

Word in Life Ministries

Biblical, Historical, and Philosophical Studies Institute

His Story Through the Ages:

AD Seminar

Session One

- I. The Coming of the Christian Gospel versus the Heteros Gospels
 - A. From the beginning of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Satanic counterfeit and opposition emerged in the forms of alternative gospels.
 1. **Ebionites** – The Ebionites were a “Jewish-Christian sect They taught that Jesus was a mere man who by his scrupulous obedience to the Law was ‘justified’ and became the Messiah” (Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* [Dallas: Word Publishing, 1995], 50). The Ebionites, therefore, were focused on ‘works righteousness’, which is the very thing Paul was refuting in the book of Galatians. Although there is no concrete evidence to support a direct relationship to the Ebionite sect to those that Paul was referring to in Galatians 3:1-14, it is certainly not far afield to suspect that they, or some group like them was whom Paul was addressing. Philip Schaff also points out the effect of the Ebionites well into the second century AD:

The Judaizing heresy was indeed continued outside of the Catholic church by the sect of the Ebionites during the second century; and in the church itself the spirit of formalism and bigotry assumed new shapes by substituting Christian rites and ceremonies for the typical shadows of the Mosaic dispensation. But whenever and wherever this tendency manifests itself we have the best antidote in the Epistles of Paul. (Philip Schaff, *The History of the Christian Church*, vol. 1, *Apostolic Christianity: AD 1-100* [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1910; reprint, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985], 360)

2. **Gnosticism** – Gnosticism was an ancient heresy that embraced both a docetic and dualistic concept of reality. Docetism comes from the Greek verb **δοκέω** (*dokeō*), which means “to seem.” One group of Gnostics held to the belief that the ‘Ultimate Good’, or God, was so far above the evil matter that he could have no contact with anything of a material nature. Thus, the very idea of Jesus the Christ actually having a real body was absolutely repugnant to them. Therefore, they saw Jesus as merely a ‘ghost’, if you will, who only appeared, or ‘seemed’ to be real. This is one reason we see Jesus making the statement in Luke 24:39-43 about his resurrected body to the disciples:

See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."⁴⁰ *And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.*⁴¹ And while they still could not believe *it* for joy and were marveling, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"⁴² And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate *it* before them.

The other group of Gnostics, who also held to the belief that the ‘Ultimate Good’ could not be touched with the “feeling of our infirmities” (KJV, Hebrews 4:15), taught that the Christ Spirit descended on Jesus at His baptism, but then left Him before the crucifixion. Therefore, that which was punished for the sins of mankind was not the Christ Spirit, but simply the man, Jesus of Nazareth. This concept of thinking expresses their dualistic belief that the world consisted of two spiritual forces – good and evil – and, consequently, these two could not coalesce in any manner. Bruce Shelley points out the following Gnostic beliefs concerning the eternal conflict between good and evil:

- a. All matter is evil.
- b. The ‘Creator God’, therefore, was considered to be an inferior entity because he made the world.
- c. Thus, the actual act of creation was looked upon as an act of debauchery by an inferior deity.
- d. The Gnostics, therefore, had in their cosmogony a series of emanations that descended from the ‘Ultimate Good’ all the way down to the ‘Creator God’, who was looked

upon by Gnostics as the ‘bottom of the rung’ of these deified emanations.

- e. Each deified emanation was capable of producing successive, deified emanations, but each successive emanation was inferior to its parent deity.
- f. Thus, the last and final deity was the ‘Creator God’ who was foolish enough to create the material universe, and, according to Gnostic teaching, this deity was none other than “the God of the Jews” (Shelley, 51).

The actual word Gnostic comes from the Greek word **γνώσις** (*Gnosis*), which means knowledge. Thus, salvation for the Gnostic did not consist of being redeemed from sin through the atonement of Christ, but rather through attaining successive levels of knowledge that at some point would unite the human seeker with the ‘Ultimate Good’, and where the seeker would attain to a level of deity himself, having escaped through his superior knowledge the corruption of the matter of his body. Thus, with all Gnostics, there was a complete denial that the Christ Spirit could in any way become human flesh and experience the plight of humanity in any way because it was so far removed from the degradation of the corruption of human flesh. This, therefore, is in direct contrast to **EVERYTHING** the Gospel tells us about the person of Jesus Christ:

Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. . . . Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16)

Another very important thing to note about the Gnostics is that there were two views concerning pursuing fleshly lusts – one was to practice asceticism as a means of purifying one’s mind,

and thereby accelerating one's ascent to divinity, and the other was a full-blown, antinomian, hedonistic approach based on the view that since all matter is evil and the only thing that matters is the pursuit of 'pure knowledge', the pursuit of fleshly lust will simply accentuate the evil of the world and renounce the Jewish 'Creator God' and his pseudo laws for righteousness. The following is from the Catholic Encyclopedia which addresses this particular issue:

As a moral law was given by the God of the Jews, and opposition to the God of the Jews was a duty, the breaking of the moral law to spite its give was considered a solemn obligation. Such a sect, called the Nicolaites, existed in Apostolic times, their principle, according to Origen, was *parachresthai te sarki* [this is a Latin transliteration of the Greek - παραχρησθαι τε σαρκι - "to actively pursue the lust of the flesh"]. (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Classic 1914 Edition, www.NewAdvent.org)

One very important thing that resulted in the conflict with Gnosticism was the Apostle's Creed. The handout provided is a copy of that very important creed, which was produced sometime in the 2nd century, as well as its comparative refutation of Gnosticism.

3. **The Nag Hammadi Texts** – The Nag Hammadi Texts were found in Egypt in December , 1945, with the first of the twelve Codices, Codex III, being acquired and recorded in the Coptic Museum of Cairo on October 4, 1946. These are Gnostic texts for the most part, and they are translated from Greek into Coptic. The significance of these texts is that they are the original, Gnostic writings that up until 1945, all we had were the writings against Gnosticism from the early Church Fathers, but we did not possess any of the extant Gnostic writings themselves. The one book I would like for us to look at is *The Gospel of Mary*. Portions of this book are missing, but the one I want to present to you describes sin not as a real, moral entity that destroys the whole of the human race, and from which we must be redeemed by the blood of Christ, but rather it is presented as a false attitude that misdirects one in his pursuit of the "Good," and therefore, it is our thought processes that must be changed so that we can become one with the "Good":

Peter said to him, "Since you have explained everything to us, tell us this also: What is the sin of the world?" The Savior said, "There is no sin, but it is you who make sin when you do the things that are like the nature of adultery, which is called 'sin.' That is why the Good came into your midst, to the (essence) of every nature, in order to restore it to its root." Then He continued and said, "That is why you [become sick] and die, for [. . .] of the one who [. . . He who] understands, let him understand. [Matter gave birth to] a passion that has no equal, which proceeded from (something) contrary to nature. Then there arises a disturbance in its whole body. 31) That is why I said to you, 'Be of good courage,' and if you are discouraged (be) encouraged in the presence of the different forms of nature. He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (James M. Robinson, ed. *The Nag Hammadi Library* [San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988], 524-525)

Thus, you can easily see that the deception of Gnosticism was very real, and its roots go all the way back to the fall in Genesis 3:1-7:

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" ² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ "but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " ⁴ **Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."** ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

That very same deception has been with us from the fall until this present day, and it will remain so until the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15).

- B. In the 2nd century AD there were two other major heresies that emerged that have had lasting effects even up to today, and both of

these were part of the ultimate establishment of the New Testament Canon.

1. A man named Marcion, whose father was a Bishop, came on the scene around 140 AD. However, unlike his father, Marcion began to embrace aspects of Gnosticism, and in particular, he looked with great disdain on the God of the Old Testament, who he said was only the God of the Jewish people, but the God of the New Testament, the Christian God, was a God of grace and love for all people. Consequently, he was intensely opposed by the Church Fathers, and Irenaeus in particular addresses his heresies:

Cerdo was one who took his system from the followers of Simon, and came to live at Rome in the time of Hyginus, who held the ninth place in the episcopal succession from the apostles downwards. He taught that the God proclaimed by the law and the prophets was not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the former was known, but the latter unknown; while the one also was righteous, but the other benevolent. Marcion of Pontus succeeded him, and developed his doctrine. In so doing, he advanced the most daring blasphemy against Him who is proclaimed as God by the law and the prophets, declaring Him to be the author of evils, to take delight in war, to be infirm of purpose, and even to be contrary to Himself. But Jesus being derived from that father who is above the God that made the world, and coming into Judaea in the times of Pontius Pilate the governor, who was the procurator of Tiberius Caesar, was manifested in the form of a man to those who were in Judaea, abolishing the prophets and the law, and all the works of that God who made the world, whom also he calls Cosmocrator. Besides this, he mutilates the Gospel which is according to Luke, removing all that is written respecting the generation of the Lord, and setting aside a great deal of the teaching of the Lord, in which the Lord is recorded as most clearly confessing that the Maker of this universe is His Father. He likewise persuaded his disciples that he himself was more worthy of credit than are those apostles who have handed down the Gospel to us, furnishing them not with the Gospel, but merely a fragment of it. In like manner, too, he dismembered the Epistles of Paul, removing all that is said by the apostle respecting that God who made the world, to the effect that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also those passages from the prophetic writings which the apostle quotes, in order to teach us that they announced beforehand the coming of the Lord. Salvation will be the attainment only of those souls which had learned his

doctrine; while the body, as having been taken from the earth, is incapable of sharing in salvation. In addition to his blasphemy against God Himself, he advanced this also, truly speaking as with the mouth of the devil, and saying all things in direct opposition to the truth, — that Cain, and those like him, and the Sodomites, and the Egyptians, and others like them, and, in fine, all the nations who walked in all sorts of abomination, were saved by the Lord, on His descending into Hades, and on their running unto Him, and that they welcomed Him into their kingdom. But the serpent which was in Marcion declared that Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and those other righteous men who sprang from the patriarch Abraham, with all the prophets, and those who were pleasing to God, did not partake in salvation. For since these men, he says, knew that their God was constantly tempting them, so now they suspected that He was tempting them, and did not run to Jesus, or believe His announcement: and for this reason he declared that their souls remained in Hades. (Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, *The Apostolic Fathers – Justin Martyr, Irenaeus* [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985], 352)

The upshot of this confrontation is that the early church was forced to look at the Scripture and solidify its authority, both the Old and the New Testaments. Thus, they chose to validate and reestablish as divinely authoritative the Pauline “Pastorals and the letters of the other apostles and to link all the letters to four Gospels by using the Book of Acts as the bridge” (Shelley, 63). In addition, the church fully repudiated Marcion’s rejection of the Old Testament, and by doing so, it established two very important points: (1) “First, it insisted that faith for the Christian would have to reconcile both the wrath and love of God” (Ibid., 64); (2) “Second, . . . the church underscored the importance of history for the Christian faith” (Ibid.).

2. Between about 155-175 AD, a man named Montanus addressed what was becoming a spiritual deadness in the church that was the result of an attempt to compromise and become ‘relevant’ to its surrounding intellectual culture. This is something that always occurs with the church, and today this attempt to be relevant may be seen in what is called the ‘emergent church’. Typically when this attempt at relevancy occurs, you have both good and bad results, and within both the good and bad, you have various aspects of how each is manifest. Montanus would

definitely be classified in the bad result, but he didn't start out that way. Montanus might be called the precursor to the modern day Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. With Montanus came a renewal of the ministry of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and with that renewal, an overall spiritual renewal and hunger for the things of God in all areas of the Christian life. However, with that positive aspect of renewal also came some negatives. He had two women with him who were prophetesses, but there was not any sexual perversion going on. The problem arose as they prophesied of the soon return of Christ, and the clear impression given to their followers was that they, Montanus, Prisca, and Maximilla (the two women), were the prophets of the final days before the return of Christ, and if the people didn't listen to and give heed to their prophecies, they would be rejecting God's Word for them and committing blasphemy. On the other hand, most all of the early Church Fathers, except Tertullian, regarded them as 'false prophets', and obviously their prophecies were false. The early church still believed in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but Montanus forced the early Church Fathers to recognize that unchecked prophecies and miraculous manifestations could lead to false teachings and serious misdirection of the people. Thus, the early church was forced to recognize the apostolic gospels and writings as the grid through which all such utterances and teachings would be judged and examined.

Session Two

II. The Establishment of the New Testament Canon

A. The establishment of the New Testament Canon was a long process that reached its climax in the later part of the 4th century AD.

1. The enclosed list you have gives an approximate grouping of the time frames in which the various books of the New Testament became recognized as authoritative.
2. The following is an analysis of the four major individuals and the one Church Council that represent the formative steps in the development and authoritative establishment of the New Testament Canon.
 - a. The 'Muratorian Canon' is named for the man who found this document, L. A. Muratoria (1672-1750). The document itself is a 7th century Latin text, which was translated from a Greek original. Muratoria published it in 1740, and it is thought that this list dates back to Pius, Bishop of Rome (140-154), due to the fact that reference is made to him in verses 44-47:

[44] But Hermas composed The Shepherd quite recently in our times in the city of Rome, while his brother, Pius, the bishop, occupied the [episcopal] seat of the city of Rome. [45] And therefore, it should indeed be read, but it cannot be published for the people in the Church, [46] neither among the Prophets, since their number is complete, [47] nor among the Apostles for it is after their time (?).

Thus, the date of the actual writing of this document would be sometime in the last quarter of the 2nd century AD (i.e., between 175-200). That means that by the beginning of the 3rd century AD, there was a move, motivated by the necessity of establishing an authoritative text to support truth and combat heresies, to confirm and solidify those writings that were considered to be 'inspired' and those that were not.

- b. Origen (185-254) divided the New Testament manuscripts into two categories: (1) those that were universally accepted (the Gospels – Revelation of John); and (2) those that were disputed (see the list).

- c. The Church Historian, Eusebius (263-339), in his Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 25:1-7, gives the following appraisal of New Testament writings:

Since we are dealing with this subject it is proper to sum up the writings of the New Testament which have been already mentioned. First then must be put the holy quaternity of the Gospels; following them the Acts of the Apostles. After this must be reckoned the epistles of Paul; next in order the extant former epistle of John, and likewise the epistle of Peter, must be maintained. After them is to be placed, if it really seem proper, the Apocalypse of John, concerning which we shall give the different opinions at the proper time. These then belong among the accepted writings. Among the disputed writings, which are nevertheless recognized by many, are extant the so-called epistle of James and that of Jude, also the second epistle of Peter, and those that are called the second and third of John, whether they belong to the evangelist or to another person of the same name. Among the rejected writings must be reckoned also the Acts of Paul, and the so-called Shepherd, and the Apocalypse of Peter, and in addition to these the extant epistle of Barnabas, and the so-called Teachings of the Apostles; and besides, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if it seem proper, which some, as I said, reject, but which others class with the accepted books. And among these some have placed also the Gospel according to the Hebrews, with which those of the Hebrews that have accepted Christ are especially delighted. And all these may be reckoned among the disputed books. But we have nevertheless felt compelled to give a catalogue of these also, distinguishing those works which according to ecclesiastical tradition are true and genuine and commonly accepted, from those others which, although not canonical but disputed, are yet at the same time known to most ecclesiastical writers—we have felt compelled to give this catalogue in order that we might be able to know both these works and those that are cited by the heretics under the name of the apostles, including, for instance, such books as the Gospels of Peter, of Thomas, of Matthias, or of any others besides them, and the Acts of Andrew and John and the other apostles, which no one belonging to the succession of ecclesiastical writers has deemed worthy of mention in his writings. And further, the character of the style is at variance with apostolic usage, and both the thoughts and the purpose of the things that are related in them are so completely out of accord with true orthodoxy that they clearly show themselves to be the fictions

of heretics. Wherefore they are not to be placed even among the rejected writings, but are all of them to be cast aside as absurd and impious. (*Loeb Classical Library, Eusebius Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 1 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926; reprint, 1980], 257-259)

- d. The fourth individual of significance with regard to the NT Canon is Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria (293-373). In 367, Athanasius wrote his annual Festal Letter to the Egyptian Churches, which was a letter informing them of the date of Easter and Lent. In this Festal Letter of 367, Bishop Athanasius lists the 27 books that we now have in our New Testament as authoritatively inspired. The following is from that Letter:

Again it is not tedious to speak of the [books] of the New Testament. These are, the four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Afterwards, the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles (called Catholic), seven, viz. of James, one; of Peter, two; of John, three; after these, one of Jude. In addition, there are fourteen Epistles of Paul, written in this order. The first, to the Romans; then two to the Corinthians; after these, to the Galatians; next, to the Ephesians; then to the Philippians; then to the Colossians; after these, two to the Thessalonians, and that to the Hebrews; and again, two to Timothy; one to Titus; and lastly, that to Philemon. And besides, the Revelation of John. These are fountains of salvation, that they who thirst may be satisfied with the living words they contain. In these alone is proclaimed the doctrine of godliness. Let no man add to these, neither let him take ought from these. For concerning these the Lord put to shame the Sadducees, and said, ‘Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.’ And He reproved the Jews, saying, ‘Search the Scriptures, for these are they that testify of Me.’ But for greater exactness I add this also, writing of necessity; that there are other books besides these not indeed included in the Canon, but appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who newly join us, and who wish for instruction in the word of godliness. The Wisdom of Solomon, and the Wisdom of Sirach, and Esther, and Judith, and Tobit, and that which is called the Teaching of the Apostles, and the Shepherd. But the former, my brethren, are included in the Canon, the latter being [merely] read; nor is there in any place a mention of apocryphal writings. But they are an invention of heretics, who write them when they choose, bestowing upon them their approbation, and assigning to them a date, that so, using them

as ancient writings, they may find occasion to lead astray the simple. (Philip Schaff & Henry Wace, *Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, *St. Athanasius* [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980], 552)

- e. The final step in this process was the Third Council of Carthage in 397 AD, at which the following statement was made for both the OT and the NT:

It was also determined that besides the Canonical Scriptures nothing be read in the Church under the title of divine Scriptures. The Canonical Scriptures are these: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua the son of Nun, Judges, Ruth, four books of Kings,³ two books of Paraleipomena,⁴ Job, the Psalter, five books of Solomon (Pr, Eccl, Song, Wisdom, Sirach),⁵ the books of the twelve prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezechiel, Daniel, Tobit, Judith, Esther, two books of Esdras,⁶ two books of the Maccabees. Of the New Testament: four books of the Gospels, one book of the Acts of the Apostles, thirteen Epistles of the Apostle Paul, one epistle of the same [writer] to the Hebrews, two Epistles of the Apostle Peter, three of John, one of James, one of Jude, one book of the Apocalypse of John. Let this be made known also to our brother and fellow-priest Boniface, or to other bishops of those parts, for the purpose of confirming that Canon because we have received from our fathers that those books must be read in the Church. Let it also be allowed that the Passions of Martyrs be read when their festivals are kept. (www.bible-researcher.com/carthage.html)

- C. There were three primary things that established the canonicity of Scripture:
 - 1. Those books that ultimately became recognized as God's inspired Word had what might be called a self-evidencing quality about them. That is, there is a supernatural and transcendent power and truth that penetrates to the very spirit of man, convincing and drawing him to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. The second thing that was a major consideration was the proliferation and use of Scripture in worship and teaching throughout Christendom. That is, if a book or writing was only used in a particular area, versus one that was used from Alexandria to Damascus, to Rome, then the latter held more weight.

3. The third and most important item was the relationship of a book or writing to an apostle in some way. There were quite a few forged writings, but time and truth sifted through such nefarious attempts, and, once again, the transcendent inspiration and anointing of God's Spirit would ultimately bear witness to its authenticity and authoritativeness.
- B. The establishment of the New Testament Canon became the pivotal point upon which the authority of the Church rested. As we will also see, however, tradition and Apostolic Succession became the ultimate appeal in the conflict between Rome and Constantinople, which ultimately resulted in a rupture between the Western and Eastern Church on July 16, 1054. From that time until this, the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches have been divided over which is the true, historical Church of Jesus Christ, and their focus and basis of their difference is their appeal to tradition and Apostolic Succession, **NOT TO THE WORD OF GOD!**

Session Three

III. The Four Major Heresies Concerning the Person of Jesus Christ & Pelagianism

- A. The first of these major heresies was Arianism.
1. Arius (250-336) was a pastor in Egypt, and ca. 318, he began to teach that Jesus was not fully God, that His nature was entirely different from God's, and that he was neither eternal nor omnipotent. Thus, he saw Jesus as the first created being, and, therefore, in no way possessing the same essence as the eternal and changeless God. Consequently, his deity was only in a marginal way, but He was not equal with God in His true essence.
 2. However, Bishop Alexander of Alexandria called a synod in 320 to deal with Arius' teaching, and the result was great upheaval in Alexandria. Emperor Constantine called for a Church Council to convene at Nicea on May 30, 325.
 3. On July 25, 325, the Council of Nicea adjourned with the Nicene Creed, which is to this day the standard for orthodoxy in Roman, Eastern, Anglican, and Evangelical churches. The following handout contains the creed, as well as how it refutes the tenets of Arianism. In essence, the Nicene Creed stated the Christ was fully divine.
- B. The next major heresy involved a man named Apollinarius (310-390). Apollinarius taught that the divine Logos displaced the rational soul in the human body, thus, the Logos simply put on human flesh, in much the same way a man would put on a gorilla suit, but his thinking would be totally that of a human, not a gorilla. Thus, Apollinarius was denying the full humanity of Jesus, and in 381 at the Council of Constantinople, Apollinarius' teaching was rejected, and the Council affirmed that Jesus was fully human, thus our redemption is complete.
- C. The third area of controversy to emerge was with a man named Nestorius (unknown date of birth; death – 451). Nestorius taught that the divine and human natures of Christ had a 'moral union', versus a union of essence – that is, it was as though two different people inhabited the body of Jesus, versus one unified, divine/human nature. In 431 at the Council of Ephesus, Nestorius' teaching was condemned, and it was affirmed that Christ was a unified, not divided person.

- D. The fourth challenge to the nature of Christ came with a man named Eutyches (378-454). He taught that the human nature of Christ was completely absorbed in the divine, “as a drop of honey, which falls into the sea, dissolves in it” (Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* [Dallas: Word Publishing, 1995], 113). This meant that the human nature of Christ was completely lost, and so too would be the redemption of mankind! Thus, at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, Eutyches’ teaching was condemned and it was affirmed that Christ was both fully human and fully divine in one person.
- E. The other important heresy that was also condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431 was that of a man named Pelagius (360-420). Pelagius was a British monk who came to North Africa, and later moved to Palestine. He advocated some rather aberrant teachings, and Augustine aggressively repudiated them. The following are the areas of emphasis in Pelagius’ teaching:
- a. Adam was created liable to death, and would have died, whether he had sinned or not.
 - b. The sin of Adam hurt himself only and not the entire human race.
 - b. Infants at their birth are in the same state as Adam before the fall.
 - c. Neither by the death nor fall of Adam does the whole race of man die, nor by the resurrection of Christ rise again.
 - d. The Law introduces men into the kingdom of heaven, just in the same way as the Gospel does.
 - e. Even before the coming of Christ there were some men sinless. (www.newadvent.org/cathen/11604a.htm)

This is, without a doubt, one of the most blatant, works oriented declarations of salvation that the early church encountered. However, thanks in large part to Augustine, this heresy was addressed, repudiated, and exposed for the express contradiction it was and is to the scriptural truth about man’s nature and how man can and may be saved.

Session Four

IV. The Origin, History, and Beliefs of Islam

A. Introduction

This study is aimed at providing you, the reader and student, with an overall perspective of Islam. Islam, without doubt, is the most intensely anti-Christ religious system in the world today. The only other belief systems that might eclipse its anti-Christ perspective are Secular Humanism and Marxism. Therefore, the need for including Islam as one of the major worldviews contending with the biblical worldview is obvious to us today. Its oppression, terror, and animalistic brutality practiced by its adherents places it in the same category with the Nazis and the Marxists of totalitarian regimes such as the former Soviet Union, as well as present day Cuba, North Korea, and China. Thus, both in Communist countries and those which are ruled and dominated by Islamic fundamentalists, Christians are routinely persecuted, and the freedoms we so take for granted (e.g., freedom of speech, the right to assemble, a free press and freedom to worship openly) are either completely denied, or seriously abridged.

Many today have tried to portray Islam as a 'peaceful religion'. However, in truth, Islam is anything but peaceful. Now to be sure, there are peaceful Muslims the world over who want nothing to do with the Islamic terrorists, or Islamic terrorism. But the religion itself, as presented in the Quran and the Hadith, is one of violence, oppression, and brutality toward those who don't accept it, or agree with it. This is especially true where and when Sharia, Islamic law, is enacted as the law of the land. Testimonies abound of former Muslims who have come to Christ and have actually risked their lives by becoming a Christian and confessing Jesus as their Lord and Savior. In fact, Sharia provides for and invokes a father or family member to kill another family member who becomes a Christian, and in those countries where Sharia is the 'law of the land', nothing will be said or done to those who kill their Christian family member. For us here in the United States, and in the Western civilized world as a whole, the above act would be comparable to us killing a stray dog or cat that was troubling our family. The difference is that here in America, there are places that have more protection for a stray animal and greater consequences for killing one, than there is

protection for and consequences attending the persecution and killing of a believer in Muslim countries.

Our approach to this study, therefore, is going to be threefold: **Origin, Beliefs & History**. With regard to the **Origin** of Islam, we will be taking an overview of Middle Eastern History in order to see Islam in its proper context. In our analysis of the **Beliefs** of Islam, we will do a rather in depth study, looking at not only the Quran and Hadith, but also the writings of famous and leading Muslim Mullahs and Imams (i.e., clerical leaders and scholars). In addition, where it is appropriate and helpful, we will also be examining the Arabic itself to get a better understanding of what is actually being taught and believed. In the **History** section, we will be looking at the spread of Islam over the centuries and how it has impacted the peoples and cultures that have come under its influence and dominance. We will also discuss the Crusades, the emergence and rule of the Ottoman Empire and the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and how all of these events have contributed to the current Islamic terrorism we are facing today.

I pray that God will greatly bless you as you pursue this study, and that He will open up your heart and mind to His Word in a greater capacity than ever before, while at the same time giving you a hunger for the truth in His Word that will remain with you for the rest of your life. Thus, as we pursue this study of Islam, we will be doing it in tandem with the Bible in order to see the stark differences between Islam and Christianity, and why.

As I said at the beginning of this introduction, Islam is the most anti-Christ religious belief system in the world today. This study will show in part why it is, and how we who are believers in Christ can confront it, not only for our own benefit and understanding, but also for the benefit and understanding of others. As has been said before, there is absolutely NOTHING beneficial about being ignorant and uninformed, and this is especially true regarding Islam. So, may the Lord bless you and fill you with His wisdom as we enter into this study, and may the Lord open your spiritual eyes to see “the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:7).

B. The Emergence of Islam in the Ancient Near East

Idolatry was the rule, not the exception in the Ancient Near East, but Israel was the one nation that advocated monotheism, even though so many of its people would fall away to idolatry at various

times. And it was out of this idolatrous culture that the Arab peoples emerged, of whom Mohammed was a descendant.

1. This, in essence, was the background out of which Islam emerged in the 7th century AD, with one addition, and that was the presence of Christianity. However, that presence was integral to Islam's development because at the very core of Islamic doctrine and teaching is an absolutely antithetical view of salvation IN EVERY WAY from that presented in the Gospels. In fact, one might say that Islam is the quintessential embodiment of antichrist teaching in the same way as we did with the teachings of the ancient Sumerians and the proclamation of Nimrod (Genesis 11:4), which we said was antigod/antichrist. Thus, from the very beginning until now, Satan has ALWAYS had his counterfeit to challenge the message and presentation of our true God and Savior.
2. It is believed that Muhammad was born in Mecca in the year 570 AD (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., vol. 22, s.v. "Muhammad and the Religion of Islam," 1). Muhammad's father died before he was born, and he was at first under the care of his grandfather, and then, after both his mother and grandfather died, his uncle assumed the responsibility of caring for and raising Muhammad (Ibid.). Muhammad's uncle was a merchant and trader, and Muhammad would go along with him. On one such trip to Syria around 595, Muhammad met a woman named Khadijah, who was 40 years old (he was 25 at the time), and she proposed marriage and Muhammad accepted. Muhammad did not take another wife until after her death in 619 (Ibid.).
3. During these early years of Muhammad's life, he observed what he considered to be a selfish disregard of the poor of Mecca by the wealthy merchants in favor of their own personal interests. According to Islamic tradition, one day in 610 when Muhammad was considering this situation of the poor and the wealthy, he had a vision of an angelic being, who was supposed to be Gabriel, and this angel is supposed to have said to him, "You are the Messenger of God" (Ibid., 2). Thus, from that time until his death in June, 632, Muhammad reportedly received messages at various times from Gabriel, and the messages that were written down were gathered together in 650 and formed what is called the Quran. Therefore, according to Muslims, the Quran contains the very words of God (Ibid.).

4. The spread of Islam by Muhammad was carried out by use of the sword. The one word that would characterize this spread would be “razzias,” or raids (Ibid., 3). These raids included massacres and assassinations, as well as outreaches to the poorest of the Arabs (Ibid., 3-4). However, the following quote puts in ultimate perspective the philosophy of Muhammad and that of Islam:

In 632 Muhammad made his last visit to Mecca, and his speech there has been recorded in the traditional writings as the final statement of his message: “know that every Muslim is a Muslim’s brother, and that the Muslims are brethren’: fighting between them should be avoided, and the blood shed in pagan times should not be avenged; Muslims should fight all men until they say, ‘There is not god but God’.” (Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* [Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991], 19)

The spread of Islam was based on threat and intimidation, and today, the exact same method is used to force people into submission to their authority and belief where they are in power, and this use of threat and intimidation is especially true for any Muslim who might commit his or her life to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. On the other hand, from a cultural perspective, Muhammad’s primary contribution is that he combined together a union of Arab tribes that, after his death, resulted in the ultimate creation of an Arab and Islamic Empire, stretching from North Africa to Iran, and Islam became the glue that held that Empire together. From that Empire created some thirteen hundred years ago, we are today facing the same philosophy of violence, threat, and brutality that was the cornerstone of Islam’s spread with Muhammad, and subsequently, with that of his followers as well, long ages after him.

C. The Beliefs of Islam

The beliefs of Islam are in essence antithetical to biblical truth in every way. From the very outset, there is a full denial of the deity of Jesus, and He is seen as no more than a prophet like Muhammad. The following are some examples from the Quran concerning the nature and person of Jesus:

1. Jesus is described as having a nature just like Adam’s, which means that Jesus and Adam (i.e., man – you and me) are identical

in nature: “The similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, ‘Be’: and he was” (Surah 3:59). Abdullah Yusuf Ali makes the following comment about this verse:

After a description of the high position which Jesus occupies as a prophet, we have a repudiation of the dogma that he was Allah, or the son of Allah, or anything more than a man. If it is said that he was born without a human father, Adam was also born without either a human father or mother. As far as our physical bodies are concerned they are mere dust. In Allah’s sight Jesus was as dust just as Adam was or humanity is. The greatness of Jesus arose from the Divine command “Be”: for after that he was – more than dust – a great spiritual leader and teacher. (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Quran*, 9th ed. [Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 1997], 142)

The biblical account of Jesus’ nature is quite different from that described in the Quran: “Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted” (Hebrews 2:17-18). Indeed, He was made like us as far as our human frailty is concerned, but He was quite unlike us as far as the essence of His nature is concerned:

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, but HE DID NOT SIN! When we read Romans 3:23, we find a startling statement about mankind: “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” This “all” of course includes all mankind, except Jesus, because He WAS NOT AND IS NOT LIKE ALL MEN! He was the

unique, Son of God, born of the virgin Mary, Who is the only One who can take our sins away.

2. The following Quranic verses deal with the denial of Jesus being God:

In blasphemy indeed are those that say that Allah is Christ the son of Mary (Surah 5:17a).

They do blaspheme who say: 'Allah is Christ the son of Mary.' But said Christ: 'O Children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.' Whoever joins other gods with Allah – Allah will forbid him the Garden, and the Fire will be his abode. There will for the wrongdoers be no one to help (Surah 5:72).

And behold! Allah will say: 'O Jesus the son of Mary! Didst thou say unto men, 'Worship me and my mother as gods in derogation of Allah'?' He will say: 'Glory to Thee! Never could I say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, Thou wouldst indeed have known it. Thou knowest what is in my heart, though I know not what is in Thine. For Thou knowest in full all that is hidden (Surah 5:116).

The Bible, on the other hand, clearly states the opposite of the above verses:

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And coming in, he said to her, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. ³¹ "And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. ³² "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end." ³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:26-35)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.² He was in the beginning with God.³ All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. (John 1:1-3)

And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.¹⁶ For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him.¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:15-17)

Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."⁵⁹ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple. (John 8:58-59)

I and the Father are one."³¹ The Jews took up stones again to stone Him.³² Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?"³³ The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'?"³⁵ "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),³⁶ do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"³⁷ "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;³⁸ but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."³⁹ Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp. (John 10:30-39)

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;⁴ having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.⁵ For to which of the angels did He ever say, "Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee"? And again, "I will be a Father to Him And He shall be a Son to Me"?⁶ And when He

again brings the first-born into the world, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him. (Hebrews 1:1-6)

Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; ⁹ and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only. (Matthew 4:8-10)

The above verses clearly present the antithesis of what we read and quoted from the Quran with regard to Jesus and His nature.

3. The Quran also teaches that Jesus was only a messenger and nothing more:

O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) a Messenger of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His Messengers. (Surah 4:171a-b)

Christ, the son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger; many were the Messengers that passed away before him. (Surah 5:75a)

After Jesus had risen from the dead, He appeared to His disciples, but Thomas wasn't there. Eight days passed from that first encounter Jesus had with His disciples, and then He appeared again and Thomas was there with the others at this appearance. Thomas had initially doubted that the disciples had actually seen Jesus, but when Jesus appears this time, He tells Thomas to examine His hands and side where He had been pierced. Upon doing that, and realizing that this was indeed the resurrected Jesus, Thomas exclaimed: "My Lord and My God" (John 20:28)! Thus, Jesus was far more than just a prophet.

4. The Quran also states that Jesus didn't actually die on the cross:

That they said (in boast), "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah" – but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain)

knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not. (Surah 4:157)

This, therefore, is a complete denial of the atonement, and that means that we are still in our sins, and we must atone for our own sins by our own works! However, the above passage in John 20:28 attests not only to the fact of Jesus' death and burial, but also of His resurrection. Paul states very forcefully the importance and necessity of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection:

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. . . . Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁴ and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. ¹⁵ Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁷ and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. (I Corinthians 15:1-5, 12-19)

Thus, we can see rather clearly that just on this one and all crucial aspect of the deity of Christ and the atonement of our sins through His death, burial, and resurrection, the Quran and the Bible are the absolute antithesis of each other. And this is the essence of that difference – salvation through the grace of God, versus salvation through man's works and his own supposed righteousness. The latter, according to the Bible, is non-existent. Consequently, the satanic deception of Islam is perpetuated through a false sense of righteousness attained by one's own

works: “Those who believe (in the Quran), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians – any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve” (Surah 2:62). The Bible says just the opposite with reference to our works:

For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them." ¹¹ Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live by faith." ¹² However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "He who practices them shall live by them." 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" -- ¹⁴ in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:10-14)

More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith. (Philippians 3:8-9)

Sadly, I have NEVER talked to a Muslim who had any assurance of eternal life after death, but only, “I hope my good works will outweigh my bad works.” In relation to this, is the Muslim’s belief that Satan was cast out of heaven because he refused to bow down and worship Adam: “And behold, We said to the angels: ‘Bow down to Adam,’ and they bowed down, not so Iblis. He refused and was haughty, and he was of those who reject faith” (Surah 2:34). In essence, Satan was commanded to “bow down” and give worship and reverence to Adam, who is mankind. Thus, man, a created being, was to be worshiped by the angels. That being the case, I, as a man, can claim deity and the right to be worshiped by lesser beings, and I am also my own savior. As we have already seen, this too is the absolute opposite of the Bible: “For to which of the angels did He ever say, ‘Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee’? And again, ‘I will be a Father to Him And He shall be a Son to Me’?

⁶ And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, ‘And let all the angels of God worship Him’” (Hebrews 1:5-6). Based on this passage in Hebrews, along with the above passage in the Quran, Islam places man on the exact same level as Jesus, and indeed, we each become our own Jesus.

However, in truth and reality, we are completely corrupt to the core and utterly incapable of saving and redeeming ourselves. The only hope, and the wonderful assurance we have in Christ is that our sins are completely forgiven in Him. Jesus has and does completely redeem us from our sin, but the satanic deception is very strong in our lives as believers, and we must be equipping ourselves every day in God’s complete armor:

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, ¹⁹ and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. (Ephesians 6:10-20)

May the Lord cause all of us to walk wisely in Him and His truth. May He cause us to be led by His Spirit and walk humbly before Him. May He also cause us to walk in love before the Muslim and any and all who do not have a saving relationship with Jesus:

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all

knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. ⁴ Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. ⁹ For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. ¹³ But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (I Corinthians 13:1-13)

And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. (II Timothy 2:24-26)

D. The Five Pillars of Islam

The following is an excellent presentation of the Five Pillars of Islam, which are the foundations for Islamic belief and practice. One interesting thing to observe is that in the confession, which is the first pillar, there is no mention of repentance and turning from one's sins and thereby receiving forgiveness of sins. It is in essence an intellectual act, much the same as accepting any philosophical position that one would prefer over another, versus coming to a life changing and life transforming encounter with the true and living God:

During the earliest decades after the death of the Prophet, certain basic features of the religio-social organization of Islām were singled out to serve as anchoring points of the community's life and formulated as the "Pillars of Islām." To these five, the

Khawārij sect added a sixth pillar, the *jihād*, which, however, was not accepted by the general community.

1. **Shahadah** – Profession of Faith

The first pillar is the profession of faith: “There is no deity but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God,” upon which depends membership in the community. The profession of faith must be recited at least once in one's lifetime, aloud, correctly, and purposively, with an understanding of its meaning and with an assent from the heart. From this fundamental belief are derived beliefs in (1) angels (particularly Gabriel, the Angel of Revelation), (2) the revealed Books (the Qur’ān and the sacred books of Judaism and Christianity), (3) a series of prophets (among whom figures of the Judeo-Christian tradition are particularly eminent, although it is believed that God has sent messengers to every nation), and (4) the Last Day (Day of Judgment).

2. **Prayer**

The second pillar consists of five daily canonical prayers. These prayers may be offered individually if one is unable to go to the mosque. The first prayer is performed before sunrise, the second just after noon, the third in the late afternoon, the fourth immediately after sunset, and the fifth before retiring to bed.

Before a prayer, ablutions, including the washing of hands, face, and feet, are performed. The muezzin (one who gives the call for prayer) chants aloud from a raised place (such as a tower) in the mosque. When prayer starts, the *imām*, or leader (of the prayer), stands in the front facing in the direction of Mecca, and the congregation stands behind him in rows, following him in various postures. Each prayer consists of two to four genuflection units (*rakah*); each unit consists of a standing posture (during which verses from the Qur’ān are recited—in certain prayers aloud, in others silently), as well as a genuflection and two prostrations. At every change in posture, “God is great” is recited. Tradition has fixed the materials to be recited in each posture.

Special congregational prayers are offered on Friday instead of the prayer just after noon. The Friday service consists of a sermon (*khubah*), which partly consists of preaching in the local language and partly of recitation of certain formulas in Arabic. In the sermon, the preacher usually recites one or several verses of the Qur’ān and builds his address on it, which can have a moral, social, or political content. Friday sermons usually have

considerable impact on public opinion regarding both moral and sociopolitical questions.

Although not ordained as an obligatory duty, nocturnal prayers (called *tahajjud*) are encouraged, particularly during the latter half of the night. During the month of Ramadān (*see below* Fasting), lengthy prayers, called *tarāwī*, are offered congregationally before retiring.

In strict doctrine, the five daily prayers cannot be waived even for the sick, who may pray in bed and, if necessary, lying down. When on a journey, the two afternoon prayers may be followed one by the other; the sunset and late evening prayers may be combined as well. In practice, however, much laxity has occurred, particularly among the modernized classes, although Friday prayers are still very well attended.

3. Zakat

The third pillar is the obligatory tax called *zakāt* (“purification,” indicating that such a payment makes the rest of one's wealth religiously and legally pure). This is the only permanent tax levied by the Qur’ān and is payable annually on food grains, cattle, and cash after one year's possession. The amount varies for different categories. Thus, on grains and fruits it is 10 percent if land is watered by rain, 5 percent if land is watered artificially. On cash and precious metals it is 2¹/₂ percent. *Zakāt* is collectable by the state and is to be used primarily for the poor, but the Qur’ān mentions other purposes: ransoming Muslim war captives, redeeming chronic debts, paying tax collectors' fees, *jihād* (and by extension, according to Qur’ān commentators, education and health), and creating facilities for travellers.

After the breakup of Muslim religio-political power, payment of *zakāt* became a matter of voluntary charity dependent on individual conscience. In the modern Muslim world it has been left up to the individual, except in some countries (such as Saudi Arabia) where the Sharīah (Islāmic law) is strictly maintained.

4. Fasting

Fasting during the month of Ramadān (ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar), laid down in the Qur’ān (2:183–185), is the fourth pillar of the faith. Fasting begins at daybreak and ends at sunset, and during the day eating, drinking, and smoking are forbidden. The Qur’ān (2:185) states that it was in the month of Ramadān that

the Qur'ān was revealed. Another verse of the Qur'ān (97:1) states that it was revealed “on the Night of Power,” which Muslims generally observe on the night of 26–27 Ramadān. For a person who is sick or on a journey, fasting may be postponed until “another equal number of days.” The elderly and the incurably sick are exempted through the daily feeding of one poor person if they have the means.

5. **Haji**

The fifth pillar is the annual pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca prescribed for every Muslim once in a lifetime—“provided one can afford it” and provided a person has enough provisions to leave for his family in his absence. A special service is held in the Sacred Mosque on the 7th of the month of Dhū al-hijjah (last in the Muslim year). Pilgrimage activities begin by the 8th and conclude on the 12th or 13th. All worshippers enter the state of *ihram*; they wear two seamless garments and avoid sexual intercourse, the cutting of hair and nails, and certain other activities. Pilgrims from outside Mecca assume *ihram* at specified points en route to the city. The principal activities consist of walking seven times around the Kabbah, a shrine within the mosque; the kissing and touching of the Black Stone (Hajar al-Aswad); and the ascent of and running between Mount Ṣafā and Mount Marwah (which are now, however, mere elevations) seven times. At the second stage of the ritual, the pilgrim proceeds from Mecca to Minā, a few miles away; from there he goes to ‘Arafāt, where it is essential to hear a sermon and to spend one afternoon. The last rites consist of spending the night at Muzdalifah (between ‘Arafāt and Minā) and offering sacrifice on the last day of *ihram*, which is the ‘īd (“festival”) of sacrifice.

Many countries have imposed restrictions on the number of outgoing pilgrims because of foreign-exchange difficulties. Because of the improvement of communications, however, the total number of visitors has greatly increased in recent years. By the early 1990s the number of visitors was estimated to be about two million, approximately half of them from non-Arab countries. All Muslim countries send official delegations on the occasion, which is being increasingly used for religio-political congresses. At other times in the year, it is considered meritorious to perform the lesser pilgrimage (*‘umrah*), which is not, however, a substitute for the *hajj* pilgrimage. (“**Islām.**” *Encyclopædia Britannica. Ultimate Reference Suite*. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2008)

6. Jihad

Jihad, also spelled *jehad* (“struggle,” or “battle”), a religious duty imposed on Muslims to spread Islam by waging war; jihad has come to denote any conflict waged for principle or belief and is often translated to mean “holy war.”

Islam distinguishes four ways by which the duty of jihad can be fulfilled: by the heart, the tongue, the hand, and the sword. The first consists in a spiritual purification of one's own heart by doing battle with the devil and overcoming his inducements to evil. The propagation of Islam through the tongue and hand is accomplished in large measure by supporting what is right and correcting what is wrong. The fourth way to fulfill one's duty is to wage war physically against unbelievers and enemies of the Islamic faith. Those who professed belief in a divine revelation—Christians and Jews in particular—were given special consideration. They could either embrace Islam or at least submit themselves to Islamic rule and pay a poll and land tax. If both options were rejected, jihad was declared.

Modern Islam places special emphasis on waging war with one's inner self. It sanctions war with other nations only as a defensive measure when the faith is in danger.

Throughout Islamic history, wars against non-Muslims, even though with political overtones, were termed jihads to reflect their religious flavour. This was especially true in the 18th and 19th centuries in Muslim Africa south of Sahara, where religiopolitical conquests were seen as jihads, most notably the jihad of [Usman dan Fodio](#), which established the [Sokoto](#) caliphate (1804) in what is now northern Nigeria. The [Afghan War](#) in the late 20th and early 21st centuries was also viewed by many of its participants as a jihad, first against the Soviet Union and Afghanistan's Marxist government and, later, against the United States. During that time, Islamic extremists used the theory of jihad to justify violent attacks against Muslims whom the extremists accused of apostasy (Arabic *riddah*). ("**jihad.**" *Encyclopædia Britannica. Ultimate Reference Suite*. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2008)

Session Five

V. The Crusades

The Crusades are an important part of the history of West and East, as well as an important aspect of our very lives and existence today. We are going to look at seven of the major crusades, plus the Children's Crusade.

- A. The First Crusade was from 1095-1099, and it was the most successful from the Christian point of view. Peter the Hermit led the first one in 1096, and in 1099 the Christians recaptured Jerusalem from the Muslims. In addition, there was a long strip of land on the Palestinian, Mediterranean Coast that the Crusaders captured and held until 1291, and they referred to it as the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.
- B. The Second Crusade was from 1147-1149, and it ended in defeat for the Christian forces. However, what is important is the possible reason for the defeat. The Church needed money for supporting legates in the Holy Land, as well as other needs, thus, through Pope Urban II (1088-1099), a means of acquiring the necessary monetary funds was hatched. During the Middle Ages, for one's sins to be forgiven, one must confess those sins before a priest. Upon hearing the confession, the priest would then pronounce the sins forgiven, but then the individual would need to perform some act to assure that his repentance was sincere. However, if the penitent died before performing this act, he would then go to purgatory where penance for his sins would be enacted through what was termed "temporal" punishment. Up until this point, the Church had claimed the authority to remit part of this punishment on earth of an individual who was in purgatory, but Urban II now declared total forgiveness of sins by the Church on earth of any Crusader who went to fight in the Holy Land out of true sincerity. However, if one could not go and fight in the Crusades himself, then he could financially support someone else who would, thus, two parties could now be promised complete remission of their sins – the one going to fight and the one supporting him financially. The result of this new "indulgence" was a great increase of funds to the Church for many new building projects, etc. Unfortunately, however, this did not bring military victory for the Second Crusade (Shelley, 189-190).
- C. The Third Crusade went from 1189-1192. The new Sultan of Egypt, Saladin, became a powerful new leader for the Muslims. He and his

forces recaptured Jerusalem, and the Third Crusade was called for to recapture it by Christian forces. The leaders of this Third Crusade were three of Europe's most powerful kings – Frederick Barbarossa of Germany, Richard the Lion-Hearted of England (of Robin Hood fame), and Philip Augustus of France. Unfortunately, this tri-part alliance didn't last – Frederick was drowned in Asia Minor, and Philip's ill health and disagreements with Richard led to his return to France. That left Richard to face Saladin by himself. The Crusaders under Richard had recaptured Acre on the Mediterranean coast on July 31, 1191, but they could not recapture Jerusalem. Saladin, on the other hand, had proclaimed a jihad against the Christians (we are now very familiar with that), but he also held out the olive branch for a negotiated peace. At one point, Saladin offered his sister in marriage to Richard, and he would in turn give him Palestine as a wedding present. Richard turned that offer down, but they did reach an agreement on September 2, 1192, which involved a five year truce and free passage for Christians to the Holy Land (William R. Cannon, *History of Christianity in the Middle Ages* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960], 209-212; Shelley, 190).

- D. The Fourth Crusade was from 1199-1204, and without question, this was the absolute nadir of the Crusades from the Christian perspective. Innocent III had become Pope (1198-1216), and he tried to revive the Crusades once again. However, those who were willing and desirous to go could not afford the shipping costs of the Venetian merchants. The Venetian merchants then concocted a plan, and they offered to subsidize the costs for shipping the Crusaders to the Holy Land if they would first attack their trading competitor, the Christian town of Zara (which is now Zadar off the coast of Yugoslavia), on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea. This was done in 1202, but Pope Innocent III rebuked all who participated in that attack by excommunicating them. However, the Venetians were not moved by the excommunication, and they next persuaded the Crusaders to attack Constantinople, and they did in 1204, conquered the city, and set up the Latin Empire of Constantinople. Two things emerged from this ill-fated Crusade: the first is that the Crusaders never made it to the Holy Land; secondly, Innocent III once again soundly rebuked those who did this, but he also set up a Roman archbishop in Constantinople, thus, bringing the center of the Eastern Church once again under Roman authority and domination. This Latin Kingdom of Constantinople lasted until

1261, but Constantinople never fully recovered, and all of this even further widened the separation between the Western and Eastern Church (Shelley, 190-191).

- E. The Children's Crusade of 1212 was the most tragic of all the Crusading efforts. The children who went did so unarmed, as their intention was to lead the Muslims to faith in Christ by their example. The leader of this Crusade was a boy named Stephen from the town of Cloyes, France. In 1212, he came to Paris with a story that Christ had met him in a field and told him to go tell the King of France that he was to lead a Children's Crusade to the Holy Land, and he would succeed where the armed warriors had failed. Stephen was hailed as a 'prophet', and children flocked to him from all over Europe. In Germany a young man named Nicholas was also calling for a Children's Crusade. By the end of June, 1212, it is estimated that ca. 9000 children were committed to following him. Stephen and his followers went to Marseilles, France, a port city. There, two men, Hugh Ferreus and William Posqueres, offered to carry the children to the Holy Land, as they owned their own ships. Seven ships were used to transport the children, but on the way, a storm arose, and two of the ships were blown onto the island of Recluse, where all the children on those ships were drowned. The remaining ships were then taken to the North African cities of Bougie and Alexandria, where the children were sold into slavery at the slave markets. The other young German boy, Nicholas, led another group of about 7000 children and young women with babies over the Alps into Italy. A number of them died crossing the Alps, and when they arrived in Geno, Italy on August 25, 1212, they asked if they could rest for a week. However, they were only allowed to rest for a day, and they then set out for Rome, and ended up in the port city of Brindisi, in the southeast tip of Italy. In Brindisi, the visionary youth met unmitigated horror as their Crusade ended up in total disarray. No merchants or shipowners offered to take them to the Holy Land. However, a Norwegian merchant named Frisco took control of them and sold the girls into brothels and the boys into slave markets (Robert Payne, *The Dream and the Tomb* [New York: Dorset Press, 1984], 287-289).

- F. The Fifth Crusade was from 1217-1221, and it ended up being the largest force since the Third Crusade. It is estimated that between 5,000 to 15,000 knights and as many as 60,000 foot soldiers began this Crusade. Initially, in February of 1219, the Muslims offered peace terms, which included the giving up of Jerusalem, but Cardinal Pelagius refused the offer, hoping instead to utterly defeat the Muslims and take over Cairo. However, in July of 1221, as the Crusaders were advancing toward the gates of Cairo, the Sultan of Egypt, Al-Kamil, opened up the flood gates of the Nile, and the entire area was flooded. This in turn forced the Crusaders to come to a truce once again, without having retaken Jerusalem (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 16, 15th ed., “Crusades” [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1989], 835-836; Payne, 300-301; Schaff, vol. 5, 278-279; <http://members.tznet.com/donjuan/fifth.htm>).
- G. The Sixth Crusade was from 1228-1229, and it did not involve any major military conflict, but rather negotiation. The Sultan of Egypt, who was being threatened by fellow Muslims, reached a negotiated peace with Frederick II in 1229:

The treaty of 1229 is unique in the history of the Crusades. By diplomacy alone and without major military confrontation, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and a corridor running to the sea were ceded to the kingdom of Jerusalem. Exception was made for the Temple area, the Dome of the Rock, and the Aqṣā Mosque, which the Muslims retained. Moreover, all current Muslim residents of the city would retain their homes and property. They would also have their own city officials to administer a separate justice system and safeguard their religious interests. The walls of Jerusalem, which had already been destroyed, were not rebuilt, and the peace was to last for 10 years. (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, *ibid.*, 836)

- H. The Seventh Crusade was from 1248-1254, and it was led by King Louis IX of France. Louis was a very committed Christian who saw the Crusade as God’s calling on his life. From September, 1248-February, 1250, the Crusaders enjoyed victory. However, the Egyptian Muslims succeeded in surrounding and capturing Louis and holding him for ransom. Then, on May 6, 1250, he was released and the city of Damietta on the northeastern shores of coastline of Egypt was surrendered back to the Muslims. However, Louis remained on for four more years in the shoreline Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in Palestine (which, didn’t include Jerusalem at this time), and he bargained for the release of more prisoners, as well as

fortified some positions in the Kingdom (Encycloopedia Britannica, *ibid.*, 837).

- I. The final defeat of the Crusaders occurred in 1291 as Acre, the last remaining fortification of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, ended up falling to the Muslims on May 18, 1291. With this collapse, the formal period of the Crusades ended. However, with the fall and capture of Constantinople to the Seljuk Turks of the Ottoman Empire on May 29, 1453, a new era of Middle Eastern and European History began:

In 1452, Sultan Mehmed II (sometimes Muhammad II) began preparations for conquering the city. He constructed a fortress at the narrow point of the Bosphorus, assembled a large and experienced army and arranged the neutrality of Hungary and Venice (likely allies of the Byzantines). A 54-day siege began in April 1453. The walled city was bombarded almost constantly from Ottoman cannons on both land and sea. The walls were breached on May 29; Emperor Constantine XI died amidst his Genoese supporters and fellow townspeople. Two days of looting, murder and rape followed before order was restored by the sultan, soon to be known as Mehmed the Conqueror.

<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1046.html>

Session Six

VI. The Reformation

- A. The prelude to the Reformation involved many issues, chief of which was the overall corruption of the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, along with a host of teachings that had no biblical foundation, but rather were founded on tradition and the rulings of the Catholic hierarchy. However, there were some important individuals and events that were pivotal to October 31, 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the Castle Church door in Wittenberg.
- B. In 1305, the College of Cardinals elected Clement V to the Papal throne, and rather than moving to Rome, he chose to remain in Avignon, France as a Frenchman. For the next 72 years, the following six Popes, who were also French, also chose to remain in Avignon. This 72 year period has come to be called the ‘Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy’ (Shelley, 219). The result of this action caused resentment from other European countries, and this was especially true for Germany. In 1324, there was a move by German king, Louis IV (1314-1347), against Pope John XXII (1316-1334). In addition, a scholar named Marsilius of Padua not only criticized the Avignon Papacy in particular, but the whole of the governmental structure of the Roman Catholic Church. Marsilius had been the Rector of the University of Paris from 1312-1314, and he also served as a political consultant to a group in Italy who were pro-king and anti-pope as far as the primary direction of their loyalty from an Italian citizen’s perspective. Between 1320-1324, he wrote a book while in Paris entitled, *Defender of the Peace*, in which he was very critical of the Papacy and its political intrusion into the affairs of European monarchs and the leadership of their countries, and he also called for a democratic form of church government within the Roman Catholic Church (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Ultimate Reference Suite, “Marsilius Of Padua,” Chicago: *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2008.). In many ways this book was a powerful prelude to the Reformation that would come within the next 100 years:

Defender of the Peace asserted that the church was the community of all believers and that the priesthood was not superior to the laity.

Neither popes nor bishops nor priests had received any special function from Christ; they served only as agents of the community of believers, which was represented by the general council. (Shelley, 219-220)

In 1326, Marsilius and a man named John of Jandun, a French philosopher and Aristotelian, presented this work to Louis IV of Bavaria, and the result was that both men had to flee Paris to Louis for protection. In 1327, both men were condemned as heretics and were excommunicated from the Catholic Church (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Ultimate Reference Suite, *ibid.*). Marsilius' work was the first of a series of critical works beginning in the 14th century and leading up to the 95 Theses of Luther in the early 15th century that would come out challenging the overall structure and focus of the Roman Catholic Church.

- C. The next major event to occur in the 14th century was centered around John Wyclif (1330-1384). In 1372, Wyclif received his doctorate from Oxford and became a leading professor at the University. At this time in Europe, the issue of "dominion," or "lordship," that is, the reality of human authority being exercised over others, was the pressing issue among monarchs and church leaders (Shelley, p. 225). The Roman Catholic Church's position was that it was the only valid dispenser of authority to secular monarchs and rulers. In essence, "God had entrusted the pope with the universal dominion over all temporal things and persons. Any authority exercised by sinful rulers was unlawful" (*Ibid.*). On the other hand, certain scholars insisted that human authority "depended less on the mediation of the church than on the fact that its possessor was in a state of grace, that is, he had committed no grievous sin" (*Ibid.*). However, Wyclif and one of his former professors, Richard Fitzralph, insisted that being in "a state of grace" was not only required for secular rulers to legitimately rule, but it was also should be required for a church leader to legitimately rule as well. Wyclif, however, went even further by saying that the English government had the divinely sanctioned authority "to correct the abuses of the church within its realm and to relieve of office those churchmen who persisted in their sin. The state could even seize the property of corrupt church officials" (*Ibid.*, p. 226). In addition to his view of the overall authority of the church in relation to the state, Wyclif also believed that every man, be he priest or laymen, had equal

access to God and was equal before God, and a man's relationship to God was the basis of his character, as well as the basis for either church or secular office. Thus, Wyclif consistently opposed the political pursuit of the papacy to dominate the European states, versus the papacy being an example of Christian character and service, and he went so far to say that the pope was the Antichrist:

As for the papacy, no one has used more stinging words against individual popes as well as against the papacy as an institution than did Wyclif. In the treatises of his last years and in his sermons, the pope is stigmatized as anti-Christ. His very last work, on which he was engaged when death overtook him, bore the title, *Anti-christ*, meaning the pope. He went so far as to call him the head-vicar of the fiend. He saw in the papacy the revelation of the man of sin. The office is wholly poisonous—*totum papale officium venenosum*. He heaped ridicule upon the address “most holie fadir.” The pope is neither necessary to the Church nor is he infallible. If both popes and all their cardinals were cast into hell, believers could be saved as well without them. They were created not by Christ but by the devil. The pope has no exclusive right to declare what the Scriptures teach, or proclaim what is the supreme law. His absolutions are of no avail unless Christ has absolved before. Popes have no more right to excommunicate than devils have to curse. Many of them are damned—*multi papae sunt dampnati*. (Schaff, vol. 6, 332)

Wyclif is known best in Protestant circles today for his emphasis on making the Word of God available in the language of the people, as well as his view of the preeminence of Scripture over tradition and the final arbiter in all matters of faith and doctrine:

Wyclif's chief service for his people, next to the legacy of his own personality, was his assertion of the supreme authority of the Bible for clergy and laymen alike and his gift to them of the Bible in their own tongue. His statements, setting forth the Scriptures as the clear and sufficient manual of salvation and insisting that the literal sense gives their plain meaning, were as positive and unmistakable as any made by Luther. In his treatise on the value and authority of the Scriptures, with 1000 printed pages, ¹⁶⁰² more is said about the Bible as the Church's appointed guide-book than was said by all the mediaeval theologians together. And none of the Schoolmen, from Anselm and Abaelard to Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, exalted it to such a position of preëminence as did he. With one accord they limited its authority by coördinating with its contents tradition, that is, the teachings of the Church. This man, with

unexcelled precision and cogency, affirmed its final jurisdiction, as the law of God, above all authorities, papal, decretist or patristic. What Wyclif asserts in this special treatise, he said over again in almost every one of his works, English and Latin. If possible, he grew more emphatic as his last years went on, and his *Opus evangelicum* (*Gospel Work*), probably his very last writing, abounds in the most positive statements language is capable of. (Ibid., 338)

However, that which separated him from the Roman Catholic leadership, and which caused his expulsion from Oxford in 1382, was his repudiation of the doctrine of Transubstantiation:

In his treatise on the eucharist, he praised God that he had been delivered from its laughable and scandalous errors. The dogma of the transmutation of the elements he pronounced idolatry, a lying fable. His own view is that of the spiritual presence. Christ's body, so far as its dimensions are concerned, is in heaven. It is efficaciously or virtually in the host as in a symbol. This symbol "represents" — *vicarius est* — the body.

Neither by way of implantation nor of identification, much less by way of transmutation, is the body in the host. Christ is in the bread as a king is in all parts of his dominions and as the soul is in the body. In the breaking of the bread, the body is no more broken than the sunbeam is broken when a piece of glass is shattered: Christ is there sacramentally, spiritually, efficiently — *sacramentaliter, spiritualiter et virtualiter*. Transubstantiation is the greatest of all heresies and subversive of logic, grammar and all natural science. (Ibid., 336)

However, prior to Wyclif's expulsion from Oxford, he had reached out to the common people in order to provide for them an English translation of the Latin Vulgate. This resulted in a revival among the common people who would go out and share the Gospel with any and all who would listen. Their critics called them "Lollards, meaning 'mumblers'" (Shelley, 230).

- D. John Huss (1369-1415) was born and raised in Czechoslovakia, and he studied and graduated from the University of Prague, receiving a BA in 1394 and a MA in 1396, after which he began teaching at the University, and in 1401, he was appointed Dean of the Philosophy Department ("Hus, Jan," *Encyclopædia Britannica, Ultimate Reference Suite* [Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2008]). In 1402, Hus was appointed to the pulpit of the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, and from this pulpit, Hus was able to disseminate

his reform views with regard to the organization of the church along the same line as that of Wyclif. Interestingly, however, he did not deny the doctrine of transubstantiation, which Wyclif did, and Wyclif maintained the doctrine of purgatory. However, Hus' primary focus was on moral reform of the leadership and practices of the church, such as simony, which he utterly condemned:

Hus's theological views regarding the nature of the Church, the practice of the sacramental life, the headship of Christ, and the role and exercise of authority in the Church all flowed from his passion for the moral reform of the Church, especially among the clergy and hierarchy. Though he demonstrated a familiarity with canon law, Hus insisted that the Scriptures and the early centuries of the Christian community, not later tradition and papal decrees, determine the nature of the Church. (Daniel Didomizio, "Jan Hus's De Ecclesia, Precursor of Vatican II?", *Theological Studies*. Volume: 60. Issue: 2. [1999]: 247)

During this same time, just subsequent to what has been called the 'Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy' (1305-1377), there emerged the 'Great Papal Schism', which lasted from 1378-1417. In 1377, Pope Gregory XI (Pope from 1370-1378) returned to Rome, and there was great excitement and elation over the papacy returning to Rome. However, he died the next year, and new Pope, Urban VI (Pope from 1378-1389), an Italian, was elected on April 18, 1378. However, by the summer of 1378, the French Cardinals were very displeased with him and announced that he was an apostate, and they moved to vote in another Pope in August of 1378 who was French, Clement VII (1378-1394), and the papacy was once again moved to Avignon, France. Thus began the 'Great Papal Schism', which lasted until 1417. However, in 1409 a group of Cardinals from both the Roman and Avignon parties met in a general council in Pisa, Italy and decided that the division had gone on long enough. By that time, Rome had already had three other Popes since Urban VI (Boniface IX [1389-1404]; Innocent VII [1404-1406]; & Gregory XII [1406-1415]), and Avignon had one other since Clement VII (Benedict XIII [1394-1417]). Thus, the Council of Pisa deposed both Gregory XII of Rome and Benedict XIII of Avignon and elected a third Pope, Alexander V (1409-1410). Alexander V died the following year, and John XXIII succeeded him (1410-1415). However, neither of the other two Popes stepped down, thus, from

1410-1415, there actually existed three Popes who claimed to be the true and rightful Pope: Gregory XII in Rome; Benedict XIII in Avignon; & John XXIII in Pisa. It was during this incredible time of upheaval in the Roman Catholic Church that John Hus came on the scene. Hus took a strong stand against the sale of indulgences, or simony for the purposes of what he considered to be ungodly pursuits, and during this 'Schism', and it was this opposition that ultimately cost him his life. In 1412, John XXIII of Pisa sold indulgences to support his campaign against Gregory XII of Rome, and Hus vehemently and publically denounced these indulgences, which the king of Czechoslovakia also received part of. Consequently, Hus lost the king's support ("Hus, Jan," Ibid.). In 1414, the German King, Sigismund (king from 1411-1437), encouraged Pope John XXIII to call a Council at Constance, Germany. This Council, which lasted from 1414-1418, ultimately succeeded in getting Gregory XII to abdicate, and deposed John XXIII and Benedict XIII (however, he never consented to the Council's decision, and he moved to Peniscola, Spain where he died in 1422/23), and then elected Martin V as Pope (Pope from 1417-1431). It was during the Council of Constance that Hus was summoned to come, with the promise of 'safe-conduct', to present his views. However, once Hus arrived, he was arrested, placed in confinement, and ultimately condemned as a heretic and burned at the stake on July 6, 1415. The following is an account of Hus' last moments on this earth:

Huss was first tied round the middle with cords. A chain was passed over these, and chains were fastened to his left leg and his neck. Thus securely bound to the stake, the faggots provided for the occasion were piled to the chin; straw was placed beneath and between them where it was thought likely most effectually to contribute to the fierceness of the blaze. A moment of awful expectation followed. The executioner approached with a lighted torch; when the Duke of Bavaria rode up to Huss, and loudly called to him, demanding that he should now renounce his errors; at the same time reminding him that in a few moments it would be out of his power to do so. "I thought the danger already passed" he replied; "but happily, I am nothing tempted to gainsay what I have advanced. I have taught the truth, and am now ready to seal it with my blood. Ultimately it shall prevail, though I may not see it. This day you kindle the flames of persecution about a poor and worthless sinner; but the spirit which animates me, shall, phoenix-

like, ascend from my ashes, soar majestically on high through many succeeding ages, and prove to all the Christian world, how vain this persecution, how impotent your rage." The martyr turned as far as his bands would admit, and looked towards the executioner, who now approached to kindle the fire. His movements caused some of the outer faggots to fall. Upon this, the flaming torch was laid down, till the wood could be replaced. The Bohemian saw the torch resumed, and in the same instant he heard the crackling of the lighted straw. The rapidly extending blaze spread round the pile; while, seizing the last moments that remained to him on earth, Huss was heard to sing out in prayer, "Christ, Thou Son of the living God, have mercy on me." He was proceeding, when the rising flames seized his beard, eyes and eyebrows, and an involuntary start threw the cap from his head. His voice was again heard above the roaring of the volume of fire, which now burst from the top of the pile behind the stake. Utterance failed him; but his uplifted eyes evinced (showed), in that awful moment, that his heart was still awake to devotion, though his tongue was mute forever. His face became violently distorted, and bowing down his head he was seen to expire. Enough wood had not been provided, and the fire failed before the mortal remains of the martyr were more than half consumed. His clothes had been thrown on the pile in aid of the faggots; but all was insufficient, and a new supply of wood was necessary. The burning being completed, carried away in a cart, and thrown into a neighboring river, that the admirers of the Bohemian might possess nothing to recall the memory of their martyr. The council had stated that it had done nothing more pleasing to God than to punish the Bohemian heretic. Huss was judged an heretic because he believed in the authority of the Bible above the pope and Canon Law. He believed that Salvation from sin was by Grace through Faith in Christ Jesus alone. The council never dreamed that the fire it lighted under Huss in Constance that day would burst into a mighty conflagration that was to sweep inexorably over the whole world with the true Gospel of Christ.

http://www.logosresourcepages.org/History/huss_b.htm

- E. Martin Luther (November 10, 1483-February 18, 1546) is unequivocally the personification of the Protestant Reformation. This one man's life has influenced the world up to our very day, and his influence has touched billions of people over the past 500 years in either a direct, or indirect manner. And yet, what God did in and through Luther came at a very high cost to Luther, and so it is with every person through whom God ministers His grace, truth, and

righteousness to a dark, self-destructive, and sin-permeated world in order to bring about His life, light, and eternal, liberating salvation.

1. Luther came from peasant stock, and he was very proud of that fact. In fact, his father began as a miner and later moved to Mansfeldt where, because of his character and work ethic, he ultimately was able “to establish at Mansfeldt two smelting furnaces. His integrity and moral worth were speedily recognized by his fellow-townsmen, who promoted him to several magisterial offices” (W. Carlos Martin, *The Life and Times of Martin Luther* [New York: American Tract Society, 1866; reprint, Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1997;], 26 [page number is reprint edition]). The following are two quotes in German, one by Luther and the other by a commentator on Luther, with regard to Luther’s early family life:

Ich bin eines Bauern Sohn; mein Vater, Grossvater, Ahnherr sind rechte Bauern gewest. Darauf ist mein Vater gen Mansfeld gezogen und ein Berghauer worden: daher bin ich.” Mathesius wisely remarks with reference to the small beginnings of Luther: “Wass gross soll werden, muss klein angehen; und wenn die Kinder zärtlich und herrlich erzogen werden, schadet es ihnen ihr Leben lang. (translation – “I am a peasant’s son; my Father, Grandfather, Forefathers were genuine peasants. Thus, my Father had a strong attraction toward Mansfeld and became a miner; from there, I am.” Mathesius wisely remarks with reference to the small beginnings of Luther: “That which should become great, must begin small; and if the children are brought up tenderly and magnificently, it is harmful to their life for a long time”). (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 7, 2nd edition, reprint [Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985] 103, footnote 3)

In addition, Luther talks about the stern discipline of his upbringing, but apparently rather than rejecting such discipline and his parents who administered it, he greatly admired and appreciated them:

Luther was deeply devoted to both Hans and Hannah, and he desired that they approve of his controversial career. Later in his life, when writing *On Monastic Vows*, Martin dedicated the book to his father. He wrote that his father’s earlier rebuke about honoring parents had been right: “You quickly came back with a reply so fitting and so much to the point that I have scarcely in

my life heard any man say anything that struck me so forcibly and stayed with me so long.”

On his way to the ecclesiastical hearing at Augsburg, when he feared the heretic’s stake lay ahead, Luther’s thoughts turned to the welfare of his mother and father. “Now I must die,” he said. “What a disgrace I shall be to my parents!” (Paul Thigpen, “The Parents Luther Feared Disgracing” *Christian History*, 34 [1992]: 11)

In addition, the very times Luther was living in were quite harsh and unrelenting:

Luther lived in exciting times, the era of Machiavelli, Michelangelo, Raphael, Copernicus, and Columbus. Even today, the splendor of life at a Renaissance court excites the imagination.

However, the young man and his family were utterly untouched by the era’s larger events. Not a single Luder was aware of Columbus’s voyages. None knew of the glories of Renaissance art and literature until much later. Instead, they endured the harsh realities of life in northern Europe, where violence was part of everyday life.

A local drought, a terribly wet spring, or an early frost could force grain prices up as much as 150 per cent over the previous year. Many people were reduced to begging for food.

Peasants often sought recourse for grievances not in the courts but with fists, knives, and clubs. Beggars and the homeless—which included many maimed, insane, and mentally retarded—were so numerous that authorities on the west bank of the Rhine would periodically round them up and drive them over to the east bank. From there, other soldiers would march them deep into the Black Forest and on to central Germany.

The Plague stalked Europe at the time. In Strasbourg, to take one local example, it took the lives of 16,000 of the 25,000 inhabitants and left deserted 300 villages in the region.

If this was an age of death, it was also an age of pilgrimages, saints, and relics. The search for spiritual security colored everything. Christ was often pictured on a throne with a lily (resurrection) coming from one side of his head and a sword (damnation) coming from the other. The burning question was, “How can I avoid the sword and earn the lily?” (Ibid., 13)

As a result of this brief overview of Luther’s early years, you can see some of the things that were part of the development of his personality and character that God used to form the nature of

Christ within him in order that he might become the man in Christ he would have to be for the work God intended to do in and through him.

2. Luther's father wanted Martin to go into the field of law, and that was the direction Martin's education was taking him. In 1502, he received his BA, and he continued his studies toward a law degree, but his heart was not really in it:

Although, in obedience to his father's wish, Martin devoted himself assiduously to the study of the civil law, his heart was never in it. He infinitely preferred the belles-lettres and music. Of music he did not hesitate to say, that to him it appeared the first of the arts after theology. "Music," he affirmed, "is the art of the prophets; it is the only other art which, like theology, can calm the agitations of the soul and put the devil to flight." . . . This inclination to music and literature, the assiduous cultivation of the arts, which he alternated with the study of logic and the law, presented no indication that he was so soon to play the chief part in contemporaneous religious history. (Martin 1997, 31)

However, that which powerfully and sovereignly affected his life was his discovery of a Latin Bible in the library as he was combing through the stacks one day:

One day — he was then in his twentieth year, and had been at the university two years — while engaged as usual in glancing over the library manuscripts, he chanced to open an old volume, moldy and cobwebbed. Attracted by its antique aspect, Luther read its title, and found it to be *a Latin Bible*, the first he had ever seen. This he read and reread with inexpressible and never-ceasing delight, mingled with some astonishment, for until then he had imagined that the fragments of Scripture contained in the various collects of the Roman ritual embraced the whole word of God. Thus in an obscure corner of a neglected library, locked up in the Latin text, was discovered to Martin Luther that book which he was so instrumental in restoring to its pristine dignity, purity, and authority, and which he did so much to popularize by that admirable German translation in which his countrymen still read the oracles of God. (Ibid., 32)

Thus, in this simple act of what would appear to men as an unplanned, incidental occurrence, the course of history was changed. Luther found the Word of God in its entirety, and as he

began to read it, that reading set in motion a deeper work of God's Spirit upon his mind, which in turn resulted in his conversion some twenty years later, and that resulted a few years later in the beginning date of the Protestant Reformation – October 31, 1517 – when Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the church door in Wittenburg, Germany.

3. In the spring of 1505, Luther received his MA from Erfurt University, and he was on his way to becoming a lawyer, which was his parent's dream. But on July 2, 1505, he encountered a severe lightening and thunder storm that not only changed Luther's course in life, but also the history of the Church and the world (<http://www.luther.de/en/blitz.html>):

Luther's life was full of startling and unexpected crises, and the first and most startling of them all came in the summer of 1505, after he had been a law-student for only a few weeks. He had just been home for a brief visit. His progress in his work had been all that could be desired, and his parents' pride and hope were higher than ever, when suddenly, to the consternation of everybody and to the wrath of his father, who was already thinking of an honorable marriage for him which should still further improve his prospects, he threw it all up and went into a monastery. The immediate occasion of this extraordinary step was a terrific thunder-storm which overtook him just outside the town when he was returning from his visit home. In mortal dread of death, he threw himself on the ground, crying to the patron saint of the miners, to whom he had often turned in seasons of distress: "Help, dear Saint Anna! I will become a monk." The vow so rashly made he hastened to put into execution. Fearing lest he might repent, he made his preparations as rapidly as he could, sold his books, including the costly "Corpus Juris" with which he had been equipped for professional study by his proud father, gave a farewell dinner to his friends, and, in spite of their pleas and protestations, entered the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt, on the morning of the seventeenth of July, when he was only twenty-one years old. (Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *Martin Luther, The Man and His Work* [New York: The Century, 1911], 16-17)

Thus, from the date of the storm, July 2, 1505, he was enrolled in the monastery in Erfurth:

Accordingly on the evening of the 17th of July, 1505, summoning a number of his most intimate university associates to meet in his room, he passed with them a pleasant musical and convivial night; then bidding his friends and the world adieu, he

entered on the following morning the Augustine monastery at Erfurth. (Martin 1997, 33)

From this point forward, Luther was moving not only toward a radical change in his own life, but in that of the Church as well that we are recipients of to this very day.

4. In 1507, Luther was ordained into the priesthood, and in 1508, he was sent to lecture at the University of Wittenberg, and while there, he continued studying moral philosophy. In 1510, he was sent to Rome to settle a monastic dispute that had arisen in his Augustinian order. Luther had such excitement in his anticipated visit, and he took a fellow monk. However, his exposure to the reality of Rome was far from what he expected. What he saw was the travesty of 'carnal religion' in its ugliest and filthiest manifestation. On the other hand, this helped to prepare him for the future conflict he was to have with Rome within the next seven years:

The grand result of this Roman tour was, that it emancipated him from many monkish prejudices, fatally shook his faith in the immaculateness of the pontifical see, drove him to lean more firmly than ever upon the Scriptures for support, and thus helped largely to prepare him for that dread conflict with the merciless and impious hierarchy of Rome which was shortly to be inaugurated. (Ibid., 62)

However, before we become so indignant at the Rome of Luther's day, we should still keep in mind our own sinfulness and compromise, repent quickly, and learn from the horrific mistakes of the Roman church of the 15th and 16th centuries. We too can very easily slip into the same type of carnality and self-centeredness if we do not guard our hearts and minds. This trip to Rome, therefore, had a major impact on Luther, and it was a leading contributor to his rebirth by the Holy Spirit and entering into a saving relationship with Christ. On the other hand, Luther was not specific as to just when his rebirth occurred, and there is some controversy concerning the date of his true conversion, but taking into account the order and impact of events surrounding his life, it appears to have taken place between 1512-1516, at some point after receiving his Doctorate of Theology in 1512. In the *Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther's Latin Writings*,

we find Luther's autobiographical account of his conversion. Luther wrote this in 1545, about a year before his death, but the overarching significance of his re-birth never faded from his memory:

But I, blameless monk that I was, felt that before God I was a sinner with an extremely troubled conscience. I couldn't be sure that God was appeased by my satisfaction. I did not love, no, rather I hated the just God who punishes sinners. In silence, if I did not blaspheme, then certainly I grumbled vehemently and got angry at God. I said, "Isn't it enough that we miserable sinners, lost for all eternity because of original sin, are oppressed by every kind of calamity through the Ten Commandments? Why does God heap sorrow upon sorrow through the Gospel and through the Gospel threaten us with his justice and his wrath?" This was how I was raging with wild and disturbed conscience. I constantly badgered St. Paul about that spot in Romans 1 and anxiously wanted to know what he meant.

I meditated night and day on those words until at last, by the mercy of God, I paid attention to their context: "The justice of God is revealed in it, as it is written: 'The just person lives by faith.'" I began to understand that in this verse the justice of God is that by which the just person lives by a gift of God, that is by faith. I began to understand that this verse means that the justice of God is revealed through the Gospel, but it is a passive justice, i.e. that by which the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written: "The just person lives by faith." All at once I felt that I had been born again and entered into paradise itself through open gates. Immediately I saw the whole of Scripture in a different light. I ran through the Scriptures from memory and found that other terms had analogous meanings, e.g., the work of God, that is, what God works in us; the power of God, by which he makes us powerful; the wisdom of God, by which he makes us wise; the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God. (Otto Clemen, ed. *Luthers Werke in Auswahl* [*Select Works of Luther*], vol. 4, 6th ed. [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967], 421-428)

F. The next Important figure of the Reformation we will look at is John Calvin (July 10, 1509 – May 27, 1564). Luther was almost 26 years old when Calvin was born, and he died when Calvin was almost 35 years old. Thus, their lives and ministries overlapped, and they are indeed the two major leaders of the European Reformation in the 16th century. The following is a brief summary of Calvin's early and formative years:

Calvin came from lowly stock. His paternal grandfather was a barrel-maker and boatman, his mother's father an innkeeper. His own father, Gerard, however, had improved his lot to become a successful lawyer, with a practice which brought him into the society of the local gentry and cathedral clergy. A side benefit from these connections fell to John, in that he was to be educated privately with the sons of the aristocratic De Montmors and was also to be given one or two chaplaincies in the cathedral, which serve as university grants.

Gerard planned a career in the church for his son. The path to this career lay through the University of Paris. There he would take the arts course and then go on to the nine years of study for the theological doctorate. After that, he would trust the De Montmors' patronage and his own talents to reach the higher levels of preferment.

The arts course was accomplished, or nearly so, by the mid-1520s. Calvin was now an excellent scholar, a good Latinist, proficient in the philosophy taught in those days, and qualified to take up the intensive study of theology.

But suddenly all the plans fell through. Gerard changed his mind and decided that John should achieve greatness in law and not in the church. John, dutiful son that he was, acquiesced, and the next five or six years saw him at the University of Orleans, attaining some distinction in a study for which he had no love. These were years which brought him into the ideals of the Renaissance and probably into the evangelical faith as well. . . . We do not know the time or the circumstances of Calvin's conversion to the evangelical faith. His own account in the preface to his commentary on the Psalms is reticent and vague. He writes:

God drew me from obscure and lowly beginnings and conferred on me that most honorable office of herald and minister of the Gospel . . . What happened first was that by an unexpected conversion he tamed to teachableness a mind too stubborn for its years—for I was strongly devoted to the superstitions of the Papacy that nothing less could draw me from such depths of mire. And so this mere taste of true godliness that I received set me on fire with such a desire to progress that I pursued the rest of my studies more coolly, although I did not give them up altogether. Before a year had slipped by anybody who longed for a purer doctrine kept on coming to learn from me, still a beginner and a raw recruit.

Plainly, for Calvin himself, the important thing was not when it happened or how it happened, but the change itself and the

results of the change. (T. H. Parker, "The Life and Times of John Calvin," *Christian History* [vol. 4, # 4, 1986] 7-8)

Probably the one thing that Calvin is best known for is his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. In his introduction to the *Institutes*, Calvin states his aim and purpose for writing them:

Moreover, it has been my purpose in this labor to prepare and instruct candidates in sacred theology for the reading of the divine Word, in order that they may be able both to have easy access to it and to advance in it without stumbling. For I believe I have so embraced the sum of religion in all its parts, and have arranged it in such an order, that if anyone rightly grasps it, it will not be difficult for him to determine what he ought especially to seek in Scripture, and to what end he ought to relate its contents. If, after this road has, as it were, been paved, I shall publish any interpretations of Scripture, I shall always condense them, because I shall have no need to undertake long doctrinal discussions, and to digress into commonplaces. In this way the godly reader will be spared great annoyance and boredom, provided he approach Scripture armed with a knowledge of the present work, as a necessary tool. But because the program of this instruction is clearly mirrored in all my commentaries, I prefer to let the book itself declare its purpose rather than to describe it in words. (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeil, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, vol. 1 [Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998])

As great and beneficial as the *Institutes* may have been in giving a very clear and delineated picture of biblical theology, the one thing that stands out in my mind about Calvin's introduction, is that he seems to convey the attitude that one cannot accurately and correctly read and understand what the Bible is saying apart from his work, which he sees as "a necessary tool." This attitude spread from Calvin's pen and teaching, and it embraced a host of his followers as well. The end result of this type of thinking is that one who follows Calvin and embraces his theological perspective naturally begins to look at the Scripture through the eyes of Calvin's theology, versus looking at Calvin, Luther, et al through the eyes of the Bible.

Session Seven

VII. The Enlightenment

- A. The time period that is referred to as the Enlightenment is generally dated from ca. 1500-1800, and it was in large part spurred on by the Protestant Reformation. During this period of time, great upheavals of society began to occur that enveloped all aspects of culture, from the religious to the economic, the political, colonization, education, and military conflict and new weaponry. The following is one of the best assessments that I have found that succinctly encapsulates what occurred during this time period:

The reformation of the Christian Church, launched in 1517 by the Augustinian friar Martin Luther (1483-1546), had profound political, social, and economic as well as religious consequences that redounded throughout the entire period. Religious beliefs became conflated with national sentiment and political ambitions, with economic goals and perceived social injustices; and religious schism, civil and international wars, and domestic revolts ensued. The Roman Catholic Church responded to calls for reform with the establishment of new religious orders (notably the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits); with the Holy Office, which investigated heresy; and with the Council of Trent (1545-63), which defined doctrine (notably on the issue of marriage) for the next four centuries.

Meantime, the centuries-old European expansion accelerated. Overseas expansion broadened the geographical horizons of Europeans and brought them into confrontations with ancient civilizations in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. These conflicts led first to conquest, then to exploitations, and eventually to economic changes in both Europe and overseas territories. For example, gold and silver from Mexico and Peru which began to flow into Europe in 1503 caused a continent-wide inflation between 1550 and 1565 (though the peak period of Spanish bullion imports was 1580-1620). American potatoes, tomatoes, and maize (Indian corn) began to revolutionize Europeans' diet. By 1575 Europe participated in the first truly global economy, paying for Asian silks, spices, and porcelain, Persian carpets, and Ottoman Turkish kilims with South American silver.

Furniture and house decor testified to rising bourgeois wealth, to economic and cultural change: chairs; cupboards, dressers, and sideboards that supported gold, silver, and pewterware and held supplies of table and bed linens, laces, and brocades; canopied

four-poster beds; and mirrors and paintings. Ceramic tile floors were common by the 17th century, as were, in wealthy homes, oak parquet floors often covered by Ottoman Turkish or Persian rugs. Such luxuries were depicted in the paintings of Ghirlandaio, Jan van Eyck, Holbein, and the Venetians Carpaccio and Crivelli, reflecting the close commercial ties between Venice and the Ottoman world. In the 16th century, transparent glass windowpanes spread so rapidly that by the 1560s prosperous peasant homes had them, although in eastern Europe, even the grandest houses continued to cover windows with oiled paper. The indoor water closet (toilet), invented by the Englishman Sir John Harrington in 1596, was a luxury everywhere before the 18th century. By the mid-17th century, the houses of wealthy Dutch merchants displayed a conspicuous consumption.

The expansion of the Ottoman Turks into southeastern Europe provoked great fears and preoccupied Europeans far more than did “discoveries” and developments in Asia and the Americas.

The 17th century opened with agricultural and commercial crises that had serious social and political consequences. Colder, wetter weather meant shorter farming seasons, which in turn meant smaller harvests, food shortages, and widespread starvation. The output of textiles also declined. The Thirty Years' War (1618-48) in Germany, which at some point involved most of the states of Europe, proved the greatest economic disaster for Germany before the 20th century. The widespread use of gunpowder increased the costs and destructiveness of war while reducing its glamour. To finance the larger armies that warfare required, governments resorted to heavier taxation mainly on overburdened peasantry, sparking revolts. To free themselves from the restrictions of competing institutions (such as the churches) or social groups (such as the nobilities), governments claimed to possess sovereignty, the right to make law for all people, a monopoly over the instruments of justice (the courts), and the use of force (police and state armies). In the process two patterns of government began to emerge in the early 17th century: absolutism and constitutionalism.

Peasant and urban workers' revolts erupted frequently between 1550 and 1650, cresting around 1648, because of bad harvests that led to widespread starvation, extraordinary royal and seigneurial taxation, and rampant pillaging by soldiers during the Thirty Years' War. A new class structure was taking shape with a growing group of landless wage laborers at the bottom, and this process mobilized many groups in its early phases. Radical outbursts in London, Lyons, Bordeaux, Naples, Salerno, Palermo, Granada, Cordoba (where women led the

rebellion), Salzburg, parts of the Swiss cantons, Lithuania, and Moscow often had an egalitarian flavor and, in urban centers, reflected the growth of class consciousness among wage laborers. These revolts, in the towns in western Europe and in the countryside in eastern Europe, constituted the most widespread movements of social protest before 1848. (Peter N. Stearns, ed., *The Encyclopedia of World History*, 6th ed. [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001], 283-284)

- B. In the midst of this social upheaval, people were trying to figure out who God is and just how He relates to this world we live in. One of the ideas that began to emerge was called Deism: “The earliest known use of the word ‘deist’ was by Pierre Viret, a disciple of Calvin, in his *Instruction chretienne* (*Christian Instruction* – my translation – Geneva, 1564), Vol. II, “Epistre” (“Letter” – my translation – signed, Lyons, December 12, 1563). Viret regarded it as an entirely new word that (he claimed) the deists wished to oppose to ‘atheist’: according to him, the deist professes belief in God as the creator of heaven and earth but rejects Jesus Christ and his doctrines” (Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 1-2, “Deism,” by Ernest Campbell Mossner [New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1967], 327). However, as time went by, the term came to be associated with those “who follow no particular religion but only acknowledge the existence of God, without any other article of faith. . . . The opinion of those that only acknowledge one God, without any reception of any revealed religion” (Ibid.). Thus, there began to arise among the educated class in Europe a rejection of the only form of religious authority they had been exposed to, Roman Catholicism, but yet what they considered a respectable form of intellectual belief:

Beginning in the early sixteenth century, general contributions to the development of deism include such broad movements as anti-Trinitarianism, Unitarianism, secularism, anticlericalism, Erastianism (the belief that the state was superior to the church in ecclesiastical matters), Arminianism, and Socinianism (a rationalist approach toward scriptural interpretation; an acceptance of Jesus as the revelation of God, but only a man; the separation of church and state; and a denial of hell, but a selective resurrection of those who obeyed all of Jesus’ commandments – thus, a works orientation), the rise of sects, and the general revolt against authority. It may be argued that all of these currents and undercurrents were united in the increasing

trend away from religious persecution and toward religious toleration, the glorification of the natural powers of man, and the endorsement of the right to think and to publish freely on all religious and political subjects. (Ibid.)

As can be seen, all of this upheaval affected the spiritual dynamic of Europe in that people were desperately looking for something to give their lives meaning, purpose, and direction, and two aspects of this search included religious and political freedom. Thus, out of this milieu and conflation of religious and political ideas, beliefs, and aims comes the beginning of the spiritual hunger for eternal truth that in England ultimately led to the move of the Pilgrims to the 'New World' in November, 1620. This 'New World' had only been discovered by Columbus in 1492, just twenty-five years before Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the church door in Wittenberg, Germany, thus initiating the Protestant Reformation! Therefore, what the Enlightenment brought was just that, enlightenment in all areas of life, which included most importantly the freedom to think, search, and decide for oneself what one believes about life and all of its intricacies. In addition, this period brought in the age of science and discovery, which dismissed many misconceptions about the universe that are today considered fundamental to our daily lives:

Finally, the Age of Reason sprang from the soil of a new faith in law and order. Modern science arose in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and filled men with visions of a new day of peace and harmony. These pioneers of modern science forced men to think in a new way about the universe: Copernicus (1473-1543), who insisted that the sun, not the earth, was the center of our universe; Johann Kepler (1571-1630), who concluded that the sun emitted a magnetic force that moved the planets in their courses; and Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), who made a telescope to examine the planets and proved that the acceleration of falling bodies is constant. (Shelley, 313)

- C. In addition to the newly discovered laws of physics and science, there was also developing a revived approach toward philosophical and religious thought known as Skepticism. In some ways, Skepticism is analogous to what today we would classify as 'critical thinking'; that is, rather than taking things at face value, one asks probing questions as to why such a belief or position should be believed or held. With regard to the Reformation, this was of

critical importance, and along with Luther, there was another Catholic scholar, Erasmus (1446-1536), who was also critical of the moral abuses of the Roman Church, and he urged a return to holiness in following Christ. However, Erasmus was not willing to go as far as Luther in criticizing the foundational authority of the Roman Church – i.e., the popes and councils – versus, simply relying on the Scripture, but rather he appealed to a form of skeptical reasoning, advocated and promoted by an ancient Greek writer named Sextus, in which Erasmus advocated simply accepting the Church’s authority because it was far easier than trying to reestablish a form of biblical authority alone. The ancient Greek writer Sextus (ca. 150-225 AD), whose theory Erasmus was following, advocated the skeptical approach of one Pyrrho of Ellis (ca. 365-270 BC). Pyrrho advocated a form of dialectic – that is, thesis, antithesis, and synthesis – in which he argued that “the reasons in favor of a belief are never better than those against (*isostheneia* – a situation of equal strength), and that the only possible response to this is to stop worrying (ataraxia – this comes from the Greek noun *taraxe*, which means “tumult, commotion, and disturbance,” thus, with the “a” attached to it, it means to be calm and at peace) and to live by appearances” (Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995], 733). In essence, therefore, what Erasmus was advocating might be described today as a form of relativism; that is, truth is relative to a given time and situation, and in this case, it is too difficult to determine by Scripture what is true of certain things, so, the route of least resistance is to simply go along with the ‘tradition’ of the church for the sake of ‘ataraxia’, and thus, let that be sufficient for one’s questions. This can be seen in the following quote:

Later in his *De Libero Arbitrio (Concerning the Free Decision/Will* – my translation – Basel, 1524), attacking Luther’s view, Erasmus contended that the problem of free will was too complex for humans to comprehend, and Scripture too difficult to interpret on these matters. Therefore, he recommended the skeptical attitude of suspension of judgment, along with acceptance of the church’s view. Luther furiously attacked this skeptical defense of Catholicism in his *De Servo Arbitrio (Concerning the Subjected/Enslaved Decision/Will* – my translation – Wittenberg, 1525) and insisted that a Christian cannot be a skeptic (based on the Pyrrhonian idea of skepticism described above, which is, you cannot really know the truth, so

apply it in a relative sense to your own situation and be content – i.e., a type of moral relativism – my analysis); that he must be certain, not dubious, since salvation is at stake. Erasmus could remain a genial doubter if he wished, but Luther warned him that Judgment Day was to follow, and “*Spiritus sanctus non est Scepticus*” (the Holy Spirit is not skeptical – my translation).

In the dispute between Erasmus and Luther a fundamental problem that was to awaken a vital concern with skepticism was raised, the problem of determining the criterion of ultimate religious knowledge. At Leipzig, Luther had challenged the church’s criterion: that of the pope, the councils, and tradition. At the Diet of Worms he had proposed a subjective, private one instead, that of the dictates of the Holy Spirit to each man’s conscience. The ensuing battle to justify either the church’s or the reformers’ criterion made this classical skeptical problem a living issue. . . . Erasmus’ solution, that of suspending judgment and accepting the Catholic view on faith or tradition, was later developed into what is sometimes called Christian Pyrrhonism. (Edwards, vol. 7-8, “Skepticism,” by Richard H. Popkin, 451)

Thus, this difference between Erasmus and Luther is a microcosm of the conflict between those who were set free to read and think for themselves, versus those who were not permitted to do so, but were placed, metaphorically, in spiritual, mental, and intellectual strait-jackets of oppression. On the other hand, with that freedom to think and judge for oneself with regard to belief and practice of a lifestyle, as with any movement, there was both good and bad change. One of the things that emerged during this time in both Europe, as well as the United States was the rise of witchcraft. Once again, people were desperately looking for something to fill the void and emptiness in their lives and to salve the sense of meaninglessness that would encroach upon their mental and emotional states of mind and thinking:

Witchcraft was an integral part of the mental climate of the age. Educated as well as illiterate people (the French political philosopher Jean Bodin [1530-96] and the English jurist Sir Edward Coke [1552-1634] are just two examples of the former) believed in the existence of witches. They were popularly described as old women (but sometimes children and young women) who convened for sabbath (midnight assemblies), worshiped, engaged in sexual orgies, and made pacts with the devil (thus renouncing Christian baptism), in return for which they acquired powers to control natural forces such as storms,

destroy crops, harm cattle, or incapacitate human genitals. Almost all witches seemed to come from the lower levels of society and were female: the poor, the aged, the senile, and those least able to defend themselves. In the period 1470-1700, 5,417 women were executed (by burning or hanging) in the Swiss Confederation; in 1559-1736, 1,000 women were executed in England; and in 1561-1670, 3,229 women were executed in southeastern Germany. (Stearns, 284)

In the midst of all this change, both good and bad, there was also the wind of spiritual renewal that was blowing from Europe into America during this time, which ultimately resulted in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America.

Session Eight

VIII. The First and Second Great Awakenings

- A. From the time of 1620 when the first Pilgrims landed on the shores of America to establish a community where they could worship God freely, until today, 2008, there has been a constant struggle to maintain that freedom and spiritual vitality. The Massachusetts Bay Company became the organizational structure that was responsible for settling Pilgrims in the Boston area, and “between 1629 and 1642 some 25,000 Puritans migrated to New England” (Shelley, 305). These colonists were viewed by England as economic investments for the homeland, and thus, they had great latitude and freedom for their religious beliefs and practices. But as often occurs, the persecuted becomes the persecutor, and that is the case with the MBC. Through an oversight in the charter of the Colony by the British authorities, the MBC was an autonomous entity, not subject to royal authority. Thus, from 1630-1684, the MBC governed itself as an independent and self-governing community, and they ultimately embraced the very thing they opposed within the government of Great Britain, and that was an oppressive, state religion that denied the freedom of worship: “Thus, for two generations the saints in New England ruled by a policy of religious conformity even as the same policy proved futile in old England. Failure to attend church services, denial of Christ’s resurrection, or infant baptism, and irreverence for the Bible could bring severe punishment” (Ibid.).
- B. In addition to all of this, there was the added significance of political control by the Puritans:

Puritans were in a position to say which laws were for “the public good” because they had secured the charter granting them the right to settle in New England. Thus, in their colony in Massachusetts they had the authority to permit only freemen to vote for the governor and magistrates, and to insist that all freemen be church members. So the vote and public morality were controlled by the churches. (Shelley, 344)

This forced spirituality ultimately became a charade, as more and more non-believers became a part of the church without any true conversion. This in turn led to spiritual compromise and deadness within the churches themselves:

The Puritan “holy experiment” – blending belief in a church of the truly converted with the idea of a Christian state – seemed destined to fail almost from the start. There are problems in operating any church on earth when only God knows who the real members are. Not everyone in Massachusetts or Connecticut could boldly testify of experienced grace. As the zeal of the New England founders cooled, fewer men and women could bear public witness to grace in their souls. To keep membership from shrinking drastically, many churches in 1662 had to settle for the Half-Way Covenant. Under this policy the “unawakened” could enjoy a kind of partial membership, baptizing their children and joining in congregational activities, but not taking full Communion. This was enough church affiliation for most political and social purposes, so that gradually the “saints” sank to a tiny minority. When a new charter in 1691 based the right to vote on property rather than on church membership, New England had reached a spiritual crossroads. (Ibid.)

As a consequence of this type of forced ‘religious compliance’, a spiritual deadness began to spread throughout the colonies. Thus, by the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century in America, there began to emerge a dearth of genuine spirituality with regard to people having a living and vital relationship with Jesus as their Lord and Savior. There was still the formal aspect of religion, and people honored the idea of accountability to God with respect to civil government and its laws. However, such a concept can only go so far until it too begins to break down in the lifestyles of the people that will in turn then begin to affect all aspects of society, from the basic civil laws, to business and economic conduct, to family life, and to the overall moral compass of a community:

Shortly after the dawn of the eighteenth century, two types of Puritan heirs were visible. The spiritual heritage fell to the children of the Great Awakening. The call for personal conversion as the basis of church conversion soon echoed throughout the Connecticut River valley through the preaching of Jonathan Edwards.

The “worldly puritans” continued the Puritan sense of civic responsibility and concern for lawful government. Even when they could no longer feel the dread of living before an awesome Lord of history, these colonialists still held that empires rose or fell depending on whether men obeyed or disobeyed the designs

of Divine Providence. They believed, for example, that God smiled upon the quest for liberty. (Ibid., 345)

C. The First Great Awakening in America was part of an overall move of God's Spirit that spanned the Atlantic Ocean and affected both Europe, as well as America, and it is generally dated from the 1730's to the 1770's:

The Age of Reason saw a dramatic spiritual renewal in Western Christianity called the Evangelical Awakening. The movement interlaced by personal ties of the leaders, but three regions were significantly changed: Germany by the rise of Pietism, the British Isles by the preaching of the Methodists, and the American colonies by the impact of the Great Awakening. . .

.....
The 1730's in America, Scotland, Wales, and England saw a sudden explosion of apostolic concern to preach the gospel to the unconverted. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) in Northampton, Massachusetts; Ebenezer (1680-1754) and Ralph (1685-1752) Erskine in Scotland; Howell Harris (1714-1773) in Wales; and George Whitfield (1714-1770) in England all preceded John Wesley (1703-1791) in the evangelical awakening. (Ibid., 331-332)

In America, the First Great Awakening played a major part in the formation of our government, which can be seen in the Declaration of Independence, as well as in the Bill of Rights in our Constitution. As Thomas Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence, he wrote:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

One of the converts in the First Great Awakening was the mother of Isaac Backus, who subsequently opened up her home for prayer meetings and Bible studies and teaching. At 17 years of age in

1741, in Norwich, CT, Backus himself was born-again, and he soon began to be a part of evangelizing his fellow New Englanders. At 27 years of age in 1751, he formed the First Baptist Church of Middleborough, MA: “Thus the stage was set for Backus’s significant role in American history as advocate of religious freedom. More than any other man he formulated and publicized the evangelical position of church and state that was ultimately to prevail throughout America” (Shelley, 348). Backus, therefore, played a major role in the formation and inclusion of the First Amendment to the Constitution, which is part of what is commonly called the Bill of Rights:

Basic to the Baptist position was the belief that all direct connections between the state and institutionalized religion must be broken in order that America might become a truly Christian country. Backus, like Jefferson and Madison, believed that “Truth is great and will prevail.” But unlike his ‘enlightened colleagues’, by *truth* he meant the revealed doctrines of Scripture. His fundamental assumption was that “God has appointed two different kinds of government in the world which are different in their nature and ought never to be confounded”; one is civil, the other ecclesiastical.

“Our civil legislature,” said Backus, does not function as “our representatives in religious affairs.” They were elected as representatives for civil or secular affairs, and when they act in ecclesiastical affairs, they meddle in matters upon which their constituents did not empower them to legislate. Furthermore, legislative power is inappropriate for faith. “Religion is a voluntary obedience unto God which force cannot promote.”

By resisting established churches the revivalists never intended to surrender their dream for a Christian America. They had found in the Great Awakening the answer to their needs. The kingdom of God would come to America if a majority of the citizens could be persuaded to submit voluntarily to the laws of God. Revivals were God’s means to that end. (Shelley, 348-349)

The point to be made with Backus’ ministry is that he was an evangelical pastor whose first priority was the preaching and ministry of the Word of God to the lost, and to the building up of the body of Christ, but he was also very involved politically in the formation of our country’s Constitution, and in particular with the First Amendment to our Constitution, which is part of what is called the Bill of Rights. Backus tirelessly confronted the Massachusetts

legislature concerning the matters of religious liberty, and as a result of his spiritual and political profile in Massachusetts, he was elected to be a delegate from Massachusetts to the first Continental Congress in 1774, and in 1788, he as a delegate from Middleborough to the Massachusetts state convention that ratified the United States Constitution. Thus, if Backus and other committed Christians such as he had not become ‘politically involved’ at the inception of our nation’s constitutional government, then we might not have the First Amendment which guarantees us the religious freedom we have today! Therefore, if you want to keep this freedom, as well as all of the other freedoms delineated in the Bill of Rights, then you too had better become involved today! The idea that such involvement is ‘unspiritual’ is misinformed and ludicrous at its very best. Do not hide behind the pseudo-spiritual veneer of God’s sovereignty in attempting to justify your political inactivity as a believer, because such a veneer is easily penetrable with the truth. We are the salt and light, and if we do not stand for the truth in our country, NO ONE ELSE WILL!

- D. The Second Great Awakening is generally thought to have occurred from ca. 1800 all the way up through the 1870’s. Just these two moves of God alone in our country are staggering in and of themselves, because from these came the establishment of the greatest freedom experienced by any people in the history of man, and it has all been directly based on the spiritual blessings of God poured out on a nation of people who sought to serve and follow Him. Even in the midst of our sins and failures as a people, both individually and corporately, the call of brokenness and repentance over our sins, based on the grid of our moral decisions being God’s Word, has been the stabilizing force that has given us victory in war, prosperity in material goods through success in business, and most importantly, a spiritual foundation for personal, family, community, and national identity and unity. Without these qualities being in our lives, we become a narcissistic society, and we will eventually destroy ourselves. Thus, we must return to the biblical foundation of our country that has given us the societal moorings that have established us as the freest people in the world! The key to that foundation as believers is found in Luke 9:23-24: “And He was saying to *them* all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever

wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.’”

1. During the Second Great Awakening, not only did very positive results occur, but also some negative. There were a variety of political and religious events that emerged from this time period that the results are still with us today. Politically, we had a great civil war, where 600,000 people gave their lives for what they believed from both the North and the South. Slavery had to be ended as it had become an egregious affront against humanity, but that was not the sum total of what the war was about, especially from the southern perspective. When the war broke out in 1861, based on the census of 1851, less than 6% of whites and freed slaves even owned slaves; less than 3% owned four slaves or less; and ca. 2000 individuals owned 100 or more slaves (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th ed., vol. 29, “United States of America,” 227). Thus, for 90% of those fighting in the war for the South, it was not to retain slavery, but rather to protect their freedoms they felt were being threatened by the encroachment of federalism. In my own family, my great-grandfather on my father’s side fought with the 1st Louisiana Infantry with Jackson and Lee at Chancellorsville, Antietam, and the Wilderness Campaign. However, he, like a vast majority of southern patriots, did not own a slave, and he was also opposed to slavery, as were Lee and Jackson, who also knew that slavery had to end. On the other hand, the dissolution of the Union, whereby one section would be free, and another would retain slavery, was totally unacceptable to many believers in the north, and this Christian opposition to slavery came to be known as abolitionism. I can only say that if I were a slave at that time, I would have unequivocally wanted my freedom and fought for it. Thus, a horrible and costly civil war was fought, but a wrong began to be corrected, and it was not until the 1960’s that African-Americans in our country finally gained full access to the American dream of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” with the abolishment of institutional segregation.
2. During this same time frame, many religious groups emerged that are at variance with orthodox evangelicalism in varying degrees.
 - a. Mormonism – Mormonism began with Joseph Smith, and the following is a brief summary of its origins:

Mormonism began with Joseph Smith Jr. who was born on Dec. 23, 1805, in Vermont. He was the fourth child of Lucy and Joseph Smith. Joseph senior was known as a money digger and sought after buried treasure, particularly that of Captain Kidd. His mother was highly superstitious.

Joseph Smith Jr. stated that he was disturbed by all the different denominations of Christianity and wondered which was true. In 1820, when he was 14, he went into the woods to pray concerning this and allegedly God the Father and Jesus appeared to him and told him not to join any of the denominational churches.

Three years later, on Sept. 21, 1823, when he was 17 years old, an angel called Moroni, who was supposed to be the son of Mormon, the leader of the people called the Nephites who had lived in the Americas, appeared to him and told him that he had been chosen to translate the book of Mormon which was compiled by Moroni's father around the 4th century. The book was written on golden plates hidden near where Joseph was then living in Palmyra, New York. Joseph Smith said that on Sept. 22, 1827 he received the plates and the angel Moroni instructed him to begin the translation process. The translation was finally published in 1830 as the Book of Mormon. Joseph claimed that during this translation process, John the Baptist appeared to him and ordained him to accomplish the divine work of restoring the true church by preaching the true gospel which, allegedly, had been lost from the earth.

The Book of Mormon is supposed to be the account of people who came from the Middle-East to the Americas. It covers the period of about 600 B.C. to 400 A.D. It tells of the Jaredites, people from the Tower of Babel who came to central America but perished because of their own immorality. It also describes some Jews who fled persecution in Jerusalem and came to America led by a man called Nephi. The Jews divided into two groups known as the Nephites and Lamanites who fought each other. The Nephites were defeated in 428 A.D. The Lamanites continued and are known as the American Indians. The Book of Mormon is the account of the Nephite leader, Mormon, concerning their culture, civilization, and appearance of Jesus to the Americas.

After the publication of the Book of Mormon, Mormonism began to grow. Because their religion was so deviant from Christianity, i.e., plurality of gods, polygamy (Joseph is said to have had 27 wives), etc., persecution soon forced them to move from New York to Ohio, then to Missouri, and finally to Nauvoo, Illinois. After being accused of breaking some laws in Nauvoo

(for destroying a printing press that was publishing harmful information on Mormonism), Joseph and his brother Hyrum ended up in jail. A mob later broke into the jail and killed Joseph and his brother.

After the shooting, the church divided into two groups: One led by his widow which went back to Independence Missouri. They are known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. They claim to be the true Church and lay claim to the legal succession of the church presidency which was bestowed upon Joseph's son by Joseph Smith himself. The other group was led by Brigham Young and they went to Utah where, in 1847, they ended up in Salt Lake and founded Salt Lake City. Brigham had 25 wives and accumulated much wealth.
(<http://www.carm.org/lds/beginning.htm>)

b. Jehovah's Witnesses – The following is brief history of the JW's:

The Jehovah's Witnesses was begun by Charles Taze Russell in 1872. He was born on February 16, 1852, the son of Joseph L. and Anna Eliza Russell. He had great difficulty in dealing with the doctrine of eternal hell fire and in his studies came to deny not only eternal punishment, but also the [Trinity](#), and the [deity of Christ](#) and the [Holy Spirit](#). When Russell was 18, he organized a Bible class in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1879 he sought to popularize his aberrant ideas on doctrine. He co-published *The Herald of the Morning* magazine with its founder, N. H. Barbour and by 1884 Russell controlled the publication and renamed it *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*, and founded Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society (now known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society). The first edition of The Watchtower magazine was only 6,000 copies each month. Today the Witnesses' publishing complex in Brooklyn, New York, churns out 100,000 books and 800,000 copies of its two magazines--daily!

Russell claimed that the Bible could be only understood according to his interpretations. A dangerous arrangement since he controlled what was written in the Watchtower magazine. This kind of assertion is typical among leaders of cult religions.

After the death of Russell on Oct. 31, 1916, a Missouri lawyer named Joseph Franklin Rutherford took over the presidency of the Watch Tower Society which was known then as the International Bible Students Association. In 1931 he changed the name of the organization to "The Jehovah's Witnesses."

After Rutherford's death, Nathan Knorr took over. After Knorr, Frederick William Franz became president.

The Society was led by Mr. Henschel who died in 2003. The group has over 4 million members world wide. The Watchtower Society statistics indicate that 740 house calls are required to recruit each of the nearly 200,000 new members who join every year.

The Jehovah's Witnesses have several 'book studies' each week. The members are not required to attend, but there is a level of expectation that gently urges converts to participate. It is during these 'book studies' that the Jehovah's Witness is constantly exposed to counter Christian teachings. The average Jehovah's Witness, with his constant Watchtower indoctrination, could easily pummel the average Christian when it comes to defending his beliefs.

The Jehovah's Witnesses vehemently portray the doctrine of the Trinity as pagan in origin and that Christendom, as a whole, has bought the lie of the devil. Along with denying the Trinity is an equally strong denial of the deity of Christ, the deity of the Holy Spirit, the belief in hell, and eternal conscious punishment in hell. (<http://www.carm.org/jw/history.htm>)

One other very interesting aspect of the JW's is their view of Russell's writings. The following is a chilling quote, but it is one that can be applied to all cults:

. . . Not only do we find that people cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see, also, that if anyone lays the "Scripture Studies" aside (*these were written by Russell as directions to the truth of Scripture – i.e., he is a "spiritual one," and only he can lead people to the real truth of salvation*) even after he has used them, after he has become familiar with them, after he has read them for ten years – if he then lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness. On the other hand, if he had merely read the "Scripture Studies" with their references and had not read a page of the Bible as such, he would be in the light at the end of two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures. (Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970], 227)

- c. Seventh Day Adventists – The following is a brief history of the Seventh Day Adventists:

Modern Seventh Day Adventism traces its origins back to the early 1800's to Mr. William Miller (1782-1849) of Low Hampton, New York. Mr. Miller had converted from deism to Christianity in 1816 and became a Baptist. He was an avid reader, dedicated to God's word, and sought to reconcile apparent biblical difficulties raised by deists. He relied heavily on the Cruden's Concordance in his studies and developed a focus on the imminent return of Jesus. He began preaching at the age of 50.

The time was right. America was hot with discussions on the return of Christ. As a result, many thousands (called Millerites) accepted his idea that Jesus would return in the year covering 1843-1844. He had arrived at this date based upon a study of Daniel 8:14 which says, *"And he said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored."* He interpreted the 2300 evenings and mornings to be years and counted forward from 457 BC when the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem was given (Dan. 9:24-25).¹ When his initial predictions failed, he adjusted his findings to conclude that Jesus would return on March 21, 1844 and then later on October 22, 1844. After these too failed, Miller quit promoting his ideas on Jesus' return and the "Millerites" broke up.

On the morning following the "Great Disappointment" of October 22, 1844, a Mr. Hiram Edson claimed to have seen a vision. He said that he saw Jesus standing at the altar of heaven and concluded that Miller had been right about the time, but wrong about the place. In other words, Jesus' return was not to earth, but a move into the heavenly sanctuary as is referenced in [Heb. 8:1-2](#).

Mr. Joseph Bates (1792-1872), a retired sea captain and a convert to "Millerism" then began to promote the idea of Jesus moving into the heavenly sanctuary. He published a pamphlet which greatly influenced James (1821-1881) and Ellen White (1827-1915). It is these three who were the driving force behind the SDA movement.

Numerous reports state that Ellen G. White (1827-1915) saw visions from an early age. Such was the case shortly after the Great Disappointment. Mrs. White claimed to see in a vision of a narrow path where an angel was guiding Adventists. Subsequent visions resulted in interpretations of the three angels in [Rev. 14:6-11](#) as being in 1843-1844 as the hour of God's

judgment; the fall of Babylon signified by Adventists leaving various churches, and admonitions against Sunday worship.

Today, the SDA church is very evangelical with mission efforts world wide, numerous publications, and many educational facilities. It claims over 8 million members world wide and is growing rapidly with its educational, TV, Radio, and publication based outreaches. (<http://www.carm.org/sda/history.htm>)

Session Nine

IX. Marxism/Leninism/Secular Humanism/Post-Modernism/Emergent Church

A. The following is a brief history of Karl Marx's life and writings:

Marx was born on May 5, 1818, and he died March 14, 1883. The son of a lawyer, he studied law and philosophy; he rejected the idealism of Hegel but was influenced by Ludwig Feuerbach and Moses Hess. His editorship (1842-43) of the *Rheinische Zeitung* ended when the paper was suppressed. In 1844 he met Engels in Paris, beginning a lifelong collaboration. With Engels he wrote the *Communist Manifesto* (1848 – *I provide this as a handout*) and other works that broke with the tradition of appealing to natural rights to justify social reform, invoking instead the laws of history leading inevitably to the triumph of the working class. Exiled from Europe after the Revolutions of 1848, Marx lived in London, earning some money as a correspondent for the *New York Tribune* but dependent on Engels's financial help while working on his monumental work *Das Kapital* (3 vol., 1867-94), in which he used dialectical materialism to analyze economic and social history; Engels edited vol. 2 and 3 after Marx's death. With Engels, Marx helped found (1864) the International Workingmen's Association, but his disputes with the anarchist Mikhail Babuknin eventually led to its breakup. Marxism has greatly influenced the development of socialist thought; further, many scholars have considered Marx a great economic theoretician and the founder of economic history and sociology.

(<http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/phil/philo/phils/marx.html>)

One very fascinating observation about Marx and Engels' relationship is that Engels' father was a very wealthy industrialist in England, and toward the end of Marx's life, if it had not been for the support of Engels, who got his support from his wealthy father, Marx and his family would have utterly disintegrated. The following is a brief account of that fact:

Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) was a lifelong companion and collaborator of Karl Marx, working with him to develop his theories on dialectical materialism, historical materialism and communism. Whereas Marx wrote mostly on political issues, Engels had a broader perspective and also wrote on politics and

aesthetics. Engels was born into a wealthy industrial family and for a while he even worked in his father's business, but it wasn't long before he began to develop more radical ideas regarding the nature of economic and political relationships, probably due to the influence of the "Young Hegelians" philosophical movement. Under the pseudonym Friedrich Oswald he wrote radical articles for a number of different publications. After a time Engels became involved with a movement to extend suffrage for English textile workers, known as Chartism. During this period he came to think that both history and politics could be best understood through the lens of how society developed economically. He also concluded that social evils in general were caused by the institution of private property and the use of private property to exploit commoners. In 1844 he went to visit Karl Marx, a man who had been publishing works which expressed sympathies towards communism. It was at this time that Engels realized that they had both, independently, arrived at nearly identical views regarding economics, society and the rights of workers. They worked together to write *Das Manifest der kommunistischen Partei* in 1848 (The Communist Manifesto) and, one of the reasons both were forced to flee Prussia. Prussian authorities tried to put pressure on the British government to expel Marx and Engels for their radical ideas, but Prime Minister, John Russell also took a liberal position with regards to free speech and simply refused. While there Engels took a position with Ermen and Engels, his father's textile firm, and used position to provide financial support to Marx - unfortunately, that support wasn't enough to keep the Marx family out of extreme poverty. The two continued to work together closely until Marx died in 1883.
(http://atheism.about.com/library/glossary/political/bldef_engelsfriedrich.htm)

With regard to Marx's view of God and man, "For Marx, then, humanity is God. We created God in our own image. We created religion in order to worship ourselves. The notion that God is merely our projection is contained in Marx's assertion that man 'looked for a superhuman being in the fantastic reality of heaven and found nothing there but the reflection of himself'" (David A. Noebel, *Understanding the Times*, 2nd ed., [Manitou Springs, CO: Summit Press, 2006], 66). However, in Marx's dialectical materialism, man is indeed worshipping himself because man is the matter of the dialectical utopia that Marx envisions. Thus, "Because Marx believes that we are God, he also believes we must seize

control of reality and shape it to our specifications” (Ibid.). Thus, Marxism is the ultimate form of self-deification in that man is seen as God who shapes and forms himself into the divine creature he wants to be. The major problem with this thinking is that IT ABSOLUTELY AND UNEQUIVOCALLY DOES NOT WORK! Just look at the former Soviet Union, North Korea, Cuba, China, etc., and in addition, a great many of the Communist sympathizers in this country are incredibly wealthy. The following also represents the tremendous hypocrisy and blindness contained in self-proclaimed Marxists in this country:

John LeBoutillier, president of Accuracy in Academia and author of *Harvard Hates America*, said he entered Harvard as a moderate but left a confirmed conservative. One of his first professors at Harvard, a Marxist sympathizer, advocated a 100 percent inheritance tax as a way of eliminating inequality of wealth. LeBoutillier soon learned that the professor maintained an opulent lifestyle supported by his wife, the heiress to the Singer sewing machine company fortune. LeBoutillier said that “this was typical of the hypocrisy routinely practiced by leftists at Harvard.” (David A. Noebel, *Understanding the Times* [Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1991], 20).

- B. Secular Humanism can best be described by the Humanist Manifestos I, II, & III in the following handouts.
- C. Post/Modernism can best be described by the following handout.
- D. The Emergent Church can best be described by the following handout.

Conclusion – I pray that this study has been helpful and beneficial to all who have attended, but most importantly I pray that God will spur all of you on to be critical hearers, thinkers, and readers who will not let someone else do your believing for you, but you will know for certain what you believe and why you believe it. There will be many other things to come in the future and challenge your faith, and I must tell you that unless you are determined to seek the truth in God’s Word and be diligent in your prayer life and abiding in the Word, you may indeed be overcome by all of the opposition you will face in every quarter of your life. Therefore, this is both a call to diligence, as well as an

encouragement to comfort that I continually refer to in Romans 8:26-39:

And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words; ²⁷ and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*. ²⁸ ¶ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; ³⁰ and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. ³¹ ¶ What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? ³³ Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; ³⁴ who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Two other passages that are of great importance to us with regard to the days in which we live and our overwhelming victory in Jesus Christ are II Corinthians 4:7-11; 6:1-10. In both of these, Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is laying out for us our call in Jesus Christ, wherein is life and victory, but he also emphasizes the cost involved to gain that life and victory – not by our corrupt works of our supposed righteousness, but rather by the indwelling power of God's Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus:

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves;

⁸ ¶ *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. ¹¹ For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. (II Corinthians 4:7-11)

And working together *with Him*, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain-- ² for He says, "At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you"; behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation "-- ³ giving no cause for offense in anything, in order that the ministry be not discredited, ⁴ but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, ⁵ in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, ⁶ in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, ⁷ in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, ⁸ by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; *regarded* as deceivers and yet true; ⁹ as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, ¹⁰ as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things. (II Corinthians 6:1-10)

