

Major Religious Movements

That Have Affected the

Religious World

13 Lessons

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ALBIGENSES -- They were the same as Paulicians, but centered in Albi, a town in southern France. They flourished also in northern Spain and northern Italy during the 12th century. They taught dualism....that a spiritual world was made by a good power and a material creation by an evil force. They rejected part of the Old Testament, while emphasizing the Gospel of John. While efforts were made by the Roman Church to stamp them out, they existed on until the fourteenth century where the Inquisition succeeded in stamping them out.

ANABAPTISTS -- a RELIGIOUS GROUP WHICH APPEARED IN Germany and other countries of Europe after the Lutheran Reformation. They were essentially religious in nature, but combined with it the social, economic, and political radicalism. They insisted on adult baptism (immersion). The movement represented a distinct break in the church as an historic organism. They were not a coherent group and varying degrees of orthodox views were held. They denied such doctrines as total depravity, original sin, election, and eternal damnation. They were persecuted by both Lutheran and Roman Catholics. Menno Simons became the leader of the movement after 1536.

ANTINOMIANISM -- It means “against Law.” It advocates that the moral Law is not binding upon Christians as a rule of life. Usually, these were groups that refused to recognize any Law but their own subjective ideas, which they usually claim are from the Holy Spirit.

ARIANISM -- This group arose in Alexandria, Egypt, about the year AD 320. They were primarily concerned with the person of Christ. They took the name from Arius, a “presbyter” in Alexandria, who taught that there is a difference between God, the Father, and Jesus. He taught that God, the Father, alone is eternal and that Jesus was the first and greatest of all creatures. Christ afterwards created the Holy Spirit. They advocated the worship of Christ, however. The first council of Bishops was called to deal with this issue at Nicea, in AD 325. It was condemned, but Arianism was not defeated. Athanasius, a “bishop” at Alexandria, is credited with the eventual overthrow of the influence of the doctrine. It finally disappeared about 650 AD.

ARMINIANISM -- Jacob Hermann, or in Latin, Arminius (1560-1609), was a Dutch theologian who, after receiving a strict Reformed training, conceived some doubts with respect to the Calvinistic tenets on the Sovereign grace of God in salvation and related themes. The following five articles give an idea of their views:

- a) God elects or reprobates on the basis of foreseen faith or unbelief.
- b) Christ died for all men and for every man, although only believers are saved.
- c) Man is so depraved that divine grace is necessary unto faith or any good deed.
- d) This grace may be resisted.
- e) Whether all who are truly regenerate will certainly persevere in the faith is a point which needs further investigation.

These views were condemned in the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) by the Reformed churches. Unfortunately, this movement was profoundly affected by the rationalistic currents of the eighteenth century, and came to have very lax views on inspiration and the trinity. Their influence was strong in Holland, France, Switzerland, Germany, and England. Their views were accepted by many within the Calvinistic churches. The Wesleyan branch of the Methodist movement embraced vigorously a revised form of Arminianism.

AUGUSTINE -- (354-430 AD). He was “bishop” of Hippo. He brought to completion the doctrines of the first four centuries that scholars had been advocating, such as: (1) The Trinity; (2) The Sovereignty of God; (3) Total Depravity of man; (4) Election; and (5) Predestination. His writings greatly influenced Calvin, Luther, and many other Reformers. However, his doctrine of the church and baptismal regeneration contributed to the growth of the Roman Catholic conception of the church and its sacraments.

CALVINISM -- He advocated that God had from all eternity decreed the salvation of His own elect few, whose number can neither be increased nor diminished, while condemning all the rest of mankind to eternal reprobation. He further taught that man, being totally depraved and incapable of any volition toward good thoughts or good deeds, can only be renewed in life by the irresistible grace of God. Calvin compiled the basic teachings of Augustine into five major tenets as follows:

- a) Predestination (Unconditional Election, Fore-Ordained, Fore-Knowledge).
- b) Total Depravity of Man.
- c) Irresistible Grace—God’s drawing of man.
- d) Perseverance—the saved cannot fall from grace.
- e) Limited Atonement—Christ died only for the elect.

COUNCILS -- There seems to have been some kind of regional synod in the second century that was loosely organized. They dealt mostly with local issues, with no authority binding upon individual congregations. The General or Ecumenical Councils are numbered from the first at Nicea in 325 AD (which was called by the Emperor Constantine). The decisions of these Councils of “bishops” were binding both in ecclesiastical and imperial Law. Both Eastern and Western Churches considered the first seven General Councils as authoritative. After 754 AD, the so-called General Councils were held independently in the East and West.

DECRETALS -- (The Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals). These were a collection of ecclesiastical laws supposedly authored by Isidor of Seville (AD 636). The book has three sections:

- a) Sixty forged Decretals of Ante-Nicene Popes and Fifty Apostolical Canons from the collection of Dionysius.
- b) Forged conations of Constantine and a collection of canons of Councils.
- c) A large collection of letters of the Popes from Sylvester (335) to Gregory II (731). 35 of these Decretals were forged.

Such Decretals were regarded as genuine during the middle ages, but now both Protestant and Roman Catholic historians are agreed that they are false. Their composition is dated about 847-865 AD.

DOCETISM -- The Greek word means “to seem.” They taught that Christ did not actually become flesh, but merely seemed to be a man. 1 John 4:2-3 seems to be dealing with this error. Cerinthus (AD 85) advocated that the divine Christ descended upon Jesus, the man, at His baptism and left Him at the cross. Marcion (AD 150-200 AD) was willing to concede the reality of the suffering of Christ, but not the reality of His birth. Ignatius, Irenaeus, and Tertullian all wrote against this heresy.

DONATISTS -- This was a reform party of the 4th and 5th centuries taking its name from Donatus, a north African “bishop.” They separated themselves from the major church group, declaring it to be apostate and its baptism invalid. They were noted for their severe discipline, insistence on separation of church and state, and high standards for the ministry. They held to baptismal regeneration and infant baptism. Augustine tried to combat their teachings in the 5th century. The Arian Vandals’ invasion help to destroy many of them, and finally Islam finished the job in the 7th century.

GNOSTICISM -- This was a very dangerous heresy which came into the church like a flood in the second century. Large portions of the more affluent churches were affected by it at the beginning of the 3rd century. The Greek word “gnosis” means “to know.” It is a system of philosophy collected from many sources: Greece, Egypt, Persian, and India philosophies. Christianity was reduced to a philosophy that fit into other philosophies. It had its elect few that were enlightened and the great mass of humanity were caught up by Satan and unredeemable. There were distinct schools of thought among the Gnostics. Gwatkin described Gnosticism as “a number of schools of philosophy, Oriental in general character, but taking in the idea of a redemption through Christ, and further modified in different sects by a third element which may be Judaism, Hellenism, or Christianity.” Their basic philosophy was that matter is utterly and irretrievably evil. The God of the Old Testament could not be the Supreme Being, but was 30 “emanations” down from the Supreme Being—so that He could create the world. Gnosticism was a deadly peril in the church for about 150 years.

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH -- The Eastern Churches comprise a family of independent units which claimed to have preserved the original faith intact. They were located mostly in Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, the Balkans, Russia and the Near East. They have 5 “Patriarchs.” In doctrine, they adhere to the seven ecumenical councils of the undivided “Christendom”—as is indicated below:

- a) Christ is the sole head of the church, rejecting papal supremacy, purgatory, and the cult of images.
- b) They accepted the seven sacraments and baptism by immersion (some exceptions now).
- c) Some clergy are allowed to marry.
- d) Worship is elaborate and lengthy, but no instrumental music (exceptions now).
- e) Human will is held to—it cooperates with divine grace.
- f) Predestination is based on divine foreknowledge.
- g) Scripture and Tradition are alike respected, but the ultimate authority tends to be found in the unchanging common mind of the churches as guided by the Holy Spirit.

ICONOCLASM -- This literally means “image breaker.” Many in the Eastern Church came to support Iconoclasm when they realized that both the Jews and Moslems saw them as idolaters because of their use of images. However, they retained such usages as the sign of the cross and intercession through the saints. The Reformers were also iconoclastic, but in a positive way, replacing the use of images by emphasizing the Scriptures and the doctrine of the priesthood of believers.

LOLLARDS -- These were the “poor priests” that were trained by Wycliffe to read and teach his new translation of the Bible to the people. It helped the reformation in England. The translation pointed out many errors of the Roman Catholic Church.

MONTANISM -- This is a second century apocalyptic movement named after its founder. It is characterized by the following:

- a) The Holy Spirit is present continually in the church in a miraculous way.
- b) They had prophets and prophetesses.
- c) They had strict morality and discipline.
- d) They advocated the soon return of Christ.

NESTORIANISM -- Nestorios was a deposed “bishop” at Constantinople in 431 AD that was banished in 436 AD for teaching the dual nature of Christ.

PAULICIANS -- This was an independent reform group which arose in the heart of the Eastern Church about 750 AD. They were anti-Romanists repudiating Mariolatry, intercession of saints and the use of relics and images. They strongly despised the Roman hierarchy, having themselves only one grade of ministry. They rejected infant baptism and taught aht 30 was the age for immersion.

PELAGIANISM -- Pelagius, a “monk” from Britain, was a popular preach in Rome from 401-409 AD. He along with others taught the “free will” of man to choose good or evil and that man did not inherit an evil nature. They denied original sin being inherited from Adam. They advocated that a man could live up to the law if he desired to—thus tending to do away with the need for the grace of God and redemption through Christ.

PETRUBRUSIANS -- Peter De Bruys and Henry of Lousanne in France were reformers in the 12th century. They advocated: (1) No infant baptism, (2) Buildings were not sacred, (3) The Lord’s Supper was a memorial, (4) There is no help for the dead, (5) Chanting and such like was not appropriate, and (6) The use of Scriptures alone.

PURITANISM -- This was a nick-name that was coined about 1564 to denote members of the Church of England who desired a moral radical reformation of its worship and church order prescribed by the Act of Uniformity (1559). They were against superstitious ceremonies, diocesan organizations. They advocated equality of ministers, called for better discipline and better preaching. However, in the 17th century the term was loosely and comprehensively used to denote all Episcopalians, Presbyterians or Independents, who held a Calvinistic creed and practiced serious piety. Their theology was Reformed and of a federal cast.

WALDENSES -- This was a religious group founded by Peter Waldo in about 1176 AD. His followers called themselves “Poor in Spirit” or “Poor Men of Lyons.” They sought to conform to the Apostolic church, used the expressions of Scripture, dressed simply, denied the efficacy of the mass and the existence of purgatory. They revived the Donatist attitude and adopted a pietistic view of life. They made up the oldest protestant church.

ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES:

Syrian Orthodox (Syrian-Nestorian church). Primarily located in borderland between Turkey and Persia. About 100,000 plus members.

Armenian Church. In the 1800s, this group was 3,000,000 strong. Between the Russian and Turkish governments, they have been greatly reduced to near non-existence. They were located between Turkey and Russia.

Coptic Church. These are located primarily in Egypt. It has about 500,000 members.

Abyssinian Church. It has closed to 3,000,000 members. They have been favorable toward western civilization.

MARONITES -- An early branch of the Syrian Church in Lebanon. It claims to have maintained an organization of their own from apostolic times. Their name is from an early hermit regarded as a saint by them. They accepted the Papal authority at Rome in 1182 and united with them. Some of these churches are found in America.

MELKITES -- They were the Greek speaking “Christians,” but loyal to the Chalcedonian Symbol and favored the Byzantine government. The Roman Catholic Church has tried to dominate them and bring them into its fold.

CHALCEDONIANS -- During the Council held at Chalcedon in 451 AD, four concepts were adopted by the “bishops” of the churches and such have become the prime concepts of belief about the Deity of Christ among Catholic Churches.

- a) Christ is perfect in Deity and in humanity as well.
- b) He is both consubstantial with the Father and with mankind.
- c) He was born of the virgin Mary, the “mother” of God.
- d) Both natures are to be recognized, yet in one person.

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Preface

Over the centuries the teachings of Christ have been greatly affected and changed in various ways. Efforts had to be made in the first century while the Apostles were alive to strive to keep the “doctrine of Christ” pure! But men will often have their way and changes began to come into the church after the death of the Apostles.

Most of us are more familiar with the Protestant Reformation than we are with these early changes. But in reality, these early changes had an immense effect even on the Protestant Reformation.

Why this study? We believe it would be helpful for those of us in the Lord’s church to be at least acquainted with religious history connected with Christianity. Hopefully, it will help us to better appreciate the RESTORATION efforts that has brought the “doctrine of Christ” back into acceptance by many today.

We will be looking briefly at three major teachings that have and still affect religious views and activities today. They have affected possibly more people than most people may realize. And they definitely present one of our great challenges today—even in the Lord’s church.

Paul E. Cantrell
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Lesson one

“Historical Perspective up to Calvin”

It is the intent of this lesson to give a brief historical overview of the teachings and controversies in the “church” up to the time of Calvin and the Reformers. During the first century, as the church was beginning to stabilize and spread over the Roman World, it faced many challenges to its new doctrine. Preachers and teachers often faced much opposition and even various forms of persecution (Acts 8:1-4; 1 Pet. 4:12-16). While the Apostles were with the new churches, they could deal with these things personally. But churches were being established all over the Roman World and help was needed to stabilize these new churches and protect them from falling away or following some false teacher (2 Tim. 4:1-5; Letter to the Hebrews). Letters were written to the churches and circulated among them with the intent of giving the needed stability. From these letters we can see the kinds of struggles that they were facing:

- 1) Judaism (Acts 15, Gal. 2, etc.).
- 2) Problems about the Resurrection (2 Tim. 2:18; 1 Cor. 15).
- 3) Leadership problems (3 John 9; 1 Cor. 1:10-13).
- 4) Second Coming of Christ (1 & 2 Thess.).
- 5) False teachers (1 John 4:1, etc.).
- 6) General worldliness (Rev. 2-3).
- 7) Worshipping of Angels (Col. 2).
- 8) Gnosticism in its beginning forms (Col., 1 John, Gospel of John).
- 9) etc.

PROBLEMS IN THE 2nd to the 6th CENTURIES

One of the greatest threats to this new and growing church was Roman persecution. For some two hundred years (off and on) diligent efforts of persecution were made to stamp out this new religion. By the turn of the 300s, Christianity was finally triumphant over paganism. But during this time, changes began to be made in church government that led to the superstructure that came to fruition by the early 600s. Also, early on there were special doctrinal problems that the churches were facing: Docetism (to seem), Gnosticism (superior knowledge), and Montanism (continuous miraculous powers).

From the 4th century to the 6th century was a period of great controversy and gradual apostasy of the church. It was a period of the formation of “theology” of the church. The early “church fathers” made their contributions to such. There were great debates that led to the Ecumenical Councils from 325 AD onward. Out of the first council at Nicea came what is looked upon as a basic “creedal statement” called “The Apostles Creed.” Some of the problem areas were:

- 1) The Deity of Jesus and the Deity of the Holy Spirit.
- 2) The question of Total Depravity and Infant Baptism.
- 3) The form of baptism.
- 4) The doctrinal system of Augustine.
- 5) Centralization of authority for the churches:
 - a) Leading Bishops
 - b) Decisions by Bishops in Councils.

- c) Gradual development of power in 5 main Bishops at Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Ephesus.
- 6) Break-away by the Oriental Orthodox churches after the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD) over the nature of Christ.
- 7) The gradual authority struggle that ended with the Roman Bishop becoming supreme over a large portion of the churches.
- 8) The beginning rise of Monasticism.
- 9) The gradual union of church and state.
- 10) More doctrinal controversies:
 - a) Arianism (Christ is a created being).
 - b) Nestorianism (The dual nature of Christ).
 - c) Donatism (a reform party).
 - d) Pelagianism (Against original sin and for free will).

THE RISE AND WANING OF PAPAL POWER (7th to 15th Centuries)

The date usually given for the first “pope” at Rome is 606 AD. The Eastern churches never did or have recognized his position. For a time, the Emperors at Constantinople (the new center of the Roman Empire) had power over the churches influenced by the bishops. After the fall of the Western part of the Empire, the way was open for the Roman Bishop to have more and more power. Then, upon the introduction of the “Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals,” his power reached its zenith. These Decretals helped to make the church dependent upon the state and elevated the Roman Bishop to a position unknown to preceding ages. Nicholas I (858-867) took advantage of the Decretals and held sway over church and state. The Papacy fell into dispute for over a hundred years and was finally rescued by the German kings from destruction.

“This period of moral and social debasement—during a considerable portion of which time harlots disposed of the papal office, and their paramours wore the tiara—was interrupted by the intervention of the German sovereigns, Otho I and Otho II....” (P. 8, History of Reforms).

In 1054, came the final break between the Latin (Western Catholicism) and Greek (Eastern Catholicism).

“The popes, by continual strategy and rare diplomacy, gained an ascendancy over Western Europe, and, for successive years, the Pope everywhere was the acknowledge head of Latin Christianity.” (p. 9, History of Reforms).

“In the period between 1198 and 1216, in which Innocent III reigned, the Papal despotism shone forth in all its ecclesiastical splendor.” (p. 12, History of Reforms).

Dissent, pre-Reformation, and waning of power of the Pope characterized the 13th to the 15th Centuries.

“Conflicts between popes and temporal princes continued. The Papal assertions in regard to the two swords, the supremacy of the ecclesiastical over the secular power, and the

subjection of every living soul to the Pope, who judges all and is judged by none, were met by a united and determined resistance on the part of the French people.” (p. 14, History of Reforms).

The French captivity of the Pope at Avignon continued for about 70 years. During this time, efforts began to be made to reform the church from top to bottom.

“It is the era of the reforming councils of Pisa, Constance and Basle, when, largely under the leadership of the Paris theologians (1409-1443), a reformation in the morals and administration of the church was sought through the agency of these great assemblies.” (p. 17, History of Reforms).

An effort was made to reduce the Pope from an absolute monarch to a constitutional head, with infallible power residing in great councils. Popes overthrew the efforts of these councils. It was obvious that reforms had to come from somewhere else.

“The church, and especially the priesthood of Rome; had become thoroughly demoralized; and this was the condition of things on the eve of the Reformation of the sixteenth century.” (p. 20, History of Reforms).

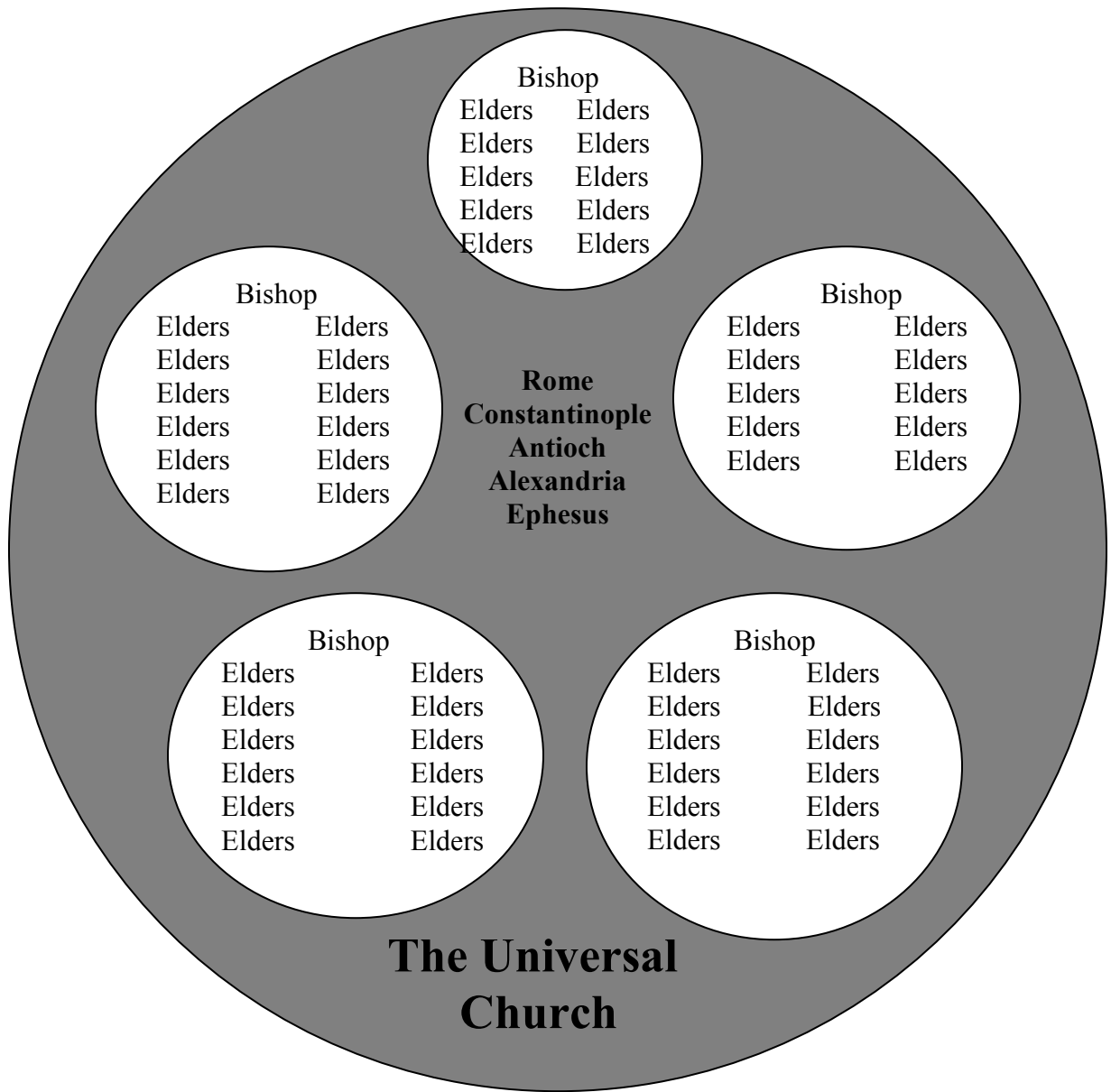
Various individual and group efforts had little success at first. And, of course, some did not go far enough. Those who tried were often burned at the stake or died in prison. Some of the individuals that lived and worked at reform during this time were: St. Bernard, St. Francis of Assisi, Wycliffe, Huss, Jerome of Prague. Some of the groups that were formed during this time were: Paulicians, Waldenses, Petrobrusians, Albigenses, and Lollards. The “Inquisition” was born during these times.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

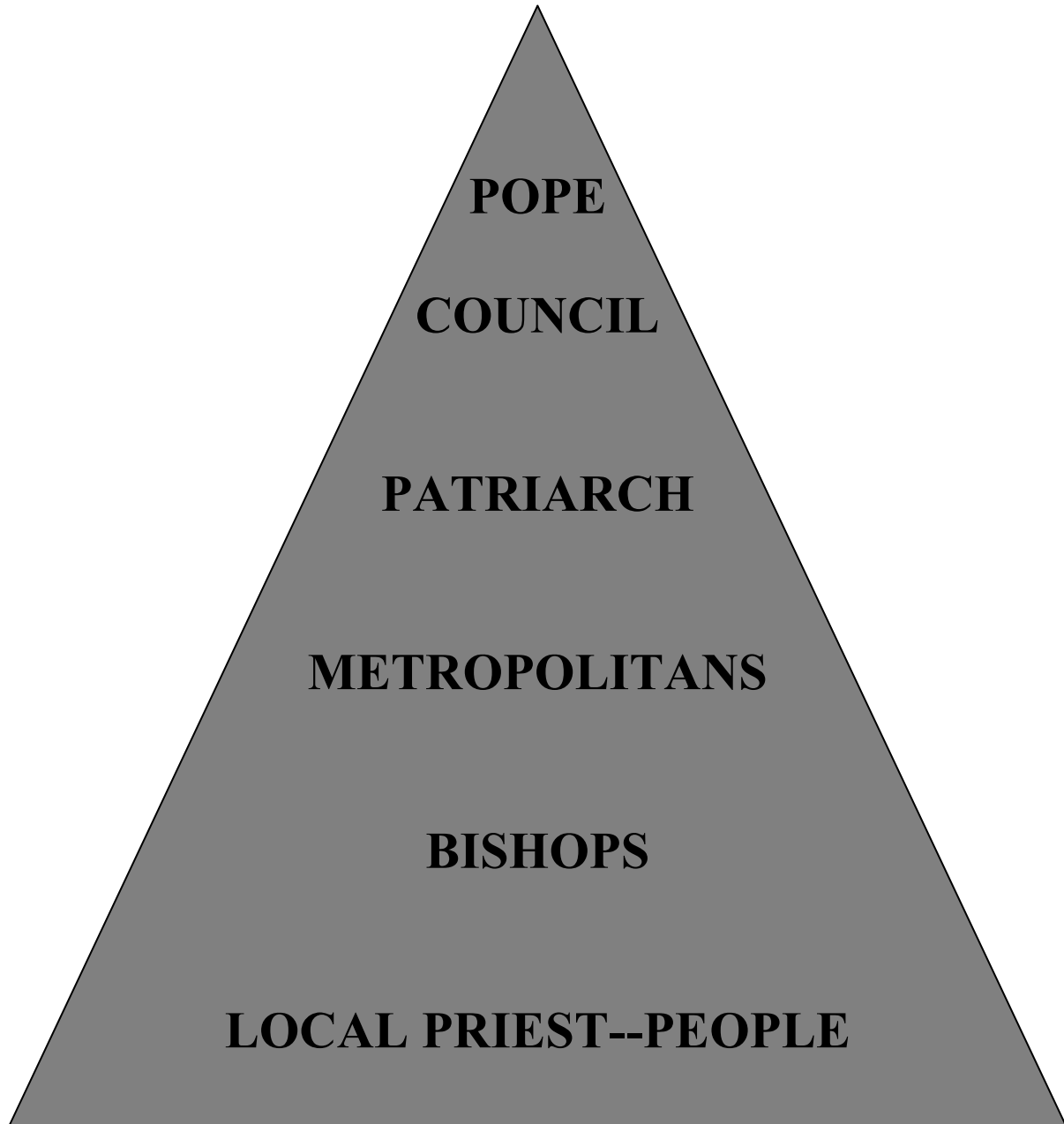
As foretold by inspiration, the church, after a period of spread and growth, gradually began to go into apostasy (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). There were voices crying out to be heard, but seemingly to no or little avail. Once the power struggle had begun, it was not satisfied until it went all the way to ultimate power...even putting to death those who opposed them. But the time was at hand that would change this picture somewhat, as we shall see in the next lesson

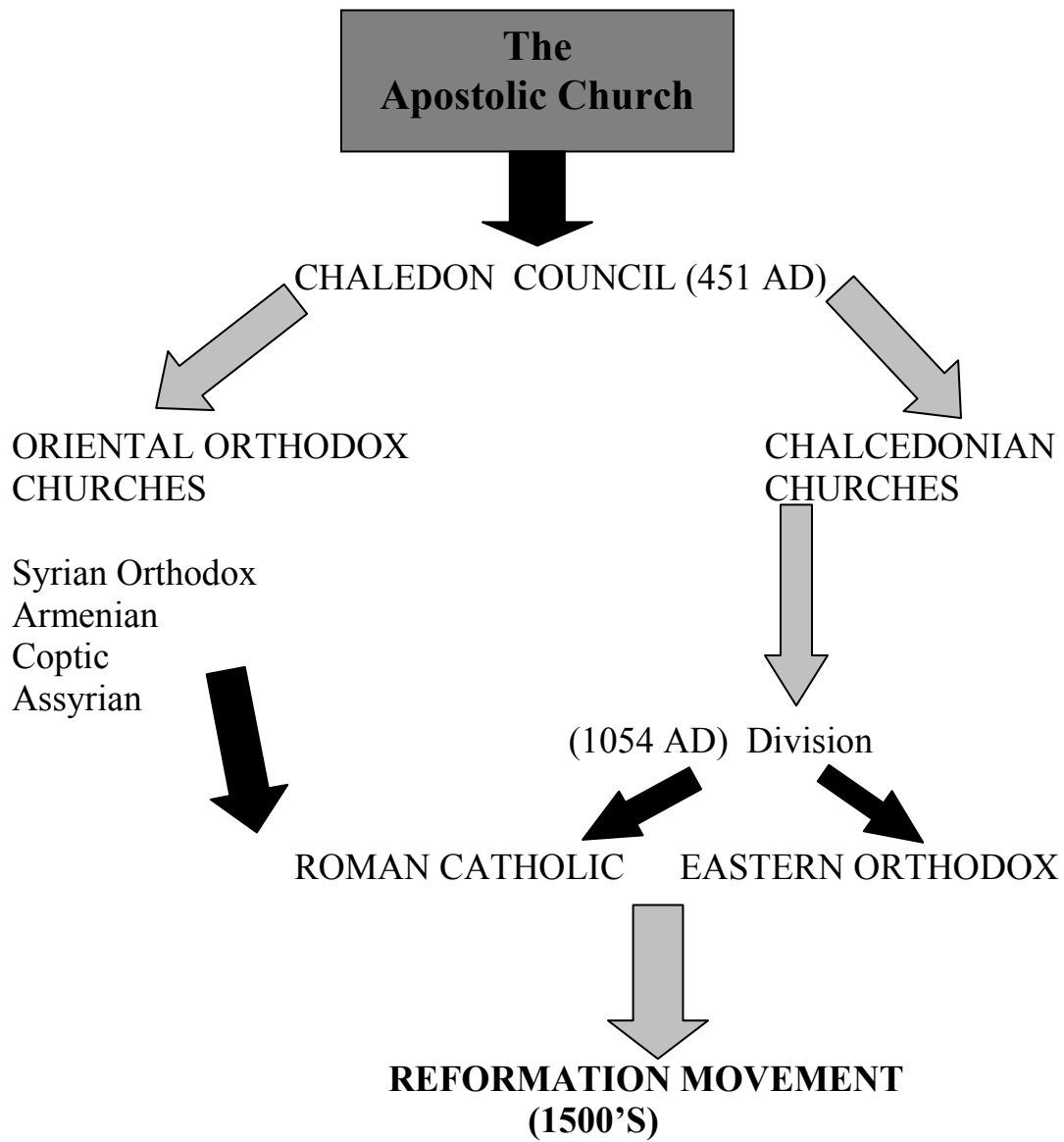
With this brief background, we are now ready to look at the three “Major Religious Movements” that have affected the religious world about us, especially in Europe and America. We will be looking at Calvinism as the first one.

Early Changes in Church Government



Gradual Structuring





Lesson Two

“Calvin and His Times”

The sixteenth century is often referred to as the “Age of Enlightenment!” “Mysticism” and “Scholasticism” gave way to a revival of learning. Books began to multiply because of the invention of printing. The Bible could be studied in the original languages because of the efforts of men to find and make them available.

“The gigantic fabric of Latin Christianity, that vast receptacle of idolatry and pagan superstition, began to quake at the near approach of intelligent faith and reason, and of civil and religious liberty. The Papacy could no longer endure the light of investigation.” (p. 37, History of Reforms).

“Reuchlin and Erasmus, two of the most eminent scholars of the age, taking advantage of the revival of literature, made it contribute to the purification of the morals of the people, and to an earnest and vigorous investigation of the Scriptures. These were the men who furnished Luther, the great champion of the reformation, with the literary munitions of war that crushed the dominion of the Papacy, and which liberated the masses from ignorance

Individuals and groups began to multiply in opposition to the corruptions of the Roman Church and Papacy. All over Europe this could be seen: Italy, France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, England, and Scotland. The time had come when many could speak out and live to see another day.

- a) Luther and Melanchthon in Germany.
- b) Zwingli in Switzerland.
- c) Calvin in France and later in Switzerland.
- d) Knox in Scotland.
- e) Cranmer in England.

The reformers brought about an open split in the Roman Church that resulted in what were called the “Reform Churches.”

- a) The Reform Church in Switzerland.
- b) The Lutheran Church in Germany.
- c) The Church of England (Episcopal in America).
- d) The Presbyterian Church in Scotland.

Later reforms also resulted in the Ana-Baptists, the Puritans, the Separatists, the Methodists, the Baptists, and the Congregationalists. These were all reformation churches in one sense, but they differed on the acceptance of the reform doctrines.

The Major thrust of the Reformation efforts were made by the Theology of John Calvin (called Calvinism). Such teachings were taken from the early views of Augustine and systematized and enlarged upon by Calvin. He took Augustine’s ideas to their ultimate conclusion. There were oppositions to these teachings in the form of (1) Arminianism—which advocated a tempering down of the Reformed Theology and advocated “free will,” and (2) Universalism—which taught that ultimately all men would be saved and a rejection of certain

“elect” only would be saved and a rejection of “eternal punishment.” The struggles of these reformers were for:

- a) Political freedom for the individual.
- b) Political freedom for each country from under domination of a foreign power.
- c) Freedom to worship whatever way the person desired.
- d) Freedom to read, obey, and preach the Word of God.

All of this brought its results—the large break-away from the Roman Church all over Europe. But it also brought on the formation of “Creeds” for each of these various groups that splintered their combined efforts more and more.

- a) **The Augsburg Confession** for the Lutheran Churches was finalized and adopted during the period of 1530-1580 in Germany.
- b) **The Heidelberg Catechism** came into existence in 1562 as a result of the controversy between the Lutheran Reformers and the Swiss Reformers.
- c) **The 39 Articles** of the Church of England was brought about by King Henry’s break with the Pope and having himself proclaimed head of the Church in England. The “39 Articles” were adopted in 1571 as the rule of faith for all the clergy of the realm.
- d) **The Westminster Confession** was adopted by the Reformed Churches in England and Scotland in 1647-1648.

CALVIN AND HIS IMPACT UPON THE RELIGIOUS WORLD

John Calvin was born in France in 1509 and died in Switzerland in 1564. He was trained for the Roman priesthood, but his father fell out with the priest and had him to change his studies to Law and Languages. At the age of 24 he was suppose to have had a sudden conversion that opened his mind to the Reformation principles. At the age of 25 the people were coming to him to be taught. His open teaching of Reformation Ideas forced him to leave Paris.

At the age of 27:

- a) He began writing and finished his INSTITUTES OF RELIGION.
- b) They were printed and made available to people.
- c) It was a short work that was later enlarged.
- d) Calvin had a giant intellect, but a frail body (dying at age 55).
- e) He went to Geneva and spent some time there until ordered out of the city, along with other reformers.

At the age of 32:

- a) Some of his friends had gained control of the government in Geneva.
- b) They persuaded him to return to be governor of the city.
- c) He was very successful and his fame spread.
- d) The persecuted flocked to live in Geneva from England, Holland, Italy, Spain, France, as well as students by the hundreds.
- e) Calvin, as much as any man, was responsible for Switzerland going mostly Reform.

Calvin was known for his great courage in perilous times, self-forgetfulness, stern morality, and uncompromising zeal. He overshadowed all other Reformers which may account for the great success of the Calvinistic doctrines. He and his teachings are still highly revered today by a large number of people in the Protestant world. The major Confessions (Creeds) of old-line Protestant Churches have been greatly affected by his teachings or have them intact in the body of

their beliefs. The first Protestants to settle America were high-church Anglicans. Religion played a secondary role in their lives—for the main pressing need was economic. The Massachusetts' Separatists (1620) and the Puritans (1630) were the first wave of strict Calvinists to the shores of America. However, a large portion of American religious history developed in reaction to Calvinism: Unitarianism, Free Will Baptist, etc.

The fullest expression of Calvinism is found in the Westminster Confession of Faith that was fully accepted by the Presbyterians and Reformed Churches. The Episcopal Church has a mildly Calvinistic creed in the "39 Articles." The Baptists and Congregationalists generally have no official creed, but Calvinism is expressed in the writings of their representative theologians.

Some of the prime teachers of this doctrine through the centuries have been:

- a) First arranged by Augustine.
- b) During the middle ages: Anselm, Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas.
- c) Pre-Reformation: Wycliffe, Huss (both strong predestinarians).
- d) During the Reformation: Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Melanchthon, Knox (Melanchthon later modified his views and such affected the Lutheran position on these doctrines).

Robert Shank's observation about Calvinism in his book Elect in the Son was: "*The pity is that Calvin's theology was not more precisely exegetically oriented. Instead, the Bible has been accommodated to theology.*" (p. 227).

The RESTORATION leaders faced three popular systems of justification taught by the religious world: Calvinism, Arminianism, and Universalism. The latter two arose more in reaction to Calvinism. But all three teach man has nothing at all to do in securing his own salvation. His salvation or condemnation is wholly in the hands of a stern and implacable God.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We are now ready in the next three lessons to look at the five major doctrines of Calvinism and to evaluate them in light of plain teachings of Scripture.

Lesson Three

“Calvinistic Doctrines Examined” (#1)

It will be the purpose of these next three lessons to take a closer look at the basic teachings of Calvin by using quotes and then comparing such with what is plainly taught in the Scriptures. These doctrines will require the use of your intelligence in order to try to understand them, but in comparing them with what the Scriptures plainly teach—the difference should be obvious!

1 -- UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION (PREDESTINATION)

“Unconditional Election sets forth a divine decree which, antecedently to any difference or desert in men themselves, separates the human race into two portions, one of which is chosen to everlasting life, while the other is left to everlasting death.”

“By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which He determined with Himself whatever He wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly as each has been created for one or the other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.”

“God has freely and unchangeably ordained whatsoever comes to pass.”

“Whoever is saved or lost is determined by God.”

“This cannot be changed.”

“God must directly call the sinner before he can be saved.”

Unconditional election seems to place all the responsibility on God for man’s salvation or punishment (Eph. 1:3-14; 2 Tim. 1:9). It is not man who chooses God, but God who chooses the man. The underlying reasons will be seen in the next two lessons. If God has ordained all things, He then has ordained: (1) Satan’s deception of mother Eve, (2) Cain’s murder of Abel, and (3) All lies and stealing, etc.

The doctrine seems to be built on:

- a) A misunderstanding of Romans 9:6-29.
- b) A rejection of Romans 9:30-11:36.
- c) A rejection of the following passages: 1 Tim. 2:4-6; 2 Pet. 3:9; Tit. 2:11; Job 3:14-17; 6:33, 51; 12:32; 1 Jn. 2:2; 2 Cor. 5:19; Rom. 5:18, etc.

The doctrine does not allow for:

- a) Man’s free will in coming to God (Rev. 22:17).
- b) The responsibility of man for his actions (Rom. 14:12).
- c) Man’s opportunity to elect God as Master (Rom. 10:9-10).
- d) God’s unwillingness for man to perish (2 Pet. 3:9).
- e) God’s not being a respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11).

Let's look at and ask some questions about the Bible's teachings on Foreknowledge, Election, being Chosen, being Predestinated. Rom. 8:29-30 uses several of these terms: Foreknew, Predestinated, Called, Justified, Glorified. Some questions:

- a) Do the Scriptures say that God predetermines who would be saved and lost?
- b) Does God foreknow who will be saved and lost?
- c) Does man have nothing to do or say about being saved or lost?

Foreknowledge. God foresees and foreknows all things from the beginning to the end. He knows what all men will do or not do. He knows exactly who will be saved or lost. For example:

- a) He knew Adam and Eve would disobey Him.
- b) He knew that Cain would kill Abel.
- c) He knew that Jacob would fit better into His Plans than Esau.
- d) He knew He could use Pharaoh.
- e) He knew that Jesus would be perfect.
- f) He knew that 3000 would obey on Pentecost in Acts 2
- g) etc.

Question—Did He predetermine all of these against their will?

Election. The problem is not with the question of election because the Bible teaches such. But the issue is over whether election is conditional or unconditional. The Bible seems to offer election to all: (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9; Rom. 11:32; Jn. 3:16; Isa. 45:21; Tit. 2:11). Reconciliation of man to God is limited by one factor—the personal choice of response on man's part (2 Cor. 5:19-20). God elects those who believe and obey Him (Mark 16:15-16). The elect are those that choose to come "into Christ"—into the one body of Christ. Outside of Christ (or His church) there are no elect.

Predestinate. God predestinates (chooses, elects) certain individuals to be saved. Who is that individual? He is the one who believes and obeys Christ. God elects or chooses certain ones to be justified and glorified. Who? Those who are faithful to death (Rev. 2:10).

2 -- LIMITED ATONEMENT

"The doctrine of 'limited atonement' which we maintain is the doctrine which limits the atonement to those who are heirs of eternal life, to the elect. That limitation insures its efficacy and conserves its essential character as efficient and effective redemption."

(Comments on Rom. 8:28-30). *"We find that Paul again uses this expression 'for us' and adds the word 'all'—'He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all.' Here he is dealing expressly with those on whose behalf the Father delivered up the Son. And the question is: what is the scope of the expression 'for us all?' It would be absurd to insist that the presence of the word 'all' has the effect of universalizing the scope...."*

Such a doctrine as the above is a logical conclusion of the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination and irresistible grace. The atonement was only for those elected! So it is a limited atonement! Jesus did not die for all—He only died for the elect! The word "all" in one text may have reference to something different in another text—the context often shows this clearly. The

very fact that there are too many passages that universalizes the Gospel would make this clear—such as:

- a) Mark 16:15-16—Preach to every creature—not just elect!
- b) Acts 10:34-35—No respecter of persons—those in every nation who fear and work His righteousness are acceptable.
- c) 2 Pet. 3:9—God is not willing that any should perish.
- d) Heb. 2:9—Jesus tasted of death for every man.
- e) Tit. 2:11—Grace which has appeared to all men.
- f) Jn. 3:16—Whosoever believes.
- g) 1 Tim. 2:4—God wants all men to come to a knowledge of the truth.

The key thought is—The Gospel was to be made available to all, but only few will accept it. Atonement is either limited or unlimited. If limited—it is for the elect only. If unlimited, it is offered for the benefit of all mankind. However, only the elect will receive the benefits.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

One of the key reasons for the teaching of what is false is that it only takes certain Scriptures out of context and places a meaning on them that the other Scriptures on the subject contradict. Once these Scriptures are all harmonized we can have a correct view of what the Bible is actually teaching on the subject. Two more of the doctrines will be looked at in the next lesson.

Lesson Four

“Calvinistic Doctrines Examined” (#2)

In this lesson we continue to look at two more of the five major tenets of “Calvinism.” John Calvin, with his brilliant mind, evidently affected a large portion of the reformers of his time and through his writings has been able to affect men religiously for several hundreds of years. However intelligent that he may have been, his writings do show a bias that has taken him into conflict with plain passages of Scripture that show his approach to the Word of God was wrong. I believe these three lessons on his five tenets can show this to be true.

3 -- TOTAL DEPRAVITY

The following quotes will help to give you an idea of what is taught about their concept of man’s inherited depravity from Adam.

Total Depravity is described as: *“In the sense of (a) complete inability to respond affirmatively to God without Divine assistance specifically granted by arbitrary particular decree.”*

“Every human being since Adam and Eve was born completely and totally depraved.”

“Every baby, when he is born, is as bad (evil) as the Devil himself.”

“Every one is born not only with the guilt but also the depravity (wickedness) of his ancestors.”

“It means that one simply cannot evaluate the evidence which God has given to man and obey the gospel without a direct, miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit upon him.”

“He must remain a child of the devil unless God sends the Holy Spirit to miraculously enable him to become a child of God.”

“Further, Calvinism holds that God sends the holy Spirit upon men in a purely arbitrary fashion; that is, the sending is not at all dependent upon the character, intentions, or motivations of the persons upon whom the Holy Spirit is sent.”

The ideas above may be illustrated by the following:

Man #1 -- Longs to know and obey God to be saved from sins that plague him.

Man #2 -- Is a profligate (Given over to sin with no concern for God or His Will).

Yet, God may send the Holy Spirit to save **Man #2**, and not **Man #1**.

In addition—**Man #2** cannot resist the Holy Spirit in spite of his wicked state of his heart.

Man #1 is not free to obey God and **Man #2** is not free to resist God.

Calvinism advocates the idea that the original sin of Adam and Eve has been passed down upon all men by inheritance.....that leads to the conclusion (in their minds) that man has become totally depraved in his nature. This corruption has extended to every part of man's nature; and because of his condition, man is incapable of responding to any invitation of God to come to him, without Divine and Miraculous help. One of the main passages used to teach these concepts is Romans 5:12-21.

The teaching of Total Depravity denies the free will of man—stating he is not capable of making a choice on his own. But man is called upon to make a choice by God (Romans 6:16; Joshua 24:15). The very fact that man is to be preached to (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16) shows that he is capable of choosing (1 Cor. 1:21).

This doctrine teaches that and sin and guilt is passed on from generation to generation—even by saved people to their children. But the Bible plainly refutes this concept in Ezekiel 18:20; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 7:9; 3:12. And obviously, if man is totally depraved, how could evil men become worse and worse? (2 Timothy 3:13).

It is advocated by those who believe in Calvinism that the Holy Spirit must come down and miraculously convert the person to God. But if one would study carefully the cases of conversions in the book of Acts, he will see no such indication of the Holy Spirit coming upon people to save them. In fact, you will see the very opposite—men and women concerned for their relationship with God and wanting to know and willing to do whatever God's servants tell them they must do in order to be saved (Acts 2:37-38; Acts 8:12-13; etc.).

The idea that man inherits the sin of Adam and Eve at birth is mistakenly based on two Old Testament passages: Psalm 51:5; 58:3. These passages indicate that man became a sinner because he spoke lies—babies cannot do such! All indications are that children (infants) are born into a state of innocence. They have no knowledge of good or evil (Deut. 1:39). Hence, they cannot be responsible to the Law of God and be sinners (1 John 3:4). Because of the purity of children, those who would enter the Kingdom of Heaven must become like them (Matthew 18:3; 19:14). Even Christians are admonished to be “babes” in malice (1 Cor. 14:20). But Jesus, in the parable of the Sower speaks about the seed being sown in “good and honest hearts.” (Luke 8:16).

4 -- IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

“Sinful man stands in need not of inducements or assistance to save himself, but of actual saving; and Jesus Christ has come not to advise, or urge, or induce, or aid him to save himself, but to save him.”

“The effectual calling of a man is the work of God's almighty power and he in this is renewing and powerfully determining their will and they hereby are made willing and able to answer his call.”

“God's grace is irresistible.”

The above quotes are advocating that man, because he is totally depraved, cannot help himself or make the choice for good—so, God’s grace has to do it for him! But...God only does it for the elect (showing respect of persons!). It is advocating supernatural salvation—a one-sided salvation. In short—no effort on man’s part at all!

The issue is not whether man needs the grace of God in order to be saved, but can man either accept or reject this grace extended by God to man! The following Scriptures say YES! (Galatians 2:21; 2 Corinthians 6:1; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; Acts 7:51; Acts 13:46, etc.). Man does have a choice of whether to accept or reject God’s grace (Acts 2:40; Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:25-29; Galatians 5:4, etc.).

An important question in this issue is.....Does God extend His grace to all men alike or only to the elect? If it is extended only to the elect, then God’s grace would become irresistible. But if it has been offered to “all men,” then man can either accept or reject His offer of Grace. See Titus 2:11; Rev. 22:17; Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16, etc., that show that this invitation is extended to “ALL MEN!”

Grace must not be looked upon as Divine indulgence of Sin (Romans 6:1-23). Yes, man is a sinner that needs the Grace of God! But it is his choice as to whether he will decide to be a “servant of righteousness” or a “servant of sin” (Rom. 6:17-18). Redemption is only possible because someone else took my place—the innocent suffered for the guilty!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The Apostle Peter’s statement on the Day of Pentecost to thousands of Jews who were crying out “what shall we do?” because their hearts had been pricked by the message of God’s redemption through Christ—were told: ***“Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*** (Acts 2:38). They were then exhorted to ***“be saved from this perverse generation,”*** or, save yourselves from this crooked generation! (2:40). Yes, man needs to hear the message of salvation that gives him hope! Yes, man can make a choice to be saved by accepting God’s grace in God’s appointed way! Yes, man does have something to do in order to be saved by the grace and mercy of God!

Lesson Five

“Calvinistic Doctrines Examined” (#3)

If a person comes up with a false teaching, this will more than likely lead to the necessity of teaching another false idea—because, such teachings have consequences that must be dealt with. To illustration:

- a) If one teaches that babies are born totally depraved because of inheriting the sin of Adam and Eve; then.....
- b) It becomes necessary to teach that man cannot respond to God because of his totally depraved condition; then.....
- c) It becomes necessary to “baptize” little babies since they are lost and if they died they would be lost eternally.
- d) But, it is more convenient to “sprinkle” little babies than “immerse them” as the Bible teaches.

As you can see from the above that one false teaching leads to another, and another, and sometimes even to many others. We believe that this is so with Calvinism! We now want to see the fifth major tenant of Calvinism.

5 -- PERSEVERANCE

“Once saved, always saved.”

“The sin question is a Son question—salvation is a trust question; damnation is a disbelief question. All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger. The justification of the human soul is through the atonement of Christ and not through the efforts of man. The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul.”

“Eternal life which is given the believer the moment he puts his trust in Jesus Christ (John 3:36) has no end, either in this world or in the next, else wherefore eternal.”

“In no sense is it possible for the born-again child of God; the true believer in Jesus Christ to so fall away as to become lost (1 John 3:9; 5:18).”

This doctrine is a necessary one as a results of believing the other four tenants. As you can see above that a great deal of emphasis is placed upon having “eternal life” now; thus, a person cannot be lost once that he is saved or it would not be “eternal life.”

The real issue here is—once that life is imparted by God, is it necessarily permanent, indestructible, so that once regenerated and believing, he can never fall? Much of this issue revolves around the question of man’s free will. If man has free will, he can choose to leave the state of condemnation and come into a state of salvation by following the directions of God’s word.

But, if he can choose to leave the state of condemnation, can he also leave the state of salvation by turning from believing and following God's Word?

Emphasis is placed in Scripture upon man making the proper choice (Matthew 11:28; 23:37; John 7:17; Luke 15:18; Rev. 22:17, etc.). But, as well, there is also emphasis upon the danger of man leaving the state of salvation (Galatians 5:4; Ephesus 2:8; Rev. 2:5; 2 Thess. 2:3; 2 Pet. 2:2, Matt. 8:12; 13:28-42; Luke 13:24-30; 1 Cor. 9:27-10:13; 2 Pet. 2:15; 2:20-22; 3:17; Rev. 3:16; 2 Tim. 4:10; Heb. 3:12; 2 Cor. 12:22; 2 Chron.; etc.).

There are many passages that also give assurance to the Christian of God's gift to him (John 10:28; Rom. 8:31-37; 1 Pet. 1:8-9, etc.). These and other passages give assurance to the Christian that God will carry out His promise and that no one or no thing can force a person away from the choice he has made to follow and obey the Lord Jesus Christ. But at the same time there are many passages that urgently warn and caution of the danger of falling away and losing our salvation (1 Cor. 8:11; 9:27, etc.). The **Common fallacy** is to place a meaning on a passage without considering all passages on any given subject. Prayer is a good way to illustrate that all passages need to be considered before drawing conclusions (Matt. 21:22; 1 Jn. 5:14).

A key question to be dealt with is: **"In what sense does a Christian have eternal life, but still hopes for it?"** (See John 10:10; 2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 1:2; Romans 8:24-25).

2 PETER 2:20-22

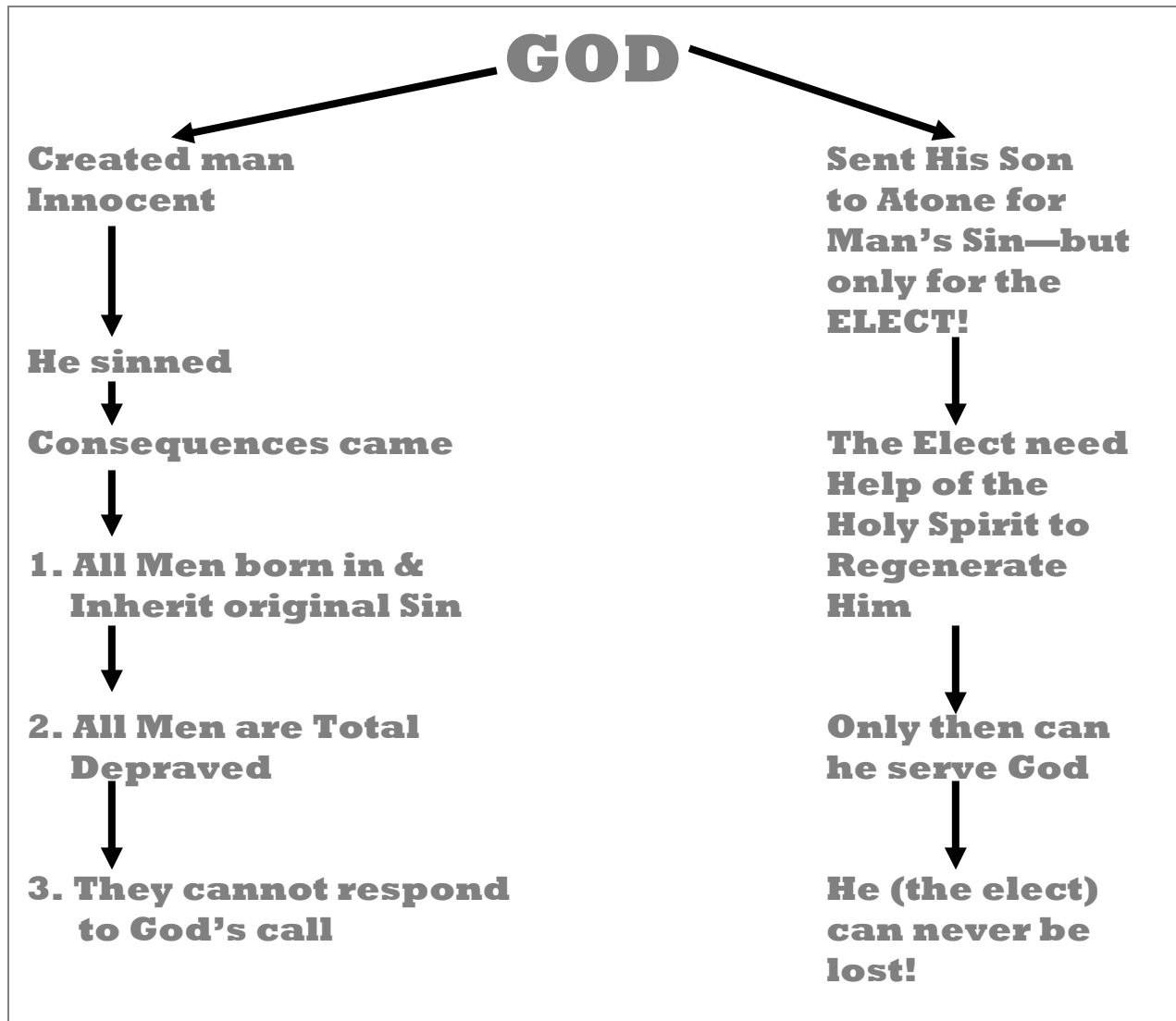
A LOST MAN: A child of the devil—one who has not been born again by the power of the blood of Jesus. One who still has sin upon his soul. This is illustrated by a Dog with rotten food in its stomach and has not yet gotten rid of it—or—a Sow in a mud hole, but not yet been washed.

A SAVED MAN: A child of God—one who has been born again by the power of the blood of Christ—one who has been separated from his sin and has been saved. This is illustrated by a Dog that has vomited up the rotten food and has been separated from his rottenness—or—a Sow who is now out of the mud hole and has been washed.

AN APOSTATE MAN: A child of God who has so sinned as to have "fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). This is illustrated by a Dog who has returned to his vomit and is eating it again—or—a Sow who had been washed but is now gone back into the mud hole.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Our approach to the Bible must be one of honesty and integrity! To be honest with the Word of God requires that we take all the passages that deal with a subject and work out an understanding that makes them all harmonize. If not, then we are accusing God of purposely misleading men—whom He claims He wants to save! God's Word is Truth (John 17:17). Truth can only be truth when it is in complete harmony with itself! We should not be satisfied with our understanding until we can see the harmony of all passages in our understanding.



Lesson Six

“A Brief History of the Controversy Over the Holy Spirit”

We now turn to a second movement that has also had a very dominant influence upon our religious world in this country. *“Though much of American religious thought has been dominated by Calvinist-oriented Protestantism and post-1880 Catholicism, the Holiness-Pentecostal Movements have gained the status of a “third force” in American life since World War II.”* (Vinson Synan). This movement has accepted more of the ARMINIAN view towards certain Scriptures.

- 1) That Christ died for all and all who accept Him as Savior can be saved.
- 2) Man can exercise his free will and refuse the offer of salvation.
- 3) He may even lose his salvation by falling into sin and backsliding.

The “Holiness” movement (promoted by John Wesley) is looked upon as a second spiritual reform of the “church.” Wesley’s concept of holiness was a **“complete”** separation from the world. Some of the terms that identified the teachings of holiness were **“Heart purity,” “Perfect love,” and “Christian perfection.”** Holiness or Sanctification was not just reserved for “Priest,” “Nuns,” or “Bishops,” but was to be used to refer to all the saved. The “Pentecostal” movement in the early 1900s added the miraculous gifts to this movement. Some advocate that the “Pentecostal” teachings were a third reformation of the “church.”

EARLY ROOTS OF THIS MOVEMENT

100-451 AD. The controversy pretty much ceased over the questions of miraculous gifts until the middle of the 2nd century. **Montanism** rose up to advocate the revival of gifts (151-171 AD). They claimed to have what the Apostles had—both the gifts and the powers. They also claimed the ability to receive special revelations. In dealing with these teachings there were two things that were solidified:

- 1) It established once and for all that the Scriptures were complete and the final revelation from God to man.
- 2) They clearly established that gifts were never promised as a permanent inheritance of the church.

But other problems begin to arise during this time about the nature—not only of Jesus—but also of the Holy Spirit. **Sabellianism** denied that God is in three persons. **Arianism** taught that both Jesus and the Holy Spirit were created beings. For quite some time the main controversy was over the **Deity** of the Holy Spirit. Various councils tried to deal with this question and controversy finally died out (170-350 AD).

451-1517 AD. The controversy from 350-1054 AD changed to a question of from whom did He precede—the Father or the Son or both? One of the reasons for the break between the Eastern Churches and the Western Churches in 1054 AD was over a difference in belief over this question.

The Greek Churches considered the Western Churches' stand on the question to be heretical—yet, they both believed in the Deity of the Holy Spirit.

Another issue that came up for debate was over the **WORK** of the Holy Spirit. **Augustine** (350-430 AD) had advocated the necessity of the Holy Spirit to work on the individual before he could believe or obey God. This was called “Efficacious Grace” and is the root of Calvinism. The Western Churches (Roman Catholic) were greatly affected by **Augustine**. The Eastern Churches (Greek Orthodox) were influenced by **Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, and others**. They taught that man could believe without the Holy Spirit working on him in some miraculous way. **Pelagius** brought this problem out into the open to be debated. He had advocated that original sin was not right—that man was able to do good apart from divine grace. **Augustine** fought these and other ideas and as a result the **Council of Ephesus** in 431 AD condemned **Pelagius** and other adherents for their teaching. An outcome of the Council's work was that the Eastern Churches did not accept **Pelagius'** views, but neither were they willing to go as far as **Augustine's** views. This prepared the way for a **SEMI-PELAGIANISM** view which became the doctrine of the Western Churches for a short period of time. The **Synod of Orange** in 529 AD opposed the Semi-Pelagianism view condemning it point by point that resulted in the Western Churches coming back closer to **Augustine's** views. The Roman Church went further away from New Testament Christianity as a religious institution during the next few hundred years that brought on the **Reformation Movements**.

1517-1700 AD. The reformers renewed the teachings of Augustine in a stronger form through the writings of John Calvin. They emphasized the necessity of the Holy Spirit working on a person before he could be saved. They also gave undue attention to the regeneration by the Holy Spirit on the saved person. And they added a third idea—the necessity of “**Illumination**” by the Holy Spirit. This was done in order to overthrow the idea that only the “Priest” could interpret or understand the Word of God. They advocated openly the reading of the Bible by each person and that the Holy Spirit would give that person enlightenment (understanding) of what they had read. Thus, advocating that the Holy Spirit would teach the meaning of the Word directly to the person.

By 1555 AD, controversy began to soften the Augustinian or Calvinistic doctrines among some of the people. **Melanchthon** in Germany believed that the will of man could cooperate with the Spirit in Justification. **Arminius** (1560-1609 AD) held that the human will decided whether a person would be saved or not—it was not the work of the Holy Spirit. The **Synod of Dort** (1618-1619 AD) reaffirmed the viewpoint of the reformers causing **Arminius'** efforts to be greatly hindered. However, his followers were still strong in Holland and France.

The **Puritan** movement in England tended towards a mysticism of supposed spiritual and emotional experiences that led to claiming things not in the Scripture (expecting the Holy Spirit to reveal directly without means of the Word of God).

Then, **Philip Spener** (1635-1708 AD) in Germany brought about the **Moravian** or **Pietist** movement that turned more attention to the Holy Spirit and Spiritual Life, but brought its errors also. The fruits of this movement spread to the Scandinavian countries and America.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The brief historical overview above shows that controversy over the Holy Spirit is not a new thing, but was a source of controversy through the centuries at different times. The next four lessons will deal with the history of this movement since the 1700s and will look at four cardinal doctrines concerning the Holy Spirit that the movement has advocated. We hope that the study will be revealing and beneficial.

PRIMARY DATES AND PERSONS

(100-1700 AD)

AD 151-171 -- Montanus Movement

AD 354-430 -- Augustinian Movement

AD 431 -- Council of Ephesus

AD 529 -- Synod of Orange

AD 1054 -- Break between the Western & Eastern Churches

AD 1560-1609 -- Melancthon and Arminius

AD 1635-1708 -- Spener (Moravian or Pietists)

Lesson Seven

“A Brief History of the Holiness, Pentecostal, and Charismatic Movements”

In one way of looking at things, these three terms could identify three different movements within “Christianity.” However, they are closely related and one built upon the other in such a way that they are often looked upon as a single movement that was developing as they went along. We need to drop back to the 1700s and onward to pick up the immediate backgrounds to this movement(s). We will break this lesson up into three main points: The Holiness Movement, the Pentecostal Movement, and the Charismatic Movement.

THE HOLINESS MOVEMENT (1700-1900)

John Wesley (1703-1791). Wesley was influenced by the Moravian movement in his preaching in Revivals. He is looked upon as the “founder” of the Methodist Church. He carried his teachings to both Scotland and America. He strongly emphasized the Work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, but at the same time recognized the doctrine of human ability. He also ended up pressing the idea of the possibility of attaining immediate spiritual perfection in this life. This was referred to as “Complete Sanctification” or “Sinless Perfection.” He advocated that a person could come to the point in his life where he sins no more. Wesley never carried this doctrine to the extreme that some of his followers did later on.

American Revivalism added its characteristics to the work of the Holy Spirit upon man. The many Camp Meetings, Great Emotional Excesses, and Religious Fervor generated more and more of the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit on the sinner. People knew little of what the Bible taught and depended much on their emotional make-up for their religious ideas and actions. Unusual things began to attend these meetings: THE HOLY JERKS, THE HOLY LAUGHS, BARKING LIKE A DOG, WILD DANCING, GODLY HYSTERIA, FALLING AND ROLLING IN THE ISLES.

Charles Finney (1850). Finney began to affect the American Revivalism. He stressed a 2nd work of Grace was Sanctification. He advocated that man needed to find God in a very dramatic, emotional and inward experience of heart. His was what was called a “Crisis Theology” on Salvation. He tried to lead people into a seeking after a holiness of experience that would be acceptable to God.

The Methodist Church in America joined in on emphasizing this 2nd work of Grace. This began to spill over into other churches. This emphasis became known as the “Holiness Movement.”

The National Holiness Association was formed in 1867. They had Camp Ground Holiness Meetings, Traveling Evangelists, Holiness Colleges, Publishing Houses, and Regional Associations, etc. As the movement grew, their doctrines became more well-defined such as:

Instant Conversions, Instant Sanctifications, Instant Divine Healings, Instant Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Too much emphasis upon these things caused the Methodist Church Leadership to reject the movement and in 1894 publicly withdrew all ties to such. They saw where it was leading

and were unhappy with such. In 10 years (1890-1990) some 23 separate holiness denominations were founded out of Methodism:

- a) The Church of the Nazarene
- b) The Pilgrim Holiness Church
- c) The Church of God of Anderson, Indiana
- d) Salvation Army
- e) Christian and Missionary Alliance
- f) The Full (4-fold) Gospel Church of God.....etc.

Some of the men involved in this movement may sound familiar to you, such as: **A. B. Simpson, Boardman, Inskip, Torrey, and Andrew Murray.**

THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT (1900 to the Present)

Controversy within the Holiness movement came over the question of how to tell when one truly had received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. **Charles Fox Parham** advocated that you could tell when a person “spoke in tongues.” **William J. Seymour**, an African-American preacher accepted this idea and began to help spread it every where he preached. At one time, they held a Revival that lasting for three years (day and night) that caught the imagination of the religious world. From this point preachers began to spread this teaching around the United States and the world that brought on what is often called the “Pentecostal Movement.”

This movement began advocated that people could have the same miraculous gifts that were in the early church. The controversy between the Pentecostals and Holiness peoples brought about an eventual division between the two groups. Pentecostals were looked upon as a lunatic fringe group and were disowned by most churches. In 1943, the **Organization of the National Association of Evangelicals** accepted the Pentecostals into their fellowship and recognition.

Following World War II, the Pentecostals began having more and more impact on the American religious life. They held great salvation-healing Revivals and Tent Meetings. Such men as **Oral Roberts, William Branham, Jack Coe**, and women like **Katherine Kuhlman** helped to push the movement forward. They help to make “speaking in tongues” popular along with the idea of “divine healing.” By 1960, they had attained a world-wide membership of about 8,000,000.

THE NEO-PENTECOSTAL or CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT (1953 to the Present)

In 1953, the Pentecostal churches formed an organization that was called: **The Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International (FGBMFI)**. It helped to bring the message to business men in the community. Many ministers and members of traditional churches were impressed with what they saw and heard.

From 1960 on, Pentecostalism began to jump denominational boundary lines and to penetrate mainline churches. By 1976, there would be found well-organized Charismatic fellowships within the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Mennonite Churches. And what may have been a surprise to many, the Catholic Churches seem to have been the most open to this Charismatic influence. People then began to see that they had more in common with the Charismatic in their group than they did with their own denomination. However, they were

encouraged to remain in their various churches and try to change them from within. The movement entered the youth culture in what was known as the “Jesus Movement.”

It is estimated that the world-wide membership of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches number into the high millions. It is estimated that 70% of Latin America’s 10,000,000 Protestants are Pentecostals. Also, that 50% of all Protestants in Italy are Pentecostal. In July 20-24, 1977, they came together for the first time as a group in Kansas City for a Conference—some 50,000 showed up.

REASONS FOR ITS GROWTH

Several possible reasons are suggested for its accelerated growth—even crossing denominational lines.

- 1) **Popularity.** The Business Men’s Fellowship (FGBMFI) has greatly enhanced their image. Large and long running TV programs have also greatly helped. It has come to the point where Pentecostals no longer have the stigma that they once did.
- 2) **People being tired of liberalism in mainline churches.** Pentecostals appear to be more conservative. They claim to accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God. They have dropped the formalism of the old churches and try to make their assemblies alive with activity.
- 3) **Ignorance of Scripture teaching on the Work of the Holy Spirit.** People are more impressed with excitement than what the Bible teaches. “Speaking in Tongues” helps to give something tangible to hold to that God must be working in “my life!” Before, people only felt like they were saved....now, they have “tongues” to prove that they are saved!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

While people may feel that these churches are leading people back to the Bible, it may be more in outward appearance or talk than in reality. While much emphasis may be placed on the Bible; yet, the whole movement is taking people away from the Bible as a final and sole authority in religion. It is reaching out for something physical and mystical—implying that the Word of God is not sufficient (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It is reaching for something unexplainable and miraculous. The emphasis is too much upon subjective experiences, rather than what the Scripture actually teach. People caught up in this are hard to deal with from the Scriptures. Not because the teaching of Scripture is not plain, but they put too much stock in subjectivity, feelings, experiences, and emotions. These replace the Bible! All knowledge of Christ, the Holy Spirit, Salvation, etc., must and can only come through the Word of God. Cold formalism needs to be avoided, but so does letting our emotions and feelings take over.

Lesson Eight

“Cardinal Doctrines of the Holiness, Pentecostal, and Charismatic Movements” (#1)

The next three lessons will be looking at four of the main doctrines of these movements. We will cover the first two in this lesson and the next two lessons will cover one a piece. It should be obvious that we will not be able to cover these teachings in great detail, but such may not be needed if we can deal with the main thing in each of the doctrines.

1 -- SECOND WORK OF GRACE (Holiness or Sinless Perfection)

John Wesley began advocating that there were two works of Grace that is brought about by the Holy Spirit: (1) Justification from past sins; and (2) Sanctification by the Holy Spirit. We are looking at the concept of Sanctification. He taught that the Holy Spirit can bring about a condition in our lives that makes a person entirely sinless. Certain passages were used to try to uphold this idea (1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 10:14; 1 John 3:6-10).

But from a study of the use of these words in Scripture, it is obvious that what might have seem to be saying what they teach—when all passages are considered, it is obvious the Bible does not teach such a doctrine. “Sanctification” (Hagiasmos) is defined as “Separation, a Setting Apart.” (1 Cor. 1:30; 6:9-11; 7:14; 1 Thess. 4:3-4; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2). From these and other Scriptures it seems obvious that Justification and Sanctification occur at the same time. When we are Justified by the blood of Jesus, we are also set apart to live for God and live a righteous life (holy life). But it is also an obvious fact that Christians are to continue to live holy or sanctified lives unto the end of their lives (Rom. 6:1-2; 1 John 1:7-10). One of the most obvious Scriptures to illustrate this is in the letter to the Corinthians. They were addressed as “saints” (those who had been sanctified—1 Cor. 1:2; 6:9-11). And yet, they were sinful (carnally minded, envious of one another, strife among them that was leading to divisions, etc.—1 Cor. 3:1-3; 2 Cor. 7:1, etc.). Holiness is something to be pursued in our lives—we are to strive to stay away from sin! But it is an obvious fact that we will never be sinless (1 Pet. 1:15-16; Eph. 1:4; 2:21; 1 Jn. 2:1). There has been only one sinless person—the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:21).

2 -- DIRECT OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT UPON THE PERSON

It is advocated by these churches that the Holy Spirit operates directly upon people today as it did on the Apostles. But, they do admit there is some difference; that is, that the Holy Spirit operates directly upon the heart of men to save them, but it did not do so to the Apostles. They make use of the following passages: John 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:13-16. Please note carefully what is promised to the Apostles by Jesus:

- 1) ***“He shall teach you all things”*** (You won’t have to study to know the truth).
- 2) ***“He will bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”***
(This could apply only to the Apostles—not to anyone today).
- 3) ***“He shall testify of me: and you also shall bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.”*** (Only the Apostles).

4) *“He will guide you into all truth”* (They would not teach any error).

5) *“He will show you things to come”* (Unrevealed truth).

Please note carefully this statement—We get the benefits of the Holy Spirit’s Work through the Apostles, but we do not get the direct operation of the Spirit upon us as it was given to them.

Again, the basic problem that men have is dealing with all the Scriptures on a given subject and harmonizing them. Not to do so causes a perverting of the Word of God. For example, if you were to just read John 16:8 only, you could easily assume that the Holy Spirit does this by direct operation upon the person. But it is only an assumption because it does not so say that He will work directly upon the person Himself. We find out how the Holy Spirit brings about a conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment by looking at other Scriptures. He does it through the preaching of the Word of God. Notice the chart below:

<u>WHAT THE SPIRIT DOES</u>		<u>WHAT THE WORD DOES</u>
1. Rom. 8:16	Bears Witness	John 5:39
2. Neh. 9:30	Instructs	2 Tim. 3:16-17
3. John 16:8	Convicts	Titus 1:9
4. 2 Cor. 3:6	Begets	James 1:18
5. John 3:3, 5	Born of	1 Pet. 1:23
6. Titus 3:5	Saves, Renews	James 1:21
7. 1 Cor. 6:11	Sanctifies	John 17:17
8. 1 Cor. 6:11	Cleanses	John 15:3
9. Rom. 8:9	Indwelling of	Col. 3:16
10. Rom. 15:13	Power of	Heb. 1:3
<u>Eph. 6:17</u>—“And take the sword of the Spirit, which is The Word of God”		

The Spirit does not operate directly to save a person, but operates through the Word of God to save a person! Notice the emphasis in the following cases of Conversion upon people hearing, believing, and obeying the Word of God to be saved:

1. 3,000 on Pentecost----*“When they HEARD this”* (Acts 2:37-38)
2. 5,000 later----*“May HEARD the word, believed”* (Acts 4:4)
3. Samaritans----*“They believed Philip preaching”* (Acts 8:12)
4. Simon----*“Believed also”* (Acts 8:13)
5. Saul of Tarsus----*“You shall be told what you must do”* (Acts 22:16)
6. Cornelius----*“Told words whereby you shall be saved”* (Acts 11:14)
7. Lydia---- *“She HEARD, and attended to the things spoken”* (Acts 16:14)
8. Jailer----*“They spoke unto him the Word of the Lord”* (Acts 16:32)
9. Corinthians----*“Hearing, believed, were baptized”* (Acts 18:8)
10. Bereans----*“Received the Word”* (Acts 17:11)
11. 12 at Ephesus----*“When they HEARD”* (Acts 19:5)

**SOME REASONS FOR NOT BELIEVING IN THE DIRECT OPERATION
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT UPON THE SINNER**

1. If the Holy Spirit operates in a direct way, apart from the Word of God to save sinners, why are there no Christians in some lands? Whose fault is it?
2. If the Holy Spirit operates directly on some, and not on others, does God become a respecter of persons????
3. No one in the New Testament ever prayed for a direct operation of the Holy Spirit to save them or sanctify them.
4. A direct operation takes away personal responsibility and accountability of man.
5. A direct operation of the Holy Spirit to save would be in direct contradiction to the passages that tell us the Gospel or the Word of God is God's POWER to save! (Rom. 1:16; Jn. 6:44-45).
6. A direct operation of the Holy Spirit to save the sinner is never taught in Scripture—it is assumed.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Such doctrines have not come from the word of God, but have been influenced by the past teachings of men. Calvinism in particular is at the basis of the various ideas being advocated by the Holiness and Pentecostal churches. Two more erroneous teachings will be looked at in the next two lessons.

Calvinism has had its great effect on the religious thinking of the people in this country, but it is more and more losing ground. Of recent years the strong emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in various ways has become a dominant area to deal with.

Lesson Nine

“Cardinal Doctrines of the Holiness, Pentecostal, and Charismatic Movements” (#2)

One of the cardinal doctrines of these movements is their emphasis upon the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Belief that this baptism is still for mankind today is critical to their whole movement. If it can be shown that the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” ceased in the first century, they would have very little to base their whole movement on. After giving some idea of the teachings these groups have about such, we will show from the Scriptures what God has to say about this “baptism.”

3 -- BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

While both the pure Calvinists as well as the Pentecostals advocate a “baptism of the Holy Spirit” in order for a person to be saved, they differ when it comes to the things that follow. The Calvinists teach that the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is to let you have an experience of grace and let you know you are among the elect—the saved. The Pentecostals advocate the necessity of the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” in order to be saved, but they also believe that such brings miraculous gifts to the person.

Support for such teaching is mostly assumed or something that is read into passages that are used. There are only a few passages that mention “baptism of the Holy Spirit”—**Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; 10:47 (11:15-17); 2:1-4, 16-21**. The doctrine is mostly based upon passages where the word “baptism” occurs that obviously have reference to water baptism, but to them it is “Holy Spirit baptism.”

How can a person know when “baptism” is in **water** or in the **Holy Spirit**? One of the things that is quite obvious is that there are passages that plainly state it is a “baptism of the Holy Spirit, as noted above. Also, something that should be obvious is that the New Testament starts out with using the term “baptism” with reference to being baptized in water as a command from God. It would continue to use the term in that way unless otherwise indicated. Thus, all references to baptism would be connected with water unless the text specifically says otherwise.

One distinction that can obviously be made between these two baptism is that one is a **command** of God that man must obey and the other is a **promise** that only God can do. A **command** would logically be in **water** since it is something man can do (Acts 2:38)! A **promise** is something that only God can do—and thus that would have to be “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 1:5). Take a look at the two examples below:

Acts 8:26-40:

1. Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian Eunuch.
2. Upon seeing water along the road side, he asked to be baptized (obviously in water).
3. The Great Commission says for us to go and teach or preach the Gospel—baptizing those who believe it (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). This is a command to be obeyed—it is a baptism in water.

Acts 10:48:

1. While Peter was preaching to Cornelius, he and those in his house received a “baptism of the Holy Spirit” and they spoke in “tongues” just like the Apostles did in Acts 1.
2. But the Great Commission tells us to teach and baptize those who believe.
3. So, Peter commanded Cornelius and all in his house to be baptized in water.
4. Why? For the same reason Peter told the people on the Day of Pentecost—in order to have their sins remitted or forgiven (Acts 2:38). All were to be saved the same way.
5. Thus, their “baptism of the Holy Spirit” did not save them, but they did have to be baptized in water in order to be saved (Mark 16:15-16).

Another approach to this issue can be taken that requires a reasoning and harmonizing process. Notice the facts involved in the following passages:

Eph. 4:4-6:

1. In about AD 63, the Apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said that there was but “one baptism!”
2. However, the New Testament mentions some possible six “baptisms.”
 - a) John’s baptism in water that was no longer valid after Acts 2 (Acts 19:1-7).
 - b) Jesus spoke of his coming death as a “baptism” which He was to endure soon. This is a figurative use of the term (Matt. 20:22-23). A one-time thing.
 - c) The baptism of Israel (1 Cor. 10:1-2). A one-time thing—possibly figurative use.
 - d) Jesus spoke about a “baptism of fire” in the sense of future punishment (Matt. 3:11-12; Rev. 20:15). It is yet to come!
 - e) Jesus was to “baptize with the Holy Spirit” (Mk. 1:8), which was promised to the Apostles and received (Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4).
 - f) Baptism of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16) that was to be preached to all nations and peoples.
3. All but two of the above baptisms would not be valid for us today.
4. The two that are left are: (1) Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which was a promise; and (2) Baptism of the Great Commission that people must do to be saved (Mark 16:15-16).
5. To harmonize Paul’s statement of there being “one baptism” would require that one of the two baptisms left above had to cease!
6. The Promise was fulfilled...and no longer valid.
7. Baptism in water for the remission of sins is the “one baptism.”
8. One more thought:
 - a) In AD 30, in Acts 1-2—there are two baptisms mentioned.
 - b) By AD 63, when Paul wrote Ephesians, one of these baptisms had ceased.
 - c) It could not be baptism in water because this is commanded of all nations and peoples in order to be saved.

In the next lesson this will be discussed further showing the purpose of the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” in the early church. See the comparison on the next page, please!

WATER BAPTISM

1. To be administered by men.
Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 8:35-40
2. Every accountable person to submit to it.
Matt. 28:18-20
3. To be done until the end of the world.
Matt. 28:18-20
4. Involved in making disciples.
Matt. 28:18-20
5. Brings about one's transition into the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.
(Matt. 28:18-20).
6. Essential to one's salvation.
Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21
7. Preceded by faith that leads one to be baptized. Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16 (Preaching necessary).
8. Commanded for man to do. Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; 22:16
9. No miraculous signs followed this act.
10. Something that we have a choice about as to whether we will be baptized or not. Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4, 17-18.

HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

1. Administered by Christ. Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5
2. Promised to "all flesh" in the generic sense (both Jew & Gentile). Acts 2:1-4; Acts 10:1-11:18
3. No indication that it would last.
4. Essential to Apostolic qualifications and work. It promised them power (Jn. 16:13; Acts 1:8) when the Holy Spirit came.
5. No connection.
6. Not essential. Not to save anyone.
7. Preaching not necessary....it can be received with it.
8. A Promise to be received. Matt. 3:11; Jn. 20:22; Acts 1:5. The promise Was kept (Acts 2:1-4). It was not called a baptism, but assumed that it was because of Acts 1:5.
9. Evidenced by a speaking in tongues on both occasions: (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-48. Power was given to the Apostles to lay hands on people and Impart miraculous gifts. (Acts 8:14-21; 19:1-7). The Gentiles did not receive this power to impart gifts.
10. No choice indicated!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We believe the Scriptures clearly show that the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" was to be given at the beginning of the church and to cease shortly after the Gentiles received it.

Lesson Ten

“Cardinal Doctrines of the Holiness, Pentecostal, and Charismatic Movements” (#3)

The previous lesson and this one need to be tied together in study because they either stand or fall together. If the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is still in practice today; then, we should expect miraculous powers to be given to God’s people. But, if the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” ceased in the first century; then, it should be obvious that the miraculous powers also ceased. There should be no question in the mind of the reader that this is an obvious truth! Let’s pursue the question about miraculous gifts and are they still to be expected today.

4 -- MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Pentecostal people teach that individuals can receive one or more miraculous gifts of the Spirit through receiving a “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” The main gift that also serves as a sign that a person has received this baptism is to “speak in tongues.” But the Pentecostals do advocate that all the gifts can be received today.

Let’s look briefly at the listing of the gifts found in 1 Corinthians 12:8-30 so that we can see what the early church had access to:

- 1) A Word of wisdom
- 2) A Word of knowledge
- 3) Faith
- 4) Gifts of healing
- 5) Prophecy
- 6) Working of miracles
- 7) Discerning of spirits
- 8) Divers kinds of tongues
- 9) Interpretation of tongues
- 10) Helps and Governments

In the two accounts of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit—both parties were enabled to “speak in tongues” or “languages” that they had not studied (Acts 2:6-11; 10:44-47). But the Apostles were also promised “power” when the Holy Spirit came on them—which evidently gave them the ability to lay hands on Christians and impart miraculous gifts for the use in the early church (Acts 8:14-21; 19:1-7).

Why were these gifts given in the early church? A fact that is often not realized by people today is—the early church did not have the New Testament written out and given to them for the first 20-30 years; and even then, it was not completed until over 60 years later (the last book of the New Testament was written in about 96 AD—Revelation). Jesus promised the Apostles that they would be sent the “Spirit of Truth” to guide them into all truth (John 16:13; 1 Peter 1:10-12; Ephesians 3:3-5). The gifts were given in the early church because the Apostles could not be at every location and the churches needed guidance, teaching, in order to mature them and stabilize

them in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 14:4). Among the gifts were miracle working powers that were used to convince people that their message was from God (Mark 16:17-20; Heb. 2:1-4).

Regulation of the use of these gifts! It was possible for the early Christians not to use the gifts properly in their assemblies, so the Apostles gave instructions on the proper use of such (1 Cor. 14):

1. “All things done unto edifying” (v. 26)
2. “Let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course” (v. 27)
3. “Let one interpret” (v. 27)
4. “The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets” (v. 32)
5. “God is not the author of confusion, but peace” (v. 33)
6. “Let women keep silence...not permitted unto them to speak (preach)” (v. 34)
7. “Let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (v. 37)
8. “Let all things be done decently and in order” (v. 40)

The very fact that these admonitions needed to be given shows that possessing a miraculous gifts was no assurance that a person was acting correctly with them.

Now, let’s go back to see why these gifts were given! The following things would seem to be obvious from statements of Scripture:

1. The coming of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles (Baptism) was obviously to endow them with miraculous gifts.
2. But the baptism was also to endow them with the power to lay hands on Christians and impart one or more miraculous gifts to them. These gifts were to help guide the early church because they did not possess the completed New Testament until the end of the first century.
3. The gifts were to teach, instruct, guide, and edify the early churches.
4. The gifts were to help to confirm the message as being from God.

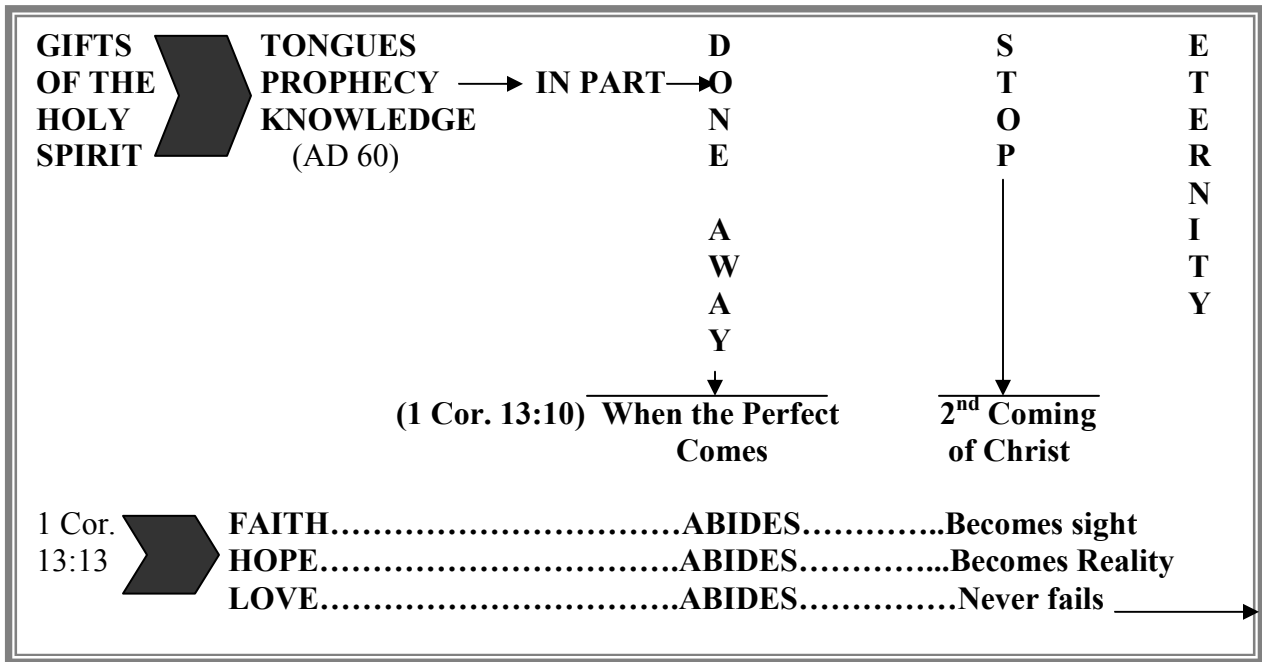
If you will notice from the above items...that the whole emphasis is upon giving and confirming the message as being from God. The Apostle Paul, in the midst of discussing miraculous gifts and the regulation of them (1 Cor. 12-14), speaks about these miraculous gifts ceasing or being done away (1 Cor. 13:8-12). He even gives the time when they will cease—when the “perfect” or “complete” comes. What was incomplete? The New Testament was incomplete at that time (AD 56-57). It was in the process of being given, but it would not be complete until AD 96. When the New Testament (God’s new Covenant or message for all mankind) was completed, the gifts would cease—for they had done their work (Jude 3; 2 Pet. 1:3; Heb. 2:1-4; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Rev. 22:18-19; Gal. 1:6-9)!

We are now ready to see why these gifts would cease! The Apostle not only said they would cease when the “complete” has come, but there are also logical conclusions that can be drawn that show this clearly. If these gifts that were given to the early Christians were given by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles; then, it would follow that when the Apostles all were dead the gifts would of necessity have to cease!

Also, if our analysis about Paul’s statement that there is “one baptism” is correct, then the baptism of the Holy Spirit would have also ceased by 63 AD! Therefore the gifts would of necessity have to cease as well!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

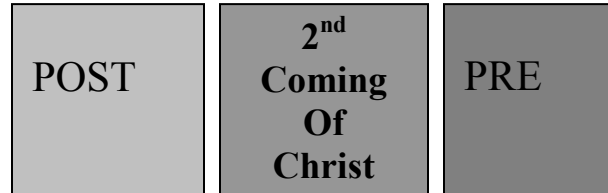
While the Holiness and Pentecostal movements had good motives in wanting to go back to the Bible for their beliefs and practices, we believe that they erred in their understanding of both concepts—Holiness (sinless perfection) and baptism of the Holy Spirit (miraculous gifts). They did break with Calvinism in several places which were certainly not only desirable, but were also Scriptural. Let’s be grateful for all truth that is brought to light, but at the same time not get caught up in the erroneous things that are not the Word of God, but the teachings of men.



Lesson Eleven

“A Brief History of Millennialism”

The term “Millennial” comes from the Latin language which has reference to a 1000 years—Mille (thousand) and Annus (year). If you are acquainted with your New Testament, you know that this concept of 1000 years is mentioned in the Revelation Letter (20:1-10). There are two approaches we want to make in the study of this subject in these last three lessons:



- 1) The relation that the 1000 years has to the coming of Christ—whether the 1000 years and its activities are before the 2nd coming of Christ or after the 2nd coming of Christ. The terms that are used general are: Pre-Millennial or Post-Millennial. A third term is often used (A-Millennial) to indicate that there is not literal 1000 years to be dealt with—that the term is figurative or symbolic.
- 2) We also want to look at the nature of the “Millennial” itself—whether it is to be understood literally or symbolically. We want to see briefly what is suppose to take place or happen during the “Millennial.”

We will follow our previous procedures and look at a brief historical sketch of how the “Millennial” has been viewed through the centuries by different groups.

Early teachings on Millennialism (100-1000). From early centuries some form of pre-millennial views were held. At first, they most stressed the earthly rewards and carnal delights of this “period of time!” It probably was a carry-over from the Jewish expectations of an earthly Messiah and an earthly Kingdom to be set up. There is a very brief reference made to the spread of some pre-millennial teachings by the Jewish Ebionites in the 2nd century. In the 4th century on Augustine’s teaching about the millennial replaced the Pre-Millennial views.

Teachings during the Middle Ages (1000-1200). From 1183-1202, a “priest” by the name of Joachim revived some of the Pre-Millennial views. He claimed that he had had the entire book of Revelation miraculously revealed to him so that he could clearly understand it. During the middle of the 1200s, Gherardo, a Franciscan Monk, made an effort to push the ideas of Joachim. These works seem to have greatly influenced the thinking and teaching of Wycliffe, Huss, and the Ana-Baptists (1300-1600).

Teachings during the Reformation Period (1500-1600). The Peasants’ Movement in the early 1500s held to some form of Pre-Millennialism. The two outstanding leaders of this movement were Hans Boenheim and Thomas Munzer. The Ana-Baptists became deeply involved in this thinking and pushed such greatly everywhere they went—going to extravagant forms of millennialism. Bengel and Mede were among the first modern scholars of distinction to advocate it.

Teachings in Post-Reformation Times (1800-1900). It was not until the 19th century that the Pre-Millennial teachings were widely accepted—much less influential. Strong beliefs can be found among the Brethren Movement that arose in England and Ireland in 1830. They were then known as “Plymouth Brethren.” They were also known as “Darbyism” because John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) was the most conspicuous representative among them. Later, in this country, these doctrines were advocated by Brookes and James Inglis and made more popular by their book entitled “Waymarks in the Wilderness—Maranatha.”

It is believed that two additional books that were published help give the doctrine its greatest acceptance among the churches:

1. Jesus is Coming by W. E. Blackstone, 1878.
2. The Schofield Reference Bible by Schofield, 1909 and 1917.

Its acceptance in the present time. The encroachment into denominations was slow until recent years. Those who believed in Pre-Millennialism were mostly connected with small denominational groups of various beliefs. However, in recent times, a revival of belief in these teachings was pushed greatly by magazines, books, tracts, TV programs, etc. The book entitled: The Late Great Planet Earth has had phenomenal sale and acceptance among denominational groups. Some of the better known groups that are pushing the belief in Pre-Millennialism in one form or another are:

1. Seventh-Day Adventists
2. Radio Church of God (Herbert W. Armstrong)
3. Mormons
4. Jehovah Witnesses
5. Holiness and Pentecostal groups.

People in all major denominational groups have begun to accept such teachings over the last 30 years.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

More information could be given in the way of background history of these teachings, but the doctrine has never had much success over the centuries in being widely accepted. It has only been in the last 100 years or so that these teachings have had much of a following. It seems that the less people know of the Scriptures the easier it is to get people to believe the ridiculous or the unusual.

Strong efforts were made by knowledgeable brethren to keep such teachings out of the Lord’s church. A few were caught up in the beliefs but noticeable teachings about them have almost disappeared among us.

Lesson Twelve

“A Study of Pre-Millennialism”

The term “Pre-Millennialism” covers a multitude of views! There are so many variations that it is hard to pin down what all will agree on. Another term is used to identify those who believe in “Pre-Millennialism”—that is “Dispensationalists.” This term comes from the belief that the world would last 6,000 years and be followed by another 1,000 years of rest. A Greek term is also used to identify such people—“Chiliasm.” They believed that the final judgment and a new creation would follow the 1,000 years of rest.

Even though there are wide variations in the beliefs that are referred to by the term “Pre-Millennialism;” yet, there are some basic things that most of them hold in common:

1. The Old Testament prophesied of a coming kingdom.
2. Jesus came to set up that kingdom.
3. But the Jews rejected Him and thus the kingdom was delayed.
4. The church was set up as a substitute until the kingdom could be set up.
5. Jesus is coming back to earth again to set up His kingdom.
6. He will then reign a 1000 years on earth, in Jerusalem, on David’s throne.
7. At the end of the 1000 years, there will be a final judgment.
8. And then, heaven or hell.

Several other things are held to by a large number of these people:

1. There will be a rapture of righteous people from earth, leaving the rest of the wicked to be here under Christ’s reign.
2. The raptured saints, along with the first resurrected saints will reign with Christ on the earth for a 1000 years.
3. There will be a great tribulation for a short period, but there are differences in belief as to when this will be.
4. A Jewish remnant will be converted and go forth to try to convert the world to Christ.
5. Christ will have a literal army of Jewish people to fight carnally against the nations.

Boettner, in his book [The Millennium](#), pp. 142-143, gives a general sequence of views of what he called “Dispensationalism.”

1. The kingdom is not now in the world—it will not be till Christ returns.
2. The Gospel Age is not to convert the world, but to preach the gospel as a witness to the nations.
3. Just before Christ’s return, there will be a period of general apostasy.
4. Christ will probably come in our lifetime (1984).
5. At His coming, the righteous dead of all ages are to be raised (this is the first resurrection).
6. The resurrected dead together with the translated (raptured) living saints are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.
7. Judgment of all the righteous will then take place.
8. Before and during the tribulation period, the Jews are to be restored to Palestine.
9. At the mere sight of their Messiah, the Jews are to turn to Him in a national conversion.

10. At His coming, He will destroy the Anti-Christ and all his forces in the battle of Armageddon.
11. After this battle, Christ will establish a world-wide kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital, in which He and the resurrected and translated saints will rule for a 1000 years in peace.
12. During the Jerusalem reign, the Temple, feasts, fasts, priesthood, and sacrificial systems are to be re-instituted, though performed in a Christian spirit and by Christian worshippers.
13. During this golden age nature's curse is to be removed. The desert will bloom as a rose; and wild beast are to be tamed.
14. During this time, great numbers of the Gentiles will turn to God and be in His kingdom.
15. During the Millennium, Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss.
16. At the close, Satan will be loosed for a short time.
17. The Millennium is to be followed by a short, but violent outbreak of wickedness, headed by Satan, which all but overwhelms the saints and Jerusalem.
18. Forces of wickedness are to be destroyed by fire which is cast down from heaven.
19. The wicked dead of all ages are to be raised in the 2nd resurrection, judged, and with the Devil and the wicked angels, cast into hell.
20. Heaven and Hell are then introduced in their fullness as the future homes eternally.

REASONS FOR REJECTING SUCH TEACHINGS

While the doctrine of Pre-Millennialism may have a few things that are correctly understood from the Scriptures, we believe the vast majority of the doctrine comes from the imagination of men. Following are some reasons why this teaching should be rejected:

1. Because it denies the place of the church in God's eternal purpose as stated in Scripture (Eph. 3:10-11).
2. Because it denies the glory of the cross and the scheme of redemption in Christ (Eph. 1:3-14).
3. Because it denies the spiritual nature of the Lord's kingdom (Luke 17:20-21).
4. Because it denies the wisdom and power of God to be able to carry out His purposes (Col. 2:3).
5. Because it stresses a materialistic hope, rather than a spiritual one (Phil. 3:20-21; 2 Cor. 4:16-18).
6. The theory is over-all insulting to God, to His eternal purposes, to His Son, to His Word, and to His church!
 - a) It has Jesus demoted from His throne of glory to an earthly Jewish throne (that may never happen—If God failed the first time, what proof do we have they He won't fail every time????).
 - b) He is to become a common Ambassador and visit the Middle East nations and try to reconcile them to Israel.
 - c) He will have a literal army for protection and fighting. (Why would He need it if He is God and all-powerful?)
 - d) Since He couldn't save everyone from His present position in Heaven, He has to come down with a "rod of iron" to coerce submission.

- e) He preached the kingdom was at hand before, but was mistaken.
 - f) He failed to set up the kingdom the first time, but will try again during the Millennium.
 - g) Jesus' death on the cross was an accident of human circumstances, rather than a part of God's plan to redeem man.
7. They use very un-orthodox and illogical means of interpreting the prophets and prophetic statements about Israel and the kingdom.
 8. They have all kinds of contradictions to deal with in trying to get all of their events in sequence: 2 resurrections, 2 final judgments, and 2 comings of Jesus.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

A great deal more could be given, but hopefully this will be sufficient to show the unreasonableness of these teachings. One of the most obvious facts about all of this is—there are no plain statements of Scripture that teach these things and they contradict so many plain statement of Scripture:

- a) “The Kingdom is not set up”but...Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9; Acts 2:29-37, etc.
- b) “There are two resurrections”but....John 5:28-29; 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 12:48, etc.
- c) They have assumed the very center of their doctrine—that the 1000 years are literal and not figurative.

In our next lesson, we will spend some time on Post-Millennialism and A-Millennialism.

Lesson Thirteen

***“A Study of
Post-Millennialism and A-Millennialism”***

“A thousand-year-reign” is mentioned in Revelation 20. How is it to be understood in its immediate and over-all context? Is it to be taken literal or figurative? Is it talking about a literal reign or is it symbolic of a concept of lifting people up that have served God? These and many other questions could be asked about this phrase and the real fact of the matter is—there are no “inspired interpreters” of the Word of God—especially of Apocalyptic language! One thing for sure, we must not try to understand sometime in this kind of a book that would contradict plain passages of Scripture elsewhere in the Word of God. It is because of this concept that there have been attempts made to have a different approach to this expression of a 1000 year reign. Two other basic views will be looked at briefly and then some additional evaluations afterwards.

POST-MILLENNIALISM

The term “Post” indicates that whatever the 1000 year reign has reference to, that it will occur before the 2nd and final coming of Jesus to judge mankind. In its older form, it was thought that Jesus would reign through His church for a 1000 years before He returned for His people. The church was the kingdom of God in which Jesus and His saints reigned in some spiritual sense.

Some have advocated that that special period has already past. Others believe that it is yet to come before the end of time on earth. That there is going to be a blessed state in which many would be won to the kingdom of God. While a third group suggests that we are actually living in that time right now. Most hold that this period of time will be a Golden Age of the church with great power and spiritual strength over evil. This will be followed by a brief apostasy and a terrible conflict between the forces of good and evil which will end at Jesus’ return.

In recent times, the humanistic philosophy and evolutionary principle has advocated that the world is in the process of constantly getting better and will continue until just before the Lord returns.

A-MILLENNIALISM

The idea in this term is to indicate that they do not believe that the expression in Revelation has any reference to a literal reigning or a literal 1000 years. That it is symbolic of something else that has to do with a means of exalting those saints that have given their lives to be faithful to Jesus. They point out that there is no place in the Bible where it teaches a millennium will follow the Lord’s return, but neither can it be found where it teaches such improvement in the world, nor a conversion of the world, before the Lord’s returns. In fact, the very opposite is plainly stated! That the end of the age will be marked by increasing lawlessness and godliness (2 Tim. 3:1-7; Luke 18:8, etc.).

