

# **False Doctrines In The Churches Today**

The following are some of the major false doctrines that are a particular danger to Bible-believing churches in our day and a concise biblical refutation of them.

## **Some Bible Facts About False Teachers**

1. Jesus warned about false teachers (Matt. 7:15-17).
2. Paul warned about false teachers (Acts 20:29-30; 2 Tim. 3:13; II Tim. 4:3-4).
3. Peter warned about false teachers and said that many will follow them (2 Pet. 2:1-2).
4. John warned about false teachers (1 John 2:18-20).
5. Jude warned about false teachers (Jude 3-4).

## **Some Facts About Doctrine**

1. The Bible is given for doctrine (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
2. We are to continue in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42).
3. Preachers are to give themselves to doctrine (1 Tim. 4:13).
4. No false doctrine is to be allowed (1 Tim. 1:3).
5. Our doctrine is to be uncorrupt (Titus 2:10).
6. We are to separate from false doctrine (Rom. 16:17)

## **Some Of The False Doctrines That Churches Must Confront Today**

### **1. The false teaching that salvation is by grace plus works (Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Church of Christ, Roman Catholic Church)**

Bible Answer:

- a. The Bible says salvation is by grace without works and that works follows after salvation (Rom. 4:1-6; Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 3:4-8).
- b. The Bible says that grace and works cannot be mixed together (Rom. 11:6).
- c. Grace means a free gift. Salvation is called a gift 16 times in the New Testament. If salvation requires some works, then it is not a true gift. The gift of God is free for the sinner because Jesus Christ purchased it at great price with His blood and death on the cross.

### **2. The false teaching that Jesus is not God - (Jehovah's Witnesses)**

Bible Answer:

- a. The Bible plainly says that Jesus is God
- (1) Isaiah called Jesus God (Is. 7:14; 9:6).
  - (2) Matthew called Jesus God (Matt. 1:23).
  - (3) Jesus called Himself God (Jn. 5:17-18; 8:58-59; 10:30-33; Rev. 1:8).
  - (4) John called Jesus God (Jn. 1:1; 1 John 3:16; 5:20).
  - (5) Thomas called Jesus God (Jn. 20:28).
  - (6) Paul called Jesus God (Acts 20:28; Phil. 2:5-6; 1 Tim. 3:16; Titus 2:13).
  - (7) God the Father called Jesus God (Heb. 1:8-10).

b. In His incarnation the Lord Jesus Christ "made himself of no reputation" and became a lowly servant to God and man (Phil. 2:7). The Greek word for "made himself of no reputation" is "kenoo," meaning "to empty, to abase, to make of none effect" (Strong). Jesus did not cease to be God. Phil. 2:6 plainly states that He is God, but the Son of God willingly laid aside His glory for the purpose of redeeming man by the cross.

c. There is an order to the Trinity. God the Son submits to God the Father, even though they are equal.

### **3. The false teaching that God is not a Trinity (Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentacostal Oneness, Unitarians)**

Bible Answer:

a. The term "trinity" is not in the Bible, but the doctrine is (Mt. 28:19; Jn. 14:16,26; 16:7-15; 2 Co. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Jn. 5:7).

b. The O.T. teaches that God is one in a plurality. Though the Old Testament does not fully reveal the doctrine of the Trinity, it does teach us that God is a plurality. It is left for the New Testament to open up this revelation fully.

Genesis 1:1. The Hebrew word for God here is elohim. This is a plural noun, but the verb is singular, teaching that there is one God in a plurality.

Genesis 11:6-7. Here again God is spoken of in the plural and in the singular at the same time.

Deuteronomy 6:4. This verse could be translated, "Jehovah our elohim is a united Jehovah." The word "one" refers to a unity. The same word for one is used in Gen. 2:24, speaking of the oneness of a husband and wife. This verse summarizes the Bible's teaching about God. He is one but exists in three Persons.

Psalms 45:6-7. According to Heb. 1:8-9, God the Father is speaking in Psalm 45, and He is referring to the Son as God. Sometimes people ask, "If Jesus Himself was God, why did He address the Father as God?" The answer is that Jesus addressed the Father as God for the same reason that the Father addressed the Son as God-because they are both God!

### **4. The false teaching that baptism is necessary for salvation (Church of Christ aka Campbellites)**

Bible Answer:

a. Paul taught that baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4). It is the blood and death of Christ that takes away our sins, not water or religious rituals.

b. Paul says that baptism is not the gospel (1 Cor. 1:17). The gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for our sins (1 Cor. 15:1-4).  
Baptism only symbolizes the gospel.

c. The book of Acts teaches us that baptism follows salvation (Acts 8:36-38; 16:30-33; 18:8).

d. Acts 2:38 does not teach that baptism is a part of salvation, because Peter later taught that baptism is a symbol (1 Pet. 3:21). Acts 2:38 teaches that we are baptized because we have been forgiven of our sins not in order to be forgiven.

## **5. The false teaching that infants should be baptized (Roman Catholic, Anglicans, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, Methodist)**

Bible Answer:

a. Baptism is only for those who believe (Mk. 16:15; Acts 8:36-38). When a child is old enough to believe on Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, then he can be baptized. But an infant cannot do this.

b. No infants were baptized in the New Testament.

Some say that there must have been infants baptized in the case of Cornelius since his kinsmen and friends were present (Acts 10:24, 47). Contrariwise, Acts 11:17 says that those who were saved and baptized with Cornelius were those "who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ." Obviously these were not infants.

What about the case of Lydia and her household (Acts 16:14-15). Nothing is said about infants in this passage, and it is highly unlikely that this busy merchant woman would have had babies. There is no evidence here whatsoever for the practice of infant baptism.

What about the Philippian jailer and his household (Acts 16:30-34). This passage clearly says that Paul spoke the Word of God to the entire household (v. 32) and that the entire household "believed" (vv. 32-33). This could not be said of infants.

What about the household of Crispus (Acts 18:8)? Those who were saved and baptized in this family were all believers, for we are told, "Crispus ... believed on the Lord with all his house..." Obviously they were not infants.

What about the household of Stephanas (1 Cor. 1:16)? Again nothing is actually said about infants being present or baptized. In 1 Cor. 16:15 we are told that this household addicted themselves to the ministry. This could not be said of infants.

## **6. The false teachings of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement (Assemblies of God, Word Of Faith, Rhema Logos Theology etc.)**

### **6a. The false doctrine that tongues speaking is for today**

Bible Answer:

a. The Bible says tongues were a real language (Acts 2:3-11).

b. The Bible says tongues were a sign to the unbelieving Jews (1 Cor. 14:21-22). After Israel rejected God's sign of tongues and Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. and the Jews were scattered to the ends of the earth, the need for tongues as a sign was finished.

c. Biblical tongues had to be used according to the teaching of the apostles, yet the Pentecostals and Charismatics do not submit to these restrictions:

(1) Women are not allowed to speak in tongues (1 Cor. 14:34)

(2) Tongues were to be spoken only by course (1 Cor. 14:27)

(3) Tongues must be interpreted (1 Cor. 14:27)

(4) There is to be no confusion (1 Cor. 14:33)

(5) Everything is to be decent (1 Cor. 14:40)

(6) Everything is to be orderly (1 Cor. 14:40)

d. Tongues were not spoken by every believer even in the days of the apostles (1 Cor. 12:28-30).

e. Biblical tongues were not sought after but were sovereignly given by God (1 Cor. 12:11).

f. There is no instruction in the Bible about HOW to speak in tongues. Those who believe in tongues

speaking today claim that they can teach people who to do it.

g. The Bible says tongues speaking, prophesying, and words of knowing will pass away (1 Cor. 13:8). When the New Testament was completed, there was no further need for these particular gifts.

### **6b. The false doctrine that healing is promised in the atonement**

Bible Answer:

a. The Bible says that not all sicknesses are healed (2 Cor. 12:9-10; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20).

b. The Bible says that the physical part of our salvation is for the future (Rom. 8:17-25).

c. Peter says that Isaiah 53:5 refers to spiritual healing of the soul (1 Pet. 2:24-25).

### **6c. The false doctrine that miracles should be sought**

Bible Answer:

a. Jesus warned that it is not good to seek miracles (Mat. 12:39).

b. The miracles performed by the apostles were special (2 Cor. 12:12). Not every Christian could perform miracles.

c. Faith does not come from miracles but from God's Word (Rom. 10:17). Multitudes witnessed Jesus' great miracles, but most did not believe.

### **6d. The false doctrine that the Holy Spirit baptism follows salvation**

Bible Answer:

a. Jesus promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5) and this was fulfilled in Acts 2 for the Jews and in Acts 10:44-47 for the Gentiles.

b. Since then, every believer receives the Holy Spirit when he believes (Eph. 1:12-14).

c. The book of Acts is a transitional book. Not everything that happened then is the pattern for the rest of the church age.

d. In the epistles, the reception of the Holy Spirit is always mentioned in the past tense (Rom. 8:9-10; 1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13).

### **6e. The false doctrine that we should exalt and pray to the Holy Spirit**

Bible Answer:

a. The Lord Jesus Christ foretold what role the Holy Spirit would have in the church age (John 16:13-15). In this passage we learn that the Holy Spirit does not exalt Himself and the Holy Spirit does not draw attention to Himself.

b. There is no example in the N.T. of praying to the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ taught us to pray to the Father, not to the Holy Spirit (Matt. 6:6,9; Jn. 16:23). The Apostle Paul taught us to pray to God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:8; 7:25).

c. There is no example in the New Testament of inviting the Holy Spirit to work. Neither Jesus nor the apostles did that.

#### **6f. The false doctrine that we should not test those who claim to represent the Holy Spirit... with the Bible**

Bible Answer:

- a. The Bible warns that there are false spirits and that the devil tries to deceive (2 Cor. 11:4; I Jn. 4:1). Therefore we must test everything carefully or we will be deceived.
- b. The Bible commands us to prove all things (1 Thess. 5:21).
- c. The Bible commended the Bereans because they tested everything by the Scriptures (Acts 17:11)

#### **6g. The false doctrine that the believer can be rid of his sin nature**

Bible Answer:

- a. Paul taught that the believer still has the struggle with sin (Rom. 7:14-21; Gal. 5:16-17).
- b. John teaches that the believer still has sin (1 John 1:8, 10).

#### **6h. The false doctrine that victory in the Christian life comes through unusual baptisms and experiences**

Bible Answer:

- a. The Bible does not exhort us to make spiritual leaps through unusual experiences. Rather, it exhorts us to GROW in Christ (1 Pet. 2:1-2; 2 Pet. 3:18).
- b. The apostles wrote many epistles instructing the believers about how to deal with sin an spiritual problems, but they never instructed the believers to seek a second baptism or other such special experiences.

#### **6i. The false doctrine that visions and 'new' prophecies and 'new revelations' are for today.**

Bible Answer:

- a. The Bible says the faith was completed in the days of the apostles (Jude 3).
- b. The Bible says that the Scriptures are sufficient (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- c. The Bible says that Scripture is more sure than visions (2 Pet. 1:16-21).
- d. The Bible says that prophecies will pass away (1 Cor. 13:8).

#### **7. The false teaching that death is a sleep and not a journey (Seventh-day Adventists)**

Bible Answer:

- a. The Old Testament plainly says that death is a journey (Gen. 25:8; 35:18; Nu. 27:13; 2 Sa. 12:23; 1 Ki. 17:21-22).
- b. The New Testament plainly says that death is a journey:

(1) Jesus said death is a journey (Lk. 16:19-23; 23:42-43). That Luke 16:19-31 is not a parable is evident by the fact that Jesus named the names of Abraham and Lazarus. He never named names

when He was giving parables. Further, even if it were a parable, it would still teach literal truth.

(2) Paul said death is a journey (2 Cor. 5:6-7; Phil. 1:23; 2 Tim. 4:6).

(3) Peter said death is a journey (2 Pet. 1:13-15).

(4) The fact that the dead saints return with Christ from heaven at the time of the rapture shows that dead saints go to Heaven at death (1 Th. 4:14).

(5) John's heavenly visions show that dead saints are conscience in heaven prior to the resurrection and during the Great Tribulation on earth (Re. 6:9-11).

(6) Moses' and Elijah's appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration proves that the dead have conscious existence between death and resurrection. Moses and Elijah, though dead, were allowed by God to appear in time on that mountain and to converse about events which were soon to take place in Jerusalem (Mt. 17:1-3; Lk. 9:30-31).

c. The Bible sometimes speaks of death as a "sleep," but it is the body that sleeps not the spirit (Jam. 2:26).

d. Ecclesiastes sometimes speaks of death as nothingness (i.e., Ecc. 9:5), but this is because Ecclesiastes is written from the perspective of the man "under the sun" (Ecc. 1:3, 9, 14, etc), the perspective of man looking at life the way it appears apart from divine revelation. To the natural man who does not have the revelation of the Scriptures, death appears to be the end of things. But other portions of the Bible tell us that this is not the case. Even the book of Ecclesiastes itself, in its conclusion, says that death is a journey (Ecc. 12:7).

e. The Old Testament speaks of the "spirit" as the breath once or twice, but usually the "spirit" of man is that non-material part which is separate from the body and which lives on after death (1 Thess. 5:23). False teachers make the mistake of refusing to allow the context to define Bible words and instead they put their own preferred definition on the word and force that definition into every context.

## **8. The false teaching that Hell is not eternal torment (Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists)**

Bible Answer:

a. The doctrine of death and hell were not fully revealed in the Old Testament; these were brought to light with the coming of Christ (2 Tim. 1:10).

b. The New Testament plainly teaches that hell and the lake of fire are places of eternal torment:

(1) Jesus said hell is a place where the worm does not die (Mark 9:43-44).

(2) Jesus said the rich man was in torment in hell (Lk. 16:24). This is not a parable, because Jesus named the names of Lazarus and Abraham.

(3) Revelation says those who receive the mark of the antichrist will be tormented forever (Rev. 14:10).

(4) Revelation says Satan, the Antichrist, and false prophet will be tormented forever (Rev. 20:10).

(5) Revelation says all the unsaved will be cast into the same lake of fire (Rev. 20:15), and since the antichrist and false prophet are not burned up but are tormented forever in the lake of fire, it is obvious that other sinners cast there will have the same experience.

c. The Bible says the punishment of the unsaved will be worse than violent death (Mk. 9:42). This proves the punishment is not annihilation, but is eternal torment. 3. Jesus said it would have been better if Judas had never been born (Mt. 26:24). Jesus' words make no sense if Judas was only going to be annihilated.

**9. The false teaching that Saturday Sabbath worship is for the New Testament Church today.  
(Seventh-day Adventists)**

Bible Answer:

a. The sabbath, though mentioned in Gen. 2:2-3, was not delivered to man until it was given to Israel in the wilderness (Neh. 9:13-14).

b. The sabbath was given, not to mankind in general, but to Israel alone as a special covenant sign between her and God (Ex. 31:13,17).

c. Jesus kept the sabbath because He was born under the law to fulfill the demands of the law (Gal. 4:4-5).

d. The apostles and early churches met on Sunday.

(1) On the first day Jesus rose from the dead and first appeared to His disciples (Mk. 16:9). The sabbath is associated with the old creation; the first day is associated with the new creation.

(2) On the first day Jesus met with the disciples at different places and repeatedly...

(Mk. 16:9-11; Mt. 28:8-10; Lk. 24:34; Mk. 16:12-13; Jn. 20:19-23).

(3) On the first day Jesus ascended to Heaven, was seated at the right hand of the Father and was made Head of all (Jn. 20:17; Eph. 1:20).

(4) On the first day the Holy Spirit descended (Acts 2:1). Pentecost was on the 50th day after the sabbath following the wave offering (Lev. 23:15,16). Thus Pentecost was always on a Sunday.

(5) The Christians met to worship on the first day (Acts 20:6,7; 1 Cor. 16:2).

e. The New Testament plainly teaches that the Christian is not bound to the sabbath law (Col. 2:16-17).

**10. The false teaching that the Prophecies of Matthew 24 and Revelation 6-22 are not for the future but are being fulfilled today  
(Roman Catholic, most Protestant denominations such as Presbyterian and Lutheran, etc.)**

Bible Answer:

a. The timing of the events of Matthew 24 are plainly given:

(1) Jesus said that the prophecy of Matthew 24 pertains to the end of the age and to the time of His return (Matt. 24:3-4). This includes the rule of the antichrist (v. 15) and the Great Tribulation (v. 21).

(2) Jesus said the events of Matthew 24 will occur just prior to His return (Matt. 24:29-30).

b. Paul also taught that the antichrist is a real man who will rule the world just prior to Christ's return (2 Thess. 2:2-9).

c. The judgments of Revelation are the wrath of God (Rev. 6:16; 15:1), whereas Paul said the church-age believers are not appointed to wrath

(1 Thess. 5:9-10).

**11. The false teaching that God is finished with the nation Israel; that the church has replaced Israel  
(Roman Catholic, most Protestant denominations such as Presbyterian and Lutheran, etc.)**

Bible Answer:

a. God's covenants with Israel are eternal (Jer. 31:31-37).

b. Paul said that Israel has been set aside temporarily, and that God will fulfill His promises to Israel after He completes His plan for the church (Rom. 11:25-29).

## **12. The false teaching that the believer can only eat certain things (Seventh-day Adventist)**

Bible Answer:

a. Dietary laws in the New Testament are a mark of false teachers (1 Tim. 4:1-5).

b. The New Testament believer has liberty in such things (Rom. 14:1-4; Col. 2:16).

## **13. The false teaching that there should only be one church in each village and city**

Bible Answer:

a. This idea has no support in the Bible. There is no such commandment in the New Testament.

b. This idea is contrary to Christ's Great Commission. Jesus commanded all believers to preach the gospel and baptize every nation and individual (Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15). This commandment was not given just to one church in each area. Believers do not have to ask other churches for permission to preach the gospel and baptize and establish churches. We have authority from Jesus Christ.

c. If this idea is true, how can it be accomplished? Such a principle would mean that one church would be able to forbid other churches to preach, but Jesus said we are not to forbid others (Lk. 9:49-50).

d. If there is only one church in each city, what church would it be? Who will have control to say which church it should be? This is what the Roman Catholic Church claims for itself and what the cults such as the Jehovah's Witnesses claim for themselves.

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