

Gate Breaker News Digest

Matthew 16:18 "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against



Biblical Christianity

The following excerpt is taken from an article entitled "Heresy in the Early Church and Today." Please visit the Gate Breaker website to read the entire article, found in the resource section.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to help Christians to be aware of the dangers of cults, false teachings, and non-Christian religions, and to give them a desire to reach out to those who are lost. New disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ need to be protected from the harmful influence of all non-biblical teachings until they become strong in their faith. Mature disciples need to learn to reach out to those caught in the cults and non-Christian religions through (1) prayer, (2) Christian love, and (3) witnessing.

Today, those who serve Jesus might think, "If it could only be like it was in the days of the early apostles, there would



The early Christians worked hard to pass on the truths of Christianity

be less deception and heresy." Yet, a brief survey of the New Testament writers illustrates that from the very beginning there was twisting of the truth, false interpretation, and individuals who led others away from the truth.

EARLY PROBLEMS WITH HERESY

Since the earliest days of Christianity, church leaders have had to guard their members against false teachers, false prophets, and even those who pretended to be the Messiah. The Lord Jesus Himself told His followers, "Beware of false prophets who come in sheep's clothing -

ing" (Matthew 7:15). He also said that false Christs and false prophets would come and perform signs and wonders to deceive the elect - meaning Christians (Matthew 24:24).

The Apostle John cautioned the followers of Christ that "many antichrists have come" (1 John 2:18). Amazingly, these were once numbered among the Christians but then they left Christianity and were manifest as antichrists (1 John 2:19). John told Christians to test the spirits "because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

(Continued on page 2)

Pakistan Mission

In late October of this year, I will be going once again to minister in the Punjab region of Pakistan for several weeks.

I went to that area in 2009 at the invitation of two Pakistani ministers: Asher Aziz and Rizwan Fazal. Both of these pastors have now become dear friends, and they are partners with GBM to bring the light of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to Pakistan.

On my last visit, GBM hosted a leadership conference, did numerous outreaches in which thousands accepted Christ, and started the first GBM - PAK sewing center for disadvantaged women.

This new trip will also be momentous. We are in the planning stages right now.

Mike Kutz of Boise is planning to go with me. He is wise, insightful, and a mighty prayer warrior. He has done numerous short-term missions, and I am so thankful to have him come along. Together, we will be ministering at Christian leadership conferences, sharing at numerous outreaches, and visiting the six sewing training centers that GBM currently operates and supports in the Punjab region.

These six sewing centers train women for one year so that they can learn a trade. Though the centers were created primarily to help impover-

ished Christian women in a Muslim-dominated society, we also allow Muslim women or others to attend. Each day the centers pray to Jesus and have a biblical devotion. For these women, this



Photo of me preaching in a crowded alley, Renala Khurd, 2009

training can be the means to help them out of poverty. GBM supports these centers monthly and also has a monthly ministry to orphans and widows.

The major city in the area that we will be ministering in is Lahore. It has about 9 million people, 95% of whom are Muslim. It is amazing that the Punjab

(Continued on page 4)

Inside this issue:

Biblical Christianity	1
Pakistan Mission	1
Kenya College of Ministry	3
Character / Early Christian	3
Product sales	3
Contact Information	4
Website information	4

Biblical Christianity (continued)

He further said, "For many deceivers who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh have gone out into the world. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (2 John 3:7). He wrote this against docetists who were teaching that God came only as a mere appearance in Jesus Christ, but not in the flesh. They did not believe that the Son of God could suffer physically on the cross. The crucifixion was an illusion.

Peter alerted people to false teachers and prophets who would "secretly bring destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them . . . By covetousness, they would exploit you with deceptive words" (2 Peter 2:1-3). Likewise, Jude exhorted Christians to contend for the faith because certain ungodly men have crept into the church and turned "the grace of our God into lewdness" (Jude 3-4).

There was also the Apostle Paul who wrote to Timothy saying that in the "latter times, some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy" (1 Timothy 4:1-2). He went on to say that there would be false, legalistic teachings about abstaining from marriage and various foods. He exhorted Timothy to instruct the church about these things so that people would be prepared. He also told Timothy that many would turn from the truth to fables. He instructed Timothy to guard against the teachings of the early Gnostics (1 Timothy 6:20-21). Paul, furthermore, warned the Colossians about worshipping angels (Colossians 2:18), exhorted the Thessalonians for believing that Christ had already returned (2 Thessalonians 2:2), and criticized the Galatians for accepting a perverted gospel message that embraced works to gain salvation (Galatians 1:6-9). Then, there were the problems at Corinth.

PROBLEMS AT CORINTH

Paul wrote much in his epistles about protecting the truth of the pure gospel. One example of this was in his exhortation to the Corinthians. When writing his first book to the Corinthians, he wrote an explanation for the gospel near the beginning of chapter 15. Paul wrote that the basic gospel was this: "Christ died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures."

These few words have profound truths within them. The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are no small matter. Also, Jesus Christ died for "our" sins, and all of it was

done according to the Scriptures. This simply means that it all happened just the way the many Old Testament prophets said it would. These Old Testament prophecies were what Jesus explained to the two that encountered Him on the road to Emmaus, shortly after His resurrection (Luke 24:27).

Paul did not just explain the gospel to the Corinthians. He had another objective. The Corinthians had embraced a false doctrine and he needed to confront it. So, after revealing the simple gospel to the Corinthians, he began with the 1st Corinthians 15:12 to confront a false teaching that some of them had accepted, namely that there

was no future resurrection.

Unfortunately, the Corinthians continued to have some problems in their basic understanding, and so when Paul wrote to them the second time, he exhorted them again. In 2nd Corinthians 11:4, he admonishes them for receiving those who teach "another Jesus, a different spirit, and a different gospel."

From this brief survey, it is easy to see that even in those days, there were teachers who brought false teachings. There were false prophets and those who tried to make people accept them as the Christ and Messiah. Some perverted the gospel and presented a Jesus and Spirit different from what the Scriptures teach.

WHAT IS BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY?

"Mom, what's a Christian?" Many parents have faced this simple question and said something like, "It's somebody who believes in Jesus." Well, this is true but it is not a complete answer. It is too inclusive. Moonies (members of the Unification Church) also believe in Jesus, as do Mormons, Baha'is, and Muslims to some extent, but not in the same way that Christians believe in Jesus. Christianity has boundaries and these are its essential doctrines or teachings.

The word orthodox is important in the discussion. It has two basic meanings today. First, it can refer to an ancient branch of Christianity in the Eastern Orthodox Church. Second, it simply means "right belief," and this is the definition that is important when considering biblical Christianity. Orthodoxy as *right belief* is how the larger Christian community understands the concept. The early church fathers called the concept "rule of faith." So, it would be accurate to say, "Orthodox Christianity is biblical Christianity and vice-versa." In other words, we need to have the right biblical belief about the Lord Jesus Christ, man's relation to Him, and the Bible itself.

Cults veer from biblical Christianity by denying the doctrines of the Trinity and/or the Deity of Jesus Christ. They often pervert other essential truths as well. For example,

many cults say that they accept the Bible but they have "other revelation" that now supersedes the Bible. That is *not* a right belief. New Testament writers would have considered these groups deceived. The Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists, Moonies, etc. may all claim that the Bible is an inspired book from God, but they also claim that the revelation is not complete. For instance, the Mormons and Moonies have added "another testament;" Christian Science says the Bible is corrupted by man; and the Jehovah's Witnesses have perverted the true Bible in hundreds of places in order to line it up with their corrupted doctrine.

Christianity holds to certain historic tenets of the faith that are non-negotiable. They were valid in the first century when Paul was martyred for his teachings. They were upheld in 325 A.D. when Arius was pronounced a heretic at the Council of Nicaea for denying the Deity of Jesus Christ. The doctrines ignited the Protestant Reformation when Martin Luther challenged the Catholic Church in 1517 A.D. for their teaching of salvation through works. These same orthodox teachings are true today.

We all know that Christians don't agree on everything. Just bring up topics like the Baptism of the Holy Spirit or end-time events and watch the heat rise. Nevertheless, there is "unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13) around the essential doctrines even for people as diverse as Lutherans, Baptists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Charismatics, Methodists, etc. This is why we see Christians rallying together today across denominational borders for the larger church events. Some of the more central doctrines of Christianity are listed below.

SOME ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

1. The inspiration of the Bible and its inerrancy at the time of transmission (2 Samuel 23:2; Acts 1:16; Romans 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
2. The Trinity: within the nature of the One God there are three eternal persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
 - a) The Three Persons of God (Genesis 1:26; Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; John 1:1; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 3:7-11).
 - b) The Oneness of God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6; Zechariah 12:10; John 10:30; 14:9; Acts 5:3-5; Ephesians 4:6; Philippians 2:6-7; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 2:5).
3. The Deity of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:23; John 1:1-14; John 8:58; Colossians 2:9; 1 Timothy 3:16).
4. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35; Isaiah 7:14).
5. The substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ's death (1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:5; Isaiah 53:6).
6. The literal resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (Luke 24:36, 39; John 10:17-18).

(Continued on page 4)

Kcom

In April, 2009, the Kenya College of Ministry was established. It is a school of ministry for pastors in and around the Nairobi region who are affiliated with the Pentecostal Evangelism Fellowship of Africa (PEFA).

Capital Christian Center of Meridian, Idaho, established Kcom and has been the primary support of the school. On that first trip in 2009, I went, with Evans Baya. We taught a leadership conference for a couple hundred pastors and then opened Kcom for a selected group of about twenty students.

Evans is from Kenya. He attended various universities in the United States and now works in the technology and business community in the Boise area. He is a dedicated Christian. The original vision for Kcom was really developed by him, his brother, Harun Baya, who lives near Nairobi, and one of the leaders of PEFA in that region.

There is a great need among pastors in Kenya to be trained. Most pastors do not have the opportunity to go to Bible college. Yet, Kcom is not just a theological training center; it has that included, but it is much



Pastor Shane Grove and I with some of the students in December, 2010

more. It is a school in which pastors learn practical ministry. Every course that the pastors take requires a project that applies what they learn to the congregation that they pastor.

Today, Kcom is preparing to move into its third year. It is a three-year program. We currently have two classes of students and soon will have three. Since 2009, I have gone to Kenya six times to teach at Kcom. GBM has been able to partner with Capital Christian Center to some extent by providing various GBM material and by supporting me when I go to teach. I have received many reports from these pastors that they and their congregations are being transformed by these powerful times of teaching, prayer, and practical ministry.

In December, Dr. Bill Graybill, pastor of Abundant Life Center in Jefferson, Oregon, and I will be teaching in Kenya at the college. Please pray for us and for those to whom we minister, that through Kcom, the Lord Jesus Christ will be exalted in Kenya and many will be saved.

The Character of Early Christians

There is an ancient epistle (letter), written by a Christian to a heathen, in which we find an amazing testimony of the character and quality of the earliest Christians. We do not know the name of the author. He referred to himself as Mathetes (Matthew), but this simply means *disciple*. He wrote the letter to a heathen named Diognetus.

The epistle—or, more properly, apologetic treatise—was probably written between A.D. 120–200 and may be applied to either the period known as the apostolic fathers or that of the apologists. The author may have been from an Alexandrian community.

In chapter 11 the author writes, “Although I am an instructor of the Gentiles now, I was a pupil of the Apostles once.” Some take this to mean that the author studied the writings of the apostles; yet he may have actually heard them teach, making him an apostolic father.

This document was not discovered until 1435. Authorship has been conjectured for any number of early writers, with a likelihood of Hippolytus. Some think it a forgery

since no patristic father mentions it, but it appears genuine. Its attack on pagan worship is quite in line with that early apologetic era of Christianity.

Diognetus was a noble heathen of social and cultural status. The treatise is an answer to Diognetus’ inquiry regarding Christians and their courage in the face of death and martyrdom. The following section elaborates on the character of Christians in the face of persecutions and ill-treatment:

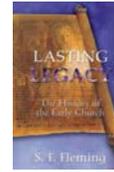
“The difference between Christianity and the rest of mankind is not a matter of nationality, or language, or customs. . . . Like other men, they marry and beget children, though they do not expose their infants. Any Christian is free to share his neighbor’s table, but never his marriage-bed. Though destiny has placed them here in the flesh, they do not live after the flesh; their days are passed on the earth, but their citizenship is above in the heavens. They obey the prescribed laws, but in their own private lives they transcend the laws. They show love to all men—and all men persecute them. They are misunderstood, and condemned; yet by suffering death they are quickened into life. They are poor, yet making many rich; lacking all things, yet having all things in abundance. They are dishonored, yet made glorious in their very dishonor; slandered, yet vindicated. They repay calumny [false and malicious accusation] with blessings, and abuse with courtesy. . . . Jews assail them as heretics, and Greeks harass them with persecutions; and yet of all their ill-wishers there is not one who can produce good grounds for hostility.”¹

Notice the many character qualities displayed that the author says his fellow Christians live by:

- “They do not expose their infants” - This was the manner of abortion in those days. So, Christians did not believe in nor practice abortion.

(Continued on page 4)

Books FOR SALE



Lasting Legacy: Discover the roots of Christian faith, the facts, legends, people, movements, and miracles from Christ to the Council of Chalcedon in 451AD.



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Servants of the Third Watch is based on a prophetic vision that the Lord gave me about the modern Church. What is the midnight hour of the Church? It may be closer than you think.



Gate Breakers is now in two volumes. Book One equips Christians regarding cults, and Book Two deals with world religions and the occult.



These are great, easy-to-read resource books for individual or group studies. You don’t have to be an expert to teach from these. A perfect gift for pastors and students of Christianity.

Book One is also available in Spanish.

BOOK ORDERING:

- **On-line:** Order and pay for books at Gatebreakers.com
- **Price:** \$12.00 each. \$3.50 shipping for one book. Add .50 cents for each additional book. Contact GBM for discount on orders of five or more.
- **Direct order:** Make checks payable to *Gate Breaker Ministries*. Send to: 2508 S. Abaco Way, Meridian, ID 83642. Please specify which books you are ordering.

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Darkness to Light - Exposing the Occult: Dr. Fleming shares at a youth event on the dangers of the occult. This video includes his own personal testimony. \$8.00 plus \$3.50 shipping.

Send check with request to GBM.

Biblical Christianity (continued)

7. Salvation is a gift which comes through faith in Christ alone (Romans 5:18-19; Romans 6:23; Galatians 2:5; Ephesians 2:8-9).

8. The literal return of Jesus Christ: The Second Coming (Matthew 24:30; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Revelation 1:7).

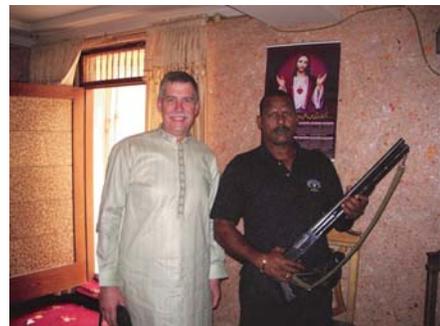
There are other scriptural truths that Christians believe also. Some examples are the doctrines of Heaven (Matthew 5:12; Hell (Matthew 25:34, 41); Eternal Judgment (Hebrews 6:2; 9:27); Repentance from Dead Works (Hebrews 2:38; 6:1); Water Baptism (Matthew 3:16; Acts 2:38, 10:47); Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:2-4, 8:15-17, 19:6); Gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cr. 12:1-6); and others. Although Christians will often vary in their interpretation of these doctrines, the essential teachings listed above are standards that must be upheld to maintain orthodoxy.

If you are someone who is interested in understanding what various cults, the occult, or world religions believe so that you can better witness to them, then I suggest that you get *Gate Breakers: Book One* and *Gate Breakers: Book Two*. These books are very readable and easily understood. They are good for individual study or for small groups to go through. Go to www.gatebreaker.com to order them on-line, or look on page 3 to see how to order them directly by mail. If you have any questions, please contact me at sfleming@gatebreakers.com

Pakistan Mission (continued)

region of Pakistan "has a higher number of unreached individuals per Christian worker than any other place in the world"

This is where GBM has six Christian sewing centers. I praise God that He miraculously led me there in 2009 to begin these sewing centers, train leaders, and do open air crusades. Though I did not know it at the time, I was less than two hundred miles from the compound of Osama bin Laden. The



I am in one of the pastor's home preparing to leave for an open air meeting

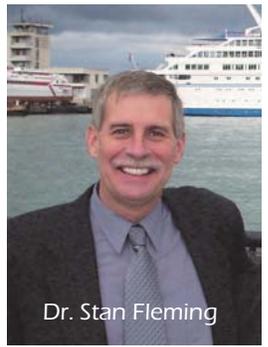
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Questions: For inquiries regarding articles and topics of interest, please email me.

Prayer requests: Send us your need and we will prayer for it.

Board Members: Cary Chrisman, Stan Fleming, Ron Hamel, Larry Starke



The Character of Early Christians (continued)

- "Any Christian is free to share his neighbor's table" - This speaks to us of hospitality,
- "But never his marriage-bed." - This is emphatic and speaks to the chastity of early Christians. Adultery was a crime.
- "They do not live after the flesh" - They were in the world but not of the world.
- "They obey the prescribed laws, but in their own private lives they transcend the laws" - They honored the laws of the land but they lived by a higher law, God's law.
- "They show love to all men—and all men persecute them." - They showed God's love to people regardless of persecution.
- "They are misunderstood, and condemned; yet by suffering death they are quickened into life" - They believed in eternal life through Jesus Christ, and they laid their lives down if necessary.
- "They repay calumny with blessings, and abuse with courtesy" - They hoped to influence others by their responses.

The epistle of Diognetus can serve to remind modern Christians of the great heritage of godly characteristics that come down to us from the earliest of times.

Let us so live our lives that we will shine the light of Christ into the eyes of those who

are searching for truth! Remember: no matter how difficult your situation may be, your godly character is a light to the world!

Endnotes

1. S. F. Fleming, *Lasting Legacy: The History of the Early Church* (Columbus, GA: TEC Publications, 2005), 36-37.

Would you be interested in helping to start one of these sewing centers in Pakistan.? GBM is looking for people to both start and sponsor sewing centers.

Prayer points:

- Please pray for protection in our travel and our ministry in Pakistan.
- Pray for powerful anointing in our ministry times to leaders, in open air meetings, and our times of prayer to the women of the sewing centers, orphans, and widows.
- Pray for provision for all of it.

The entire ministry to Pakistan is expensive, and it is all done through the generosity of those who donate. Would you please consider sending a donation today? May the Lord bless you richly for it. Thank you.

Endnotes

1 Jason Mandryk, *Operation World, 7th Edition* (Biblica Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO, 2010), 664.

Website 😊

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