

A Follow-up To *The Gospel of the Covenant* Is the Pilgrimage to Salvation

De-Hellenizing Mental Muck: Lesson 3

“I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them by the power of Your Name—the name you gave Me—so that they may be one as We are One... that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are One”
(John 17:11,21,22).

When we arrived back in the United States from Israel in 1994 with the Hebraic foundations, there were an estimated 24,000 competing denominations and sects within Christendom. The most recent estimate puts that number at over 38,000. How does this mushrooming division of the body of Christ’s called-out ones happen? For that matter, how did the first *denomination* come into existence? (A denomination is defined as “a recognized autonomous branch within Christendom.”)

This *prejudicial fracturing* of the Kingdom in which our Lord Jesus has called His people to live in unity has come about through the enemies of biblical apperception: *revisionism* and *syncretism*. These two widely practiced evil influences within Christendom have a demonic root designed to generate and perpetuate unbiblical creeds and religious practices. Ever since Hellenism overthrew the Hebraic foundations in the fourth century, these two sinister influences have sundered the body our Lord intended to be one (Romans 12:4,5).

Specific roles were given by our Lord so that His followers might be equipped to put their faith in action and reach unity as they grew in depth of knowing and trusting Him:

“And [Jesus] Himself gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be shepherds-teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4: 11-13).

Given our Lord’s purpose and plan for His people, how did what He established to ensure unity become *irrelevant*? The answer is revisionism and syncretism.

The Mucky Effects of Revisionism and Syncretism Wiped Out Apperception

What do these perhaps unfamiliar terms mean? We previously defined *apperception* as going back to the original intent of how Scripture would have been understood when it was penned by the writers. This process was foundational for both Older and Newer Testament believers. But as more and more Hellenists came into Christendom, this time-tested method of making sure new teaching was founded on older established truth was set aside. In its stead came these two unbiblical practices:

Further reading: For more on revisionism, see *Pastoring By Elders*, pp. 27,28; *Discussing How To Restore The Early Church*, Lesson 18; Hebraic Article: *God’s Clergy-less Kingdom*.

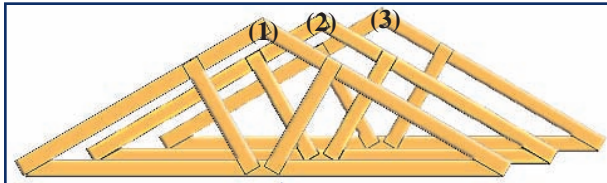
Revisionism restates historical truth and facts to manipulate them to fit current social or cultural standards. For example, a major attempt at revision in the Church occurred as far back as the late *second century* as anti-Semitism reared its ugly head. Many of the Hellenist-influenced “Church Fathers,” including the bishop Irenaeus, foisted upon the Jews the *collective guilt* for crucifying Jesus.

In their hatred of Jews they also deliberately turned much of the Hebrew Scripture into *allegories* to remove any aspect of God’s promises to the Jews. Another revision by Irenaeus which became widely accepted was the false claim that the apostle Peter was the “rock” upon which his successors could claim church primacy as the Bishop of Rome. In so doing, this prominent “Church Father” ascribed ecclesiastical power to Peter which the *Bible did not support*.

Syncretism is the centuries-long practice of ecclesiastical leaders *adapting pagan ritual and traditions* into Christianity. Syncretism somewhat revamps different and sometimes contradictory beliefs and customs and then incorporates them into one religious system. As the political/religious entity of Catholicism made contact with various heathen cultures, the church hierarchy tweaked the pagan practices and observances they encountered to make them “Christian.” That way the pagans could be considered among the Roman Catholic “faithful” and still enjoy the familiarity of their pagan ways.

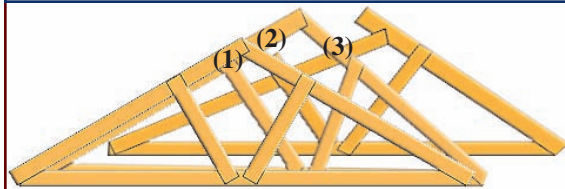
What sort of pagan practices are we discussing here that merged into the 4th century “Christianity” that became Roman Catholicism? Consider these: •the priesthood of clergy (rather than the priesthood of all believers); •public places of worship with steeples, pulpits and pews which mimicked pagan temples; •the Sacrifice of the Mass (which declares the once for all time death and resurrection of Christ as incomplete for redemp-

A Visual Metaphor for Apperception, Revisionism and Syncretism.



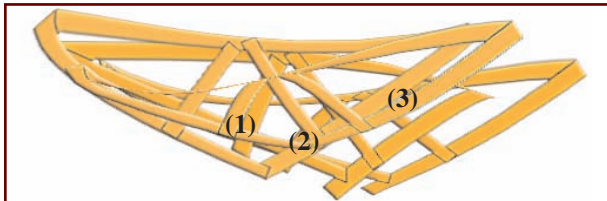
Picture **apperception** as a man who’s constructing roof joists for the house he’s building. He carefully measures out a pattern for his first joist and cuts it (1). Then he uses that joist as the pattern for the next one (2). For each and every joist (3 and beyond), he uses his *original as the pattern*.

Apperception always goes back to the *Word of God* for every application of your faith practices.



The **Revisionist** measures out and cuts the first roof joist (1) and then makes a second one from that. **But**, instead of using the original joist as his pattern, he uses the second joist (2) as a pattern for the third, the third joist (3) to make the fourth, and so on. By the time he finishes cutting his last joist and lays it against the original one, he discovers his measurements are *way off!* What started as minor deviations added up to major differences.

It’s the same with revisionism. As God’s Word was *revised* through various church councils over the centuries, the original pattern of God’s INTENT for His people was lost. Instead of apperceiving the Bible the way our earliest Hebraic forefathers did, church councils only went back to the decisions of PREVIOUS councils, not to the Bible.



Syncretism totally warps the joists altogether, rendering them useless. This mirrors the multiple pagan adaptations which poured into Christianity. The religious system appeased the people by distorting our Father’s righteous instructions. Religious leaders hallowed the adapted pagan feasts and rituals, and threatened to excommunicate anyone who questioned these unbiblical practices. As a result, “*hallowed syncretisms*” that blaspheme God abound today.

tion); •statues of Isis and her infant son Horus renamed Mary and Jesus; •the celebration of Christmas adapted from the Roman Saturnalia celebration; •Easter, which emulates the worship of Ishtar, a fertility goddess symbolizing the Earth Mother; •infant baptism in place of immersion of the repentant who can identify with the death and resurrection of Jesus; •purgatory as a means to purge sins rather than trusting in the shed blood of Jesus for atonement for sins; •indulgences to reduce time in purgatory.

Revisionism and syncretism have shaped and controlled Christianity for hundreds of years. Because of Hellenism these two evils have been perpetuated by “church councils” which then dictate what their adherents must believe. Since Council participants were part of the church organizational hierarchy, they were far removed from the everyday life of people. And through reliance on syncretism and revisionism, councils over the centuries have woven pagan practices into Christianity and have enforced their ecclesiastical position as well.

Church councils often used the word “doctrine” as synonymous with creed. This is a blatant Hellenist approach which allows words to be recited *apart from* having to carry them out in everyday life. The Hebraic intent and understanding of “doctrine” (instruction accepted as biblically authoritative) means focusing on *putting into practice* what is accepted as scriptural truth. Therefore doctrine as understood by the earliest followers of Jesus encompassed the various *applications* of God’s Word in their daily way of life so they might please their Father and lead others to Christ.

Further Reading: For more on *syncretism* and its devastating effect on Christianity, see Repentance Leads To Christ-like Character, Lesson 15 (sections a-h), *The Sin of Belonging to Jesus While Also Serving the Queen of Heaven*; also Lifebyte 22. *Obedient Trust versus Reasoning*.

In His teaching on the mountainside overlooking the Sea of Galilee, our Lord Jesus emphasized how important it was for *each person* to establish His Word as a way of life: “Everyone who *hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock*” (Matthew 7:24,25; see also Matthew 16:19;18:18).

How tragic that so many Christians worldwide have forfeited the privilege and responsibility our Lord gave them to take the righteous teachings of His Father and *apply them* to their personal, family, and faith community lives.

You Must Be Your Own ‘Gatekeeper’!

The “faith” of so many self-proclaimed Christians today is an amalgamation of centuries of manmade creeds and paganized religious practices—the fruit of revisionism and syncretism. Time and usage have hallowed these so that they’re considered too untouchable to question.

Sadly, the past few generations of churchgoers have become so fixated on comfort, complacency and “tolerance” for beliefs and practices which clearly violate the Bible that they have no inclination to question either their denomination’s teachings or any of their own personal faith practices. The SELF-idolatry of this nation has so infected their lives that any thought of the Lordship of Jesus or obedience to His commands repels them. Cringing at the thought of SELF-denial, all too many churched people today pick and choose what they accept from God’s Word—those things which allow them to pursue personal pleasure without feeling guilty. Please, don’t let this characterize you at the Throne!

In in our July, 1997 Newsletter, *Today's Gatekeepers*, and in our July, 2007 Teaching E-mail, *Practicing Biblical Gatekeeping*, we discussed the entities within Christendom that *control what you believe*. These "gatekeepers" direct and influence what you accept as truth because *they say it is*:

1. **clergy,**
2. **seminaries,**
3. **parachurch ministries,**
4. **publishers,**
5. **media (TV, movies, radio, Internet).**

You might say that today's religious gatekeepers are people who are motivated by attracting a following and/or making a profit. But they're definitely not *God-centered*. If they were, they'd encourage and exhort followers of Jesus to establish our Father's instructions and righteous commands as their *way of life* so that Christians could stand out from the world's ways as His own.

As Christian pollster George Barna has reported, there is *no moral difference* between Christians and unbelievers in this nation. Those who call themselves Christian embrace the same worldly values as non-Christians, and their moral standards are as lax and culturally dictated as those of people who make no claim to follow Jesus. Shamefully, this worldly testimony of "believers" maligns His holy name and reputation:

- They fail to see themselves as representatives of Jesus, set apart to be different from the people who are controlled by the ruler of this world, Satan.
- Instead, they conform to the sinful standards and values of the world so they can blend in and be accepted.

Further Reading: *Restoring the Early Church*, Chapter 6. "Greek Philosophy in the Church: How Did Plato Displace God?"

Do you truly want your life in Christ to count for something lasting in His Kingdom? Foundational to this wonderful goal is the realization that our Father's instructions, His good and righteous commands throughout His Word, are authoritative in themselves. Why are they authoritative? Because you know the One Who gave you His instructions.

If you love our Lord, you *will* walk in the freedom and boundaries of His commands (John 14:21). He didn't make them hard to understand or burdensome (1John 5:3). But He *does* require you to trust in His Spirit in you to apply them. Isn't this path far more reliable than trusting someone behind a pulpit who's paid to fill a position adapted from paganism?

The Kingdom of our Lord Is Always Opposite the World's Ways & Goals

- Do you really want to come before the Judgment Throne having embraced man-made lies that you made a hallowed part of your faith practices?
- Do you think God minds if you ask questions to discern if your faith practices are what He requires of you as His Son's follower?
- Remember, asking questions isn't doubt; rather, it helps you ensure that you walk in truth.

Discuss these with your family and/or others close to you in the faith.

1. **List what you consider to be important elements of your religious or spiritual life.**
2. **Find the Scriptures that support the things you've listed.**
3. **If you can't find any supporting verses, what does that show about your practices?**