

APOSTOLIC INSTITUTE OF MINISTRY

MINISTERIAL TRAINING COURSE Christianity Revisited Lesson One

READ: Student's Handbook: Highlights in Church History, Chapter One

THINK: Church history has made almost a complete circle, from Apostolic truth to complete apostasy and heresy, and finally, back to Apostolic truth.

Martin Luther was a great reformer, but when presented with full Apostolic truth, rejected it. Why was he able to see and accept only a small portion of truth? (You need not answer the question; it's offered as food for thought.)

Consider the bearing of Rev. 2:4 on the failure of the early church to maintain truth past the first century.

The first century is known as the Apostolic Era. Its leaders were the Apostles. The next two centuries began the Church Era, led by the Church Fathers. We may accept the writings of the Apostles, found in the scripture, as truth. However, the writings of the Church Fathers must be considered carefully, and weighed in relation to the scripture. From AD 100 onward, many heresies were manifested in the church.

Consider the courage of the Protestant Reformers, who risked their lives to stand for the few truths they were shown. Do we show as much courage when standing for the original Apostolic doctrines?

WRITE: A short essay on the causes of the Falling Away from Apostolic Truth. Concentrate specifically on causes in the first century. Exact length of the essay is up to you. You need not go into great detail. We are mostly concerned with making sure you understand the reasons why the church backslid.

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READ: Student's Handbook, Chapter Two

THINK: While there is great emphasis placed on the restoration of the Gifts of the Spirit, and rightly so, the Fruit of the Spirit is just as vital. All the Gifts in operation will profit nothing if the Fruit of the Spirit is not also present.

Joel, between predicting the Falling Away of the Church (Joel, chapter 1) and the restoration of the Church (Joel 2:19-32), advised us as to what we might do to bring about restoration. Joel, chapter 2, verses 1 and 15, demonstrate the great urgency which the Lord placed upon the heart of the prophet. And what did the prophet advise? Turning to God, fasting, weeping and mourning (for the great error into which the church had fallen, and for our sins), and rending our hearts instead of our garments (indicating a sincere repentance, rather than lip-service).

The ministry was especially instructed to weep for the people between the porch and the altar. That was the place where sacrifices for sin were brought. It is a place of repentance and sorrow for sin. Any minister with a call from God knows what it is to weep. Many is the night the man or woman of God lays before the Lord crying out for lost souls. A minister who cannot weep for the lost does not truly love the lost, and will be of little value to the Kingdom.

WRITE: Using Joel 2:15-18, and any other references you may wish to use, expound upon the role of the ministry in bringing about restoration and reaching the lost. No specific length, just say what's in your heart.

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Lesson Three

READ: Student's Handbook, Chapter Three; the book of Lamentations.

THINK: Jesus said, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." The word power was a poor translation of the Greek word. But in 1611 AD, the year the King James Version was translated, there was no English word that could carry the full meaning of the Greek word *dinamin*. (You may occasionally see this word spelled *dynamin*, or *dunamin*. The reason for the spelling discrepancy is that the original sound of the Greek letter Y does not exist in English. It was similar to the German ü or the Russian ы. The sound can be approximated by forming the mouth as if to say oo, but saying ee, instead.) Today, we have several words in our language which were taken directly from this Greek word. Some of these words are dynamo, dynamite, and dynamic. These words give us a better insight into the type of "power" that Jesus promised us. Both dynamo and dynamite call to mind tremendous, fiery, explosive power. Stop now, and read Acts 2:1-4. Compare in your mind the events taking place in those verses and the promise of "power" that Jesus gave us.

The first church, in all its power and glory, with all the fruits and gifts of the Spirit in operation, still backslid. Reading through the book of Acts, it seems impossible that such a thing could happen. But it did happen. The twenty-first century church must always be on guard against the enemy called complacency. Take a few moments to picture in your mind the effect that complacency would have on the church today.

WRITE: Offer two scripture references that demonstrate the power of the early church. Offer two scripture references that warn the early church of the Falling Away that was coming upon them.

The book of Lamentations was Jeremiah's view of the ruins of Jerusalem after Babylon destroyed her. The first century church was also overrun by Babylon, or rather by Babylonian religious teachings, and was laid waste by them. Write a short

comparison of the ruins of Jerusalem and the remains of first century Christianity after the infiltration of Babylon.

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READ: Student's Handbook, Chapter Four; the book of Jude

THINK: As the devouring insects (Joel 1:4) destroyed the church, it became more and more formal. Since the fruit of the Spirit was gone, there was no real love between the people. Without love, there was no need for real fellowship, so cold formality took its place. Without the gifts of the Spirit, God was not able to guide the worship services. Without that guidance, the church used ritual and tradition to keep order. Hardly a satisfactory substitute.

In his epistle, Jude warned of the infiltration of non-Christian elements into the church. This book was written 66 years after the church was born. The message was clear: The church was backsliding.

Jude warned of the infiltrators, referring to them as twice dead (King James Version). Don't miss the significance of this phrase! It tells us something important. When we repent, we die to sin. Spiritually, this death to sin is the only death a Christian will see. But a Christian who backslides, and who then falls away to the point of being reprobate, is bound for the second death (Rev. 21:8). These infiltrators were twice dead, that is, they had once died to sin, but after being saved, had died again, having fallen away beyond hope of redemption. Their ultimate end will be the lake of fire. (See Jer. 6:30; Rom. 1:28; II Tim. 3:1-9; Titus 1:10-16; Heb. 6:4-6)

Rome was the world power when the church was born. But the greatest danger that Rome represented to the church was not its great political or military might. To understand the real danger of Rome, we must go back almost 2300 years before the birth of the Messiah. (Note: This is just a brief historical overview. The following information will be covered in greater detail in the class entitled Babylon the Great.)

Noah's son Ham had a son named Cush. Cush was the father of Nimrod (Gen.

10:8-10). Nimrod, whose name means “*he is in rebellion*”, founded the Babylonian Empire. The religion of the Empire was the worship of Cush, his wife Semiramis, and Nimrod. These three claimed to be one god in three persons, a trinity.

Babylon was the first world empire. It fell to the Medes and the Persians (Dan. 6:24-31). At that point, the Medo-Persian Empire ruled the known world. Although the Empire of Babylon had fallen, its religion had not. It became the religion of the Medo-Persian Empire. This Empire fell to the Greek Empire (Alexander the Great).

Although Greece did not embrace the religion of Babylon, the religion nevertheless remained in power by moving its headquarters from ancient Babylon to the city of Pergamos in Asia Minor, close to the center of the Empire. By doing so, it remained an important force in world affairs.

All through the scriptures, God condemned Babylon and everything it stood for. In Rev. 2:12-17, in writing to the church in Pergamos, God twice mentioned that Satan lived there. Why? Because Babylon was centered there.

The Greek Empire fell to Rome. For a few centuries, Babylon did not relocate. But during the reign of Constantine, a unique opportunity arose. Rome had become a city without a solid religion. Although the Romans still worshiped Jupiter, etc., they no longer really believed in their gods and goddesses. Since a people without faith would be easy prey for their enemies, Constantine sought a solution.

Up until this time, Christianity, although mostly backslidden by then, was an "outlaw" religion. It was severely persecuted. But following the conversion of his mother to Christianity, Constantine toyed with the idea of making it the new official religion of Rome. Seeing this, Babylon lost no time in moving to Rome. In an effort to get Constantine to choose Babylon over Christianity, they named him honorary high priest. Constantine, for his part, did not choose one religion over the other. Rather, he combined them. Christianity, already backslidden and rife with Babylonian doctrines, offered little resistance. Babylon, already a tool of Satan, was overjoyed. The resulting religion was the Roman Catholic Church.

In Revelation, chapter 17, God warns of the end-time destruction of Babylon. She is pictured as a woman sitting on a beast. Verse 9 tells us that the woman sits on seven hills. Only two cities in the world are built on seven hills. One is in Ohio, the other is Rome. It is obvious that Babylon is still in Rome.

WRITE: Is there room for Babylonian doctrines or traditions in the church? Why

or why not?

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Lesson Five

READ: Student's Handbook, Chapter Five,

THINK: The word trinity was coined about 200 AD by Tertullian. It was formed from the Latin words *tri unitas*, that is, three in one. The teaching of a triune god-head in Christianity began earlier, however. Montanus taught it in 156 AD. About the same time, some began baptizing using the trinitarian formula (Mt. 28:19), still in common use today.

The Apostolic truth of baptism in the Name of Jesus has appeared many times through the centuries, but only among small, isolated groups. This truth was restored to the church in 1914. (More on this in later studies.)

Baptism in Jesus' Name does not contradict Mt. 28:19. In reading this verse, we note that the word name is singular, not plural, indicating that only one Name was to be used. In addition, the words Father, Son and Holy Ghost are not names, but titles. Then what is the one Name? The apostles understood it to be Jesus. (See Lk. 24:47; Acts 2:38; 4:12; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16; Col. 3:17) No other baptismal formula was ever used in the Bible. If the apostles always baptized in Jesus' Name, dare we do otherwise?

WRITE: Since baptism is an essential part of salvation (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; I Pet. 3:21), do you feel that the formula used (Jesus' Name, trinitarian, or other) is an essential part of baptism? Is trinitarian baptism acceptable practice? Why or why not?

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Lesson Six

READ: Student's Handbook, Chapter Six,

THINK: Trinitarianism became the official teaching of the church at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. This teaching, as derived from that Council and the *Quicumque Vult*, or Athanasian Creed, is basically as follows:

There is one God, who is eternally divided into three Persons. All three Persons are equal, they all exist at the same time, and all three have always existed. No Person is before or after another. There is the Holy Ghost who proceeds from the Father and the Son; the Son who proceeds from the Father; and the Father who proceeds from no one. To summarize, the trinitarian view declares that when we die, we will find three Persons on thrones in heaven.

It is granted that a significant number of people who consider themselves trinitarian do not believe in the Godhead as it is described above. Nevertheless, that is the actual doctrine of the trinity as declared in the Nicene Creed and as expounded upon in the Athanasian Creed. This is the doctrine as it is accepted and believed by the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and most Protestant Churches. If read carefully, the doctrine can be seen to contradict both itself and scripture.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL: (Extra items that will be on the mid-term exam, which follows this lesson.)

The Bishop of Rome is called Pope, which means Papa.

The Holy Ghost was restored to the church in the first few moments of 1901 (New Years Day).

Worship of goddesses (Semiramis, Venus, Diana, etc.) was replaced in the Roman church by Mariolatry, that is, the worship of Mary.

Images (statues) first appeared in Christian churches in 405 AD.

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Examination CR-1

1. Which prophet used worms to describe the falling away of the church?
2. (T or F) Tertullian was a great 2nd century Oneness teacher.
3. At which church council, and in what year, was the doctrine of the trinity made official church teaching?
4. What did Joel mean when he said the new wine was "cut off?" (Joel 1:5)
5. The Apostolic Church period ended in 100 AD. In what year was the Baptism of the Holy Ghost finally restored?
6. What are the nine fruits of the Spirit?
7. What are the nine gifts of the Spirit?
8. Summarize the doctrine of the trinity.
9. Offer one verse of scripture to disprove the doctrine of the trinity.

10. What did Catholicism use to replace the worship of goddesses such as Venus and Diana?
11. What does the title Pope mean?
12. Which Roman Emperor made a nominal conversion to Christianity in order to get Christians to fight for him?
13. The first church council was held in Acts 15. What was the main topic of discussion?
14. Offer three scriptures to prove that the Apostolic church baptized in Jesus' Name.
15. Which Protestant church did the nations of Germany, Denmark, Norway and Sweden adopt as their state church?
16. When did statues first begin to appear in Christian churches?
17. Who is the woman depicted in Rev. 17?
18. (T or F) No false teachers arose in the church while the apostles were alive.
19. (T or F) The spirit of antichrist was at work in the days of the apostles.

20. Name two leaders of the Protestant Reformation, and the churches they started.

Student's name

Date

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Lesson Seven

READ: Student's Handbook, Chapter Seven

THINK: The Dark Ages were a period of great turmoil for believers in Apostolic truth. During this time, many faithful saints were tortured and killed. In the year 800, the Roman church discovered an Apostolic church in Abyssinia (Ethiopia). It took them 200 years to do it, but they eventually destroyed it, replacing it with a church more like Rome (Coptic Church).

The loss of the Abyssinian church did not mean there was no longer an Apostolic witness in the world. First, God has never left Himself without a witness (Acts 14:17). Second, Jesus promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against His church (Mt. 16:18). All throughout the history of the last two thousand years, we see a thread of truth. There was always a voice, somewhere, speaking the truth. When one voice was silenced, another, somewhere else, took its place. Names such as Bishop Sabellius, Abyssinia, Michael Servetus, the Albigenses, the Camisards, the Cevennes, the Bogomils, and others, stand as proof that, somewhere, God has always had a witness. The last of these small groups, the Bogomils, disappeared at the close of the 19th century, just as God began the end-time outpouring of His Spirit (1901, Topeka, Kansas). . . . and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it . . .

WRITE: What, in your opinion, would make a person, or group of people, willing to do what God wants, in spite of the powerful Roman church, in spite of popular opinion, etc.? Hebrews 11:32-38 may be helpful to you in answering this.

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Lesson Eight

READ: Student's Handbook, Chapter Eight

THINK: The Roman church had made it illegal to translate the scriptures into any language other than Latin. (It already existed in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.) But for most of the Dark Ages, Latin was not the language of the people. Only the wealthy could afford education. And even if the common people had been able to read and understand Latin, it was also punishable by death to own a copy of the scriptures!

The Roman church's policy of keeping the Bible from the laity continued even into the 20th century, hundreds of years past the point where they made their own English translations. Until the mid-twentieth century, Catholics were taught not to read the Bible. They were told that only their priest had the ability to understand scripture.

In the late 1300's, a faint wind began to blow in the Roman church, a few scattered drops of rain began to fall. Through the centuries, the wind and rain have increased to a veritable hurricane, as the wind of God's Spirit blows, and the latter rain continues to fall.

WRITE: Why should the Bible be available to all the people, instead of just the church leaders?

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Lesson Nine

READ: Student's Handbook, Chapter Nine

THINK: The truth was not lost by the early church all at once. Nor could it be restored all at once. There was a Spanish man named Michael Servetus (Miguel Serveto), to whom God had revealed full Apostolic truth. His first book, entitled *On the Errors of the Trinity*, was published in 1531. He was eventually burned at the stake, but not before he had written several books and pamphlets, which were distributed all over Europe. Copies of these books and pamphlets were tied to his arms as he was taken to be burned.

Martin Luther approved of Michael's execution. Why? Because Martin Luther was given only a small portion of truth. That was all that he and his followers were prepared to accept. Their love for truth was not strong enough to allow them to see any more. Michael received full Apostolic truth because he loved truth. But, as frequently happens, he paid for that love by dying. The day will come when those who burned him will see him receive his reward (Ps. 116:15).

WRITE: Luther's reforms were not directed at creating a personal relationship between man and God. What, then, was the purpose of Luther's 95 theses? What situation(s) did they seek to remedy?

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Lesson Ten

READ: Student's Handbook, Chapter Ten

THINK: The Revival Period (1648-1900) was an exciting, albeit dangerous, time to be alive. Spiritually speaking, the wind and the rain were getting heavy. The experiences of people such as Mother Ann Lee, François de Paris, Wesley, and others, are a great inspiration to us, as they show clearly the involvement of God with human beings. As Mother Ann preached for four hours in 72 languages she had never learned, who could doubt that God was speaking through her?

More so than during the Protestant Reformation, a personal experience with God was being stressed. People were warned of their personal responsibility for their sins, and their personal obligation to "get right" with God. And the end result of this teaching was the clear, unmistakable blessing of God. All of this set the stage for the last and final chapter in the history of the Christian Church.

WRITE: Neither the Quakers, nor the Shakers, nor Wesley, had a revelation of full Apostolic truth. (Unlike the Bogomils in eastern Europe, who did have such a revelation.) What do you think kept Pentecost from being restored to any of these western groups?

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Lesson Eleven

READ: Student's Handbook, Chapter Eleven

THINK: From Jerusalem to Topeka. It seems strange to us that God would choose Topeka, Kansas as the place where He would begin the final stage of restoration. Even today, more than ninety years after the outpouring, Topeka is hardly a major American city. Perhaps we can better understand why God chose Topeka by reading I Cor. 1:25-29.

Agnes Ozman is a name every Pentecostal should know. Who was Agnes Ozman? She was the first person to receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost in the 20th century, the first to be filled with the Spirit in the Topeka outpouring.

Within a few years, the Spirit had spread all over the world. The story of the "new religion" was carried by newspapers everywhere. The followers of this Way were branded as heretics, and were expelled from mainstream Christian churches. They therefore founded their own. Thus was born the Assemblies of God, still a major Pentecostal denomination. Also born were new names for the Pentecostals. Names such as holy rollers, intended as insults, were often taken by the Pentecostals as compliments! They were not ashamed of who they were or of how they worshiped.

Although the Pentecostal church grew quickly, and had great power, restoration was not complete. Between 1912 and 1914, the groundwork was being laid by the Spirit of God for another major restoration, one which would take the infant Assemblies of God by storm, causing one-third of the ministers to withdraw.

WRITE: Draw a comparison between the Upper Room in Jerusalem (Acts, chapters 1 and 2), and the Upper Room at Bethel Bible College in Topeka (Student's Handbook, Page 54). Try to find as many similarities as possible between the events which took place, and the events which followed.

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Lesson Twelve

READ: Student's Handbook, Chapter Twelve

THINK: During the first fourteen years of this century, many great miracles took place. Books such as *The Winds of God* by Ethel Goss, and *Their Story: 20th Century Pentecostals* by Fred J. Foster, recount some of these great events. (Note: These, and other books of a similar nature, are available from Pentecostal Publishing House in Hazelwood, MO. They are used as textbooks in the elective class 20th Century Pentecostal History.)

During this fourteen year period, the main Pentecostal organization was the Assemblies of God. The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW) was also started during this period. The Assemblies of God are still one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in the United States, although in some places, they have only a fraction of the spiritual power they once had. In some places, the Assemblies of God doesn't even function as a Pentecostal church. A major factor in their spiritual condition today was their rejection of an important revelation of truth in 1916. (Discussed in Lesson 13)

WRITE: Martin Luther received some truth, but rejected further truth. Therefore, the next major revelation came to others. Each time a group refused more truth, God would give it to others. Those who refused truth were "left behind." A comparison is the pillar of cloud that guided Israel in the wilderness: When it moved, they had to move. When it stopped, they had to stop. If it moved, and they did not, they would have been left behind. God's restoration of truth is like that pillar of cloud. When He moves, that is, when He offers truth, those who refuse it will be left behind. What lesson does this pattern of truth offered/truth refused teach us? How can we avoid being "left behind?"

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Lesson Thirteen

READ: Student's Handbook, Chapter Thirteen

THINK: In 1916, the Assemblies of God rejected the revelations of the Oneness of God and Baptism in the Name of Jesus. Accordingly, one-third of their ministry resigned, and Oneness Pentecostals began to organize, with God blessing their efforts. At this writing, the largest Oneness groups in the United States are the United Pentecostal Church International, the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, and the Assemblies of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Known as UPCI, PAW and ALJC, respectively)

An important point to remember: We are Oneness believers; we are NOT Unitarian. Unitarian doctrine denies the deity of Jesus. Oneness doctrine proclaims it.

Unfortunately, most Oneness churches did not learn a lesson from the events of 1916. Most have not received a major new revelation of truth since then. Some go so far as to say they have all the truth. But the slow growth of churches and scarcity of great miracles show the need for more truth. In addition, their persecution of minorities also points out their need for more truth. Let us never make the mistake of thinking we have all the truth God wants us to have. God will continue to teach us as long as we remain willing to learn.

WRITE: Final Exam for Christianity Revisited follows this lesson.

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Christianity Revisited

Examination CR-2

1. Who were the Bogomils? When did they disappear?
2. (T or F) The Catholic church would only allow the Bible to be translated into Greek during the Dark Ages.
3. Who was Michael Servetus? How and why did he die?
4. What did Martin Luther hope to change by writing his 95 theses?
5. How did the Revival Period differ from the Protestant Reformation?
6. Mother Ann Lee was connected with which Revival Period group?
7. (T or F) Agnes Ozman was a Dark Ages heretic burned as a witch. If false, who was she?
8. What was the name of the first Pentecostal organization in the 20th century?
9. (T or F) Pentecostals were immediately welcomed into the denominational

churches.

10. In which American city did the Holy Ghost first fall in the 20th century?
11. (T or F) The United Pentecostal Church International is the largest trinitarian Pentecostal church in the United States.
12. In which year (20th century) did the Pentecostal church split over the doctrines of Oneness and Jesus' Name baptism?
13. (T or F) The Assemblies of God is still the most spiritually powerful church.
14. What percentage of the Assemblies of God ministers resigned over the Jesus' Name and Oneness issues?
15. Do we have all the truth yet?
16. Did Tertullian teach Oneness or trinitarianism?
17. Why are we called Apostolic?
18. (T or F) Two of the apostles baptized in the trinitarian formula.
19. (T or F) William Penn founded the Quaker church.
20. In which year, and in which Bible school, was the Holy Ghost restored to the church?

Student's name

Date