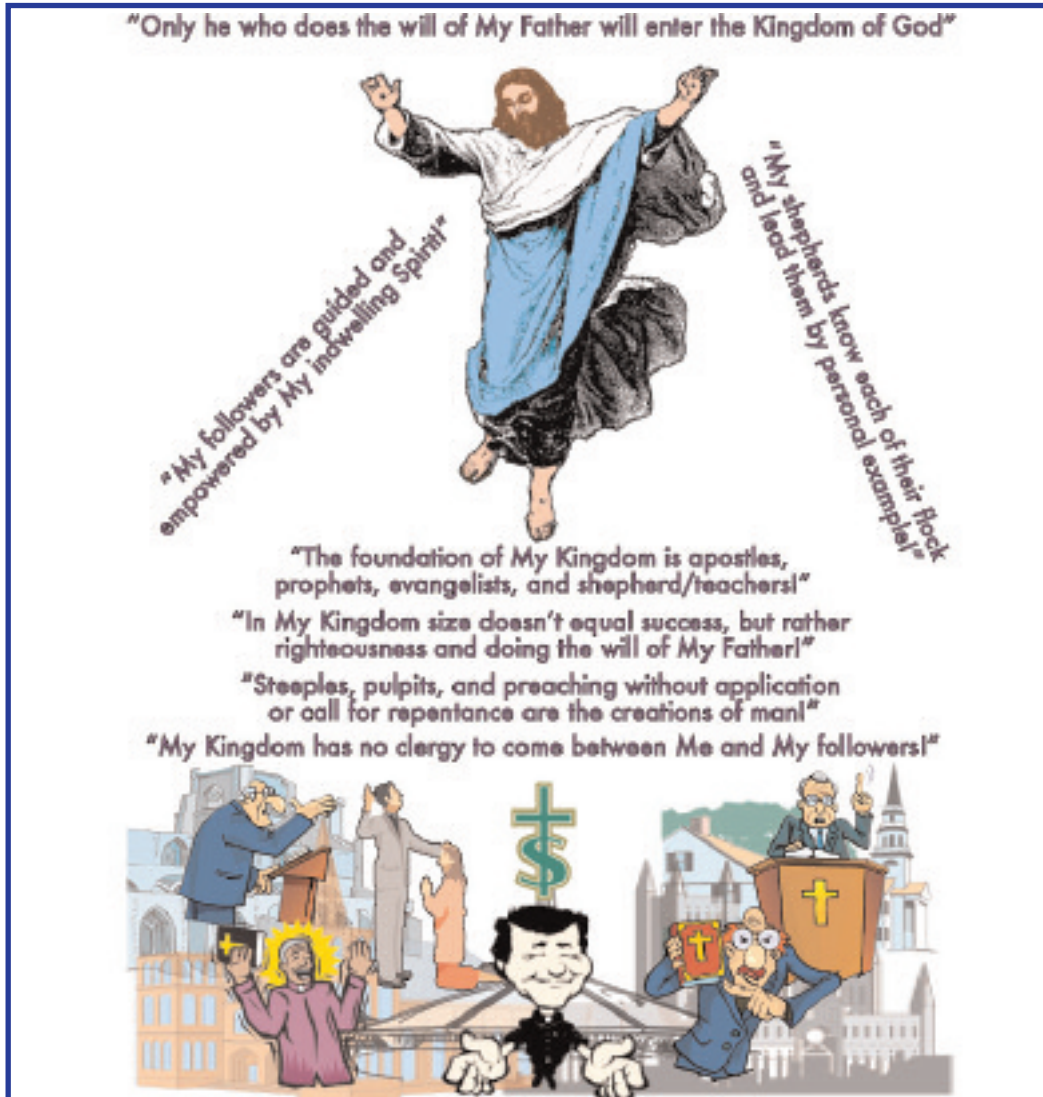


Lifebyte 67

The Hebraic Restoration: *Our Father's Plan To Restore the Spiritual Power of the Early Church* Lesson 2: How "Christendom" Forsook Spiritual Power (Part 2)



Restoration Ministries International

Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz
Web: www.Restorationministries.org

“As they retain the outer form of religion but deny its power. Stay away from these people!” (2 Timothy 3:5)

Lesson 2: How “Christendom” Forsook Spiritual Power (Part 2)

“This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind” (Ephesians 4:17).

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2).

In these two verses the Apostle Paul thrusts forth a strong warning: anyone who follows Jesus as Lord of their lives *must cast down* their old way of thinking that follows the world’s pattern. Both the Roman and Ephesian cultures were held captive to their minds. As with the Athenians, they loved to consider and argue about intellectual matters that ultimately had no real meaning in their lives — in other words, just optional mental entertainment.

But Paul realized how essential to their daily lives was the truth he was sharing and commanding under the anointing of the Spirit. God’s truth couldn’t be relegated to the “optional” category of their mind-games framework. That’s why he erected a *stop sign* in their thinking: the truths of God must become their *way of life* (Matthew 7:24).

What goes on in people’s minds is by no means standardized! For a variety of reasons we each process new information differently. Besides gender and cultural disparities, most of us have thoughts that are swayed by our **sin nature** as well as any **spiritual strongholds** in our mind, will and emotions.

As we discussed in **Lifebyte 66**, the degree to which you have *not* been transformed through the sanctifying work of the Spirit is the degree to which you are under the influence of your sin nature and strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4,5). These will create a *system of thinking* that will hinder you from testing and approving our Lord’s good, pleasing and perfect will both individually and as a couple and/or family.

Refusal or resistance to leave behind old patterns of thought applies to faith communities and denominations in which the Church Councils that formed them were controlled by the same dark influences. And the bondage of *old ways of thinking* are part of the reason why 38,000 competing denominations dominate the landscape of Christendom today.

“For our struggle is against... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12).

Not only are you contending with the influence of the sin nature and strongholds within your mind. There are also thought processes — ways by which you evaluate matters — that demonic principalities have developed and perpetrated. We introduced one of these mental frameworks in **Lifebyte 66**: the reliance of Church Councils on **Hellenist philosophy**.

Paul may have been addressing this demonic influence in Ephesians 4:17. He recognized how the philosophical, dualist worldview that elevated the mind but disregarded daily living could hinder his listeners from understanding his *Hebraic approach* in which *hearing meant obeying*. Keep in mind that philosophy *negates the centrality of God* and places man and his thinking at the center of all things.

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The subtle influence of philosophy in Christendom still hinders many Christians today who are rooted in an exalted view of *human “wisdom”* — a cornerstone of Hellenist thought. It is this very “wisdom” which Paul condemns, and the very wisdom on which Church Councils have relied for centuries. Since Eden Satan has used man’s dependence on his own mental framework to divide the children of God. The enemy’s appeal to *Eve’s mind* silenced the warning of her spirit and led her to sin.

Let’s look at the apostle’s letter to the called-out ones in Corinth for some insight into the futile but widely accepted mind-exaltation of the Greek-influenced Mediterranean culture. And take note of the completely opposing approach of our God!

*For it is written: ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate’. Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? **Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?** For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the **foolishness of the message preached** to save those who believe (1 Corinthians 1:19-21).*

*But **God has chosen** the foolish things of the world to **shame the wise**; God has chosen the weak things of the world to **shame the things which are mighty**, and the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to **bring to nothing** the things that are (1 Corinthians 1:27,28).*

*My speech and my preaching were **not with persuasive words of human wisdom**, but in **demonstration of the Spirit and of power**, so that your faith should **not be in the wisdom of men** but in the **power of God** (1*

Corinthians 2:5).

*For the wisdom of this world is **foolishness in God’s sight**. As it is written: ‘He catches the wise in their **own craftiness**’ (1 Corinthians 3:19).*

For centuries the Hellenist philosophy that undergirds the *humanism* that’s so prevalent today has influenced Christians to turn to and exalt people who are wise and learned by the *world’s standards*. At the same time, this worldview has hindered so many from having confidence in the Spirit of Christ within them. As a result, so few Christians the world over are able to demonstrate the spiritual power *promised by Jesus* (John 14:12).

Is Your Desire to Serve our Lord Hindered By Hellenist Futility In Your Thought Life?

To understand the futility that we’re addressing, recall that Jesus and all those who went forth to share the Gospel *proclaimed Lord Jesus and His Kingdom*, not a religious system. The *Person* of our King and the *way of life* that’s lived for His sake reveal the essence of the Good News: “[Paul was] *preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him*” (Acts 28:31).

The demonic influences underlying Hellenism have greatly impeded wholehearted, responsive pursuit of our King and our Kingdom responsibilities and privileges. While He would have us glorify His Father through Spirit-led living, a **demonically-induced system of thought** throughout much of Christendom shrouds understanding of serving our beloved King in His Kingdom.

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People who hear about the nature of the Kingdom but *don't understand* put it into a disposable category in their heart. It *seems irrelevant*, so they put up no resistance when the devil snatches away what would have been life-changing for them:

*When anyone hears the **word of the Kingdom** and does not understand it, the **evil one** comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside (Matthew 13:19).*

What can *hinder* a person from understanding the Kingdom of God? Their futile way of thinking the way the world does.

What was the thinking process that Jesus and His early disciples depended on? In our book, *Restoring the Early Church*, we speak about Hebraic “**block logic**.” We want to review this perspective so that you can readily discern the difference when we discuss the Hellenist syllogistic reasoning that, in conjunction with philosophy, controls the mindset of Western Christendom.

Let's define the “block logic” which was so deeply a part of the thinking processes of first-century followers of Jesus. The Bible offers a number of scenarios that *seem* contradictory but are not. It's a matter of *perspective*: God's or humanity's. For instance, Pharaoh hardened his heart, yet we're also told that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 8:32; 9:12). Jesus is both Lion and Lamb (John 1:29; Revelation 5:5), the Prince of Peace Who comes with a sword (Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 10:34). Each “block of thought” is accurate and can stand alone since each is true. And, your *trust in God* gives you peace without any need for further explanation.

God sees the whole picture, we see in part — which was clearly understood when Jesus walked the land (1 Corinthians 13:9). When the Bible is viewed through block logic, you don't need a lot of the extra-scriptural explanation that we in the West receive through sermons and books. Block logic is the key to complete trust in our God. He and His ways are too vast to rationalize and fully plumb! Whatever is within the text of Scripture *is truth*; it's our limited capacity as human beings that requires Holy Spirit interpretation to apply it.

Our Hebraic ancestors who first trusted Jesus not only realized that they didn't have all the answers. They also knew that through the mercy and wisdom of the One Who created them, they didn't need to! They were willing to live at peace with God without being able to explain everything about Him.

How can you explain a God Who is transcendent above the highest heavens yet indwells the spirit of His children? Paul emphasized the unknowable mystery of God and marveled,

*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! **How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!** For who has known the **mind of the Lord?** Or who has become His counselor? (Romans 11:33-34).*

Over the centuries the influence of Hellenism has caused theologians to write countless treatises attempting to explain God. More effort seems to be spent by the “wise” who to try to *explain* God rather than help His people keep His commands! As with the parable of the wise and foolish builders, the wise person *responds by faith* in coming to Jesus, *hear-*

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ing His Words, and *putting them into practice* (Luke 6:47) — all responsive actions that reveal his or her trust in our Lord.

Because the concept of Hebraic block logic may be new to you, let's look at a familiar example that contrasts the simple trust of what God says vs. the complex attempts of Hellenist philosophical thought to wrangle out some rational explanation.

Partaking of communion in the early Church was a serious communal activity that, according to Paul, had severe consequences if shared unworthily (1 Corinthians 11:26-32). This communal celebration was *Covenant renewal with their Father* through the shed blood of Jesus.

The early Hebraic believers understood the holiness of the Passover, and that evening Jesus identified Himself as the One Who would be slain as their Substitutionary Sacrifice. His disciples could fully trust the words of Jesus and pass them down to succeeding generations of Jesus-followers: ***“This is My body which is broken for you”; “This cup is the new covenant in My blood”*** (1 Corinthians 24,25).

Their experience of Hebraic block logic bolstered their trust; they accepted the words of Jesus without further explanation. Jesus was the sinless Son of God. His fulfillment of prophetic Scripture as the sacrificial Lamb could in no way violate God's command to abstain from blood consumption.

Thus, Jesus could assure His disciples that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood (John 6:53-58) as an experience of the *spirit*, not of the flesh. He knew that only those whose hearts were open to the Spirit could accept and trust: ***“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life”*** (John 6:63). The

faith of the Twelve could accept His words even while the mental struggle of other disciples caused them to turn away and desert Him (see John 6:60-68).

A few centuries after Christ's ascension, Hellenized “Church Fathers” introduced Plato's **cosmic dualism** that separates the sanctity of spirit from the perceived unholiness of physical matter. As a result, simple bread and wine could never be the body and blood of Jesus just because *He said they were* in spirit. So according to certain denominations' doctrines, these elements must be *made spiritual* through the prayers and incantations of an ordained “holy man.”

This addition to the clearcut words of the Bible has brought about deep division within Christendom through arguments over *transubstantiation* (bread and wine changed into the body and blood), *consubstantiation* (bread and wine coexist with the body and blood), or *spiritual remembrance* (bread and wine not changed at all). Such analysis and debate also further removes the simplicity of partaking of the body and blood of Jesus in *one's own home*. (We'll discuss the detrimental influence of Plato's dualism later in this Lifebyte.)

Syllogistic Reasoning: *Satan's Means to Hide the Simplicity of Understanding the Kingdom*

Not only has the prevalence of humanistic philosophy obstructed the trust-filled obedience that God's Word calls for in His people. Christendom has also been heavily influenced by Hellenist **syllogistic reasoning**. The entire way in which we in the West organize the world around us in our minds is based on *syllogism*. It's the way most people have been

trained to verify the validity of information they hear or read, even if they're unaware of the process going on in their mind.

Syllogistic reasoning involves steps that begin with a *premise* — an idea or proposition or assumption. These lead up to a conclusion. Each step is linked to the next in some sort of rational order that can be explained as with an outline.

Theologians over the centuries have tended to use this line of thinking to organize the Bible into a more orderly fashion to suit the Hellenistic-trained minds of Westerners. As a result, they try to piece together a lot of “seemingly related” verses and passages in order to organize God’s Word into a teachable format like an academic textbook. Again, their goal is to instruct the mind but avoid the much more profound work of the Holy Spirit to apply the Word to bring solution to life situations.

Hellenized theologians have constructed highly systematized creeds that Christians have *falsely come to believe* are the foundations of their faith. Yet how far from either the intent or purpose of God for His people to *personally know and experience Him* as they come into His Kingdom!

The enormous power of syllogistic reasoning on Christian thought creates a compelling need to *rationalize biblical truths* so that it feels good to our sin-nature controlled, stronghold-influenced souls. But the problem with boxing truth into a rational format is that God demands that our spirits verify truth with the *Spirit of Truth within us*.

Let’s look at syllogistic reasoning to help you see how Satan seduces many Christian teachers and listeners into believing lies/half-truths/distortions.

Syllogistic reasoning is a three-step process.

1. A **hypothesis**: You propose an explanation about something based on limited evidence. This is your starting point for further investigation.
2. A **synthesis**: You combine various ideas or evidence to form a theory or system that seems valid.
3. A **conclusion**: You sum up all the points in your theory by relying on human reasoning to show you’re right.

Here’s a simple example of this type of reasoning.

1. **hypothesis**: All humans are mortal,
2. **synthesis**: I am a human,
3. **conclusion**: therefore, I am mortal.

The reasoning sequence is always from the *general* to the *specific*. Remember this important point:

For the entire process to be valid, each step must be true in itself. That is, the hypothesis, synthesis, and conclusion each must be a true statement for the whole syllogism to be a valid truth.

Again, this way of thinking has been implanted in you both through your education and your Christian training. It *organizes information* using the syllogistic reasoning process. This is such an ingrained mental process that it’s like your heartbeat — you don’t have to think about it! It’s analogous to the operating system in a computer which controls everything that goes on.

Let’s examine *how* Satan uses the syllogistic process to deceive people. Something as familiar as modern advertising can help you understand, since commercials are designed to appeal to your syllogistic reasoning.

For instance:

1. A **hypothesis**: A famous sports star or sexy actress tells you to buy a certain shaving cream.
2. A **synthesis**: You really like the sports star or are attracted to the sexy woman.
3. A **conclusion**: You're induced to buy that particular shaving cream.

The lies: What makes the sports star more knowledgeable than you about which shaving cream (or car or whatever) is best for you? (And, the sexy woman doesn't even use the shaving cream!) Neither one is an expert. In the end, you buy the shaving cream. You've been induced to purchase something, not based on the product but on the deception hidden in the advertisement.

Just remember, most advertisement is based on one or more of the syllogistic steps being a lie. The ultimate goal is to induce you to buy *heedless* of the quality of the product or if you even really need it. Syllogistic-based advertising is not informative as much as it is deceptive, attempting to seduce you to buy.

The next time you watch an ad on TV or see one in a magazine, ask yourself what the people or the context they're in has to do with the quality of the product or its true usefulness to you.

It's through syllogistic-based advertising that well-known Christian teachers have been marketed over the past 40 years! Do you remember the ads in Christian magazines that were so popular a while back concerning certain conference speakers: "Signs and wonders guaranteed!"? Guaranteed by whom? Noted Christian teachers today are marketed using the same form of hype that

the secular world uses. Marketing induces you to accept what they have to offer.

Many ministries today, especially those on TV, use marketing the same way as those who sell shaving cream. The goal is to *make money*. Here's what we mean. A friend followed up on a number of people who'd been "healed" through certain well-advertised healing ministries. After his inquiry, however, our friend found that *not one person* who claimed to be healed was in fact healed.

Through marketing schemes these ministries use ads showing large crowds of hurting people gathered around the person who claims the power of healing. If *you* were suffering, the picture would induce you to believe that if you were there, you'd be healed. So when the chance comes, you go. And, if you *weren't* healed, you'd be told that you lack faith. That stigma would keep you, like all the others who'd been duped, from speaking out against the lie.

When we returned from Israel with the Hebraic foundations and began to write books, certain publishers wanted to market *us* — to make us a household name in Christendom: "Once you're well-known and are on the speaking circuit, then you can share your message." We turned them down because there's no biblical basis for marketing *individuals* in order to share God's truth. We wanted people to verify what our Father had given us by using the means Jesus gives in Matthew 18:18-20.

So, where has syllogistic reasoning gotten us in Christendom thus far?

(1). Through the myriad of Church Councils over the centuries it has produced the 38,000 divisions we now have.

One of the main foundations of **philosophical debate** that strongly influenced these Councils is to organize Scripture into a syllogistic format. Then through **Hellenist oratory**, others were persuaded to accept the presented conclusion.

You may have heard of the early twentieth century philosophical-rhetorical defense of the faith in the Scopes Monkey Trial (1925). The biblical truth of Creation was argued against the theory of evolution in a court of law. Greek rhetoric and human oration rather than reliance on the Holy Spirit were the means of determining "truth". The reality of Creation was bypassed, and the teaching of evolution triumphed. (Even today, despite the arguments of many scientists who recognize an Initiator to all of life, "chance origin" reigns in universities and therefore in public school classrooms.)

(2). Because of the "success" of corporation-style advertising, well-known Christian teachers have been influenced by deceptive syllogistic reasoning. With a teaching style that offers entertainment for the unrepentant, the primary goal of these teachers is to make both themselves and their congregations popular. Popularity = success by the world's standards, and success pays bills!

1. A **hypothesis**: Clergy A is convinced by the Church Growth Movement that size equals success (and noses equal nickels).
2. A **synthesis**: Successful teachers in this movement rely on entertainment to attract crowds. Refraining from anything that leads to conviction of sin or makes people feel uncomfortable, they soothe people in their guilt so that they feel good about themselves (the same self-esteem strategy Satan has infiltrated into modern

childraising techniques). (The "bible" of this movement to avoid the controversy of sin and the need to humble yourself and repent before our holy God is *The Purpose Driven Church* by well-advertised Christian author and speaker, Rick Warren.)

3. A **conclusion**: "If I use entertainment to attract people and don't step on any toes with Bible truth, I'll be successful."

The truth: Success in God's sight is a repentant heart that seeks and receives His forgiveness by grace (Luke 15:10). The sign of our Lord's pleasure with the repentant who love and serve Him is that their prayers are powerful and accomplish much for His Kingdom purposes (James 5:16). These are the promises of God, and are therefore true beyond doubt!

The syllogistic reasoning that was introduced by the Hellenist converts in the second and third centuries has replaced and nullified the block logic on which we can know and trust our God and His Word. Block logic enables us to understand His Kingdom and the interconnected theme of both testaments to fulfill His purposes. Syllogism, however, not only destroys the simplicity of trust, it opens the door for demonic deception.

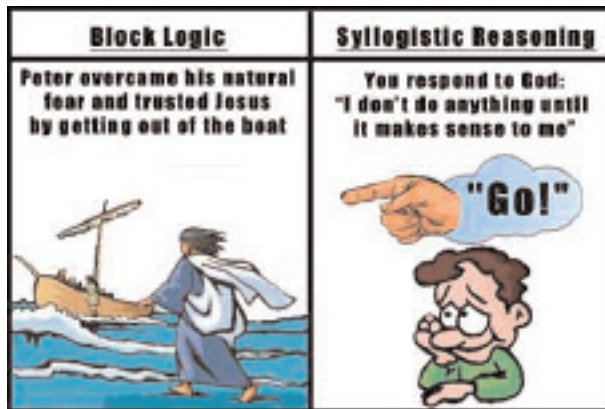
Syllogistic reasoning is the basis of teaching and learning in both public and Christian education. In essence, "Once I know a fact, that's the end of it. I'm ready to pass the test." Knowing, not application of that knowledge, is the end-all product of education today. And Christian education, from pulpit to Sunday school, has readily accepted this goal which

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falls far short of our Lord's criterion to *put His truth into practice*.

Syllogistic reasoning, coupled with the centuries-long philosophical debates used by Church Councils to establish creeds and doctrines, has propelled countless Christians to errantly rely on the "wise and learned" (1 Corinthians 1:19-21, 27,28) to establish their faith practices for them. Those who are *told* what to believe rather than *mining His Truth for themselves* through His Spirit find that they can repeat creeds but are on shaky sand without personal obedient trust.

God's Word commands His own to call upon the Spirit of Christ within them to guide and empower them to serve Him in His Kingdom.



"Satan himself transforms himself into [masquerades as] an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14).

From God's perspective, the massive divisions within Christendom are the work of Satan. Through the Holy Spirit in those who love and serve Him with obedient trust, our Father yearns for His people to be ONE in union with Jesus (John 17:11,21-23). Church history reveals that so many of the **religious practices** found today throughout Christendom are root-

ed in demonic/pagan Hellenism. And, to His sorrow, the demonic/pagan Roman religious hierarchy has influenced the various forms of **religious organization** found throughout Christendom as well.

While this may be new turf for you, the demonic influence of Greek Hellenism and Roman religious rule on Christendom can never be overstated. Almost everything you might consider "Christian" today, from familiar faith practices to "Christian holidays" to the overarching role of clergy and ecclesiastical hierarchy, come from pagan Hellenism or Roman rule — *not* the Bible.

(Please examine the influence of the Sodom Factor on religion in Lifebyte 34. *The Abrahamic Covenant Groundwork For The Hebraic Restoration.*)

In our own little corner of Colorado Springs (a city deemed openly by many evangelicals to be the "Protestant Vatican"), the influence of Hellenism and Romanism permeates the world's perspective of religious division. For example, a large Korean population resides within a few blocks of our home. Represented nearby are manifestations of division and disunion with the Korean Roman Catholic Church, the Korean Methodist Church, the Korean Presbyterian Church, the Korean Lutheran Church and the Korean Baptist Church.

They have the same language and culture, but a stubborn refusal to cooperate as a single expression of the body of Christ. Who is behind this division? The devious one who *hates the children of God*.

"Do not think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against another" (1 Corinthians 4:6, NKJV).

Greece was the epitome of exalting the mind and hailing those whose

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rhetorical speech skills most persuaded others to their side. Athens, a city festering with pagan deities, was known worldwide as the **bastion of philosophical debate**. This was the difficult scenario Paul encountered on his journey there with the Gospel:

*All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but **talking about and listening to the latest ideas** (Acts 17:21).*

At the core of these endless debates lay the Hellenist premise that **man is the center of all things**. Keep in mind that it was from the Hellenist influence that emerged John Chrysostom, Justin Martyr, and Origen who are esteemed today as “Church Fathers” but could more accurately be branded **the persuasive Fathers of Hellenism** rather than heralds of the Kingdom of God.

The Hellenist philosophical/syllogistic influence on Church Councils of all kinds over the centuries blinded them from relying on *apperception* as Jesus and the Bible writers did. **Apperception** interprets any new information or idea according to how it measures up to the *previous established truth* of God’s Word.

In other words, whenever you encounter some new teaching or practice, you evaluate it in light of older, proven truths, trusting both in the *Spirit of Christ within you* for discernment and the *reliability of God’s Word* as the only unalterable standard. That’s why the Bereans were commended by Paul for taking every new teaching and measuring it against the Hebrew Scriptures, the only Bible of their time (Acts 17:11).

So too, instead of discarding the Older Testament as outdated or inapplicable as so many today do, we who fol-

low Jesus must align all that we say, teach and live by through the unchangeable filter of *both testaments of the Bible*. For instance, those who insist there is no hell, or that all “good” people go to heaven are revealing their own biblical illiteracy and personally-revised religion.

As Jesus taught His disciples as well as the crowds and even those of the religious establishment, He made frequent use of *apperception*. He brought forth *known Hebrew passages* that authenticated a point He was making, then applied them in a deeper way to Himself and to His making full their meaning.

For example, everyone was familiar with the commands of God regarding adultery and murder (Exodus 20:13,14). Using that Hebrew text, Jesus then expanded the commands to a deeper heart issue that surpassed outward violation. So important were the Hebrew Scriptures as a basis for the gospel message that they were quoted, or *apperceived as the basis for the new teaching*, fifty-one times in the book of Matthew alone!

Now ask yourself: Is your life in our Lord characterized by a pure heart which so loves God that you’re *eager* to *apperceive* His Word and live by it as your standard?

[Every division in Christianity relies on *revisionism*, turning away from the intent of the scriptural authors in order to appease your own agenda — the opposite of *apperception*. For more on *apperception* go to: <http://www.restorationministries.org/HtmlFiles/htmlDiscussingHow/18.DiscussingHow.htm>].

Apperception will always take you back to our Lord Jesus and what He commands in His Word. All that He taught was founded on Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:44). By following His pattern, you’ll guard yourself from error. Any faith practice you establish will

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never let you go beyond what He has written (1 Corinthians 4:6), that is, you won't revise Scripture to suit you.

Jesus gave His authentic followers who would be true to Him the authority for *two or three in agreement as witnesses* to use His Word as their basis for validating their faith practices (Matthew 18:16-20).

Remember, a “faith practice” is a *way of life*, not a ritual. *Hearing and putting into practice* is what “doctrine” meant to those who first put their trust in Jesus. Their *halakhahs*, that is, their Bible-based applications, guided their way of life. They were first called “The Way” (Acts 9:2) — their *way of thinking* resulted in a *way of life* that understood the importance of bearing fruit for the Kingdom of God.

Hellenism was demonically inspired, relying on the *intellectual domination* of philosophical discussion to establish faith practices and creeds. The antithesis of apperception, philosophical argument establishes faith practices based on debate and the power of persuasive oratory.

Many today errantly use “doctrine” and “creed” interchangeably. There's a big difference! Creed has been developed by Church Councils, far removed from those who will be affected by their decisions.

Creeds are the man-made postulates you must agree with in order to belong to a particular denomination or sect. Creeds can be explained without any sense that you're accountable to live according to them. Your sin nature-controlled mind can agree with creeds yet live compromised with the world's ways

— in other words, at enmity with God (James 4:4).

Your doctrine, however, is revealed by your *way of life* as you're increasingly sanctified into the character of Jesus. Doctrine *shapes your will* so that you determine to follow through, both in faith practices that accord with it as well as in life choices that reflect it (Matthew 5:19).

These two arenas authenticate that your doctrine not only emanates from your mind, will and emotions but also is *owned by your spirit* as you live it out. Your doctrine substantiates how you put into practice the commands of God, and how you live out your call from Lord Jesus to actively participate in expanding His Kingdom.

NO Clergy and NO Titles in the Kingdom of God

Demonic influence has permeated Christendom with a hierarchical perspective that nullifies the intimacy of our Father with His children. How? Through *establishment of a clergy system* which our God hates and wars against. [See our Hebraic Article, *I Hate Nicolaitanism*; <<http://www.restorationministries.org/html/hebraicArticles.html>>]

We need to examine the detrimental impact of the clergy system because while you may have left that system behind, your *way of thinking* may still bear the rotted fruit of its influence. Consider in your spirit this warning by our Lord to not only His disciples but also to the multitudes of listeners. They were well familiar with the overbearing Pharisees and Law experts who paraded their prestige out of self-love but ignored the needs of God's people:

“As they retain the outer form of religion but deny its power. Stay away from these people!” (2 Timothy 3:5)

*“But you, do **not be called ‘Rabbi,’**
for One is your teacher
and you are all brothers.
Do **not call** anyone on earth ‘father,’
for One is your heavenly Father.
Neither **be called** ruling leaders for you
have one ruling leader, the Christ.
And the greater of you shall be your ser-
vant” (Matthew 23:8-11, literal trans-
lation).*

Have you ever considered why our Lord didn’t want those who would serve as leaders in advancing His Kingdom on earth to have titles? Certainly the people of His day knew the difference between the caring elders of their clans and the self-serving religious leaders who lorded their position over them! *Serving others from the heart* distinguished the two.

Contemporary Christendom is filled with titles: “Pope”, “Bishop”, “Pastor”, “Reverend”, “Father”. But why are titles such an accepted practice when Jesus forbade His people from either *calling anyone by a title* or from *being called by one*? Because *He* never intended that His kingdom on earth become a religious organization. That was the sin nature of man at work. The Jewish religious establishment flaunted their positions by title as well as trappings of power (Matthew 23:4-7). And even more influential upon the Church was the demonic power of Rome!

Let’s briefly review what we discussed extensively in **Lifebytes 51 thru 57**. As our High Priest and King, Lord Jesus established a Kingdom, empowering through His Spirit those He’s called out of the world to fulfill their purpose in His Kingdom. That’s why we must constantly keep in mind that He ALONE is the Head of each of His followers. Jesus has *never called for ecclesiastical intermediaries* to come between Him and each fol-

lower who is indwelled by His Spirit.

To advance His Kingdom calls for true submission to *His Lordship*, that is, total rule in your soul by your beloved Lord and King. Kingdom living calls for His followers to look to the Spirit of Jesus within for guidance and empowerment and discernment of His will. Our Lord Jesus assures us, *“the Kingdom of God is within you”* (Luke 17:21). The primary commitment of His beloved people is to Him and His Kingdom service, not to any religious organization (Matthew 6:33).

Our Lord and King describes how His kingdom is expanded: *“The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough”* (Matthew 13:33). His Kingdom, borne on the rule of His Spirit in His followers, is worked through the “dough” of people’s lives as they interact and see and hear His Spirit at work in His sheep. A Kingdom of those who are *totally dependent on Jesus*, it advances entirely without ecclesiastical organization (see John 15:4-8).

The history of Christianity demonstrates a departure from its Kingdom purposes by the third and fourth centuries. Once the demonic principality of Rome invaded and overcame those who were not clinging to the True Vine, what was intended to be the Lord’s Kingdom advancing on earth became a man-controlled religious organization no longer dependent on His guidance and empowerment. Without the Headship of Jesus, Christendom substituted all forms of demonically-inspired pagan practices to compromise the purity of God’s ways.

The organizational hierarchy of the Roman Empire seeped into Christendom like an evil cloud, adopting the same titles and levels of power with an ecclesiastical flavor. The title of the chief priest

“As they retain the outer form of religion but deny its power. Stay away from these people!” (2 Timothy 3:5)

of the Roman cults, Pontifex Maximus, became the Roman Pontiff, the sovereign and supreme ruler of Christianity. The writings of Roman Catholicism state that the Pope is the doorkeeper of heaven, the “vicar of Christ” — the *vicarious substitute for Christ*. Even the pagan holidays of Rome became cherished “Christianized” holy days: Christmas at the time of the winter solstice, Easter adapted from celebration of the goddess of Spring, Eastre.

You may find it hard to believe that Satan rather than Jesus has such control over organized religion within Christendom, particularly with its multiple divisions and positions of clerical control.

Again, refusal to apperceive what would have been understood by the original writers causes people to project what they’d like the Bible to say, or discount its timeless truth as intended only for that time period. Rather than being applied as the Word of God, the Bible becomes a historical tome of suggestions about a God in a faraway place and time.

More time is spent trying to explain the Bible rather than focusing on how to apply it so that you can fulfill your specific Spirit-directed part in the Kingdom. Thus, the whole body of Christ suffers from its missing pieces.

“He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse”

(Malachi 4:6).

“And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and He is in heaven”

(Matthew 23:9).

A very sinister reason lurks behind why the title “father” in its various forms has been used in many parts of Christendom. In its pure form, the designator “father” pertains to a man’s relationship with his children. God turns the heart of a father to children to fulfill His purposes. But Satan has counterfeited that role by usurping “fathering” by the ecclesiastical hierarchy within Christendom.

Remember, the two of us are heralds of a *Hebraic* Restoration. God chose Abraham, the first Hebrew (Genesis 14:13), out of all others He could have selected because of a key trait He knew about the Patriarch: “*For I have chosen him in order that he may command his children and his household after him that they keep the way of the LORD to do righteousness and justice...*” (Genesis 18:19).

The highest authority in the earliest church was a male head of a household. Hebraic culture as well as Scripture supported that man to be like Abraham as he taught and role-modeled for his children and entire household the righteous living and just decisions God called for. It was a *daily interactive process* of coming together as a family and looking to God’s Word to find answers for each decision and issue and need.

In this light Paul would remind the fathers in Ephesus to “*not provoke your children to wrath; instead, nurture them in the discipline and admonition of the Lord*” (6:4). Who is behind separating fathers from their children through divorce, as well as urging the Christian religious establishment to usurp God’s requirement for fathers to train their children in the way of Lord? Satan and those he uses, whose sin nature overrules God’s will and ways.

“As they retain the outer form of religion but deny its power. Stay away from these people!” (2 Timothy 3:5)

The destruction of the role of fathers as wise patriarchs of their clans is nothing new. It all began centuries ago when the devil seduced leaders in the Christian religious establishment to use the word “father” to bolster their control and dominance.

Let’s begin at the top of the ecclesiastical pyramid and look at the demonic control that is exercised in religious organization when they appropriate the title “father” — a practice forbidden by Lord Jesus. The term “Pope” is a variant of the Latin *papa*. So in Roman Catholicism you have a “father” image at the top of the hierarchy all the way to the bottom with priests called “father.”

Nor are Protestants innocent in assuming a paternal role. Most use the term “pastor” for their clergy — “pastor” is derived from the Old English word for father, as well as the Latin for “feeder”.

Even today, many Protestant *women* clergy use the title “pastor”, even though the apostle Paul commanded through the Holy Spirit that women are forbidden to teach or have authority over men (1 Timothy 2:12). Don’t forget that Satan and all his schemes have deceived part of institutionalized Christianity for centuries. His ways are *anti-Christ*, in opposition to the Person and commands of Jesus our Lord.

Think about it: To tempt the Christian establishment to broadly accept a title that’s forbidden by Jesus is a great victory for the devil. Satan has induced Christendom to accept the title “father” and other positional ranks with few questioning their use. Why have so many remained silent?

A satanic scheme that has proven successful has been the intimidation of fathers by clergy who keep these men in submission through their seminary

training. An old adage states, “Knowledge is power.” Roman Catholicism effectively kept the Bible captive in Latin for over 1,100 years!

Today, most fathers are intimidated by the religious knowledge that clergy wield from the pulpit. That’s why so many fathers relegate their God-given responsibility to train their children to the religious establishment. What a tragic testimony of fearful irresponsibility that so many fathers refuse to trust the Spirit of Jesus within them to guide them into the biblical truths their family so desperately need.

***“God saw all that He had made,
and it was very good...”***

(Genesis 1:31).

Another sinister devilish accomplishment needs to be mentioned, one that extends back to the Greek/Hellenist influence on Christendom through the “Church Fathers”: the **Dualism** we noted earlier. Again, based on the teachings of Plato, this philosophical worldview posited that life was divided into two components: the transcendent spiritual arena of eternal truths which he called “good,” and the coarse physical realm of matter which he considered “evil.”

As dualism began to influence Christianity, it emphasized that the spiritual realm and those who focused on it are considered “holy” and “pious”, above all others. Those who work in the world are considered “profane” or “secular”. [Note: There was no separation of the holy and the common in the early Church. Holiness and righteousness were, and still are, available equally to all through repentance.]

Of course, since the physical realm counted for nothing, those who consid-

“As they retain the outer form of religion but deny its power. Stay away from these people!” (2 Timothy 3:5)

ered themselves “spiritual” could indulge their flesh in all sorts of immoral, unholy ways and feel no guilt. Their “spiritual” self was untouched so it didn’t matter how they indulged their flesh. (Now is that self-deceptive or what?!) That’s why so many “religious leaders” down through the ages have rationalized their sinful pleasures — their “spirit” was still alright with God, or so they thought!

Let’s look at the impact of demonically-inspired dualism on Christendom today:

- This underlying belief system is foundational to *Nicolaitanism* — a “clergy class” set apart for higher sacred pursuit while “laity” labor in the mundane realm of the profane world (See Revelation 2:6,15).

Dualism established a class of religious professionals set above the rest of the body of Christ. Only the educated ordained could conduct religious services and carry out responsibilities for which every follower of Jesus was specifically gifted to carry out. The “untrained laity” were thus relegated to passive spectatorship, particularly during “church services”, which were adapted from Greek stage performances. This elevation of one individual over communal participation of all directly violates a biblical command (1 Corinthians 14:26).

Even today many seminaries (including the one we attended!) infer or teach that those who choose to engage in full-time ministry as an occupation are somehow more spiritual and more favored than those in “secular” vocations. So asking clergy to step aside from their unbiblical position is like asking the fox to leave the henhouse — the cost is too dear.

- Dualism is behind identifying inanimate buildings as holy places, referring to them as “the church” or “the house of God”. However, the biblical understanding of church from God’s perspective as well as the first-century interpretation is the *collective body of those who follow Jesus* — His “called-out ones”, the definition of *ekklesia*. (See Acts 17:24.)

Instead of pointing people to the Spirit of Jesus within His people, dualists created *external visual images* to attract those controlled by soulish desires. Dualism influenced the use of stained-glass windows and towering steeples that point upward to a deity out of reach — again, the separation of the spiritual realm from the physical.

[For more on the influence of cosmic dualism on Christendom, see *Discussing How to Restore the Early Church*, Lesson 16—“Attack On Jesus’s Victory: Pietism and Asceticism; Attack On Jesus’s Victory: Self-mortification; Attack On Jesus: Veneration of Mary and the Saints”.]

Through widespread acceptance of Plato’s dualism and Rome’s hierarchical organization, control of the masses became the hallmark of Christendom. Professionally trained men considered themselves holier than and spiritually superior to others. So they established and perpetuated a religious system in which they stand between our only Father and His children, and insert themselves between the personal Headship of Jesus and His beloved.

As result, the “laity” were trained to be passive toward the Kingdom interests our Lord Jesus — a passivity that’s exactly the fruit Satan has produced throughout Christendom. So few who call themselves “Christian” are fulfilling our Lord’s

“As they retain the outer form of religion but deny its power. Stay away from these people!” (2 Timothy 3:5)

Kingdom mandate, “As you go, make disciples...”

Concluding thoughts

What little emphasis there is on discipleship within Christendom has become institutionalized, thereby becoming part of Satan’s overall plan to thwart the expansion of our Lord’s Kingdom. As with the clergy system, discipleship has become a system of programs that only hurts those being trained.

Our Lord’s way, however, was personal role modeling and interactive instruction as the earliest Christian elders did. Jesus spent intense, private time with His disciples, showing the kind of love that laid aside personal needs on behalf of others. In like manner He commanded that they should love one another the way He had.

Today, efficiently run discipleship programs rely heavily on prepared training materials which emphasize techniques rather than loving, committed relationships. Leaders throughout Christendom stay behind pulpits and podiums as they teach techniques which listeners don’t have a chance to see put into practice. Jesus’ way? *Personally role modeling a way of life* that reflects His character and His heart to reach the lost.

The majority of Sunday schools and Bible studies today continue to pass along passivity by presenting scripture as a compilation of interesting historical facts and recommendations. But this is the *Word of God!* And He intends that His people put it into practice as their way of life. Sadly, the teachers themselves have lost sight of Jesus’ command to make disciples as part of going about their daily living.

Contemporary Sunday schools and Bible studies mirror public education in

being far removed from the training people need for daily life in *all its dimensions*. By adopting worldly methodologies which encourage passivity toward the commands of Jesus, at their core Sunday schools and Bible studies might be considered *anti-Christ*.

As long as your acceptance in a Bible study or Sunday school is based on just being there rather than on your righteous identity and fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus, you are participating in a demonic practice. As long as your teachers have no ongoing, frequent interaction with those they’re training so that they can role model a way of life that reflects the commands of Jesus, they’re following the lead of demons.

As long as the end-all product of religious services, Sunday schools and Bible studies are people who remain passive to the Kingdom interests of our Lord and King, they are *anti-Christ*.