

What Is Orthodoxy?

Orthodoxy comes from the Greek word *orthodoxos*, meaning "right" or "true opinion."

Christian Orthodoxy

- **God (Trinity)**—only, sovereign, eternal, perfect
- **Jesus**—God/man, sinless, death and resurrection, return
- **Man**—created, sinner, lost, redeemable
- **Salvation**—by faith/grace alone in Christ alone
- **Scripture**—inspired, authoritative, trustworthy

• Removing one of these threatens the reality of the other ones. This is why these are the core tenants of the faith.

This Is Orthodoxy Because...

- The testimony of Scriptures
- The testimony of the Holy Spirit
- The reliability of Scriptures
- The testimony of Christian tradition

Why Study Cults?

1. To be able to guard yourself against false doctrines.
2. To be able to witness to those who are in a cult.

Guard Yourself Against False Doctrines

"And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will correspond to their actions." (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)

"He must hold firmly to the faithful message as it has been taught, so that he will be able to give exhortation in such healthy teaching and correct those who speak against it." (Titus 1:9)

Guard Yourself Against False Doctrines

"Finally, be strengthened in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Clothe yourselves with the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens." (Ephesians 6:10-11)

"But examine all things; hold fast to what is good. Stay away from every form of evil." (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)

To Witness to Those Who Are in a Cult

“And the Lord’s slave must not engage in heated disputes but be kind toward all, an apt teacher, patient, correcting opponents with gentleness. Perhaps God will grant them repentance and then knowledge of the truth and they will come to their senses and escape the devil’s trap where they are held captive to do his will.” (2 Timothy 2:24-26)

To Witness to Those Who Are in a Cult

“But set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts and always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks about the hope you possess.” (1 Peter 3:15)

“Such prayer for all is good and welcomed before God our Savior, since he wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:3-4)

Marks of the Cults



What Is a Cult?

- 1) Formal religious veneration; worship,
- 2) a system of religious beliefs and ritual; also its body of adherents,
- 3) a religion regarded as unorthodox or spurious; also its body of adherents,
- 4) a great devotion to a person, idea, object, movement, or work (as a film or book); especially such devotion regarded as a literary or intellectual fad. (Webster’s Dictionary)

What Is a Cult?

“A group of people polarized around someone’s interpretation of the Bible and characterized by major deviations from orthodox Christianity relative to the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, particularly the fact that God became man in Jesus Christ.” (Walter Martin. Rise of the Cults, p. 12.)

What Is a Cult?

“A Cult is any religious movement, which claims the backing of Christ or the Bible, but distorts the eternal message of Christianity by an additional revelation and by displacing a fundamental tenet of faith with a secondary matter.” (Gordon Lewis. Confronting the Cults, p. 4.)

12 Marks of the Cult

1. **Defective Christology:** Denies some aspect of Christ; His deity, humanity, origin, or the union of his two natures in one.
2. **A False Basis of Salvation:** Teaches that eternal life depends upon works other than faith in the atonement of Christ on the cross.
3. **Uncertain Hope:** The issue of a cult member's salvation is unknown and is based on one's obedience to the leader and their doctrine.

12 Marks of the Cult

4. **Extra Biblical Revelation:** They deny God's Word as the only source of authority. They add or elevate their own teachings as authoritative.
5. **Special Revelation:** They claim new and continual, exclusive revelation given to them through visions.
6. **False Messianic Leadership:** The leader is seen as the only interpreter of Scripture appointed by God and therefore should not be disobeyed.

12 Marks of the Cult

7. **Denunciation of Others:** The members are taught that their community is the only true group and that all other groups are false.
8. **Doctrinal Ambiguity:** Their "doctrine" tends to be unclear or continually changing.
9. **Segmented Biblical Attention:** They tend to focus on one verse or passage of the Bible to the exclusion of others, violating the context.

12 Marks of the Cult

10. **Syncretism:** They combine different teachings from differing systems of belief, which results in a new teaching or belief system.
11. **Enslaving Organizational Structure:** They demand total commitment from their followers that usually destroys their individual will.
12. **Financial Exploitation:** The leader strongly implies that money given to the cause will grant blessings, powers, and salvation.

12 Marks of the Cult (Simplified)

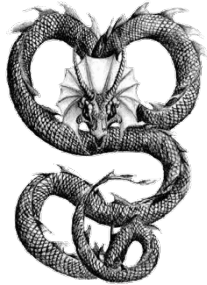
- **Add:** Cults add to Scripture, usually with their own writings.
- **Subtract:** Cults subtract from the person of Christ, usually His deity or humanity.
- **Multiply:** Cults multiply the requirements of salvation by adding works.
- **Divide:** Cults divide the loyalty of believers within and from those who are outside the cult.

The Lie of Satan

"Now the serpent was more shrewd than any of the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Is it really true that God said, 'You must not eat from any tree of the orchard?'' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit from the trees of the orchard; but concerning the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the orchard God said, 'You must not eat from it, and you must not touch it, or else you will die.' The serpent said to the woman, 'Surely you will not die, for God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will open and you will be like divine beings who know good and evil.' When the woman saw that the tree produced fruit that was good for food, was attractive to the eye, and was desirable for making one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate it. She also gave some of it to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves." (Genesis 3:1-7)

The Lie of Satan

- Questioned the command
 - Denied the consequences
 - Questioned God's character
 - Offered divinity
- His strategy can also be seen with his temptation of Christ in the wilderness.



Testing the Spirits

“Suppose your own full brother, your son, your daughter, your beloved wife, or your closest friend should seduce you secretly and encourage you to go and serve other gods that neither you nor your ancestors have previously known, the gods of the surrounding people (whether near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other). You must not give in to him or even listen to him; do not feel sympathy for him or spare him or cover up for him. Instead, you must kill him without fail! Your own hand must be the first to strike him, and then the hands of the whole community. You must stone him to death because he tried to entice you away from the Lord your God, who delivered you from the land of Egypt, that place of slavery. Thus all Israel will hear and be afraid; no longer will they continue to do evil like this among you.” (Deuteronomy 13:6-11)

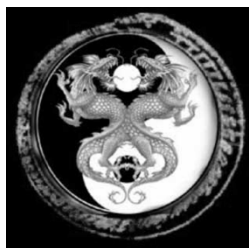
Testing the Spirits

“When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, you must not learn the abhorrent practices of those nations. There must never be found among you anyone who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, anyone who practices divination, an omen reader, a soothsayer, a sorcerer, one who casts spells, one who conjures up spirits, a practitioner of the occult, or a necromancer. Whoever does these things is abhorrent to the Lord and because of these detestable things the Lord your God is about to drive them out from before you... But if any prophet presumes to speak anything in my name that I have not authorized him to speak, or speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet must die. Now if you say to yourselves, ‘How can we tell that a message is not from the Lord?’ - whenever a prophet speaks in my name and the prediction is not fulfilled, then I have not spoken it; the prophet has presumed to speak it, so you need not fear him.” (Deuteronomy 18:9-13, 20-22)

Testing the Spirits

“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to determine if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses Jesus as the Christ who has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God, and this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and now is already in the world.” (1 John 4:1-3)

Four Types of Religions



Monotheism (One God)

- God is sovereign, eternal, and perfect.
- Matter is created by God and is joined with the spiritual realm.
- Humans are less than God and are sinners.
- Salvation is necessary to be with God.
- Religions are Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.



Atheism (No God)

- God does not exist.
- Matter is eternal, and there is no spiritual realm.
- Humans are the highest form of matter.
- Salvation is unnecessary.
- Religions are Secular Humanism, Philosophical Marxism, and most forms of Satanism.



Polytheism (Many Gods)

- Gods are not sovereign, eternal, or perfect, but are personal.
- Matter is eternal & intertwined with spiritual realm.
- Humans are flawed but can become greater.
- Salvation is through works and rituals.
- Religions are ancient mythologies (Egyptian, Greek, etc.), Voodoo, and Mormonism.



Pantheism (All Is God)

- God is an eternal and impersonal force. Everything is god, and god is everything.
- Matter is an illusion; there is only the spiritual.
- Humans are god (singular).
- Salvation is realizing your own deity (enlightenment).
- Religions are Hinduism, New Age, and Taoism.

