on of hands of an apostle, with a particular purpose in mind, which was to testify to the message of the Gospel.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit ≠ the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 It is a one-time special event at Pentecost. “Wait in Jerusalem... But in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit Acts 1:5. (also Acts 10?)

Hebrews 2:3-4 The gospel was testified to by signs, wonders and miracles. This was the purpose. This is a biblical pattern.

Acts 8:9-17 They had not yet received the Holy Spirit. Context: the miraculous gifts. Apostles went there to take care of this.

2 Tim 2:6 A gift given to Timothy when Paul laid on his hands.

1 Tim 4:14 The elders laid their hands on Timothy to give him a charge.

1 Cor 13:8-10. Where there are tongues, prophecies, etc... they will cease. When the perfect comes, the imperfect disappears.

Careful about using this as a proof-text, but...

Does Zechariah 13:1-6 prophesy an end to new prophecy?

The reason for miraculous gifts has ended.

Do not over react.

God still works miracles. God still heals. God could even cause someone miraculously to know a language, for all I know, but what we do not have is people who, in themselves, possess personal miraculous gifts. We all say we believe in miracles, but, in practice, we seem to deny believing in God working miraculously (I am guilty of this!).

Not: I have this miraculous gift, but God worked a miracle. A very different thing.

Historical evidence. By the mid-second century the only groups with such miraculous gifts were decidedly non-mainstream groups.

Here is what it comes down to. Do we have modern-day revelation? I say no.

II. Our response should be to correctly emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

A sermon I have taught:

The Holy Spirit His Role in Our Lives

Questions to think about:

Who/what is the Holy Spirit?

What is His role in our lives?

Does the Holy Spirit speak to us? If so, how?

John 14:16-18

What do we see about the Holy Spirit here?

He is a counselor/comforter.

We are not left as orphans. It is about relationship. Jesus did not abandon his disciples. In fact, because he left and sent the Holy Spirit, we are more closely related to him.

John 16:5-7 It is a good thing that I am going. Having the Spirit live in us is better than having Jesus live near us. Wow!!!

How does that make you feel? All of us imagine how great it would be to have Jesus to talk to, listen to, be inspired by, etc.

Q: On a daily basis, how much do you think about the Holy Spirit?

Q: Do you pray to the Holy Spirit?

Q: Do you recognize/feel the Holy Spirit working in your life?

The GREATEST gift the Father has given us, after his Son is sending his Spirit.

A Little Background.

Alexander Campbell and Restoration Movement Rational Empiricism Scientific analysis of Scriptures.

Christianity Rational Holy Spirit irrational, unpredictable, emotional.

VERY suspicious of those who emphasized Holy Spirit

Campbell: The role of the Holy Spirit was to inspire the Word of God.

An obvious overreaction.

Us: We see what the Pentecostals do, and we over react.

God told me.... The Spirit is telling me....

We look at the scripture which strongly implies that these miraculous gifts were to edify the first century church and to testify to the Gospel message which was being newly revealed ((Hebrews 2:3-4) and we are nervous when we see people falsely claiming such gifts today.

Prophecy has ceased (Zech 13:1-6, 1 Cor 13:8)

The Result: We spent more time talking about what the Holy Spirit does NOT do than what he Does!!!”

Do not let what you oppose steal what is God’s gift for you. Do the Scriptures warn against overemphasizing the Holy Spirit (well... maybe in 1 Cor 13 or 1 Cor 14)

James Gitre: “Charismatic teachings have cast a long shadow on the theological landscape

The result of overreacting: a cold, rational Christianity.

Encouraging Facts about the Holy Spirit:

1. The Holy Spirit Lives in Us (which can seem bad some times.... Kind of like bringing your mom or dad on a date)

Acts 5:1-4 Lied to HS He must put up with and hang out around the sins we commit. This is an extremely intimate relationship. Keep a clean house!

Acts 5:29-32 HS is a witness to all we do. Imagine how realizing this on an everyday basis might help you.

(Illustration: CoC song “The All-Seeing Eye”) The Holy Spirit is an unwilling witness to our sin.

2. Although it is true the HS empowers us (see below), his principle role is relational.

Phil 2:1 If there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation in his love, if any fellowship in the Spirit, if any affection and mercy... (also 2 Cor 3:13 fellowship in the Spirit)

It is about closeness and a relationship. That is why the Spirit lives in us. It is like a piece of heaven—a taste of the future. God is right there.

Illustration: “Footsteps” has nothing on this!!!!

3. He lives in us, but we can be more or less filled with the Spirit.

Acts 6:2-3 I don’t know about you, but I would love to be full of the Spirit.

1 Thess 5:16-19 Do not quench the Spirit.

Q: How might we quench the Spirit? (by keeping an impure house or by ignoring his promptings See point 4!)

4. The Holy Spirit can and will give us promptings and influence us.

Acts 8:29-31 HS orchestrated this entire situation. God will work through the Holy Spirit.

However, if the Spirit tells you to not serve this person or to not make this church meeting or to.... You can be sure it is not of the Spirit.

If the Spirit is telling you to share your faith with this person or to overcome such and such sin, or to stay away from a dangerous or tempting situation, OK.

5. The Holy Spirit helps us in our prayers (especially; in our emotions, our desires, our deepest needs—things words cannot express)

Romans 8:26-27 We should be aware of the Holy Spirit's presence and role when we pray. Sometimes we need to stop talking. Meditate.

6. The Holy Spirit will help raise up leaders in the church and will influence the direction the church takes.

Acts 13:2-4 Set apart Barnabas and Saul. How did the Holy Spirit do this? I do not know.
(Acts 20:25-29 The Holy Spirit made these men overseers)

7. The Holy Spirit will help us to understand God's word and his will. John 16:8-11

8. The Holy Spirit helps us to overcome sin.

John 16:8-11 Convict with regard to sin. We have help!

Romans 8:6-14 The Holy Spirit helps us to put sin to death. (Again, we see it is about a relationship we call God "abba")

9. The Holy Spirit is a seal, a mark, a guarantee of our salvation. Romans 8:14-16 The Holy Spirit testifies that we are God's children. We get to call God daddy!

Satan says: You are a loser. You are hopeless. You will never make it. We have a great advocate. The one speaking for us is more powerful than any.

Ephesians 1:13-14 A mark, a seal, a deposit, a guarantee. We can turn our back on God and drive the Holy Spirit away (Hebrews 10:26 f), but nothing else can take away our guarantee.

The goal of this lesson: Joy, Confidence and Knowledge that God is working in our lives in the Holy Spirit.

In summary: Let us

Be filled with the Spirit (Romans 8:14)

Serve God by the power of the Spirit (Romans 7:6)

Be led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14)

Keep in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25)