

KINGDOM INVADERS STUDY GUIDE

For best results, it is recommended that whenever possible group participants read each chapter prior to going through the study material

CHAPTER 1 - THE BIBLE: CREDIBLE OR CORRUPTED

Comprehensive study of the Bible -- as well as its related history, archeology, and other sciences – can provide confidence that it is indeed God’s Word. It’s true that you can’t prove the Bible to be absolute truth, but you can get oh-so-close!

1. What are some of the ways we can know the Bible to be actual truth from God Himself?

- Amazingly, it was written over the course of sixteen hundred years by more than forty different authors from all walks of life -- and yet a common thread is woven throughout
- To be included in the Holy Bible, the various books had to be recognized as inspired by a council of rabbis and councils of church leaders after passing a test of careful guidelines
- There is remarkable evidence that the Bible we have today is true to the original writings; more than fifty-three hundred ancient hand-made manuscripts still exist

2. What area of science provides the most convincing evidence that the Bible really is truth from God?

- Archeology regularly proves the accuracy of the Scriptures; never has any discovery ever disproved any aspect of the Bible
- The Dead Sea scrolls were found in 1947 in some caves in what is now called the West Bank of Israel; they were over one thousand years older than most manuscripts previously used for Bible translation and compared with them virtually word for word, proving the accuracy of the modern Scriptures
- More recent archaeological evidence points to a worldwide flood as described in Genesis 6-9; in Asia fossilized sea creatures have been located in the Himalayas, the highest mountain region in the world

3. What is the most compelling proof that the Bible is truly the Word of God?

- Literally hundreds of prophecies written in the Scriptures have been fulfilled
- Most of the Old Testament prophecies referred to the coming Messiah; no less than 109 of these prophecies were fulfilled by Jesus
- Probably the most amazing fulfillment of biblical prophecy relates to the nation of Israel (read Ezekiel 37:12-14); the Jewish people were dispersed from their homeland and scattered across the earth some two thousand years ago but became a nation once again, just as prophesied by Ezekiel around 580 BC

There are simply no other “holy books” used by any other religion that have provable authenticity like the Bible. On the contrary, archeology and other sciences have actually proven these other books to be contradictory and inaccurate at best, complete frauds at worst. And none of these other books can claim fulfillment of even a single specific prophecy, whereas literally hundreds of Bible prophecies have been, and continue to be, fulfilled.

CHAPTER 2 - THE BIBLE: LITERAL OR LITERARY

(Read 1 Timothy 3:16-17) This passage makes it quite clear that the Bible is to be considered more than just a good book containing literary classics. Unfortunately, many who would call themselves Christians today think of the Bible in just that way -- a piece of intriguing literature worthy of being known intellectually but hardly absolute truth.

1. The question of whether or not to take the Bible literally took on new life in the 1800's; what caused this to happen?

- Charles Darwin and the theory of evolution began to gain credibility in the scientific community of the day
- Because his theories appeared to be based on science, many Christians started to feel that their Bible-based creation theology must either be flawed, or the result of misinterpretation
- So it was thought that in order for belief in Christianity to remain viable, evolutionary ideology had to be somehow integrated into the Bible's account of creation

2. What in the creation account of Genesis should convince us that even the most unbelievable stories in the Bible can be trusted as literal? (read Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26) What is the common denominator in these verses?

- All God had to do was speak the words and this massive, complex universe was formed
- This should be all we need to understand that absolutely *nothing* is impossible with God, including a literal seven-day creation week with literal 24-hour creation days
- When you doubt this, the Bible becomes less authoritative from Genesis to Revelation, or worse, you start believing God doesn't really exist and the Bible becomes meaningless

3. What is another reason that people have a hard time accepting the Bible text as literal truth from God?

- Cultural differences between the Hebrews of the biblical era and we westerners of modern times can create some confusion when distinguishing between what is literal and what is literary
- For example, it was common practice among the Jewish people to use hyperbole, or exaggeration, to make a critical point (read Matthew 21:21)
- Jesus is not saying we can literally move mountains and have them thrown into the sea; the analogy is an obvious exaggeration used to emphasize the important point that the impossible is made possible through God

Another potential point of confusion when confronting the question of the Bible as literal or literary has to do with the fact that some portions are actually symbolic or poetic. But this shouldn't be a stumbling block because when this is the case, we are actually clued in. For example, the parables Jesus told were clearly just stories, but they were used as a very effective method of helping people understand biblical truth.

CHAPTER 3 - AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH: HELL

The Scriptures relating to hell leave no doubt whatsoever that it does exist. That is unless you work very hard to create an alternate meaning. Unfortunately, this is what has happened in increasing measure in recent years. Many people, including some very prominent and influential Christian leaders, have come out with explanations for what hell is or isn't that are not biblical.

1. What is one prominent modern teaching that denies the existence of hell as a real place of eternal torment?

- The “hell as a trash dump” teaching says hell was actually, metaphorically speaking, a garbage dump that never stopped burning outside of Jerusalem (read Jeremiah 7:31-32)
- The name Valley of Ben Hinnom was translated from the Old Testament Hebrew word “ge'hinnom” which correlates with the New Testament Greek word “gehenna”; this was said to represent hell as merely a temporary place of earthly consequences for sin
- But the concept of ge'hinnom or gehenna was used so often as a synonym for hell that it was later understood to mean hell itself, and was translated as such in the New Testament manuscripts

2. What are some reasons that people have for coming up with alternative meanings for hell?

- The Calvinistic interpretation of election and predestination makes people believe that our free will does not enter into the equation (read Romans 8:29-33); but Peter, one of Jesus' closest disciples, makes it quite clear that being part of the elect is our choice and our responsibility (read 2 Peter 1:10-11)
- In the book of Matthew alone, hell is described as a place “where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” no less than six times; if you believe you or a loved one may be headed there, therein lies the desire to change hell into a kinder, gentler place
- Some people believe that a loving God would never send anyone to a place of eternal torment; but eventually there is a price to pay for rejecting Him (read Luke 12:4-5)

3. Do prominent Bible characters express belief in a real place called hell?

- Paul (read 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)
- John (read Revelation 20:10); after that, there is what is called a Great White Throne Judgment in which those who have rejected God during their lives are thrown into the “lake of fire” along with Satan and his allies

- Jesus himself (read Matthew 18:8-9)

In understanding God's immeasurable love for us, it is insightful to look at all that He has done to *rescue* us from hell. God has given us His instruction manual, the Bible, to tell us all we need to know in order to be saved, and has sent His very own Son, Jesus, to die on a cross as payment for our sins. Would you be willing to allow your child to suffer and die if the choice was yours? Neither would I. But that's the kind of love God has for us.

CHAPTER 4 - AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH: SATAN

Many Christians are beginning to believe Satan does not exist. And this thought is invading the Kingdom in increasing measure. Satan is propagating the lie because he knows that if you don't believe there is an enemy to battle, then you won't build your defenses, your guard will be down, and you won't be prepared to fight the spiritual battles when they come.

1. Which book of the Old Testament perhaps points to the reality of Satan better than any other?

- Job contains a remarkable “fly on the wall” look at the reality of Satan and his relationship with God; Satan wickedly chides God by saying Job is only a righteous servant because the hedge of protection placed around him has prevented him from facing any real hardship
- To prove Satan wrong, God allows him to inflict Job with all manner of trials and tribulations, including the loss of his possessions and livelihood, the death of his children, and the onset of painful sickness and disease
- Because Job remained faithful to God in the midst of his trials, he received earthly rewards double what he had before Satan's attacks

2. Which New Testament incident perhaps points to the reality of Satan better than any other?

- In both Matthew 4 and Luke 4 Satan meets up with Jesus in the wilderness, trying to tempt Him to sin before His earthly ministry begins
- Satan attacked Jesus in some of the same ways he goes after us, hoping to use pride, greed, and selfishness to entice Jesus into an act of iniquity; Satan tempted Jesus by twisting the Scriptures into saying what he wanted them to say
- Jesus overcame Satan's lies because He knew what the Bible *really* says -- a great example for us

3. What peculiar phenomenon through the centuries perhaps points to the reality of Satan better than any other?

- From their enslavement in Egypt some thirty-five hundred years ago, to their captivity in Assyria and Babylon more than twenty-five hundred years ago, to their oppression under Roman rule during the time of Jesus, to the barbaric holocaust at the hands of Nazi

Germany during World War II, the Jewish people have faced unjust persecution throughout history

- The Jews are God's "chosen people" (read Deuteronomy 7:6); that automatically makes them a target for Satan, who hates God and anyone He favors
- With a spirit-realm understanding, it is evident that Satan has always sought out and found willing vessels to attack, oppress, and even kill the Jewish people

When somebody does something sacrificially good, that is evidence of a supernatural godly influence in that person's life. Conversely, when somebody does what is evil, that is evidence of a supernatural satanic influence in that person's life. Make no mistake about it. Evil exists because Satan is real. There is really no other satisfactory explanation.

CHAPTER 5 - GRACE GONE WILD: SOMETHING OLD

God's grace is a valuable and necessary component of our lives as Christians because we are imperfect people. We *need* grace. But when our understanding of God's grace is taken too far, it can be detrimental to the point of physical and spiritual danger; that is "Grace Gone Wild."

1. What belief popularized some five hundred years ago by John Calvin is helping to fuel the modern dilemma of Grace Gone Wild?

- "Eternal security" is a belief in which some denominations teach that once you proclaim Jesus as your Savior, then you are saved from that moment on no matter how you choose to live your life
- Other denominations have a different take on eternal security, teaching that once you are baptized as a baby or adult you are heaven-bound from that time on; this belief actually predated Calvin by about twelve centuries, popularized in the late 300's AD by the influential bishop Augustine
- The belief in Grace Gone Wild tells us that God's grace trumps every other aspect of who He is; for instance, God is also a God of perfect justice

2. Is it possible to "lose" your salvation?

- (Read John 10:27-29) These verses would tell us "no" we can't lose our salvation
- But just as we chose to accept Christ, we can choose to reject him; the Parable of the Sower provides an example (read Matthew 13:20-21) Free will is not voided just because at one time a person professes faith in Christ
- The Holy Spirit is a gentleman who does not force Himself on anyone, He only comes to dwell in the person who invites Him in; similarly He will only stay where He is welcome

3. (Read Revelation 20:15) Can God's book of life be edited?

- The doctrine of eternal security would say that once a name is written in the book it can never be removed; but very early and very late in the Bible, we are told that the names of God's children which were once written in His book of life can be "blotted out."
- (Read Exodus 32:31-33) God made sure Moses knew that only the disobedient would be at risk of being removed from His book of life because of their choice to live in unrepentant sin
- (Read Revelation 3:4-5) From these verses, we see that God would not consider even for a moment blotting the faithful out of His book of life; conversely, it stands to reason that the opposite is true

Whether you believe in eternal security or not, this teaching has been used by some people to justify very sinful and destructive lifestyles. We must be wary of any grace-heavy teaching that gives permission to go against God's clearly expressed instructions in Scripture. Instead, we should embrace those things which inspire us toward a greater holiness and consecration to God.

CHAPTER 6 - GRACE GONE WILD: SOMETHING NEW

A lot of what we hear from our Christian leaders these days is too heavy on spiritual "sweets." We are hearing the good stuff about grace, mercy, love, and forgiveness -- which is absolutely critical to a proper understanding of God and the Christian life -- but we are not being told enough about the other essentials needed to have a healthy, well-rounded theological diet. Among them is striving to live a life of obedience to God according to the Scriptures.

1. Is it healthy to have a "fear" of the Lord?

- (Read Psalm 103:11-13 and 17-18) Here, David draws a correlation no less than three times between God's love for His children and their appropriate fear of Him
- These verses are among many in the Bible pointing to the wisdom in having a healthy fear of the Lord; it is "healthy" because it is not a cowering type of fear where we have to be afraid of getting squashed by God if we displease Him
- A healthy fear of the Lord could be characterized as a respect with such depth that it would be unreasonable if it were reserved for anyone other than God Himself

2. What is one modern day belief that is helping fuel the dilemma of Grace Gone Wild?

- There has been a teaching around for several decades called the Prosperity Doctrine in which believers in Jesus are told that, as children of the King, they deserve the riches of the Kingdom; in other words, God loves us so immensely that He would want us to always be wealthy and happy -- never requiring us to leave our comfort zone
- Rather than lead us to a life of progressive sanctification, in the end the Prosperity Doctrine and Grace Gone Wild basically turn Christianity into a more desirable set of beliefs -- giving permission to read and know God's commandments and then ignore them, if we choose, to live the more abundant life as *we* see it

- But this does not reflect truth; Solomon was healthy, wealthy, and wise, and after taking advantage of all life had to offer, he found it to be “meaningless” (Read Ecclesiastes 12:13) His words pretty well sum up what the Christian life should be all about

3. When a believer makes the grace of God into an object of worship similar to an idol, what tends to be the result?

- Their focus is often on emphasizing what we *can* do as Christians as opposed to what we *should* do as Christians; this type of mindset would logically prevent spiritual growth
- Those who are excessively focused on grace will often say this attribute of God will inevitably cause us to live obediently because we desire to show our gratitude to Him; but for a significant number of people this belief actually defies human nature
- In reality, even we as Christians are far more likely to do the right thing because we know inappropriate behavior leads to consequences

God's grace is immense and immeasurable, but those who persist in taking it for granted will eventually find it does have a limit. The opportunity to accept God's gift of salvation, His son Jesus, will one day come to an end. But no matter where a person has been or what they have done, if they repent of their sins with a sincere desire to please God, His grace is sufficient for them.

CHAPTER 7 - DANGEROUS DECEPTIONS: HETEROSEXUALITY

There are certainly issues that can be considered “gray areas” where sincere Christians disagree based on their interpretation of Scripture. But there is simply no wiggle room when it comes to God's design for marriage and sexuality.

1. What is God's design for marriage and sexuality?

- (Read Genesis 2:22-24) Marriage is intended to be an unbreakable bond between the man and his wife; we can know for certain that this design was not meant just for Adam and Eve because, as the first people, they did not have any fathers or mothers to leave
- The polygamy of many Old Testament Hebrew patriarchs has often been used to dispute that marriage is only meant to be the union of one man and one woman; but each of these men faced serious consequences for their willing disobedience to God
- There is a similarity to these patriarchs today in that many who would call themselves Christians are being dramatically influenced by the culture around them; while polygamy is rare, many are still acting out sexually in ways that grieve the Lord

2. Isn't it unrealistic in this day and age to expect someone to abstain from sex until they are married?

- We live in a hyper-sexualized society where, even in our churches, otherwise very godly young females are wearing the shortest of shorts, skirts or dresses, and the tightest of pants; men have been designed by God to be visual creatures and need women to dress modestly
- Men can't possibly avoid all of the tantalizing visual stimuli, but it is not acceptable to sit there and stare, soaking it all in as long as possible; "look, but don't touch" is not good enough -- God's instruction to men is "see, but don't look"
- We need to totally "reboot" how we go about our dating relationships as Christians or we will continue to fall short of what God requires; anything unmarried romantic partners do that causes sexual arousal should be immediately stopped because it cannot be satisfied in a godly way (Read Song of Songs 2:7, 3:5, and 8:4)

3. Are there consequences to living together outside of marriage?

- The success rate for marriages that follow live-in relationships is actually very poor; depending on the study, statistics show that couples who cohabit before getting married are about 33 percent more likely to get a divorce than those who don't live together first
- When marriage is not honored as the exclusive place for sexual intimacy it has an impact on our mentality; there are elements of selfishness, insecurity, lack of trust, and questions of commitment that can either consciously or unconsciously invade the mindset of those who choose to live together
- A host of studies have also shown that life outcomes are far better for children raised in homes with a married father and mother; they are less likely to get in trouble in school, get pregnant in their teens, end up incarcerated at some point in their lives, and less likely to end up in poverty

The issue of pornography can help bring perspective to proper sexuality. If viewing porn is clearly a sin, then why would it be acceptable in any way to view the nakedness of a flesh and blood person in our presence? And if just seeing the nakedness of another is sinful, then why would we believe touching their bodies would somehow be all right? With these things in mind it would be absolutely absurd to consider total intimacy outside of marriage to be in any way acceptable in the eyes of God.

CHAPTER 8 - DANGEROUS DECEPTIONS: HOMOSEXUALITY

As with the other forms of immoral sexual behavior, homosexuality has become more common in recent years. As it is gaining acceptance in the culture, Christians who would dare characterize homosexual activity as sinful are regularly being called "homophobic" and "haters." But speaking the truth in love as Jesus requires is not hateful.

1. What is the most destructive belief when it comes to homosexuality?

- If you believe they are born that way and are homosexual through no choice of their own, then naturally, accepting their lifestyle would be the most loving thing you can do; if

homosexuality is defined by what they *are* as opposed to what they *do*, then certainly we would want to give them every relational and marital right that heterosexuals have

- But there has never been a scientifically verifiable study ever done that shows any genetic, hormonal, or physical difference between heterosexuals and homosexuals; on the other hand, no less than eight major studies of identical twins have shown that post-birth factors such as exposure to pornography or sexual abuse are by far the strongest contributors to homosexuality

- (Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11) In verse 11, *were* is past tense, meaning that the people Paul was writing to were able to overcome and turn from their sin. If those who practice homosexuality were born that way, this would be an impossibility

2. What is the strongest physical evidence that man/woman sexuality is God's design?

- (Read Romans 1:26-27) Just like a nut and bolt are designed with a natural function that cannot be achieved separately, so too the anatomy of men and women indicate they have a function that can only be achieved together

- The rest of the biology surrounding sexuality points just as obviously to a master designer; through the union of their compatibly designed bodies, a human begins its life through the union of a man and a woman

- From start to finish, there is unquestionably a natural function for men and women that only works as designed by the creator, God himself

3. Why is so-called gay marriage a problem?

- The issue of same-sex marriage has actually become much bigger than simply a matter of gay rights; it is rapidly being used in our culture to draw a line in the sand as a way of punishing Christians who would stand up for biblical truth

- God's design for marriage can literally be found from Genesis to Revelation in the Bible (Read Genesis 2:22-24)

- (Read Revelation 19:7) This points to one of the main spiritual reasons gay "marriage" is a problem; redefining marriage ultimately skews the proper understanding of Christ's relationship with His Church

Any act of sexual behavior outside of a one man/one woman marriage is sinful in the eyes of God so none of us has the privilege of being self-righteous. Does God love those who practice homosexuality? Absolutely. But can they continue in their behavior unrepentantly? Of course not. None of us is given permission to remain in our sin. We are expected to do all we can to forsake sinful lifestyles to the glory of God.

CHAPTER 9 - THE BROAD ROAD: ISLAM

As with so many other dangerous beliefs, the thought pervading the culture that there are many ways to heaven is invading the Kingdom of God at the same time. This is despite the fact that

the Bible contains many, *many* passages declaring that only through Jesus can we spend our eternity with God.

1. Apart from Christianity, what is the largest and most influential spiritual belief in the world today?

- The founder of Islam is Mohammed, who was born in 570 AD in the land that is now Saudi Arabia; he learned much about Christianity and Judaism while growing up
- This is an important fact because the “revelations” he had written in the Qur'an contain many surahs, or chapters, that share common people and themes with the Bible; these apparent similarities have helped boost the false perception that Christians and Muslims worship the same God
- After Mohammed's death in 632 AD, Islam continued to grow as His followers continued to advance the religion through largely violent means; non-Muslims were forced to either convert, live in poverty, or be put to death

2. What is the true face of Islam -- the violent terrorists or the moderate “peace-loving” Muslims?

- The early surahs written while in Mecca were quite genteel, compassionate, and inclusive; this was during a time when the fledgling religion was weak and struggling for acceptance
- The later surahs written while in Medina took on a more violent tone as Islam began to grow in numbers and in subsequent strength; Mohammed became a fierce warrior and began to spread his religion by the sword
- The Islamic doctrine of abrogation says when one surah in the Qur'an contradicts another, then the newer passage is considered better and replaces the previous passage; therefore the harsher, more violent Medinian surahs render the related, more peaceful Meccan surahs that were written earlier as null and void

3. What are among the “irreconcilable differences” separating the beliefs of Islam and Christianity?

- Muslims believe Jesus was a great prophet, but just one of many; and although the Qur'an says Jesus was born of a virgin named Mary, Muslims do not believe he was the son of God (read John 3:16-18)
- They also do not believe that Jesus died on a cross and rose again, but rather was rescued by Allah and taken to heaven (read 1 Corinthians 15:3-6)
- The Qur'an teaches that there are two angels assigned to every person to record their good and bad deeds; if their good deeds outweigh their bad, then Allah *may* allow them into heaven; it is still up to his discretion (read Romans 10:9-10)

Simply put, in order to have eternal life you have to believe in Jesus as the Son of God, that He died on a cross for your sins, rose again, and then confess him as your Lord. Muslims believe none of this and therefore have not received salvation. With this in mind, Christians need to

compassionately share the love of Jesus with Muslims, understanding that they have been imprisoned by a satanic deception

CHAPTER 10 - THE BROAD ROAD: EASTERN RELIGION AND THE NEW AGE

Eastern religions, such as Hinduism and the closely related Buddhism, are having a major impact on the world today. Their influence among Western cultures has grown dramatically in recent years largely because of their acceptance as part of New Age Spirituality. These beliefs may seem harmless. But in the end, nothing could be further from the truth.

1. What is the utmost goal of Hinduism?

- Hindus desire to break free from the “individual soul” and unite with the “universal soul” (becoming one with the Ultimate Reality, the main god of Hinduism); this process is accomplished through the death/birth cycle of reincarnation and karma
- Reincarnation is the belief that after you die, you will be born again into a new life; that life will either be better or worse, depending on the good works and bad works you produced known as karma
- Among the methods used by Hindus to reach a mystical union with the universal soul are meditation and yoga; a guru named Patanjali created the techniques of yoga to divorce oneself from the material world and unite with the impersonal cosmic god of the universe, ultimately allowing the Hindu to escape the cycle of reincarnation

2. What is the utmost goal of Buddhism?

- Buddhists desire to achieve a godlike “enlightenment,” overcoming the evils of greed, hatred, and ignorance through reincarnation; eventually, the realization of ultimate truth and understanding is achieved -- an enlightenment known as nirvana
- While Hinduism is polytheistic with millions of gods, Buddhism is actually atheistic with no god; all spirituality is achieved through self-discovery and awareness
- Meditation is the central process by which Buddhists pursue nirvana; it is a practice, similar to Hinduism, in which a mantra such as “Om” is repeated over and over as a way of achieving mental calmness in an attempt to awaken a source of spiritual power from within themselves

3. What is New Age Spirituality?

- It is everything and nothing at the same time; many different religions and philosophical beliefs are welcomed in New Age Spirituality -- including Christianity, Eastern religions, Native American practices, and psychic phenomenon -- yet it is humanistic to the core
- The ultimate appeal of NAS is that it allows for a person to be “spiritual” yet tolerant and accepting of all beliefs, with no expectation of righteousness or obedience to God
- New agers are expecting a new world order -- a coming global utopia created by a one-world government and a humanistic, unified religion; this belief is actually playing a role

in fulfilling end times biblical prophecy (one-world government in Revelation 13:1-8, and one-world religion in Revelation 17:1-18)

The Bible says Satan is like a lion prowling around looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). Eastern religions, New Age Spirituality, and their related “tools” such as meditation and yoga effectively allow Satan an opportunity to pounce. These spiritual beliefs and their related practices have occultic roots. When combined with a modern naivete about their potential dangers, they clearly provide just the opening Satan needs to “devour” an unsuspecting life.

CHAPTER 11 - THE BROAD ROAD: MORMONISM AND THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

The followers of these prominent religions would claim to be Christians. But from their doctrines it is evident they cannot claim that title. They say their beliefs are based at least in part on the Bible, but what they believe and what the Scriptures teach have only a passing similarity.

1. What are some of the modern day evidences that Mormonism is based on a fraud?

- In the *Book of Mormon* written by Mormon founder Joseph Smith, the Native American people were purported to be descendants of the biblical Jews; modern DNA samples taken from Indian tribes in the Americas have uncovered virtually no Jewish blood, but rather, a highly-predominant Asian ancestry
- Portions of another “scriptural writing,” the *Pearl of Great Price*, were supposedly translated by Smith from scrolls found with Egyptian mummies that he purchased from a traveling antiquities salesman in 1835; modern day Egyptologists have determined that the scrolls were not scriptural writings at all but merely remnants of common Egyptian funeral texts and related drawings

2. What are some “irreconcilable differences” between Mormonism and Christianity?

- Mormons believe that Father God, who rules the earth today, was once a man who became a god; he was conceived by another god who existed before him, who was conceived by another god who existed before him, etc. (read Isaiah 45:5)
- Father God and Mother God had millions of spirit children together; their firstborn was Jesus, followed by Lucifer, making them spirit brothers according to Mormon doctrine (read John 1:1-3) Jesus has always been part of the triune Godhead
- Mormons teach that there are three heavens -- one for the faithful Mormons, one for the less-than-faithful Mormons and some exceptional non-Mormons, and one for non-Mormons who have been mostly bad; before entering this last heaven, these people must serve a temporary sentence in hell (read 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

3. What are some “irreconcilable differences” between the Jehovah's Witnesses and Christianity?

- Jehovah's Witnesses are taught that there is no Trinity; God has one name, Jehovah -- Jesus is not the son of God, but rather, Michael the archangel -- and the Holy Spirit is not

part of the Godhead, but rather, an active force (read Genesis 1:26) This verse makes no sense unless God exists as a plurality

- Since they do not believe Jesus is the son of God, JW's are taught that his death on a stake (not a cross) only canceled out Adam's sin; this did however remove the curse of original sin, which allows them to achieve their own salvation (read Ephesians 2:8-10)

- Jehovah's Witnesses deny the existence of hell; they believe that all non-JW's evaporate after death, but a glorious afterlife awaits the faithful Jehovah's Witnesses -- either in heaven or a rejuvenated earth

From this examination of a few key Mormon and Jehovah's Witnesses beliefs, it should be obvious that they are not at all Christian. The vast differences between their doctrines and what is taught in the Bible make any realistic attempt to reconcile them a practice in futility.

CHAPTERS 12 & 13 - THE NARROW GATE

In God's design, there is saving power in the blood. When Jesus died on a cross, the blood He shed as the perfect, sinless "Lamb of God" provided a permanent sacrifice. That made atonement for sins a possibility for all of mankind for eternity. Despite what is believed by so many people in this postmodern culture, the way to heaven is truly that narrow (read Matthew 7:13-14).

1. What are some modern day evidences that there is power in the name of Jesus?

- Prayers which have been allowed for a couple of centuries in the United States -- such as when politicians meet, or in schools at the start of the day or before their sporting events -- now often face the court-ordered requirement that the name of Jesus can't be mentioned; why would this be unless there is something special and unique about that name?

- Areas of the world where Jesus' name is not honored are human rights train wrecks; in Communist countries -- where atheism has been taught and encouraged -- the rights of average citizens have been minimal, and in Muslim-dominant countries there have been many documented cases of injustices and atrocities

- During World War II, the Nazis effectively bullied the Christian church in Germany into silence, marginalizing their influence, and the brutality of the military in the Shinto-dominant country of Japan was also well-documented; conversely, the United States aided both Germany and Japan in recovery efforts after the war was over, likely influenced by the words of Jesus (read Luke 6:27) Such merciful actions by a conquering nation are rare in human history

2. (Read 1 John 5:11-12) What does it mean to "have the Son of God?"

- It all begins with believing in Jesus and His death and resurrection (read John 3:36) But even the demons believe in Jesus so there has to be more to it

- Jesus fulfilled His responsibility by dying on a cross; now we as Christians need to fulfill our responsibility by acting on our faith -- both verbally and through our obedience (read 1 John 2:3-5) One act of obedience is telling others about Jesus
- When you share your faith, whether you believe you handled the opportunity poorly or perfectly, God can use it for good; you may not see any immediate fruit, but it's your obedience that matters

3. Is the "Narrow Gate" still wide open?

- (Read 2 Peter 3:9) God's greatest desire is to see people come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ
- No matter where we have been, no matter what we have done, no matter how young or how old we are, as long as we are still on this earth it is not too late
- (Read Luke 23:39-43) This man's sincere "deathbed conversion" meant his sins were forgiven and he is now spending eternity in God's presence

There is no wisdom in waiting as there is not even a guarantee we'll wake up tomorrow; even if we could predict when we would die, there is no better way to live than with the peace of knowing our sins are forgiven, that God is always there to care for us, and that a blessed heavenly hope awaits for eternity.