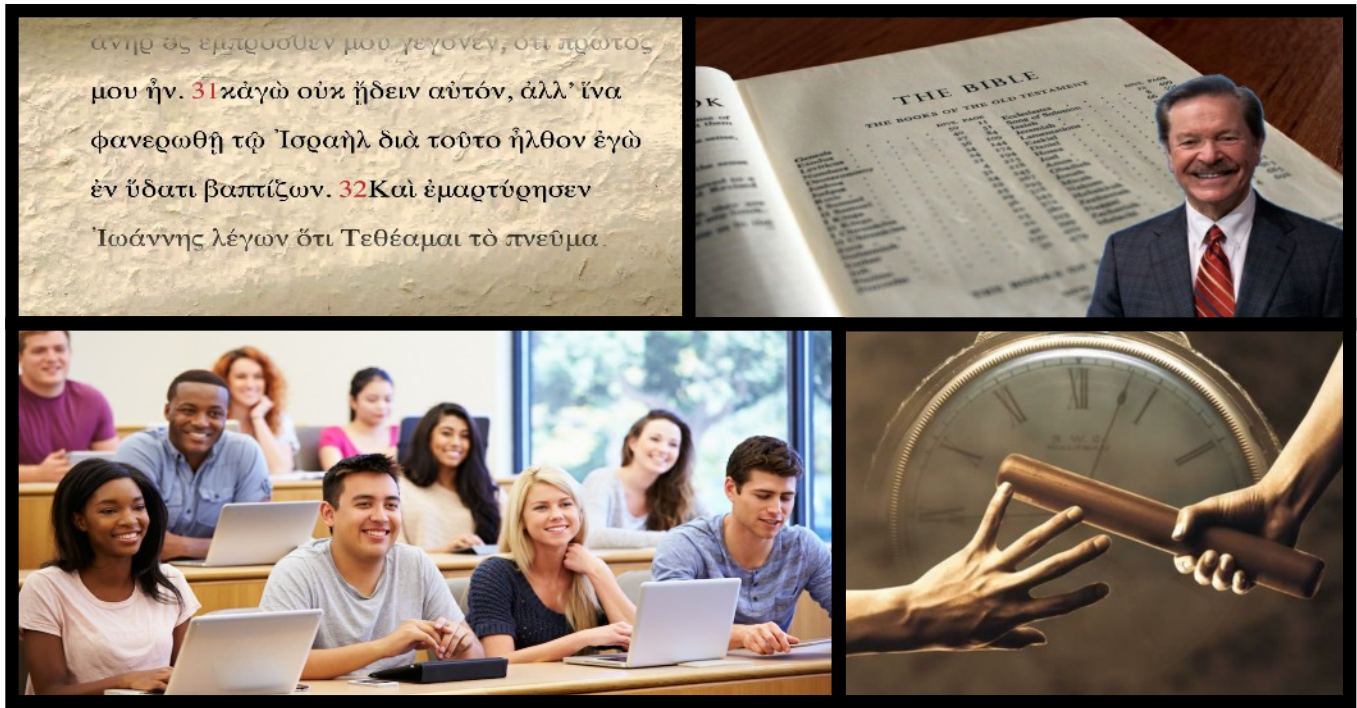


EMBASSY COLLEGE



SYLLABUS AND STUDY GUIDE

Historical Christianity & Other World-Views

HT504

Dr. Stanley Fleming

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FOREWORD

Greetings to those of you who will be taking this course! It is wonderful to see Christianity growing at an amazing rate today. We see the gospel message beginning to have an impact in parts of the world that appeared unreachable just a few years ago. Reports from third world countries about miraculous conversions and power encounters are almost becoming daily news in the Christian media. It was to be expected because Jesus told us that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached in all the world as a witness to the nations before the end would come (Matthew 24:14). God's desire is for all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). Therefore, the gospel message is going forth into all the world.

However, there are other messages going forth in the world as well. Jesus warned us that there would be "many" false christs and false prophets in the last days. Today, there are winds of doctrine constantly blowing against Christianity. People, unwittingly, get drawn into the net of new age psychics on telephone hotlines, spiritists acting as mediums to contact the dead, bizarre UFO interest groups, and science fiction cults. Now add to these a host of theological cultures that deviate significantly from the basic tenants of historic Christianity, and we see that the messages get more subtle and people get more confused.

Youth and adults often have hidden questions about cults that are not adequately answered. What makes a group a cult? Who decides that it is a cult? Do the people in the cult know they are in a cult? How should we act around them? These and many other questions arise in our hearts as we grow in the Lord and realize that not everyone sees things the way we do. Unfortunately, these questions are often left unanswered because of a tendency in Christianity to ignore the subject. Also, there is a feeling of inadequacy about how to effectively deal with it. This course was created to help Christians have adequate answers to their questions.

It is my hope that as you take this course you will gain a heart of compassion for those who are lost and without hope in the cults. John 3:16 teaches us that God loved the whole world and gave His Son for everyone. He wants to see those imprisoned in the cults set free. As you take this course, prayerfully ask the Lord to give you a greater compassion for the people in these groups that we will be studying.

Warmest Christian Regards!

Dr. Stan Fleming

Historic Christianity and Other World Views

Instructor: Dr. Stan Fleming

Course Information

I. Course Description

This course provides an overview of various theological cults and occult groups that are at odds with the essential doctrines of historic Christianity. It helps give the student a solid foundation for understanding the basic tenets of Christianity, the authenticity of the Bible, and differing theological cultures that have strayed from those truths.

II. Course Objectives

- * To understand the essential doctrines of historic Christianity
- * To become more confident in the authority and authenticity of the Bible
- * To learn the definition of cult
- * To gain knowledge of the confusing doctrines, evangelistic strategies, and lifestyle of various cults
- * To learn to witness, show Christian love, and pray for those caught up in the cults.
- * To learn to do spiritual battle in prayer with demonic forces that hold these people in darkness and confusion

III. Course Methods

- * Teaching
- * Textbook: Fleming, Stanley. *Gate Breakers: Book One*. Columbus: TEC Publications, 2003.
- * Videos
- * Discussion
- * Prayer
- * Examination

IV. Course Grading System

- * Final Examination

Chapter 1

The Foundation of Christian Doctrine

“My wife and I have probably called on thousands of homes between the two of us. Not once did we encounter anyone who shared their testimony or their faith in Christ with us. Lots of people would say something like, ‘Oh, you’re that group that doesn’t believe in hell’ or, ‘You don’t believe in the Trinity.’ Most people spoke to us in negative terms, telling us our beliefs were wrong but never bothering to tell us what was right. Nobody ever said anything about the love of Jesus Christ. No one ever tried to witness to us at the door.”¹

—Chuck Love, a former Jehovah’s Witness

I. WHY STUDY THE CULTS AND OTHER RELIGIONS?

A. The Lord Jesus warned us:

1. Matthew 24:4-5

2. Matthew 24:24

B. The Apostle Paul told the Galatians:

1. Galatians 1:7 “there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.”

a) Pervert—(dict.) means “to lead astray” or “to divert to a wrong purpose”; to corrupt.

b) What is the simple Gospel? 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

(1)

(2)

¹. Chuck Love, “I was an elder with the Jehovah’s Witnesses: The Personal Testimony of Chuck Love,” Interviewed by Dan Kistler, *Christian Research Newsletter*, 2:3, p.1

(3)

- C. Paul also warned the Corinthians to be mindful of those who come and preach:

2 Corinthians 11:4

“another _____”

“a different _____”

“a different _____”

- D. The Apostle Peter told us:

1. 1 Peter 3:15 “*always be ready to give a defense*”

2. 2 Peter 2:1 “there will be false teachers among you”

- E. Jude tells us “*to contend for the faith*”—Jude 3

- F. The number one target of the cults

II. WHAT IS A CULT?

- A. (Webster’s Dict.) “devoted attachment to, or extravagant admiration for, a person, principle, etc.”

- B. A group of people gathered around someone’s misinterpretation of the Bible or misunderstanding of God Almighty. Their teachings deviate from the historical biblical view of God, doctrine, or the infallibility of the Bible. Cults deny the doctrine of the Trinity and the deity of Jesus Christ. Cult groups normally center around a strong, charismatic individual who claims to have a new revelation that has more authority than the Bible.

1. 2 Corinthians 11:13 “*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers....*”

2. 2 Timothy 4:3-4 *People turning to myths*

C. Cults can be of a sociological, psychological, or theological nature.

—sociological:

—psychological:

—theological:

D. There is a rise in bizarre end time movements: apocalyptic cults

III. **WHAT ARE EIGHT ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES OF HISTORIC CHRISTIANITY?**

A. **The Inspiration of Scripture and the Inerrancy of the Bible**

Samuel 23:2; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Acts 1:16; Romans 16:25-26;
Luke 1:70; 1 Peter 1:25; Proverbs 30:5

B. **The Trinity:** That within the nature of the one true God there are Three Eternal Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (God represents Himself to us in these three distinct ways.)

The Three Persons of God: Genesis 1:26; Matthew 28:19; Matthew 3:16-17;
Luke 1:35; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 3:7-11, Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1,14

The Oneness of God: Deuteronomy 6:4; Ephesians 4:6; John 14:9; Colossians 1:15; Zechariah 12:10; Acts 5:3-5; Isaiah 44:6; John 10:30; Philippians 2:6-7; 1 Timothy 2:5

C. **The Deity of Jesus Christ**

John 1:1,14; John 8:58; 1 Timothy 3:16; Colossians 2:9; 1 Corinthians 5:4;
Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 6:14-16

D. The Virgin birth of Jesus Christ

Matthew 1:18-20; Luke 1:35; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:27-35

E. The Substitutionary Atonement of Jesus Christ's death

Peter 2:24; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:5; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:10-12, 23, 5:9; Colossians 1:20; Revelation 5:9; John 1:29

F. The Literal Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

Luke 24:36,39; John 10:17-18; John 2:19,21; 1 Corinthians 15:42,44; Luke 24:16; John 20:26-28; John 21:4

G. Salvation is a Gift which comes through Faith in Christ alone.

Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 2:16; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:8; Hebrews 9:22; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 16:31

H. The Literal Return of Jesus Christ (The Second Coming)

Acts 1:11; Revelation 1:7; Matthew 24:30; Matthew 26:63-64; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

There are other scriptural truths that Christians believe which are too time consuming to outline here. Some examples are the existence of Heaven (Matt. 5:12); the existence of Hell (Matt. 25:34, 41); Eternal Judgment (Heb. 9:27, Heb. 6:2); Repentance from Dead Works (Heb. 6:1, 2:38); Water Baptism (Acts 2:38, Mt. 3, Acts 10:47), the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:2-4, 8:15-17, 19:6); the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:1-6), and others. While Christians might vary in some areas, there is a general sense of unity centered around the essential doctrines listed above.

IV. WHAT QUESTION DID JESUS ASK?

A. Matthew 16:13

B. The Chameleon Image Factor

V. **WHO IS THE JESUS TO THE CULTS AND RELIGIONS?**

Bahai: He was one of nine great world manifestations. He is not God. He is a prophet beneath Baha'u'llah.

Christian Science: They believe he was only a human man. He was not Christ because Christ is only a divine idea or principle.

Freemasons: To them Christ was a mystical figure, Jao-bul-on (Jehovah—Baal—Osiris) is God, all men have divine potential.

Hare Krishna: An enlightened vegetarian teacher of meditation, maybe even Krishna.

Iglesia Ni Cristo: Jesus is Savior and Lord but is not God and did not pre-exist.

Jehovah's Witnesses: He is Michael the Archangel. The first being God created. He is "a god" but not a part of the Trinity nor God Almighty.

Moon's Unification Church: He was a man who failed to bring physical salvation. The cross is a sign of failure. Moon is the new Messiah.

Mormons: He is the spirit brother of Satan; one god in a pantheon of gods.

New Age: To many he is simply an ascended master, guru, and spiritual guide, but not God and not Savior.

Scientology: He's rarely mentioned; an implant in man's memory; not Operating Thetan.

Spiritists: He is an advanced medium in the 6th sphere of astral projection.

T.M.: He was an enlightened guru who never suffered for anyone.

Theosophy: He is no greater than any other since all men are "Christs."