

ABOUT THIS CLASS

I can see on the horizon an enormous spiritual storm approaching of biblical proportions. A new generation of Christians has emerged, a generation with no reverence God's Word who are not afraid to speak their own mind. The result of years of neglecting God's Word and following a social gospel, the emergence of a Postmodern Church has arrived.

Put bluntly, Postmodern Church Movement is a complete redefinition of Christianity. It is unquestionably the new Liberalism. However, don't wait for their teachers to use the term "emergent" or "postmodern" or "progressive." Learn how to spot it for yourself.

This class will include short list of authors, teachers and areas of concern that may indicate that a particular group is being influenced to varying extents by biblically deviant philosophy. In order to spot them, here are some helpful questions:

- Have biblical doctrines such as salvation by grace, repentance and the reality of a literal Hell been marginalized or abandoned?
- Is there a constant insistence that the Church must abandon history and orthodox teaching and methods in order to reach the postmodern world?
- Is Contemplative Prayer/Spirituality being introduced and practiced? Is there talk of "Spiritual Formation," centering prayer and something called "lectio divina" which, in a nutshell, is leading believers to occult-based practices?
- Have you heard the term "labyrinth"?
- Have buzzword phrases like "Missional Christianity," "Incarnational Christianity," "Conversational Christianity" and "Relational Christianity" been attached to the identity of your church?
- Have the teachings of Open Source, Open Theism or Process Theology, or Replacement Theology been embraced? (Open Theism teaches that God knows the past and lives in the present but has no idea of what the future holds. Obviously, this destroys every prophetic passage in the Bible – including the blessed hope of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.)
- Is there a new, uncanny identification with saving planet Earth? Has environmentalism become common pulpit rhetoric? (Brian McLaren contends that it is Earth – and not unregenerate humans – that Christ came to save.)
- Perhaps the most important question to ask is about the authority of the Scriptures. In your church, is the Bible held in utmost regard by those in leadership? Is the inerrancy of the Bible preached faithfully? Is there a complete and unapologetic dependence on God's Word by those in leadership?

INTRODUCTION

Matthew 7:15

"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

The classes this semester are going to focus on truth. There is a great exchange that is taking place in the church, the schools, and even the seminaries: the truth of God is being exchanged for a lie. In an effort to make Christianity more appealing to a populace that is increasingly ignorant of God's values, doctrine is being compromised, even erased, for the sake of presentation and appeal. The diversity and tolerance movements have compromised sound teaching. The church of Jesus Christ, charged with being the pillar and foundation of truth, is embracing lies in the name of Jesus.

In the past, I never understood how Matthew 7:22-23 could possibly be true:

"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'
And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

But, in front of our very eyes, a new church movement is making this scripture suddenly quite understandable. This isn't something that should be unexpected. Scripture has clearly told us that it would happen.

Read 2 Peter 2:1 and journal what you learn here: _____

Jesus clearly warned of the times that we live in. Read His words in these verses and write your thoughts; be specific.

Matthew 7:15 _____

Matthew 24:11 _____

Matthew 24:24 "For false christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."

It is important to notice that the work of these false teachers is not restricted to false teaching alone. It is also accompanied by false miracles—miracles not empowered by God. This is such an important point that two gospel writers indicated its truth. Read Mark 13:22 for the other citation: _____

The idea that even the elect could be deceived by them speaks to their empowerment. Do a word study on "elect" and write what you learn here:

But, people will argue of false teachers, "this person has become wealthy. Or this person has a large following. Or this person has written a lot of books. He's on TV! People like him!" When these arguments come, remember the words of Jesus:

Luke 6:26 "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way."

God is all powerful: Satan has a lot of power (but not all!)
God is truthful at all times: Satan can be truthful when it suits his purposes
God's truth never changes: Satan is great at morphing/skewing truth
God's miracles bring Him glory: Satan's make people feel good about themselves
God brings people into the light: Satan tows them into the darkness of sin

Many so-called Christian leaders are introducing innovative teachings based on new Bible translations and paraphrases that alter the timeless truths of Holy Scripture. A more progressive spirituality, with roots in eastern mysticism, is replacing faith in God's Word. This "New Christian Spirituality" poses as a more relevant "New Gospel" for today's Postmodern culture that prefers subjective and emotional feelings, rather than absolute truths.

Biblical truth is the foundation for knowing God, His promises and His prophecies. At Pentecost, the Church was given the Holy Spirit of Truth to guide the church into all truth. Jesus Christ, who is truth incarnate, taught that after

His death, resurrection and ascension to Heaven, He would bring His Church to His Father's house before returning to govern the world for a 1000 year Kingdom period. Biblical faith trusts God's promise to fulfil these prophecies.

However many within the Postmodern, Seeker-friendly, neo-Evangelical, churches deny teachings and do not see prophecies in God's Word as literal truth.

Many promote the false gospel of transforming the world for the common good, encouraging a "working together," and social justice as a way for humans to bring about God's kingdom on planet earth.

The Bible says that a man made world-system will usher in the reign of Antichrist and his kingdom, preceding the coming of the true Jesus Christ and the true Kingdom of God on earth.

Its slick reinvention of "new truth" shows itself off today as a new "Emerging" Christianity, a "Vintage for the Future" movement that is supposedly taking us back to our "Christian" origins in the Desert Fathers of 300 years after Christ in some cases to people who were soundly refuted by the early church. Sadly, that "taking back" does not go back far enough. Missing is a return to the Early Church's foundation, birthed in Jerusalem, at Pentecost, 40 days after the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, who at that time, filled His believers with His Holy Spirit and instructions to go out, preach the Gospel and make disciples.

Through modern marketing techniques and business management skills, a global agenda of faith, commerce and government is being orchestrated for churches to partner with other faiths for world peace and unity.

Today's "postmodern" brand of Christianity has a different gospel and is targeting thousands of the younger generation with a so-called hip, cool, experiential spirituality, much of which is embracing mysticism and ecumenical philosophy to unite people from all faiths to work together and bring about a new world order of peace and harmony on this planet now.

In **A Generous Orthodoxy**, Brian McLaren, an emergent church leader said this:

"Then I must add, though, that I don't believe making disciples must equal making adherence to the Christian religion. It may be advisable in many (not all!) circumstances to help people become followers of Jesus and remain within their Buddhist, Hindu, or Jewish contexts. This will be hard, you say, and I

agree. But frankly, it's not at all easy to be a follower of Jesus in many "Christian" religious context, either."

This notion dovetails with the heart of New Age thinking and the utopian ideals of many world religions which believe their unity can bring in world peace.

The dangerous result of this new spirituality in the church is the rise of today's "Christianized" occultism. It's stretching its tentacles around the souls of unsuspecting youth, setting them up for the lie that subjective emotions of "power" and "experience" are "feelings" to be held higher than an objective walk in the Christian Faith, based in truth found in the pure Word of God. The Holy Bible is presented as unattainable truth: "stuffy", "dry" and "religious."

The Bible warns of great heresy and apostasy in the church of the last days. It foretells false teachers, prophets, doctrines of lying spirits, and their signs and wonders. For 2000 years, since the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the Bible has been attacked. Alongside the church, based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles, counterfeit Christian heretics, apostate denominations and false movements have proliferated. Ecclesiastes truthfully says, "There's no new thing under the sun." (1:9)

In this class, we will learn what Scripture teaches about the times we live in, the ways in which people, even Christians, are being seduced away from biblical truth, and the methods used by the New Spirituality to usher in the counterfeit Kingdom of God on earth. We will look at leaders of the "emerging, postmodern, progressive" church and their teachings. Then we will bring the light of God's Word to bear on those teachings so that we can stand in the truth.

In John 18:36, Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world," and "Narrow is the Way which leads to life and few are those who find it." (Matthew 7:14)

HERESY #1: NO ORIGINAL SIN

TONY JONES : Tony is the author of *The Church Is Flat: The Relational Ecclesiology of the Emerging Church Movement* and is theologian-in-residence at Solomon's Porch in Minneapolis and an adjunct professor at Fuller Theological Seminary and at Andover Newton Theological School.

“When I was growing up in a moderate, centrist church — somewhere between mainline Christianity and evangelicalism — Original Sin was a given. I first learned about it in youth group, and we regularly talked about it. Actually, it’s more accurate to say that we talked about a life with Christ, and the notion of Original Sin was in the background. It was assumed. And I cannot remember that it was ever debated. In other words, I assumed that the doctrine of Original Sin was a biblical notion, and that all Christians accepted it as gospel truth. Of course, neither is true. In college, Original Sin was also assumed by the Campus Crusaders and Navigators who ministered to me, as well as in the little bible church that I attended. But, while in college, I also took at class on the theology of Augustine from an eccentric professor, Charles Stinson, and therein I learned that the great father of Western theology was the author of the doctrine of Original Sin. Of course, Augustine was not making it up ex novo, but was taking as his inspiration the account of creation in Genesis 3 and certain Pauline texts. In seminary, I learned from John Thompson that John Calvin and his theological heirs reified the notion of Original Sin and that it hadn’t played much of a role in medieval and Scholastic theology. And sometime later, I discovered that whole branches of the Christian family tree — most notably, the Orthodox Church — has never embraced Original Sin. I have come to reject the notion of Original Sin. I consider it neither biblically, philosophically, nor scientifically tenable.”

One of the main leaders of the Postmodern movement is Brian McLaren, who also endorses this heresy. Doug Pagitt is also a leader/adherent to this philosophy. We will look more at these men in later sections.

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT ORIGINAL SIN?

The Bible defines sin for us very clearly. Read James 4:17 and record the definition of sin here: _____

Now, we must move to the first pages of the scripture. Read Genesis 3:1-7 and indicate whether you think that Adam or Eve sinned here: _____

Continue your reading in 1 Timothy 2:14. Remember that it is knowing that you are doing something wrong that makes it sin! If Eve was deceived, did she know

it was wrong? Or did she believe the lie? Does scripture say that Adam was deceived? If Adam wasn't deceived, then he was intentionally sinning.

It is important to look at what happened after Adam sinned. Continue your reading in Genesis 5:3 and record whose image Adam's procreation reflected.

Adam, who had been created in the image of God, suffered a change in image after sin. And Adam procreated in his own image which had become skewed by sin. We know this is true because scripture repeatedly speaks of our need to have our image fixed!

Romans 1:23 _____

Romans 8:29 _____

2 Corinthians 3:18 _____

2 Corinthians 4:14 _____

Colossians 3:10 _____

The Bible reveals the way to fix the image: we need to be redeemed! And scripture calls out a method of redemption. We need a blood relative, a kinsman redeemer, who is able and willing to make the redemption.

What is the problem then? Ability presupposes that the one doing the redeeming doesn't need redeeming himself. And all people, being descendants of Adam, need redeeming.

So, in reality, we need a blood relative not born of the seed of man to make the redemption. Jesus came to be that kinsman redeemer. Read the following verses and record what you learn:

Hebrews 2:14 _____

Galatians 4:5 _____

Titus 2:14 _____

People who dismiss original sin, also dismiss the need for Jesus to come. If this doctrine is new to you, work through the model on the next page. We know it as "The Kinsman Redeemer Model."

WHY ONE NEEDS A REDEEMER

1. Had become enslaved – kinsman redeemer paid the price to redeem the enslaved relative
2. Had lost control of land – kinsman redeemer paid the price to redeem the land
3. Family murder – kinsman redeemer served as the judicial executioner of the murderer
4. Had produced no heirs – kinsman redeemer married the one without heirs/produced heirs

WHO COULD SERVE AS A GA'AL? (3rd party kinsman redeemer)

The nearest blood relative who: (Leviticus 25:48)

1. Was willing to pay the price (would use his own resources to pay the price)
2. Was able to pay the price (was qualified i.e. sufficient resources and not himself a slave: Ruth 4:6)

MANKIND (ADAM) NEEDED A REDEEMER

1. After the fall, mankind was enslaved to sin (John 8:34: Jesus answered them, "truly, truly I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.")
2. Mankind had lost dominion of the earth (John 12:31 "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out")
3. Mankind had been murdered (John 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning...")
4. Because of sin, there were no heirs for the kingdom (Romans 4:14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified.)

HOW JESUS REDEEMED US

1. We had no eligible kinsman to redeem mankind because no one was able (i.e. not himself enslaved to sin) Sin entered through being a descendant from Adam's seed)
2. Jesus became eligible for us by meeting the requirements:
 - a. He became a blood relative (Hebrews 2:14 Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same)
 - b. He was able because he wasn't born of Adam's seed and therefore was not born enslaved to sin
 - c. He was willing

JESUS' ACTIONS FOR US

1. Redeemed any of enslaved mankind who choose His redemption
2. Will redeem the land over which Satan took control (Earth)
3. Will include the judicial execution of our murderer (Rev. 20:10, 14)
4. Will include marriage to those who had produced no heirs, making them His bride (the church)

EXAMPLES OF REDEMPTION

Ruth and Boaz (he redeemed the land and married her) Ruth 4:1-13

Jeremiah 32:10-14 (he redeemed the land and put the deed in a jar of clay)

Articles redeemed were "sealed" as a mark of ownership and authenticity. Only the rightful purchaser could break the seal, which was both placed and broken before witnesses.

REDEMPTION TERMINOLOGY

1. 2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels (saved spirits /fleshly bodies)
2. Ephesians 1:13 In Him, you also after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise
3. Revelation 19:9 And he said to me, "write, 'blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And He said to me, "these are true words of God."

HERESY #2: THERE WAS NO VIRGIN BIRTH

HERESY #2: BY ROB BELL Robert "Rob" Bell Jr. (born August 23, 1970 in Ingham County, Michigan) is an American author and founding pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church located in Grandville, Michigan and is also the featured speaker in a series of spiritual short films called NOOMA. In 2011 Time Magazine named Bell to its list of the 100 Most Influential People in the World. He is the author of the New York Times bestsellers **Love Wins** and **Velvet Elvis**. Under his leadership Mars Hill Bible Church was one of the fastest-growing churches in America. Bell attended Wheaton College. With friends Dave Houk, Brian Erickson, Steve Huber and Chris Fall, he formed the indie rock band, "_ton bundle", which was reminiscent of bands such as R.E.M. and Talking Heads. This is when _ton bundle wrote the song "Velvet Elvis", based upon the same Velvet Elvis painting that he used in his first book **Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith**. Wheaton College was also where Bell met his wife, Kristen. Bell received his bachelor's degree in 1992 from Wheaton. He moved to Pasadena, California to pursue a calling for teaching and received a M.Div. from Fuller Theological Seminary. His podcast, called the RobCast, was named by iTunes Best of 2015. He's been profiled in the New Yorker, toured with Oprah, and in 2011 Time Magazine named him one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World. He has a regular show at Largo, the legendary comedy and music club in Los Angeles, where he lives with wife Kristen and their three kids. Listen to his style:

"What if tomorrow someone digs up definitive proof that Jesus had a real, earthly, biological father named Larry, and archeologists find Larry's tomb and do DNA samples and prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the virgin birth was really just a bit of mythologizing the Gospel writers threw in to appeal to the followers of the Mithra and Dionysian religious cults that were hugely popular at the time of Jesus, whose gods had virgin births?

But what if, as you study the origin of the word "virgin" you discover that the word "virgin" in the gospel of Matthew actually comes from the book of Isaiah, and then you find out that in the Hebrew language at that time, the word "virgin" could mean several things. And what if you discover that in the first century being "born of a virgin" also referred to a child whose mother became pregnant the first time she had intercourse? Could you still be a Christian? Is the way of Jesus still the best possible way to live? Or does the whole thing fall apart?" (Velvet Elvis, p. 26)

Rob Bell contemplates "trampolianity" where believers are bouncing on a trampoline and all of the springs are various doctrines of the church. He asks, how many springs have to fail or be proven false before Christianity totally falls apart? If the virgin birth spring fails, has Christianity failed?

BY MARCUS BORG: Marcus was president of the Anglican Association of Biblical Scholars; he was an American New Testament scholar and theologian, and one of the

most widely known and influential voices in progressive Christianity. He was born in 1942 in Fergus Falls, Minnesota and Died on January 21, 2015 in Powell Butte, Oregon.

Seminary also introduced me to the historical study of Jesus and Christian origins. I learned from my professors and the readings they assigned that Jesus almost certainly was not born of a virgin, did not think of himself as the Son of God, and did not see his purpose as dying for the sins of the world ... I also found the claim that Jesus and Christianity were the only way of salvation to be troublesome. Marcus Borg, "The God We Never Knew."

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT THE VIRGIN BIRTH?

Let's begin by looking at the biblical account of the virgin birth. Consider....

Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."

Do a word study on "virgin" from this passage and journal what you learn here:

Continue your reading in Matthew 1:18 _____

Scripture is here very specific that Mary's child was fathered by the Holy Spirit (and just for the record, the Bible no where calls the Spirit "Larry!")

In order for Joseph, Mary's fiance, to believe what was happening, read what happened in his life: Matthew 1:20 _____

It quickly becomes clear that to believe that there was no virgin birth requires not believing that scripture is inspired by God and totally true! But progressive leaders believe exactly that, and we will discuss that in the next chapter.

In order for us to understand the necessity of the virgin birth, we need only go back to our Kinsman Redeemer model. Redemption under God's Law required that the redeemer be a blood relative who was willing and able to make the redemption.

Paraphrase what you learned about the following topics we discussed in the previous chapter:

Jesus becoming a blood relative: _____

Jesus' ability to make the redemption: _____

Since we know that Adam procreated in an image that resulted from sin, we know that none of Adam's offspring (all of us) have the perfect image of God apart from the redemptive work of Christ.

So, what mankind really needed in order to be redeemed was a blood relative who was not born of the seed of man and who was willing to sacrifice whatever it cost in order to redeem us.

Galatians 4:4-5 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

The emerging church goes terribly wrong when they take only portions of scripture out of their context. Context Rules!

Scripture is very clear that Jesus made a way for the redemption of all people on earth. BUT scripture is also clear that you must make a conscious decision to accept that redemption. That decision is two-fold:

Romans 10:9 ... that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

There are two important things here:

1. Confession with your mouth. Do a word study on "confess" and record what you learn here:

2. Belief in your heart concerning Jesus' resurrection. Do a word study on "believe" and write the results here: _____

In other words, you must believe that Jesus' substitutionary sacrifice, death, and subsequent resurrection is sufficient for salvation AND you must actively believe the same thing God believes about it and say so.

If the human man Jesus was fathered by a human male, then Jesus would be ineligible to make any redemption. This means that Jesus was **UNIQUELY QUALIFIED** to be our redeemer.

So, now we answer Rob Bell's question: Does Christianity fall apart if there is no virgin birth? The answer is a resounding "YES!"

HERESY #3: THE BIBLE ISN'T GOD'S INSPIRED WORD

Heresy #3: By Brian McLaren McLaren was the founding pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church in Spencerville, Maryland (Washington DC area), which he left in 2006 to pursue writing and speaking full-time. He is an author, speaker, activist, and public theologian. A former college English teacher, he is a passionate advocate for "a new kind of Christianity" – just, generous, and working with people of all faiths for the common good." He is an Auburn Senior Fellow and a leader in the Convergence Network, through which he is developing an innovative training/mentoring program for pastors, church planters, and lay leaders called Convergence Leadership Project. He works closely with the Center for Progressive Renewal/Convergence. He has endorsed the work of Rob Bell and Tony Jones.

In describing the work of Brian McLaren, Jason Moore says this: "For lack of a better word to describe his audacious hermeneutics, his arrogance is astounding." It becomes clear from reading McLaren's work, that he believes the Bible contains some good things and some that must just be thrown away. Concerning the global flood found in Genesis 6-9, McLaren writes:

"In this light, a god who mandates an intentional supernatural disaster leading to unparalleled genocide is hardly worthy of belief, much less worship. How can you ask your children--or nonchurch colleagues and neighbors--to honor a deity so uncreative, overreactive, and utterly capricious regarding life? To make matters worse, the global holocaust strategy didn't even work. Soon the "good guy" Noah gets drunk, and soon after that his sons are up to no good, and soon after that we're right back to the antediluvian violence and crime levels. Genocide, it turns out, doesn't really solve anything in Genesis, even if a character named "God" does it. (Could that be a more worthy lesson to draw from the text?)" (A New Kind of Christianity, page 109)

McLaren clearly changes what he does not like about God and makes Him into a God more to his own tastes. When he cannot understand what is happening in a particular text (or chooses not to believe it), then he simply attributes the text to cultural mores of pagan religions. Concerning the Genesis account:

"In previous chapters, we saw God as the good creator in Genesis, as the compassionate liberator in Exodus, and as the reconciling king, lover, and father of all people in the prophets. But as a serious reader of the Bible, I'm still a little uneasy, because I know about some of the other images of God that are also found in the bible-- violent images, cruel images, un-Christlike images." (A New Kind of Christianity, p. 98)

Did he just call God "un-Christlike?" Why, yes he did. He simply does not like the images credited to God in the Hebrew Scriptures; and he will either try to

explain them away, or he will try to credit the "un-Christlike" images to a Greco-Roman Platonic view of God instead of his purported Aristotelian view. Consider the following from A New Kind of Christianity, page 42:

"Now the god of this Greco-Roman version of the biblical story bears a strange similarity in many ways to Zeus (Jupiter for the Romans), but we will name him Theos. The Greco-Roman god Theos, I suggest, is a far different deity from the Jewish Elohim of Genesis 1, or Lord (referring to the unspeakable name of the Creator) of Genesis 2 and 12, not to mention the Abba to whom Jesus prayed. As a good-no, make that perfect-Platonic god, Theos loves spirit, state, and being and hates matter, story, and becoming, since, once again, the latter involve change, and the only way to change or move from perfection is downward into decay. In fact, as soon as something drops out of the state of perfection, Theos is possessed by a pure and irresistible urge to destroy it (or make it suffer).

Either you believe that the Bible is true, or you don't. McLaren doesn't. Neither does Rob Bell. Consider Bell's quote from an Interview in Christianity Today: "The Emergent Mystique:" **"The Bible is a human product, rather than the product of divine fiat."**

WHAT IS TRUE ABOUT THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE?

Scripture has a number of things to say about itself. This has led to the following well-known confessions concerning the Bible:

"We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct." Revised Apostolic Creed (creed comes from Latin "credo" which means "I believe")

"The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct." Assemblies of God doctrinal position

Read the following verses and record what you learn:

2 Timothy 3:16 _____

What scripture would Paul have been speaking of? _____

What does this tell you about people who want to dismiss the Old Testament because we are "New Testament People?" _____

Now, do a word study from the verse above on the following words:

Teaching: _____

Reproof: _____

Correction: _____

Training in righteousness: _____

Continue your reading in 2 Peter 1:20,21 _____

Do a word study on "own interpretation:" _____

Continue your study with Jesus' words in Mark 13:31 _____

Clearly, Jesus took the words of scripture to be true. Consider the following:

John 7:38 _____

John 13:18 _____

John 19:37 _____

Luke 4:21 _____

Matthew 24:15 _____

In addition to this, there is more manuscript evidence for the Bible than any other book ever written, including the works of the Greek philosophers. The Bible is wholly unique among texts that are considered sacred. The Bible displays a unity and harmony throughout that is distinct. It contains hundreds of specific prophecies that have been fulfilled with complete accuracy—something no other religious book can boast. It is historically verified and supported by archeology. No scientific inaccuracy has ever been found. From a literary perspective, the Bible's richness, depth, and beauty are unequalled.

When you question a document's historicity, you question the document's authenticity, and ultimately, its authority.

There is much more evidence for the New Testament than for any other ancient writings of comparable date. There are over 5,000 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, all of which bear earlier dates than any other ancient works. F. F. Bruce, considered to be one of the greatest of New Testament scholars, said: "The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning."

Scholar Sir Frederic Kenyon sums it up: "The interval then between the dates of the original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established."

Among the New Testament writings, at least ten percent is Old Testament material, composed of some 295 quotations, 1600 citations, and numerous allusions.

We say that the Bible is "inerrant." Inerrancy has to do with truth. It means the Bible is truthful and does not err.

Theologian Paul D. Feinberg proposes the following definition of inerrancy: "Inerrancy means that when all facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything that they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical, or life sciences."

This definition helps to clarify what is and is not implied in the doctrine of inerrancy. Inerrancy applies to the original writings (autographs), not the copies. The Bible teaches that the scriptures were inspired, not the scribes or copyists who duplicated the original. Thus, inasmuch as the copies reflect the originals, they are considered inerrant. Any errors in copying, transmission, or preservation do not negate original inerrancy. No human interpretation is infallible, so proper hermeneutics is necessary.

Inerrancy denotes that the Bible is true in all it affirms. For instance, the Bible contains historical record of many evil acts, but it does not condone or teach those evil acts. Finally, inerrancy is not a denial that difficult passages exist within the Bible. But these difficult passages should not be assumed to be errors, contradictions, or discrepancies simply because they have not yet been understood or harmonized. We should be encouraged by the fact that for over 2000 years the Bible has stood the test of time.

HERESY #4: NO SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT

Heresy #4: By Spencer Burke: Spencer Burke, a speaker, creator of theooze.com, and author of "A Heretic's Guide to Eternity" rejects major doctrines such as exclusivism, Hell, and the substitutionary death of Christ. As the founder and executive director of Hatchery LA, Spencer is passionate about coaching Innovators to launch their own Common Cause Communities. Over the past 25 years, he has explored his passion for arts, technology, and the church in written articles and speaking engagements. He and his family live in Newport Beach, CA.

"Of all the elements of Christianity, the most repugnant is the notion of the Christ who took our sins upon himself and sacrificed his body in agony to save our souls. Did we ask him to? A better approach is to see Jesus as 'the model of sinless living, the ultimate example' to which all humanity should aspire." Spencer Burke and Barry Taylor, "A Heretic's Guide to Eternity."

Regarding the cross of Christ, Brian McLaren writes:

"That just sounds like one more injustice in the cosmic equation. It sounds like divine child abuse. You know" "The Story We Find Ourselves In," page 102.

Alan W. Jones, dean of Grace Episcopal Cathedral in San Francisco until 2009 writes:

The Church's fixation on the death of Jesus as the universal saving act must end, and the place of the cross must be reimagined in Christian faith. Why? Because of the cult of suffering and the vindictive God behind it. Reimagining Christianity, page 132.

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT?

The Scriptures teach the doctrine of the substitutionary death of Christ.

Read 1 Peter 2:21-24 _____

Isaiah 53, one of the most enduring chapters in all scripture, also predicts the penal substitutionary death of Christ. Read that chapter and record your thoughts: _____

And we cannot leave out the redemptive power of the cross. How could an Old Testament person understand the idea of Christ dying for our sins (our transgressions and iniquities)—actually bearing the punishment that we deserved? The sacrifices suggested this idea, but it is one thing to kill a lamb, and something quite different to think of God's chosen servant as that Lamb. But God was pulling aside the curtain of time to let the people of Isaiah's day look ahead to the suffering of the future Messiah and the resulting forgiveness made available to all mankind.

Paul in Romans 8:3 teaches the penal atonement: "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

Read 1 John 4:10 and journal your thoughts here: _____

Apparently saints in Heaven have a different perspective on the penal substitutionary atonement when they fall at the feet of Christ and worship Him in Revelation 5:9 as the "who has redeemed us to God by your blood."

For those leaders of the emerging church movement, we would offer up the words of Paul here:

1 Corinthians 1:17-25 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void. For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

For it is written,

**"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
And the cleverness of the clever I will set aside."**

Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Inherent in the biblical concept of atonement is the exchange of one thing for another. As we complete our study for this chapter, study the following verses and record what you learn about substitutionary atonement in the spaces that follow.

Romans 5:6-8 _____

1 Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

2 Corinthians 5:21 _____

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"—

Titus 2:14 _____

1 Peter 2:24 ...and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

1 Peter 3:18 _____

It becomes clear that the only way you can doubt the vicarious atoning sacrifice of Jesus is to doubt the veracity of the scripture.

HERESY #5: THERE IS NO LITERAL HELL

Heresy #5 by Rob Bell: "Heaven and hell are choices we make and live with right now. God gives us what we want, including the freedom to live apart from God (hell) or turn God's way (heaven)."

"At the center of the Christian tradition since the first church has been the insistence that history is not tragic, hell is not forever, and love, in the end, wins."

Bell doesn't believe that death cuts off the ability to repent. In his Bible, Bell sees no **"infinite, eternal torment for things people did in their few finite years of life."**

Bell believes Jesus makes salvation possible even for people who never know his name. **"We have to allow for mystery, for people who 'drink from the rock' of faith without knowing who or what it was."** Further, he charges that churches that don't allow for this are "misguided and toxic."

Brian McLaren not only defends Bell, but he goes on to say:

...the Kingdom of God doesn't come like the kingdoms of this world by inflicting violence and coercing people. But that the kingdom of God comes thru suffering and willing voluntary sacrifice right? But in an ironic way the doctrine of hell basically says no, that's not really true. At the end God gets his way through coercion and violence and intimidation and uh domination just like every other kingdom does. The Cross isn't the center then, the Cross is almost a distraction and false advertising for God." From "The Last Word and the Word After That."

Doug Pagitt founded Solomon's Porch in 2000 in Minneapolis, a church (he calls it a "gathering") and a national Initiator with Convergence, a collective of faith-engaged organizations, individuals, institutions, and networks who seek to embody a generous and just Christian ethos leading to constructive collective action in the United States. He defines hell like this:

"Hell is disconnection and disintegration with God." His website goes on to say, "You will not find statements of what our community believes on this site. Belief is a dynamic lived reality and doesn't lend itself to website statements."

Although his community may not make statements of its beliefs, the Bible clearly does!

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT HELL?

Let's begin by looking at what scripture says about Hell. Hell is alternatively translated as Sheol (Hebrew) and Hades (Greek). It is also called gehenna in the New Testament, and in some translations "tartarus."

Do a word study on each of the above words, recording what you learn here:

Sheol _____

Hell _____

Hades _____

Gehenna _____

Tartarus (you may have to look in KJV) _____

The Bible doctrine of hell is by no means confined to the terms above mentioned and to the passages in which they appear. There are many phrases in which the overshadowing idea is presented with great distinctness, such as "unquenchable fire," "black darkness," "furnace of fire," "fire and brimstone," "the smoke of their torment," "the lake of fire which burns with brimstone," "where their worm does not die," "the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels."

There is no doubt that Scripture requires us to believe in a properly so-called *place* of punishment, in whatever part of God's boundless creation it may be. Further, the purpose of hell is not rehabilitation in any way. Rather, it reflects on the justice of God.

Matthew 25:46 _____

To answer the question of how God could send someone to hell, read Romans 1:18-20 _____

To understand the eternal nature of separation from God, read 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 _____

Jude 1:7 _____

Revelation 1:17-18 _____

Revelation 20:14 _____

Leaders of the emerging church movement appeal to a law of “fairness” or “justice” that is higher and more absolute than God. This law of fairness is binding, even on God. Therefore, God must act in response to that law in order to be fair. People then appeal to the law of fairness.

Scripture teaches, on the other hand, that God Himself is the standard of justice. He uses His power according to His moral perfection. Whatever He does is fair, or just, even if we don’t understand it. Our response is to appeal to God directly.

God’s justice is seen in the perfection of his nature where He is infinitely righteous in Himself and in all He does. He is righteousness in His divine nature as exercised in his moral government. At first God imposes righteous laws on His creatures and executes them righteously. Justice is not an optional product of His will, but an unchangeable principle of His very nature.

God’s legislative justice is His requiring His rational creatures to conform in all respects to the moral law.

His distributive justice is his dealing with his accountable creatures according to the requirements of the law in rewarding or punishing them.

In remunerative justice he distributes rewards.

James 1:12 _____

2 Timothy 4:8 _____

In punitive justice he inflicts punishment on account of transgression.

He cannot, since He is infinitely righteous, do otherwise than regard and hate sin as intrinsically wrong and deserving of punishment. "He cannot deny himself."

2 Timothy 2:13 _____

His essential and eternal righteousness immutably determines him to visit every sin as such with merited punishment.

HERESY #6: UNIVERSALISM

Heresy #6: By Doug Pagitt: Consider this interview from a Sunday, October 26, 2008 radio show:

Question - How is God going to judge the good Muslim?

Pagitt: **God's going to judge the life and repair and restore and heal the life of everybody in the same way. There's gonna be no difference between what God...**

Question - So the Muslim is ultimately not going to be... go to a bad place. He's ultimately going to be restored with God when he dies?

Pagitt: **No, there's going to be no difference between the way God going to interact with you when you die and the way God's going to interact with a Muslim when a Muslim dies.**

We should probably begin this section with some definitions.

1. Pluralism: All the world religions lead to God and can save.
2. Exclusivism: Only those who came to God during the Old Testament era, such as Abraham, and all Christians since the time of Christ can be saved. Those who were believers before the coming of Christ are included in the efficacy of His sacrifice; there is salvation in no other name but that of Christ. Outside of these groups, there is no salvation. All those who live and die without accepting Christ will go to Hell whether or not they ever had the opportunity to hear about Him.
3. Inclusivism: There is salvation in no other name but that of Christ and those finally saved will only be saved through Him, but they don't have to have known/accepted Him while living on earth
4. Christian Universalism seems to combine #1 and #3.

At the Aspen Institute in July of 2005, Rick Warren stated: **"I happen to know people who are followers of Christ in other religions."** This has caused many to wonder if he is beginning to follow into the postmodern thought train on this issue.

Rob Bell: "Salvation is the entire universe being brought back into harmony with its maker."

Doug Pagitt: "I do think this is the story that ought to be told is that the story of Christianity is not the narrow way and I know people are going to go, "But Jesus said it's the narrow way." That wasn't what he was getting at. He was getting at something else and we can get into that some other time, 'cause we need another show..."

**"The image I have sketched views Jesus differently: rather than being the exclusive revelation of God, he is one of many mediators of the sacred."
Marcus Borg, Meeting Jesus again for the First Time, page 37.**

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT SALVATION

The first thing we have to acknowledge about God is that He is very consistent. He established Law, methodology, and festivals in the Old Testament that are all pointing to Christ. Paul appropriately acknowledged, "an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth." (Ephesians 1:10) We can interpret scripture in part on our observation of God's consistency in everything He has done in the past.

Therefore, any appropriate view of salvation must first embrace the Kinsman Redeemer Model that God established. This model was used to refute Heresy #1: No Original Sin. Any view that violates that God-established truth, must be discarded as erroneous.

Second, any appropriate view of salvation must embrace the methodology established by God. God's methodology involved two parts:

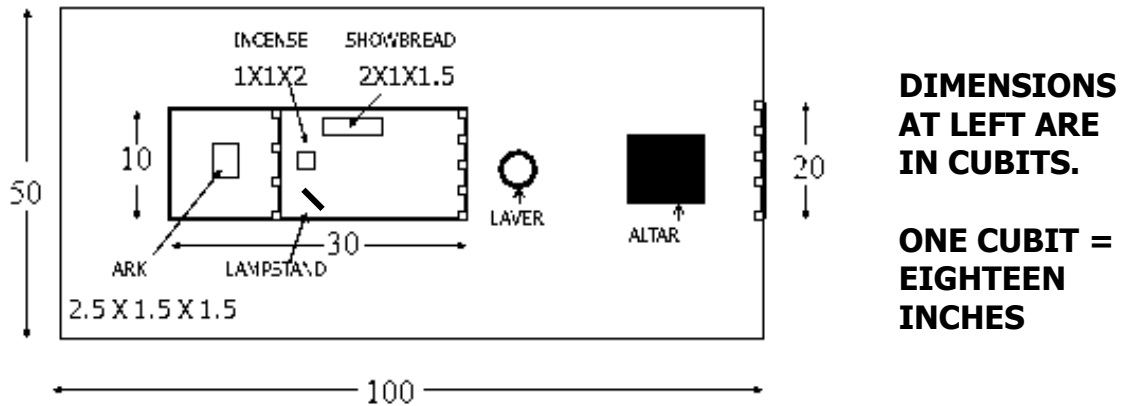
1. A worship system (the tabernacle) which was combined with
2. A sacrificial system (the sacrifices offered at the tabernacle)

Begin by reading Acts 4:12, doing a word study on "no other" and "name" _____

Continue your reading in John 14:6 recording Jesus' words here: _____

Clearly, Jesus claimed that the only way to get to the Father, who is in heaven, is through Him. The problem arises when people began to identify with any part of an inclusive doctrine. This is a "have your cake and eat it too" position. It says that people are saved by Jesus even if they never knew it! This is NOT what scripture says.

Read Romans 10:9 _____



Today we are going to consider the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was always pitched facing East. It was entered through a 30' wide opening in the fabric fence that was called "the way." It was also called the Narrow Gate because it was the only entrance of the three in the tabernacle that was narrower than the wall that it was in.

Read the following verse and record your thoughts: John 10:9 _____

Matthew 7:13 _____

The early church called itself "the Way." Read the following verses:

Acts 9:2: _____

Also Acts 19:9, Acts 19:23, Acts 24:14, Acts 24:22 _____

The Way opened into the outer court. This court was enclosed by a fabric fence that was seven and a half feet tall but was open to the sky.

The outer court symbolized salvation

The first thing inside the outer court was the sacrificial altar. This symbolized the sacrifice of Christ. The only other thing in the outer court was the laver for ceremonial cleansing of the priests prior to entering the other parts of the tabernacle. The Tabernacle is telling us God's plan:

- ◆◆ Only enter by the Way...the Narrow Gate...Jesus
- ◆◆ Having accepted the sacrifice of Christ (altar)
- ◆◆ Having been ceremonially cleansed (laver)

When we are baptized, this symbolizes our ceremonial cleansing from sin and our identification with the sacrifice of Christ, His death, and resurrection.

Ephesians 5:25-26 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word...

Romans 6:3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

The Tabernacle model is telling us that we must enter by the Way, the Narrow Gate. Salvation is only through the sacrifice of Christ. Our cleansing comes only

after accepting that sacrifice. We cannot go on to do additional ministry before God until we have understood and accepted this as God's unique plan.

It is important to note that only priests could enter the second court, called the Holy Place, and only the High Priest could enter the third court, called the Holy of Holies.

Read 1 Peter 2:9 and record the importance of that verse here: _____

The priests were to be experts in God's Word and they also presented the sacrifices to God.

Read Romans 12:1 _____

If we are a priesthood of believers, how should we approach the Word of God?

Read Ezra 6:20 for the information on purification of priests: _____

Read Romans 12:1-2 for more information. Do a word study on "prove" from this passage: _____

Continue your reading in Philippians 4:8 _____

As a priesthood of believers, we are eligible, because of Christ, to symbolically enter into the second area called the Holy Place. This represents discipleship. There is a difference between a convert and a disciple. A disciple has accepted Jesus sacrifice and is "saved." A disciple has a heart desire to grow and become all that God wants him/her to be.

Read John 8:20-32 and write what you learn about disciples here: _____

The Holy Place is entered through the door of truth. There are three items inside the Holy Place.

On the north side is the table of showbread, with the bread of the presence.

Read Romans 8:28 and do a word study on "purpose" and record the results here: _____

Consider the use of the word *prothesis* in the following verses:

- ❖ **Ephesians 1:11**...also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will...
- ❖ **Ephesians 3:11** This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord...
- ❖ **2 Timothy 1:9** ...who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity...

The showbread represents coming into God's presence in such a real and personal way that your very being is summed up in becoming all that God wants you to be and doing all that He wants you to do.

John 4:34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."

On the south side of the Holy Place is the lampstand. Because there were no windows in the Holy Place, the lampstand was literally a light in a dark place. It was carefully tended by the priests so that its light would not go out. It was made of gold...beaten into shape. Each of its seven lamps had to be individually tended. Consider the following verses:

- ❖ **Psalms 119:105** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
- ❖ **Proverbs 6:23** For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light;

❖ **Luke 8:16** "Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light."

❖ **John 5:35** "He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light."

Now read Matthew 5:14-16 regarding believers: _____

Continue reading in Leviticus 24:2 and make the personal application: _____

The final object in the Holy Place is the altar of incense. It was on the west side of the Holy Place, directly in front of the entrance into the third area of the Tabernacle, called the Holy of Holies.

From the book of Revelation, we realize that this altar represents prayer.

❖ **Revelation 5:8** When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

❖ **Revelation 8:3-4** Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.

It is important to know that this altar was always to be fired from the sacrificial altar. This tells us that Christians can pray in Jesus' name because of the sacrifice that He made on our behalf. Read Leviticus 10: 1,2 and record what you learn about the sons of Aaron: _____

God intended that the privilege of praying in Jesus' name would be preserved in purity through the methodology of the tabernacle services. To pray in any other

name, or to approach God other than through the sacrifice of Jesus, results in death just as surely as it did for Nadab and Abihu.

So we see that discipleship is represented in living purposefully before God, understanding His Word, taking that Word to the world, and prayer.

The entrance into the last area of the Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies, is through the veil of Life. At this point, we should observe that the three entrances are the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

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

The veil of Life represents Jesus body. Read Hebrews 10:19-21 and record your results here: _____

Now read what happened to the veil at Jesus' death. Matthew 27:51 _____

Inside the Holy of Holies was the ark of the covenant. Do a word study on ark (translated from the Hebrew in the OT) _____

Read Deuteronomy 10:2 and note what was inside the ark here: _____

Now, read Exodus 25:21 and note what the lid to the ark was: _____

Cross reference to Hebrews 9:5. Do a word study on mercy seat in this verse:

The mercy seat literally means "the place of propitiation." Read 1 John 2:2 and find the cross reference: _____

**MERCY: WHEN YOU
DO NOT GET
SOMETHING BAD
THAT YOU DO
DESERVE**

**GRACE: WHEN YOU
GET SOMETHING
GOOD THAT YOU
DO NOT DESERVE**

Now, read James 2:13, and journal your thoughts about how mercy triumphs over judgment: _____

The ark is the perfect example of God's mercy covering the punishment due under the Law.

Reviewing what we have learned under this section, God's revelation in His Word, answer the following questions:

1. Can you be Jesus' disciple and be in another religion? Why not? _____

2. If you must make a choice to enter by the Way, can you get to God without making that choice? _____

Can you remain outside the Narrow Gate and still get to God? _____

HERESY #7: THE ANCIENT-FUTURE POSITION ALSO CALLED VINTAGE FAITH

Heresy #7 by Dan Kimball: Aesthetics is not an end in itself. But in our culture, which is becoming more multi-sensory and less respectful of God, we have a responsibility to pay attention to the design of the space where we assemble regularly. In the emerging culture, darkness represents spirituality. We see this in Buddhist temples, as well as Catholic and Orthodox churches. Darkness communicates that something serious is happening.

Brian McLaren adds to this position: **In the tradition of Julian of Norwich and St. Teresa of Avila and all the other mystics, we can learn to render ourselves vulnerable to the “favors of God”—those indescribable experiences that mock our dualisms and so saturate our imagination with abundance that they transcend our ability to convey joy and wonder. In the tradition of St. John of the Cross, we can learn to survive and derive benefits from the soul’s dark night.**

My wife and I spent an hour in the labyrinth and found ourselves calmed and refreshed, our perspective uniquely restored. We made our own prayer path after the convention — we knew we couldn’t keep this experience to ourselves. A few months later we featured a labyrinth as part of Graceland’s annual art event at Santa Cruz Bible Church. Graceland artists recreated the labyrinth with a kit we purchased (The Prayer Path, Group Publishing), transforming one of the church’s multipurpose rooms into a medieval prayer sanctuary. The team hung art on the walls, draped fabric, and lit candles all around the room to create a visual sense of sacred space.

Tony Jones also joins in: **As a Christian practice {meditation is} inextricably bound up with...silence, the Jesus Prayer, and Centering Prayer,... Further, it’s linked with the recent popularity in the West of Eastern religions, resulting in books with such titles as Christian Zen and Christian Yoga. While this makes some Christians nervous, others revel in the fact that God is revealed in all truth, no matter the religion of origin. The Sacred Way, page 79**

THE DANGERS OF THE VINTAGE FAITH POSITION

The concept of vintage faith has much to commend it. Certainly, Christianity has become removed from its roots. Some of my fondest memories of my family involve singing old hymns together and giving testimonies of God’s goodness to prior generations of our family.

However, many in the Vintage Faith movement within the emerging church place much focus on meditation and practices associated with eastern religions, the New Age, and the occult. I am struck by their emphasis on darkness. Jesus said

"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil." John 3:19

Begin your reading for this section in Romans 13:12 _____

Elements of Eastern faiths and New Age thinking have been widely adopted by 65% of U.S. adults, including many who call themselves Protestants and Catholics, according to a survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

Many in the vintage movement have reported finding "energy" in trees, mountains, streams, etc. When it comes to being in touch with God, those who practice these things are open to any avenue. And using the ancient mystics as an example introduces avenues into the New Age and occult.

What do you say when a good friend who loves God, reads her Bible, and talks and walks her faith becomes a devotee of "Christian yoga"?

"Christian yoga" is coming to a church near you if it hasn't already arrived.

For those who understand yoga's Hindu roots and to all former New Agers, it will never be compatible with Evangelical Christianity.

The May 20, 2005 edition of "Christianity Today" on-line featured an interview with a woman who says she is an Evangelical and proud of it, however, she is a devotee of yoga. She says she breathes in Christ and breathes out stress. Holy Spirit in, fear out. God the Father in, carbon dioxide out. She is so thankful someone pried open her Evangelical mind to the wonders of yoga. She states, "Give me five minutes of yoga and my mind immediately goes to the metaphor of God's Spirit being omnipresent and as necessary as air." Insisting that Hindu gods will never make it to her yoga sessions, she joins the chorus singing that yoga doesn't belong to Hinduism but to "world spirituality." Frankly, that doesn't sound any better.

A popular video called, "Outstretched in Worship" has fueled the yoga popularity among Christians, be they Mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, or Catholics. "Just don't throw the baby out with the bath water," say proponents who insist there are so many "benefits" of yoga. So, having "sanctified" a Hindu practice, they have called

The subtlety of eastern religion is that it enters like an odorless poison gas, seeping under the door, through the keyhole, in through the open window, so that the man in the room is overcome without his ever realizing that there was any danger at all. "The Dust of Death" Os Guinness

it "Christian yoga." Daniel Akin, dean of the school of theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said Christians who are drawn to the physical benefits of yoga should avoid its spiritual and psychological underpinnings. "Yoga is rooted in Eastern mysticism and it is incompatible with Christianity," he says.

Laurette Willis, a yoga veteran of 22 years and an Evangelical Christian, said the experience left her vulnerable to "psychic influences" she believes were demonic. "It opened the door to twenty years of involvement in the New Age movement." Willis says that many yoga postures are based on ancient Hindu worship of the sun and moon as deities, and rejects the notion that they can be redeemed by putting a Christian spin on them. Willis concludes that yoga's emphasis on cultivating divine energy within oneself conflicts with Christianity's goal of finding salvation in Christ. Yoga means joining together. It's the joining of the individual spirit with the universal spirit. Christians should be seeing red flags rather than exploring a trendy new "experience."

Many who have been fans of the Purpose Driven books by Rick Warren were upset recently when Warren partnered with Dr. Mehmet Oz to kick off The Daniel Plan diet. Joining them were two other Eastern indoctrinated, mystical doctors. This plan was presented to Warren's entire congregation of 22,000 people as a new health and wellness plan. Dr. Mark Hyman, an expert in metabolism and Dr. Daniel Amen, a clinical professor of psychiatry at UC Irvine, helped Warren kick off this program. These three doctors between themselves have an Eastern worldview even though one is a Muslim, one is a Jew, and one is a Christian. They come from a background which teaches that within ourselves is the potential to heal ourselves. This is a position we must consider carefully.

As a result of the fall, the curse of sin is still in full operation on this earth – disease, sickness, and illness are still part of the big picture that we all have to contend with. We live in unredeemed bodies and anyone of us at anytime can get sick.

We all know the different things that can happen to our bodies that can cause them to breakdown, and in some cases, seriously disable us. However, as Christians, we have an all-powerful God who has the power to fully heal us.

We certainly know that Jesus healed people while he was on earth. Read the following:

Mark 6:13 _____

Luke 4:40 _____

Furthermore, we know that certain people have the gift of healing:

1 Corinthians 12:9 _____

In each of the above scriptures, we must then ask ourselves this question:
"where does the healing come from?" _____

Dr. Oz is a well-known TV personality who discussed his Muslim faith and his particular resonance with Sufism (Islamic mysticism) and the influence of Emanuel Swedenborg in a PBS interview. Dr. Oz has endorsed Reiki, a type of "energy healing" that is based on the New Age chakra system and puts those practicing it into contact with the realm of familiar spirits.

During the Reiki attunement process, the avenue that is opened within the body to allow Reiki to flow through also opens up the psychic communication centers. This is why many Reiki practitioners report having verbalized channeled communications with the spirit world. (cited in A Time of Departing, page 97)

Dr. Amen has teamed up with T. J. Bartel, a Tantra educator. Tantra is the name of the ancient Hindu sacred texts that contain certain rituals and secrets. Some deal with taking the energies brought forth in meditation through the chakras and combining them with love-making to enhance sexual experiences, which include not only with the human partner but also with ishvara (your personal god.) In New Age communities, this "god" would be better known as your "spirit guide."

Dr. Hyman is a strong advocate for mystical meditation. In his book, "The Ultramind Solution," Hyman emphasizes meditation, saying that it doesn't matter what religion one has to benefit from it (page 322). Dr. Hyman suggests that "Mindful meditation is a powerful well-researched tool, developed by Buddhists" (page 384).

Self healing is an idea that derives from Eastern Mysticism, that within us we can connect to divinity. We can heal ourselves. It's all mind over matter. It is self-hypnosis. Unfortunately, the emerging church is bringing in "new" ideas that are not new ideas; they are old ideas from religions that never honored God.

Read the following verses and journal what you learn:

1 John 4:2 _____

Hebrews 13:8-9 _____

While much can be said of the practice of withdrawing to a quiet place to pray and seek God, methodology that invites demonic participation is to be avoided. **This means that discernment is extremely important.**

Read Hebrews 5:12-14 and record your thoughts here: _____

Do a word study on "discern" in this passage and write the results: _____

According to this passage, our ability to know right from wrong or good from evil, is directly proportional to our knowledge of God's Word. And if you don't believe that the Bible is God's Word, where does this leave you in determining right and wrong?

One of the most fundamentally wrong parts of the emerging, progressive, postmodern church movement is the minimizing of the importance of studying God's Word.

Another practice that has passed into Christianity via the Vintage Faith, Ancient-Future movement, is the labyrinth. Many within the movement have claimed that it is a form previously used by Christians. In fact, it predates Christianity by at least thirteen hundred years and is expressly related to the Asian mystic religions. It is found in Native American art and Buddhist temples. But in the past it has never been found in association with Christian art. Wiccans use the labyrinth walk in many of their ceremonies.

Jesus already instructed us how to be open to his leading and his answers so why do we need to use this other religious device? Religious syncretism is

probably the most dangerous act we can involve ourselves in because we can put a label on something and call it something it essentially is not.

April 12-15, 2012 there was a "Co-Creation Conference" featuring Brian McLaren as a keynote speaker. The conference was billed as "Servant Leadership and the Great Emergence: The Spirit's Call to Evolve." Part of this conference featured instructions on Labyrinth walking.

Dick Rauscher, founder of the Stonyhill Institute, said this about the co-creation movement and labyrinth prayer:

"All prayer is driven by our thought process and the beliefs of our own egos. We co-create with God through positive prayer and negative prayer. This is true whether our behaviors and choices are conscious or unconscious."

Jesus told us very clearly:

John 4:23 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers."

HERESY #8: CHRISTIAN EQUALS GREEN

Heresy #8 by Rob Bell: Salvation is the entire universe being brought back into harmony with its maker. This has huge implications for how people present the message of Jesus. Yes, Jesus can come into our hearts. But we can join a movement that is as wide and as big as the universe itself. Rocks and trees and birds and swamps and ecosystems. God's desire is to restore all of it.

For Jesus, the question wasn't how do I get into heaven? but how do I bring heaven here?... The goal isn't escaping this world but making this world the kind of place God can come to. And God is remaking us into the kind of people who can do this kind of work.

Doug Pagitt adds, **"God is constantly creating anew. And God also, invites us to be re-created and join the work of God as co-creators. . . . Imagine the Kingdom of God as the creative process of God reengaging in all that we know and experience. . . . When we employ creativity to make this world better, we participate with God in the recreation of the world."**

The progressive, postmodern church is strongly committed to the revelation of God's kingdom here and now, before the second coming of Christ. The main objective of this kingdom is to promote conditions that will ensure happy and contented societies in which people can live together without oppression, exploitation, poverty, disease, conflicts, revolutions, warfare and other negative experiences. They believe in preservation of the earth that goes beyond biblical stewardship.

What if he (Jesus) didn't come to start a new religion, but rather came to start a political, social, religious, artistic, economic, intellectual and spiritual revolution that would give birth to a new world? Brian McLaren, The Secret Message of Jesus, page 4

People who embrace the green agenda generally believe in a theology that says Christ will not return until the earth has been made suitable for His coming.

Rick Warren has endorsed books by emergents such as Dan Kimball's "The Emerging Church" and often speaks highly of emergent leaders including a front cover endorsement of Leonard Sweet's book, Soul Tsunami: **"Soul Tsunami shows us why these are the greatest days for evangelism since the first century."** We will look at Sweet in a future chapter. Although not officially part of the postmodern church, nevertheless, those who have long admired Warren wonder why he would give its leaders so much validity and encouragement.

Brian McLaren wrote that **a Christian's goal is not simply to reach people for Christ but to save the planet from destruction. (A New Kind of Christian, p. 83).**

Tony Campolo adds this drivel, **"God saved us in order that he might rescue all of creation. The earth is groaning and waiting for the sons and daughters of God to be redeemed and filled with the Spirit. Why? So that they can invade the planet and rescue it from the demonic destruction that has played havoc with the atmosphere, the ecology balance, all the things we see around us. Our call is to be God's agents, to rescue not only the human race but the whole of creation."**

Dr. David Cloud quoted Jeffrey Whittaker's experience at Brian McLaren's "Everything Must Change" tour at Goshen College in Indiana, in May of 2008. "The very first session was titled 'Focusing on the Wounds of Our Planet.' They sang a song based on Francis of Assisi's poem 'Brother Sun, Sister Moon' and watched a DVD by the Sierra Club 'exposing the immoral mining techniques used by energy companies in West Virginia.' Then they were treated to a song that cried out against 'our rape of Mother Earth.' The second day's session began with another environmentalist song that said mining is a 'scar cut across the face of Mother Earth.' They were constantly reminded that 'catastrophic consequences due to global warming are upon us.' Another session opened with the 'Hymn of Remorse,' which bewailed the supposed desecration of the earth. 'We repent for covering your colorful earth with gray cement...for cutting down trees...for scarring your earth...Lord, have mercy, can we be restored? What of the lands of tribes and nations who lived here first...the noise of traffic is drowning out the songbird's song....'" ("A Pastor Reports on McLaren's 'Everything Must Change Tour,' "June 2, 2008.)

Many involved in the Green movement want to introduce an earth based religion for the solution to the world's problems— they believe in Gaia — an "Earth spirit," some call her the goddess or planetary brain. They believe the planet is a living organism, a deity, at the same time denying the actual deity that made it. Some think that human beings can have a spiritual relationship with this entity. This earth spirituality is part of the new age movement but it is more accurate to say it has more to do with ancient paganism.

Some may protest and say the environmental movement is about science and not religion. But they need to take a closer look at those involved and what they are writing.

"GaiaMind" is the name of a project associated with the Light Party, which maintains that through "global meditation and prayer," people can "align with and expand the powerful initiating energies of The Aquarian Age..."

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT THE EARTH?

We will begin our reading with 2 Peter 3:10. Read about the fate of the earth and record it here: _____

Continue your reading in Revelation 21:5 _____

As we begin our thinking concerning Earth, we must start in Genesis, where God's role for mankind was stated:

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

From our discussion of the Kinsman Redeemer model, we know that Satan is now the ruler of the world because Adam chose to obey Satan rather than God. However, scripture nowhere says that mankind is supposed to rescue the earth. In fact, we aren't even supposed to rescue people. God does the rescuing. Our job is the presentation, the evangelism, and the discipling.

Chapters one and two of the book of Job clearly declares that Satan patrols the earth and has power on the earth but Satan answers to God and God sets Satan's limits.

To say that we don't have a duty to "rescue" earth in no way undermines our responsibility for stewardship. In fact, Genesis is clear about the fact that God's creation on earth was for the use of man. The environmental part of the emerging, postmodern church's agenda is not just to keep the air clean and the streams pure; it goes far beyond that to a position that is akin to earth worship.

For them, part of bringing about a healthy earth involves a redistribution of wealth, to make the earth more equitable and fair prior to Jesus' second coming. Brian McLaren said this, **"I think our future will require us to join humbly and charitably with people of other faiths – Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, and secularists in pursuit of peace, environmental stewardship and justice for all people, things that matter greatly to the heart of God."**

McLaren is on the Sojourners board of directors. Sojourners is headed by Jim Wallis, who was the religious advisor to President Obama. Lynne Hybels, wife of Willow Creek's former lead pastor, is a regular contributor to the Sojourners magazine. Willow Creek recently used Wallis' book on social justice called "The Great Awakening" in one of its education classes. Sojourners receives substantial funding from The Open Society Institute, one of George Soros' organizations.

The green agenda is also popping up in paraphrased Bibles. Eugene Peterson, the editor of The Message Bible paraphrase has endorsed "Love Wins" by Rob Bell. He is a proponent of the green agenda of the emerging church, and this bias is reflected in his paraphrase. Do you see why I always say that we should study from a good translation?

- Read Romans 15:13 in a Bible translation:

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the same verse from The Message:

Oh! May the God of green hope fill you up with joy, fill you up with peace, so that your believing lives, filled with the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit, will brim over with hope!

- Also 1 Corinthians 6:9 from a translation:

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

And the same verse from The Message:

Don't you realize that this is not the way to live? Unjust people who don't care about God will not be joining in his kingdom. Those who use and abuse each other, use and abuse sex, use and abuse the earth and everything in it, don't qualify as citizens in God's kingdom.

Notice the biases from The Message. The Word is concerned with people who are not in right standing with God and their future inheritance of the coming kingdom. The Message paraphrase is concerned about people and their use of the earth and its resources qualifying as members of a Kingdom Now. The Word

makes no mention whatsoever of the Earth in these verses. The Message makes the Earth a major thrust.

There are other equally egregious sections of the Message, particularly those that minimize homosexuality in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and 1 Timothy 1:8-11.

Christian stewardship of the earth respects the purpose for which things were made. God expected that Adam and Eve would use earth's resources for the advancement of humans, and to meet their needs. That stewardship continues in a respect for what God created and its appropriate use for the kingdom. The creation itself is not to be worshiped, but the One who created it.

It is clear that there will be a restoration of the earth. Read Isaiah 66:22 and record what you learn about who is in charge of making the new earth: _____

Although Revelation 21 speaks of new heavens and a new earth, it nowhere says that people are the ones who are responsible for making it.

HERESY #9: POSTMODERNISM: TRUTH IS EVOLVING

Heresy #9 by Tony Jones: Emergent doesn't have a position on absolute truth, or on anything for that matter. Do you show up at a dinner party with your neighbors and ask, "what's this dinner party's position on absolute truth?" No, you don't, because it's a non-sensical question. 2005 National Youth Workers Convention

Ask me if Christianity (my version of it, yours, the Pope's, whoever's) is orthodox, meaning true, and here's my honest answer: a little, but not yet. Assuming by Christianity you mean the Christian understanding of the world and God, Christian opinions on soul, text, and culture I'd have to say that we probably have a couple of things right, but a lot of things wrong, and even more spreads before us unseen and unimagined. But at least our eyes are open! To be a Christian in a generously orthodox way is not to claim to have the truth captured, stuffed, and mounted on the wall. Brian McLaren, A Generous Orthodoxy, page 293.

Additional information comes from emergent Leonard I. Sweet, an author, preacher, scholar, and ordained United Methodist clergyman currently serving as the E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism at Drew Theological School, in Madison, New Jersey, and a Visiting "Distinguished" Professor at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon. In 2006 and 2007, Len was voted by his peers "One of the 50 Most Influential Christians in America" by Church Report Magazine and in 2010 was named one of the top ten influential Christians by a non-english website. Sweet is endorsed by Rick Warren, Brian McLaren, Tony Jones, and others.

"A major New Light undertaking is the designing of newstream communities that can be 'in connection' and 'in-formation' with the spirit of Christ. Christ will be embodied for the postmodern church in information." Leonard Sweet, Quantum Spirituality, page 121.

"The following are five gross premises of embodiment... that build anew the body of Christ for the postmodern era -- being "in connection" and "in-formation" with: (1) other Christians, (2) all creation, (3) one's ancestors and ancestral memories, (4) other faiths, (5) technology. Leonard Sweet, Quantum Spirituality.....

"To be "in connection" and "in-formation" is to be related to other Christians and the shared culture of all Christians and to grow a set of organic relationships and coalitions around a common love for God. Communities have souls, not just individuals. The modern era downplayed a biblical doctrine of salvation that had this communal dimension. In contrast, the New Light movement is concerned about the salvation of ensouled communities as well as individual souls, and the salvation of community souls relating

synergistically to one another. ... The power of community is the energy of between: The synergizing of synergies in which "one [shall] chase a thousand, and two [shall] put ten thousand to flight" (Deuteronomy 32:30).... Leonard Sweet, Quantum Spirituality, p. 122.

My personal salvation depends on our collective salvation. President Barack Obama

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TRUTH

It is very apparent from the work of the progressive church leadership that, when you dismiss the Bible as God's authoritative word, you lose a grip on reality. The ridiculous positions espoused by these leaders would be comical if it weren't embraced by many people who believe that they are saved.

When believers see the direction that such churches are taking, they cry out with David,

**Psalm 25:4-5
Make me know Your ways, O Lord;
Teach me Your paths.
Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
For You are the God of my salvation;
For You I wait all the day.**

Scripture teaches us truth on many levels.

1. GOD'S WORD IS THE WORD OF TRUTH

Read Psalm 119:160 _____

John 17:17 _____

2. JESUS IS THE PERSON OF TRUTH

John 14:6 _____

Notice that Jesus didn't say that He "knows" the truth; He said He "is" truth.

John 1:17 _____

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

John 14:16-17 _____

1 John 5:6 _____

4. THE CHURCH IS THE PILLAR AND FOUNDATION OF TRUTH

1 Timothy 3:15 _____

In this chapter, our study will center on one of the most tragic sections of scripture. Read through John 8:28-47 and then answer the following questions:

Who was Jesus addressing in these verses? _____

What had these people believed? _____

Write a definition of "disciple" from John 8:31 here _____

Do a word study on "continue" in this verse: _____

Observe that the truth itself doesn't free anyone. Truth is truth whether people know or believe it. It is when you come to KNOW truth that you are freed.

A three-part discussion is found in this section.

First, the people are claiming that they are Abraham's descendants and have never been enslaved. (apparently they are forgetting Egypt, Babylon, etc...but maybe they mean themselves and not their ancestors). Do a word study on "descendants" and record the result here: _____

Jesus' response is that they are truly Abraham's biological descendants, but they don't have the belief structure that Abraham had. Read Romans 4:3-6 and record what you learn about Abraham _____

Second, since Jesus has refuted their argument concerning being children of Abraham, they try another apologetic. They claim that they are God's children, and that God is their Father. Jesus response is basic Christianity:

John 8:42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

Jesus' argument is that God isn't their father; if they recognized God as their father, then they would know who Jesus is.

Third, Jesus points out that there are only two teams: God's and the Devil's. Since they aren't playing on God's team, they are on the Devil's team by default. Tragically, because they haven't understood the truth of who the Father is, they don't recognize the Son either.

Jesus concludes with this horrible affirmation:

John 8:43-44 "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

This section of scripture is one of the most tragic in the Bible because it is speaking to people who believe that they know God and walk in the truth. But what they believe about Jesus shows what they truly believe about God. If you don't believe the truth about Jesus, then you don't know the Father.

1 John 2:22-23 _____

Read the following verses and record what you learn:

Mark 9:40 _____

Galatians 1:6,7 _____

With Pilate, the emerging church asks the fateful question: "What is truth?"

Paul gives a stern warning to his disciple, Timothy, regarding the truth of God's word.

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

Diligence, translating "spoudason" from the root "spoudazo" means to do something well and with a sense of urgency. As we live in these troubled times, we should diligently guard the truth. 2 Timothy continues:

2 Timothy 2:16 But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness...

Because I have always loved a vigorous debate (aka argument), years ago I adopted this verse as a check on my personality:

1 Timothy 6:20-21 O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"— which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.

There will always be worldly (godless) people who bring up arguments that are the antithesis of correct doctrine. We must carefully guard the truth of the gospel message.

As we close this section, do a word study on "guard" from 1 Timothy 6:20 and write what you learn here: _____

We must never let error of any sort to permeate our belief structure.

1 John 4:1-6 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

We will discuss the spirit of the antichrist in the next lesson.

BABYLON RISING

Scripture speaks frequently of the spirit of antichrist as well as a person in the last days who is The Antichrist.

In addition to this, scripture clearly pictures "Babylon" riding into power. Let's begin our reading for this section in Revelation 17:1-6, and answer the following questions:

1. Where is the woman sitting – be sure to note two places: _____

2. What made her drunk? _____

3. Do a word study on "harlot" and note two specific ways that the word is used in scripture: _____

4. Describe in detail what the harlot was wearing: _____

If time permits, spend some time looking for anyone in literal Babylon in the past who was adorned in this way. Write what you learn here: _____

In addition to being a harlot, the woman is described as being a city. Read Revelation 18:10, 21 _____

Continue your reading in Revelation 16:19 _____

The harlot who had given all the nations a drink of her immoral passion is now given God's cup to drink. Read Revelation 14:8 _____

SUMMARY:

1. A HARLOT CITY (a city isn't a literal woman, so harlot must be used in the sense of a people who knew God but worshiped other gods/things)
2. THE HARLOT IS ATTIRED LIKE THE BABYLONIAN CULT GODDESS ISHTAR, INCLUDING THE GOLDEN CUP
3. THE HARLOT IS BEING PUNISHED FOR HER IMMORALITY
4. THE HARLOT IS 'RIDING' A BEAST – PROBABLY COMING INTO POWER ON A WORLD SYSTEM
5. THE WOMAN IS NOT ONLY A HARLOT BUT THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS

Now, let's review what the woman is riding. Read Revelation 17:3 and describe the beast in as much detail as possible: _____

Continue your reading in Revelation 17:7-13 and write everything else you learn about the beast here: _____

The beast has seven heads which have a two-fold representation: they are seven "oros" which can mean either hill or mountain. They also represent seven kings, five of whom had fallen when John received his revelation, one of whom was in power when John received his revelation, and one of whom was to receive a future kingdom.

Conquerors of Israel:

Egypt	}	These five kingdoms had fallen
Assyria		
Babylon		
Medo-Persia		
Greece		

Rome } This kingdom was in power when John received the revelation

Future kingdom: this kingdom was still future in John's time and is still future now insofar as we can tell

SUMMARY: A BEAST WITH SEVEN HEADS REPRESENTING

1. SEVEN HILLS ON WHICH THE HARLOT SITS AND
2. SEVEN KINGDOMS, ONE STILL FUTURE

Review Revelation 17:11-13 and describe everything you learn about the beast's past here: _____

It is apparent that a person can't be alive on earth, die, and come back – unless of course you are Jesus. So we can pretty much assume that this beast is something more than a person. What sort of being can be on earth, go to the abyss, and then get out and come back to earth? There is only one answer: a demon.

So now we see a beast that was one of the seven kingdoms above (I would say the spiritual empowerment of one of them), who was confined to the abyss, and who has been released from the abyss for this time—this demon forms kingdom together with ten nations as prophesied by Daniel.

Read Daniel 7:7-28 and write what you learn here: _____

Daniel 7:23-24 "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings.

From Daniel, we learn about the ten nations in league with this demonic being that arises and subdues three of the ten kings leaving seven, with himself being an eighth. We call this demonic "little horn" the antichrist.

Now it is time for serious hermeneutics. Put together everything you have discovered from the prophecies here: _____

We find out more about the antichrist in Revelation 13:1-10. This is generally believed to be a description of a demonically empowered man rising to power as part of a false trinity established by Satan at the end of the age.

Satan establishes himself as a false father
Beast from Revelation 13:1-10 is established by Satan as the antichrist
Beast from Revelation 13:11-18 is established by Satan as the false Holy Spirit

Note the parallel between the antichrist description and the beast that is ridden by the harlot. _____

As you conclude your study for this section, do a word study on "antichrist" and record what you learn here: _____

15 Warning Signs that the Postmodern Church is Emerging into Your Church:

1. Scripture is no longer the ultimate authority as the basis for the Christian Faith.
2. The centrality of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is being replaced by humanistic methods promoting Church Growth and a Social Gospel.
3. More and more emphasis is being placed on building the Kingdom of God now and less and less on the Warnings of Scripture about the imminent Return of Jesus Christ and a Coming Judgment in the Future.
4. The Teaching that Jesus Christ will rule and reign in a literal millennial period is considered unbiblical and heretical.
5. The Teaching that the church has taken the place of Israel and Israel has No Prophetic significance is often embraced.
6. The Teaching that the Book of Revelation does not refer to the Future, but instead has been already fulfilled in the past
7. An experiential Mystical form of Christianity begins to be promoted as a method to reach the Postmodern Generation.
8. Ideas are promoted teaching that Christianity needs to be reinvented in order to provide meaning for this generation.
9. The Pastor may implement an idea called "ancient-future" or "vintage Christianity" claiming that in order to take the church forward, we need to go back in church history and find out what experiences were effective to get people to embrace Christianity.
10. While the authority of the Word of God is undermined, images and sensual experiences are promoted as the key to experiencing and knowing God.
11. These experiences include icons, candles, incense, liturgy, labyrinths, prayer stations, contemplative prayer, experiencing the sacraments, particularly the sacrament of the Eucharist.
12. There seems to be a strong emphasis on ecumenism indicating that a bridge is being established that leads in the direction of unity with the Roman Catholic Church.
13. Some evangelical Protestant leaders are saying that the Reformation went too far. They are reexamining the claims of the "church fathers" saying that communion is more than a symbol and that Jesus actually becomes present in the wafer at communion.
14. There will be a growing trend towards an ecumenical unity for the cause of world peace claiming the validity of other religions and that there are many ways to God.
15. Members of Churches who Question or Resist the new changes that the Pastor is implementing are reprimanded and usually asked to leave.

CHRISTIANS HAVE ALL AUTHORITY

So far in this study we have been focusing on viewpoints that are held in direct conflict with scripture and which can dangerously cause people to believe they are saved when they are not. Now we are going to move into areas where belief structures can be held, erroneously, but not negate salvation. In other words, people can hold these positions and still be saved. However, their walk with God and appropriate interaction with sin can be compromised.

In fact, much progressive doctrine may flow from the false premise that Christians have all authority. If that is true, then fixing the world, deciding who is saved and how they are saved, and a plethora of other things must fall within our authority.

Let's begin our study with some definitions. Read Matthew 28:16-20 answering these questions:

Who does Jesus say has all authority? _____

What word is translated "authority?" _____

Authority is defined as the "right" to act.

1. Authority is given by someone (or group) to someone else (or group)
2. Authority has a domain in which it can operate
3. Authority can only act according to the rules of the one granting it

In addition to the authority of Christ, believers move in the power of the Holy Spirit. Read the following verses and record what you learn here:

Acts 1:4-8 _____

Power has to do with the "ability" to act. Power without authority is abusive. Authority without power is impotent.

Romans 13 is Paul's treatise on a Christian's requirement to be subject to governing authorities. Read through this section and write your thoughts:

Read Colossians 2:10 and answer the question, "who has all authority?" _____

Authority has always been a problem with humanity. Many rulers have come and gone down through the annals of history wanting to rule and become famous. Even the disciples who were learning from Christ thought about the authority they would receive from Jesus.

Read Luke 22:24-30 _____

The kingdom according to Jesus is inherited by humility, not by taking things through force. Humility is what Christ taught and true humility means to rely on someone who is greater; real humility is to know your position and enjoy it. Those who want all authority to promote His kingdom now prove they are not under the authority of Jesus. As He said we are His servants, and even when He comes back we will be serving under Him.

Even the Spirit does not have the authority that some people claim. Read John 16:13-15 and write your thoughts here: _____

This brings us to the question of exactly how much authority Christians do have. Read Luke 4:5-8 and think about how much authority the devil had: _____

The devil acts for only one reason, to deceive by power, and to bring a person to a place of operating in pride. He longs to separate us and make us think we can function without being dependent on Christ. The first person who was offered this authority was Eve. She was told she could be like God and rule. Instead of being satisfied with the position she had, she was offered more, coveting the power and position that God had. By this the Devil deceived her into losing even what she already had.

Christ grants authority to believers to work according to the purpose He has for them individually. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to make that purpose happen.

Read John 14:12-14 and write your thoughts here: _____

Jesus' name isn't a magic word. It speaks of His authority and power and its use flows out of relationship. In a sense, it is a key that opens doors for believers.

My husband and I have been landlords for many years and we have many master keys. This gives us access to every apartment in every building, every mechanical room, every elevator room, all the storage rooms and the garages.

We've been very careful to give keys to individual buildings and spaces only to those who need them.

When a key is given, we're authorizing that person to use it. They have some work to perform, and the key is a tool that helps them accomplish it. Every person on our management team doesn't have a key to every building. They have the key that opens the area where they need to work.

That key is a symbol of authority; someone has authorized them to perform their work and has given them the means to do it. Such keys are only given to people who know us and know the management plan, the fair housing requirements, and a myriad other requirements for leasing spaces.

That's what **Jesus' name** is – a key to spiritual authority and power, to be used in the area given (our calling) and according to the purpose set forth by the rightful owner of the keys.

So when Jesus gives us authority, it will always have a domain of operation – our purpose.

There is a huge promise for those who are working in accordance with his purpose. Read Romans 8:28 and end your work for this section by recording your thoughts here: _____

REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY

Replacement theology, also called supersessionism, is the position teaching positing that the Christian church has replaced national Israel regarding the plan, purpose, and promises of God. It is described by the following points:

- The Jewish people are no longer God's chosen people. Instead, the Christian church now makes up God's chosen people.
- In the New Testament after Pentecost, the term "Israel" refers to the church.
- The Mosaic covenant (Exodus 20) is replaced by the new covenant.
- Actual circumcision is replaced by a circumcision of the heart

Read the following verses and write your understanding here:

Luke 22:20 _____

Romans 2:29 _____

Romans 4:13-15 _____

Though it is true that the church does replace Israel in some areas such as properly representing God on earth, acknowledging the promise of the Messiah, etc., it is not biblical to say that God is completely done with Israel and that the Christian church is its complete replacement. Matt Slick, CARM

Romans 11:25-26 contains teaching that is frequently misunderstood regarding the point of replacement. After reading those verses, answer these questions:

What is the context of these verses? You will need to read the entire chapter to learn this: _____

Some replacement theologians believe that any scripture mentioning Israel after Acts 2 is actually referring to the church. The following are some claims and the respective rebuttals:

CLAIM: To be a son of Abraham is to have faith in Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:29 shows that sonship to Abraham is seen only in spiritual, not national terms: "And if you be Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Rebuttal: While this is a wonderful inclusionary promise for Gentiles, this verse does not exclude the Jewish people from their original covenant, promise and blessing as the natural seed of Abraham. This verse simply joins us Gentile Christians to what God had already started with Israel.

CLAIM: The promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham was only a "starter." The real Promised Land is the whole world. Romans 4:13 says the Church inherits the world, not Israel. "For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."

Rebuttal: Where does this verse exclude Abraham and His natural progeny, the Jews? It simply says that through the law, they would not inherit the world, but this would be acquired through faith. This is also true of the Church.

CLAIM: The nation of Israel was only the seed of the future Church, which would arise and incorporate people of all nations (Mal. 1:11): "For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, My Name shall be great among the nations, and in every place, incense shall be offered to My Name, and a pure offering for My Name shall be great among the nations, says the Lord of Hosts."

Rebuttal: This shows that the Jewish people and Israel fulfilled one of their callings to be "a light to the nations," so that God's Word has gone around the world. It does not suggest God's dealing with Israel was negated because His Name spread around the world.

CLAIM: Jesus taught that the Jews would lose their spiritual privileges, and be replaced by another people (Matt. 21:43): "Therefore I am saying to you, 'The kingdom of God will be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits of it.'"

Rebuttal: In this passage, Jesus was talking about the priests and Pharisees, who failed as leaders of the people. This passage is not talking about the Jewish people. To include all Jewish people in this statement, God would be breaking covenant.

CLAIM: A true Jew is anyone born of the Spirit, whether he is racially Gentile or Jewish (Romans 2:28-29): "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Rebuttal: This argument does not support the notion that the Church replaced Israel. Rather, it simply reinforces what had been said throughout the Hebrew scriptures: God is looking for people with a heart relationship with Him.

CLAIM: Paul shows that the Church is really the same "olive tree" as was Israel, and the Church is now the tree. Therefore, to distinguish between Israel and the Church is, strictly speaking, false. Indeed, people of Jewish origin need to be grafted back into the Church (Romans 11:17-23).

Rebuttal: This claim is the most outrageous because this passage clearly shows that we Gentiles are the "wild olive branches," who get our life from being grafted into the olive tree. The tree represents the covenants, promises and hopes of Israel (Ephesians 2:12), rooted in the Messiah and fed by the sap, which represents the Holy Spirit, giving life to the Jews (the "natural branches") and Gentile alike. We Gentiles are told to remember that the olive tree holds us up and NOT to be arrogant or boast against the "natural branches" because they can be grafted in again. The olive tree is NOT the Church. We are simply grafted into God's plan that preceded us for over 2,000 years.

CLAIM: All the promises made to Israel in the Old Testament, unless they were historically fulfilled before the coming of Jesus Christ, are now the property of the Christian Church. These promises should not be interpreted literally or carnally, but spiritually and symbolically, so that references to Israel, Jerusalem, Zion and the Temple, when they are prophetic, really refer to the Church (2 Corinthians 1:20). Therefore, they teach that the New Testament needs to be taught figuratively, not literally.

Rebuttal: The promises and covenants are literal, many of them are everlasting, and we Christians can participate in them as part of our rebirth, not in that we took them over to the exclusion of Israel. The New Testament speaks of the Church's relationship to Israel and her covenants as being "grafted in" (Romans 11:17), "brought near" (Ephesians 2:13), "Abraham's offspring (by faith)" (Romans 4:16), and "partakers" (Romans 15:27), NOT as usurpers of the covenant and a replacer of physical Israel. We Gentile Christians joined into what

God had been doing in Israel, and God did not break His covenant promises with Israel (Romans 11:29).

So we must ask ourselves how this doctrine arose. Many Gentile Christians saw the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD as God's judgment on the Jews for refusing the Messiah.

After the Second Jewish Revolt (AD 133-135) was put down by the Roman Emperor Hadrian, theological and political power moved from Jewish Christian leaders to centers of Gentile Christian leadership such as Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch. It is important to understand this change, because it influenced the early Church Fathers to make anti-Jewish statements as Christianity began to disconnect itself from its Jewish roots.

As the Church spread within the Roman Empire, and its membership grew increasingly non-Jewish, Greek and Roman thought began to creep in and completely change the orientation of Biblical interpretation through a Greek mindset, rather than a Jewish or Hebraic mindset. This would later result in many heresies, some of which the Church is still practicing today.

Once Christianity and Judaism began to take separate paths, the chasm became wider and wider. Judaism was considered a legal religion under Roman law, while Christianity, a new religion, was illegal. As Christianity grew, the Romans tried to suppress it. In an attempt to alleviate this persecution, Christian apologists tried in vain to convince Rome that Christianity was an extension of Judaism. However, Rome was not convinced. The resulting persecutions and frustration of the Christians bred an animosity towards the Jewish community, which was free to worship without persecution. Later, when the Church became the religion of the state, it would pass laws against the Jews in retribution.

The antagonism of the early Christians towards the Jews was reflected in the writings of the early Church Fathers. For example:

Justin Martyr (c. AD 160) in speaking to a Jew said: "The Scriptures are not yours, but ours."

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon (c. AD 177) declared: "Jews are disinherited from the grace of God."

Tertullian (AD 160-230), in his treatise, "Against the Jews," announced that God had rejected the Jews in favor of the Christians.

In the early 4th century, Eusebius wrote that the promises of the Hebrew Scriptures were for Christians and not the Jews, and the curses were for the Jews. He argued that the Church was the continuation of the Old Testament and thus superseded Judaism. The young Church declared itself to be the true Israel,

or "Israel according to the Spirit," heir to the divine promises. They found it essential to discredit the "Israel according to the flesh" to prove that God had cast away His people and transferred His love to the Christians. Although partially true, it also reflected vengeance against Jews who would not recognize Christians, resulting in the death of many.

At the beginning of the 4th century, a monumental event occurred for the Church, which placed "the Church Triumphant" over "Vanquished Israel." In AD 306, Constantine became the first Christian Roman Emperor. At first, he had a rather pluralistic view and accorded Jews the same religious rights as Christians. However, in AD 321, he made Christianity the official religion of the Empire to the exclusion of all other religions. This signaled the end of the persecution of Christians, but the beginning of discrimination and persecution of the Jewish people.

Already at the Church Council in Elvira (Spain) in AD 305, declarations were made to keep Jews and Christians apart, including ordering Christians not to share meals with Jews, not to marry Jews, not to use Jews to bless their fields, and not to observe the Jewish Sabbath.

Imperial Rome, in AD 313, issued the Edict of Milan, which granted favor to Christianity, while outlawing synagogues. Then, in AD 315, another edict allowed the burning of Jews if they were convicted of breaking the laws. As Christianity was becoming the religion of the state, further laws were passed against the Jews:

- The ancient privileges granted to the Jews were withdrawn.
- Rabbinical jurisdiction was abolished or severely curtailed.
- Proselytism to Judaism was prohibited and made punishable by death.
- Jews were excluded from holding high office or a military career.

These and other restrictions were confirmed over and over again by various Church Councils for the next 1,000 years.

In AD 321, Constantine decreed all business should cease on "the honored day of the sun." By substituting Sunday for Saturday as the day for Christian worship/rest, he further advanced the split.

This Jewish Shabbat/Christian Sunday controversy also came up at the first real ecumenical Council of Nicea (AD 325), which concluded Sunday to be the Christian day of rest, although it was debated for long after that. Overnight, Christianity was given the power of the Imperial State, and the emperors began to translate the concepts and claims of the Christian theologians against the Jews and Judaism into practice. Instead of the Church taking this opportunity to

spread its Gospel message in love, it truly became the Church Triumphant, ready to vanquish its foes.

After 321, the writings of the Church Fathers changed in character. No longer was it on the defensive and apologetic, but aggressive, directing its venom at everyone "outside of the flock," in particular the Jewish people who could be found in almost every community and nation. During this period, we find more examples of anti-Jewish bias in Church literature written by church leaders:

- Hilary of Poitiers (AD 291-371) wrote: "Jews are a perverse people accursed by God forever."
- Gregory of Nyssa (died AD 394), Bishop of Cappadocia: "the Jews are a brood of vipers, haters of goodness..."
- St. Jerome (AD 347-407) describes the Jews as "... serpents, wearing the image of Judas, their psalms and prayers are the braying of donkeys."

We are told that the Jews are "beloved for the sake of the Patriarchs" (Romans 11:28). They are a chosen people who fulfilled their calling and brought the Gospel to the world. They were chosen to:

1. Be obedient to God's Word and demonstrate to the world as "a light to the nations."
2. Hear God's Word and record it - the Bible.
3. Be the human channel for the Messiah.

The Jewish people have fulfilled their role. The promise to the world through Abraham was that, "in you will all the nations on the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). They were to be a light unto the nations and, while they made mistakes as we all do, they did demonstrate the power of God on earth, they did hear God's Word and record it so that we have the Bible, and they were the human channel for the Messiah, who was born, ministered, died, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven and will return to Jerusalem, Israel, in a day yet to come.

God made an everlasting covenant between the land of Israel and the Jewish people that must be fulfilled and completed or His Word, the Bible, will be proven to be a lie. IT IS NOT. God will never forget or annul His covenant with Israel. If God will not fulfill His promises to Israel, what guarantee do we have that He will fulfill His promises to the Church?

As we complete our thinking for this lesson, read the following verses:

Jeremiah 31:35-37 _____

PROGRESSIVE NOT EVANGELICAL

Before we can move forward in a meaningful way on this topic, we need to take time to define terms.

Progressive Christianity Defines Itself: Progressive Christianity is an open, intelligent, and collaborative approach to the Christian tradition and the life and teachings of Jesus that creates a pathway into an authentic and relevant religious experience.

Stated belief structure:

1. Believe that following the path and teachings of Jesus can lead to an awareness and experience of the Sacred and the Oneness and Unity of all life;
2. Affirm that the teachings of Jesus provide but one of many ways to experience the Sacredness and Oneness of life, and that we can draw from diverse sources of wisdom in our spiritual journey;
3. Seek community that is inclusive of ALL people, including but not limited to:
 - Conventional Christians and questioning skeptics,
 - Believers and agnostics,
 - Women and men,
 - Those of all sexual orientations and gender identities,
 - Those of all classes and abilities;
4. Know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe;
5. Find grace in the search for understanding and believe there is more value in questioning than in absolutes;
6. Strive for peace and justice among all people;
7. Strive to protect and restore the integrity of our Earth;
8. Commit to a path of life-long learning, compassion, and selfless love.

Evangelicalism defines itself: The National Association of Evangelicals and Lifeway Research developed the standard:

- The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe.

- It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin.
- Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation.

Progressive Christianity is essentially telling its adherents to stop looking for truth at all. There are some things that its adherents say that Christians must stop saying according to Steve McSwain:

1. The Bible is the inerrant, infallible Word of God.

It isn't inerrant and not likely even in the "original manuscripts." But then, I cannot say that with absolute certainty, anymore than anyone else can either.

Why? Because no such "original" manuscripts even exists. That's like saying, "We believe there are aliens on other planets!" Good for you. Now, prove it.

As we have it, no matter what translation you favor, the Bible is replete with errors. To pretend otherwise is your right. To say otherwise is a lie. You are entitled to your opinions, your assumptions, even your beliefs. What you are not entitled to is a misrepresentation of the facts.

2. We just believe the Bible.

That, too, is false. What you really believe is your interpretation of the Bible. And the last I checked, the history of the Christian church *is* the history of disagreement over "interpretation." How else do you explain the scores of denominations within Christianity alone? It would be patently more honest of Christians to say, "The following represents our understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures, but we are also aware there are many equally sincere Christians who interpret the Scriptures differently from us."

Jesus is the only way to heaven.

What you are really saying is, "The way we interpret John 14:6 is that Jesus was clearly drawing a line in the sand and telling his hearers and the world: 'If you do not believe in Me, you won't go to the Father when you die.'"

What you and your group of believers *really* mean to say is, "It is our interpretation of John 14:6 that Jesus is saying that He is the only way to heaven."

There are scores of Christians, however, and I am one of them, who do not interpret Jesus' words in John 14 the same way. Just because I do not makes me no less Christian than you are. So stop drawing lines in the sand, please, between equally sincere followers of Jesus.

When I read the 14th chapter of John, I see a context that yields an alternative reading of the text. Instead of Jesus starting some new religion here and saying, "OK, fellas, I'm going to go away soon" — referring to his death — "but, before I go, you should know that where I'm going you, and others who believe just like you, will one day be, too — that is, of course, if they believe like you believe that I am the only way to heaven. That is to say, if the people around you and who come after you don't believe that I am the only way to heaven, then, of course, they'll have to go to hell. Is all that clear?"

I offer an alternative interpretation: When Jesus spoke to them about leaving them, they were understandably shaken. How could they not be? After all, they had left everything to follow him. Now, just a year, or two, or three years later, Jesus is saying he's getting ready to leave them? But, of course, they're upset. So Thomas, speaking on behalf of the others, asks, "But where are you going and why can't we go with you? Furthermore, how will we know the way?"

Jesus responds in tender, reassuring ways. Sensing the fragility of their faith, seeing the anxiety on their faces, he reassures them that, in God's house are many rooms, "mansions" or places. Yes, He's going away but where He's going they, too, will go. Just as He has led them this far, He will lead them further still (and what follows in the latter part of John 14 is the beautiful reassurance of the on-going presence of God in the Holy Spirit).

So, for me personally, and many other Christians, too, Jesus is no more pointing to himself as the "one-and-only-way" to God than Thomas is expressing in his question concern for Hindus, Muslims or Buddhists and whether they'll go to heaven? I can assure you that Thomas, and the others, were only concerned about themselves. And yet, even at that point, Jesus is tender in His care of them and seeks to reassure them that, just as He and the Father were one, and just as they had trusted the things He had been saying to them during his time with them, so they could trust him and what he was saying at this time, too. Yes, he was leaving them. But no, they would not be left alone. Where he was, they would be. He had shown them the way to the Father. But, even after He's gone from them, they will know the way then, too. The Comforter would guide them.

And so, the Church is here today. But not because Christians declare, "There is no way to go to heaven if you don't believe in Jesus." The Church is here today because when people do trust the things Jesus said about Himself, about His relationship to the Father...when people believe and so live the teachings of

Jesus they, too, are changed — they, too, become “new creations in Christ,” as Saint Paul put it (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Now, I took longer with this one thing Christians need to stop saying because many Christians seem stuck here, thinking that there’s only one way to interpret Jesus’ words about being the way. It is my hope these Christians will know there are equally sincere Christians like myself and others who do not believe Jesus was drawing a line in the sand between him and some new religion he was creating and all the other religions of the world.

Again, it’s your right to “believe” or, more accurately, interpret Scripture as you wish. You do not, however, have permission to arrogantly assume your way of interpreting the words of Jesus are the only way to understand His words. Last I checked, no one’s interpretation of anything is infallible. Not yours. Not mine.

The rapture of Jesus is imminent.

Again, if you want to believe in some secret rapture of Christians from the earth just before the Tribulation, if you want to believe in and carry around in your hip pocket detailed charts and graphs of how its all going to happen, then so be it. But do the rest of us a favor and stop saying so in public.

So far, your record of correctly predicting the future earns a flunking grade. And I and scores of other Christians are frankly tired of apologizing for your arrogant — and so far, absolutely wrong — predictions as to when it’ll happen.

My recommendation? Burn up your charts and go live like Christ. Quit masking your real fears by calling them faith. It isn’t faith that leads you to sell all you have, give the proceeds to some wacko, and go camp out on Mount Horeb as you await the rapture. It’s stupidity instead. It’s embarrassing, too. It makes thoughtful Christians have to apologize to the world and explain that we’re not all off-our-rockers, at least, not yet, anyway. So, please, please. If you want to believe in the charts that Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye and other “get-rich-off-the-stupidity-of-Christians” have duped scores into believing, then have at it. Just stay out of the news please! Go quietly to your campsites and do your waiting.

5. Homosexuality is a chosen lifestyle and it is a sin against God.

This one issue, my friend, is on the outs. If you don’t know that, you are more blind than the Republicans were in the last election. They misinterpreted the political environment and so completely blew it when it came to getting their candidate elected. And you, my friend, are misinterpreting the moral, spiritual and religious environment — and the changes that are coming.

My son said it well the other day. We were discussing homosexuality and same-sex marriage and he observed, “Dad, it’s your generation that’s hung up on

these issues. Once you guys get out of the way and the younger generation moves into the decision-making arena, these issues will disappear. The day will come when, just as slavery is unthinkable in our consciousness today, it will be equally unthinkable to deny anyone the right to be who they are or the right to same-sex marriage.”

You can still revere the Bible, my friend, but move beyond the prejudice of Paul or anyone else. You don’t need to make Saint Paul infallible to treat the Bible as important.

6. The earth is less than 10,000 years old.

If you want to believe that Genesis is a scientific description of the origins of the universe, then have at it. Just stop insisting that those myths be taught in our public schools. You do no service to the Bible nor to the morality of this country by demanding school administrators include textbooks that teach that nonsense or by demanding courts hang the Ten Commandments on chamber walls or classroom walls.

If this democracy is going to survive, get over your silly, misinformed notions that our forefathers were all Bible-believing, Bible thumping, Genesis-affirming Christians who came to this country to establish your kind of Christian nation and then expect everyone else to conform to your misguided assumptions.

CHURCH IS ABOUT MAKING ME FEEL GOOD

President Kennedy once famously said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." I remember my grandfather saying, "God could make the same statement about the church." Somewhere along the line, people got the idea that church was about making them feel good. Today we will ask the question, "what is the purpose of the church." And, "is church about making me feel good?"

There is no one single verse that describes the purpose of the church. But we can look at several scriptural areas to assimilate a picture.

The purpose of the church is to worship God

Luke 4:8 _____

John 4:23 _____

Revelation 4:10 _____

The purpose of the church is to study His Word

2 Timothy 2:15 _____

1 Corinthians 4:6 _____

The purpose of the church is to pray

Acts 2:42 _____

The purpose of the church is to love one another

John 13:35 _____

Philippians 1:1-4 _____

The purpose of the church is to help each other

Galatians 6:2 _____

The purpose of the church is to remember through baptism and the Lord's supper

Luke 22:19-20 _____

The purpose of the church is to learn how to live as godly people

Titus 2:11-12 _____

The purpose of the church is to be equipped to evangelize the world

Ephesians 4:12 _____

Matthew 28:18-20 _____

The church is the body of true believers who have trusted in the redemptive work of Christ, who is God in flesh, who died and physically rose from the dead. Therefore, those who claim to be Christians, those who have trusted in Christ by faith alone, are members of the true church. These people attend different local bodies across a multitude of denominations around the world.

Theologians often speak of the church as “visible” and “invisible.” The visible church is defined as those who regularly attend services at a building and who call themselves Christians. Of course, just going to a building does not make one a Christian. The invisible church is made up of those who have received Jesus as their savior, regardless of the building they walk into on Sunday morning.

The church is sometimes called the “body of Christ.” Read the following verses and record what you learn:

Ephesians 4:12 _____

1 Corinthians 12:28 _____

Of course, a number of the functions of the church will make us feel good. A sense of belonging, the uplifting feelings of worshiping God, etc. But those are the result of the church functioning properly and not the purpose of the church.

Read through the following verses and discuss other functions of the church:

To guard the proper teachings of the church

2 Timothy 2:1-2 _____

To discipline believers (does this feel good?)

Matthew 18:15-17 _____

To become more like Christ

Ephesians 4:15-16 _____

To be subject to pastoral leadership

1 Peter 5:1-3 _____

To be unified in Christ

Galatians 3:28 _____

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