

“Why Christianity Compared”

Lesson #1

Acts 17:10-12

Introduction

I. Examining American Culture

1. Melting Pot - A Society Where People From Other Cultures Blend Together Into One Common Culture

Emphasizes: Assimilation And The Creation Of A Shared National Identity

2. Salad Bowl - A Society Where People From Many Cultures Live Together While Maintaining Their Unique Identities

Emphasizes: Diversity And The Preservation Of Cultural Differences

3. Ecumenical Movement - An Effort To Promote Unity, Cooperation, And Dialog Among Different Christian Denominations

Emphasizes: Unity Among Different Christian Churches

4. Parachurch Organizations - Christian Ministries That Work Alongside Of Local Churches To Accomplish A Specific Mission Or Ministry

Emphasizes: Assisting And Strengthening The Work Of Local Churches

5. Church Denominations - Groups Of Christian Churches That Share The Same Basic **Beliefs**, **Practices** And **Organizational** Structure

Emphasizes: How Different **Churches Practice** Their Faith

Why So Many Denominations

1. Denominations Have Formed Based On Disagreements Over The **Interpretation Of Scripture**
2. Denominations Have Formed Because Of **Historical** And **Cultural** Developments Throughout Church History

II. Why This Study Matters

1. Because **Truth Matters** - John 8:32
2. Because **Error** Exists - Matthew 24:4
3. Because God **Commands Discernment** - 1 John 4:1
4. Because **Souls** Are At Stake - Galatians 1:8-9

III. The Purpose

Goal: To Become **Spiritually Discerning** - 1 Thessalonians 5:21

Spiritual Discernment -

- Seeing Life From **God's** Perspective And Evaluating **Truth** According To His Word
- The Ability To Recognize **Truth** From **Error** And Make Wise Decisions.

Spiritual Discernment is **NOT Fault-Finding**

Spiritual Discernment

1. Seeks **Truth**
2. Protects **People**
3. Guided By **Scripture**
4. Motivated By **Love**
5. Evaluates Teaching **Biblically**
6. Desires **Restoration**
7. **Humble**
8. **Fair** And **Careful**

Fault Finders

1. Seeks **Flaws**
2. Criticizes **People**
3. Guided By **Preference**
4. Motivated By **Pride**
5. Looks To **Condemn**
6. Desires **Vindication**
7. **Self- Righteous**
8. Quick To **Judge**

IV. The Berean Standard

- Our North Star Scripture **Acts 17:10-12**

The Standard

1. **Hear It**
2. **Compare It**
3. **Test It**
4. **Believe Or Reject It**

Biblical Faith Is Not **Blind Faith**

Biblical Faith Is **Informed Faith**

V. Categories Of Comparisons

1. **Ultimate Authority** (What Determines **Truth**)
2. **View Of God** (What Is **God**)
3. **Humanity** (What Is **Mankind**)
4. **Truth** (How Is **Truth Known**)
5. Man's **Greatest Problem** (What Is **Wrong With The World**)
6. **Salvation/Solution** (How To **Solve** Man's Greatest Problem)
7. View Of **Jesus Christ** (Who Is **Jesus To You**)
8. **Ethics** (What Is **Right And Wrong**)
9. **Purpose Of Life** (Why Do I **Exist**)
10. **Destiny** (What Happens **After Death**)

VI. Warning Signs Of An Apostate Religion

- **Receive** The Truth
- **Reject** The Truth
- **Replace** The Truth

Apostacy: A Falling Away, Defection, Rebellion

- To Be An Apostate Does Not Mean To **Leave God** Or **The Church**
- To Be An Apostate Means To Invent A **Faith**, A **God**, A **Jesus**, A **Doctrine** And **Experience** That Is Foreign To Scripture (2 Timothy 3:5)

1. The **Authority Of Scripture** Is Replaced - Mark 7:13
2. The **Gospel** Is Changed - Galatians 1:6-9
3. **Christ** Is Diminished - 1 John 2:22
4. **Repentance** Is Unnecessary - Luke 13:3
5. Sin Is **Redefined** Or **Excused** - Isaiah 5:20
6. Truth Is **Sacrificed** For Unity - Jude 1:3
7. Worldliness Is **Embraced** - Romans 12:2
8. **False Teachers** Are Tolerated - 1 Timothy 4:16
9. The **Fear Of God** Is Lost - Psalms 36:1
10. **Reputation** Without **Spiritual Life** - Revelation 3:1

VII. The Challenge

Keep The **Berean Standard** - Acts 17:11

Answer Three Important Questions

1. Do I Know **What I Believe?**
2. Do I Know **Why I Believe It?**
3. Can I **Recognize Error** When I Hear It?