

EMBASSY

COLLEGE



TEXTBOOK (ACADEMIC VERSION)

Gate Breakers I

COURSE: HISTORICAL CHRISTIANITY AND
OTHER WORLD VIEWS (OT504)

Dr. Stanley F. Fleming



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Gate Breakers: Book One:

***Answering Cults with Prayer, Love, and
Witnessing***

Dr. Stanley F. Fleming



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DEDICATION

Dedicated to Tad:

The one bold enough

To share with me

That Jesus is the Light of the world

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book is part one of two *Gate Breaker* books by the author specifically created for courses in Christian Life School of Theology (CLST).

This book, part one, deals primarily with the topic of cults and is used in conjunction with course BT602: Historical Christianity and Other World Views. Part Two deals primarily with the topic of world religions and the occult and is used in conjunction with course HT640: A Study of Faiths and Religions.

The full version of *Gate Breakers: answering cults and world religions with prayer, love and witnessing*, along with study guides, answer keys, and group discussion questions is available from Selah Publishing Group; call (800) 917-BOOK; Amazon.com; or by ordering it at your local Christian bookstore. Other books by the author are *Islam and New Global Realities: the Roots of Islamic Fundamentalism* and *Servants of the Third Watch* (Selah Publishing).

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FOREWORD

We are living in an age of spiritual confusion. The market place of religion offers up a smorgasbord of “false christs” and “false gospels,” each with their own truth claims. The spiritual anemia of this present generation has left it vulnerable to the spiritual counterfeits being offered by various gurus and pseudo prophets of religion.

This book provides a valuable tool in helping to equip Christians to respond to the onslaught of the Cults and Religions influencing our society today. Jude 3 commands us to “contend for the faith.” This is Apologetics, a reasoned defense of one’s beliefs or convictions. Our English word comes from the Greek *apologia*, which is found in 1 Peter 3:15 “. . . be ready to give a defense (or an answer) to everyone who asks.”

The Cults and Religions in this book have claimed to be spokesmen for God. They are not. In fact, they assail some of the foundational doctrines of Christianity for which we are commanded to “give an answer” or in effect practice apologetics. We must answer the challenge of the Cults and World Religions according to the guidelines God has given us in His Word, the Bible.

The reader of this book will not only find the history and doctrine of the Cults and Religions laid out, but a Biblical and reasoned response to them. In our pluralistic, post-Christian society, the Cults and Religions of the World have literally become the “Mission field at our doorstep.” In this volume we have practical and Biblical steps for both defending Christianity and reaching out to those ensnared in the tangled web of false teachings and practice.

Evangelism is the heartbeat of God. It is not enough to know about the Cults and Religions. We must pray that as we study this book, God would give each of us a heart of love and compassion for those lost in the false religions of today. The Gospel is truly “Good News.” My prayer for you as you read this excellent work is Romans 1:16 that you will “never be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.”

Dr. Ron Carlson
President, Christian Ministries International

INTRODUCTION

Samson arose at midnight and ripped off the gates of the city. The Philistines were plotting to kill him in the morning, but he anticipated their plan and overthrew it (Judges 16:1-3). Samson had been given anointed strength from God to fight against those who worshiped pagan deities. We read about his failures as well as his victories in a morally and spiritually depraved society. His strength and cunning inspire us. He truly became a champion of the people and of God.

In some ways, this sounds like modern day America and other societies. Moral failure and paganism are on the rise. Yet, the Lord is calling for those who will champion the cause of Christianity in a world that has forgotten God and turned to idolatry.

In the days of ancient Israel, there were those who would worship Baal, Asherah, Nisroch, Dagon, and others. They would perform sexual rituals to the god and goddess of fertility. Then they would sacrifice their children to Molech. Others would pay homage to the Queen of heaven or get counsel from the sun, moon, and stars. It was not hard to find a fortune teller, spiritist, witch, or sorcerer. Shrines for demonic angels, wooden images of false gods, and occult symbolism were common elements in society. People would cut themselves, wear magic charms, and show off strange tattoos. There were obscene images of goddesses and altars with prostitutes. Even some professing God would embrace paganism and create a religion mixed with truth and lies. They would manipulate God's Word by adding books that gave them permission to pray for the dead and worship angels.

Today, we often think that all of these activities are things of the past. However, the rise of interest in new age angels, spiritist psychics, UFOs, and the occult are leading people into strange types of worship once again. The modern secular climate of America has made room for witches to worship the Great Mother Goddess and Satanists to exalt their master. The altar of prostitution is not hard to find, and we could easily include the sacrifice of children on the altar of "pleasure at any price." Within the cults, there are false christs, prophets, and teachers perverting the gospel of Jesus Christ and leading millions astray. Science fiction gurus teach followers bizarre myths that altar rational thinking. Secret societies worship pagan

idols and conspire to dominate the world. False religions try to hold on to their captives, but Christianity is storming the gates of hell.

Indeed, Jesus Christ is on the throne! He is already victorious! He told us that the enemy gates would give way. The hour has come for champions to arise in the anointing and power of God and war on behalf of those who are in the bondages of cults and false teachings. This book focuses on the need of the Church to arise with prayer, love, and witness in this midnight hour and take the city by surprise.

WHAT IS A *GATE BREAKER*?

The Lord Jesus said,

*“I will build my church and the gates of Hades
shall not prevail against it.”*

(Matthew 16:18)

Gate Breakers is an apologetic study to equip Christians regarding cults and world religions. A *Gate Breaker* is one who stands against the gates of deceptive bondage and helps win those caught up in cults and world religions through prayer, love, and witness.

The three cardinal rules of one who wants to be a Gate Breaker are:

PRAYER The key to mobilizing evangelism today is prayer. A Gate Breaker needs to develop an attitude of prayer for those in the bondage of cults and false world religions. Prayer can be individual, corporate, silent, or verbal. It can be prayer of spiritual warfare, intercession, or supplication. It can be a spontaneous prayer while driving by a Mormon temple, Kingdom Hall, etc. or a strategic prayer in a group setting. Let's believe God for breaking down the gates that hold these people in captivity.

LOVE The key to winning the right to evangelize today is love. A Gate Breaker needs to develop a heart of love for those in the bondage of cults and false world religions. Christ died for these people. The followers of Christ should show Christ's love and compassion. Acts of kindness and words of Agape love may cause hard, resistant hearts to soften for the gospel seed.

WITNESS The key to setting the captives free is witness. A Gate Breaker needs to develop his or her ability to share the Gospel with those in the bondage of cults and world religions. A Christian can plant the message of the Gospel, water what others have sown, or even reap a harvest of souls

for the Kingdom of God. The purpose of this book is to equip Christians so that they can be more effective in their witness to those caught in cults and world religions. *Appendix A* has a format for leading someone to the Lord.

Christians need to be equipped to share their faith. Wouldn't it be amazing if Christians stopped fearing the cults and slamming the door on them, and started sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ instead? *Wouldn't it be amazing if Christians became so equipped that the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses had to stop sending people door-to-door because they were getting converted to Christianity?* Christians should have nothing to fear. We have the truth of God's impenetrable Word and the power of God's omnipotent Spirit to help us.

CHAPTER ONE:

CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

“Christianity is unique among the religions of the world. And the reason for its uniqueness lies in the historical figure who stands at its center - Jesus Christ.”¹

I. WHAT IMPORTANT QUESTION MUST BE ANSWERED TODAY?

A. **The chameleon image factor.** Chameleons are really amazing little creatures. They show the wondrous imagination of an awesome Creator. As a child, I lived in Phoenix for a couple of years and had one of these strange lizards. It would change color to match its surroundings. If I put it on the grass, it turned green. While on the sidewalk, it was a milky sort of color. It was brown on brown and yellow on yellow. It did not turn every color, but it did turn many.

For years I have been studying the cults and world religions and have discovered an amazing thing: they treat Jesus like a chameleon, blending His identity with their perverted doctrinal background. He becomes what they want Him to be, and in the process, He loses His Biblical identity.

Today, we look for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and many believe it will be soon. But who is this Jesus that will return? People view Him in different ways. This raises the most important question of our day — the same one Jesus asked nearly 2,000 years ago. He asked, *“Who do you say that I am?”* (Matthew 16:15). Simon Peter answered that question by stating, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God”* (Matthew 16:16).

B. **Who do you say that Jesus is?** As you read through this chapter, take time to examine your own understanding of Jesus. If you have not yet made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, this chapter will give you a better understanding of what the Bible says about Jesus. If you are a new Christian or one who came from a cult or non Christian religion, this chapter will help you

understand who the Bible says Jesus is as compared to the “Jesus” of the cults and religions.

It is vitally important that you have a “personal relationship” with Jesus Christ and not just a religious view. There are many that will try to sell you a religious view of Jesus that is actually a chameleon image of the truth. The Jesus of the cults and the world religions is not the Jesus revealed in the Bible. They follow “*another Jesus*” (2 Corinthians 11:4) rather than the true One. Their concept of Jesus does not come from the Heavenly Father, but from “*the father of lies*” (John 8:44).

II. WHAT PROCLAMATION DID JESUS MAKE ABOUT HIS CHURCH?

- A. **I will build My Church.** When Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was, Peter boldly answered the question and said, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.*” To this Jesus responded, “*Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven*” (Matthew 16:17-19).
- B. **The revelation.** The message that Peter received from the Heavenly Father, about the identity of Jesus, was not to be taken lightly. Jesus wanted them all to understand the significance. So he proclaimed that it was upon this very truth - of who He is - that the New Testament church would be built. Furthermore, the process of the revelation was vital because the Heavenly Father would reveal it in the heart of the believer. Jesus would build His church upon the truth of *who* He is as revealed by His Heavenly Father, and it would be confirmed in the heart of the believer. He goes on to proclaim that the gates of Hades would not be able to withstand the church and that His disciples would be given the “keys” that open the gates of Heaven.
- C. **The gates of Hades.** Ever since the days of Jesus, the church has continued to storm the gates of Hades and rescue people who were

on their way to an eternity without God. The word *Hades* comes from the Greek and means “the unseen place or the place of the dead.” While we recognize that there is a literal place of the dead to which people pass after this life, we should remember that many in this world are trapped in a literal place of unbelief, confusion, and darkness. They are dead because they don’t know Christ and are on their way to an eternity without hope or love. It is for them that Christ died. The gates that hold them can be broken open.

Jesus informed us that the power of Satan will not prevail against His church. An insight on this verse comes from the famous commentator Adam Clarke who says, “In ancient times the gates of fortified cities were used to hold councils in, and were usually places of great strength. Our Lord’s expression means that neither the plots, stratagems, nor strength of Satan and his angels should ever so far prevail as to destroy the sacred truths in [Peter’s] confession.”²

- D. **The growth of the Church.** Today, Christianity is storming the gates of Hades all over the world. Christian evangelicals and Pentecostals are spreading like wildfire in the third world countries and are thought by some to be “the fastest-growing major religious grouping in the world.”³ Although, it is not always easy to measure growth, Dr. David Barrett, of the World Evangelization Research Center, conservatively estimates a growth of 66,000 converts daily. This means 24 million converts annually and of these about 9 million are Pentecostal / Charismatic.⁴

There is not only growth in Christianity today, but a greater unity among believers. Movements of the last decade like Promise Keepers, the March for Jesus, the A.D. 2000 Movement, the Pastor’s Prayer Summit, and Every Home for Christ had a tremendous impact that united Christians towards trying to complete the task of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

III. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE END-TIME STRATEGIES OF THE ENEMY?

- A. **Lawlessness and a loss of love.** Even though the church is rescuing people from the devil’s domain, the battle wages strong. All around the world we see acts of violence happening. As a result, people are growing cold towards God even as Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24:12.

- B. **Spiritual degeneration.** Many are involved in things that take them away from God and the truth of His Word. 2 Timothy 3:1-7 gives an entire list of the types of behavior we are seeing today. People are more self-oriented. Children are disobedient to parents. Men are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.
- C. **False teaching and deception.** In 1 Timothy 4:1-6, Paul exhorts Timothy to instruct the brethren about the specific types of deception because of what will happen in the latter times. Paul says,

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits, and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth . . . If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ.”

He tells Timothy that there will be deceiving spirits, doctrines of demons, lies in hypocrisy, seared consciences, and dictatorial control over people getting married and what they eat. It will cause some to depart from Christianity. Today, more than ever, Christians need to learn what the Bible teaches and how it differs from the false doctrines that are leading people astray.

We desperately need teachers who will instruct “*the brethren in these things*” because the number one target of cults are untrained Christians. Although they believe in God and the supernatural, they often do not have enough knowledge about the Bible or the deceptive doctrines of the cults in order to withstand them. They buy into the cult view of Jesus that is actually a chameleon image of the truth.

IV. WHAT ARE CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS AND POLEMICS?

- A. The word “apologetic” comes from *apologia* which means “an argument in support or justification.” Apologetics is basically the branch of theology that defends and gives proofs for Christianity. In