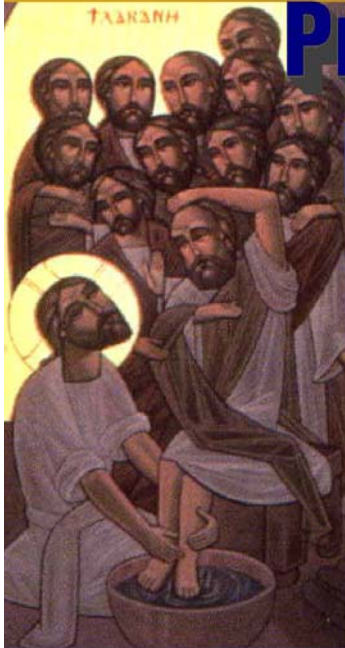




Servants' Preparation Program



Coptic Orthodox
Diocese of the
Southern
United States

*"For I have given you an example,
that you should do as I have done to you"
John 13:15*

Coptic Orthodox
Diocese of the Southern United States

COMP 102
CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS

Servants' Preparation Program

✠ TABLE OF CONTENTS ✠

- **Orthodoxy vs. Catholicism**
- **Orthodoxy vs. Episcopalianism**
- **Orthodox Views on Protestantism**
- **Protestantism I**
- **Protestantism II**

Orthodoxy vs. Catholicism

Introduction

- In the Creed, which we repeat frequently in our daily prayers, we say “We believe ... and in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. We confess one baptism for the remission of sins, ...”.
- Today churches may be classified in one of four major groups:
 - ❖ The Orthodox Church.
 - ❖ The Catholic Church.
 - ❖ The Protestant (Reformation) churches.
 - ❖ The Cults
- The Orthodox Church is unfortunately divided into two major families of Churches known as the Eastern versus the Oriental Orthodox Churches.
- The Catholic Church, although it sounds like one universal Church, we find that it contains variety of ethnic churches with differences in the way the faith is expressed, such as the Roman, the Greek, the Coptic, the Maronite Catholic churches, and so on.
- The Protestants, although started as a trial to reform the Catholic Church, it has divided on itself to over 300 denominational and non-denominational churches such as the Lutheran, the Baptist, the Assembly of God, ...

Background

- Historically, the Church of Rome enjoyed communion with the Orthodox Church.
- In 1054 a schism between Rome and the other patriarchal sees resulted from widening differences between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism.
- The cause of the schism was initially a dispute over papal authority and the soundness of theology surrounding the term filioque, a word which was added by the Western churches to the Creed without the consent of the Orthodox bishops.
- Nevertheless, the effects of the schism were not immediately felt everywhere, and it was only over time that the current complete lack of communion between the Orthodox and Roman Catholics became widespread.

Major Differences

- Filioque
- Immaculate Conception of St. Mary
- Role of the Pope
- Purgatory
- Celibacy of Priests
- Development of Doctrine

Filioque

- Filioque is a Latin word meaning "and the Son" which was added to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed by the Church of Rome in the 11th century Roman Catholicism teaches that the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father and the Son" (filioque)
- Thus, the Latins added words to the Nicene Creed: "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son..."
- Apostolic Tradition has always taught that God the Father is the single Source ("monarchy") of the Son and the Spirit.

Filioque objections

- It is contrary to Scripture - John 15:26: "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me." Thus, Christ never describes the Holy Spirit as proceeding from himself, but only mentions the Spirit's procession in terms of the Father.
- The filioque distorts Orthodox Triadology by making the Spirit a subordinate member of the Trinity.
- Traditional Triadology consists in the notion that for any given trait, it must be either common to all Persons of the Trinity or unique to one of them.
- Thus, Fatherhood is unique to the Father, while begottenness is unique to the Son, and procession unique to the Spirit.
- Godhood, however, is common to all, as is eternity, uncreatedness, and so forth.
- Positing that something can be shared by two Persons (i.e., being the source of the Spirit's procession) but not the other is to elevate those two Persons at the expense of the other. Thus, the balance of unity and diversity is destroyed.

Immaculate Conception of St. Mary

- Both Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism believe she is "Mother of God" (Theotokos, Deipare) and "the Ever-Virgin Mary."
- Both also believe in the intercessions of the Virgin Mary and all the Saints. Such intercessions reflect the unity of the Church in heaven and the Church on earth.
- Catholics, however, believe that St. Mary was born without original sin
- The Catholic Pope Pius IX, on the 8th of December 1854: "the first instant of her conception, the Blessed Virgin Mary was, by a most singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the human race, preserved from all stain of Original Sin. It is a doctrine revealed by God, and therefore to be firmly and steadfastly believed by all the faithful" (from the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*).

Immaculate Conception objections

- The Orthodox Church does accept the idea that the Mother of God was born with the original sin; everyone is.
- She inherited the mortality which comes to all on account of Adam's Fall.

- "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior" (Luke 1:46-47).

Role of the Pope

- The Latins teach that the visible head of the Church is the Pope, the successor to St. Peter, who was appointed to that sacred position by the Lord Himself with the words, "...you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church..." (Matt. 16:18).
- The Pope is, then, "the Bishop of the Catholic Church," her teacher, the vicar (agent, deputy) of Christ on earth.
- He is the interpreter of the Christian Tradition. When he speaks for the whole Church (ex cathedra), the Holy Spirit does not permit him to err.
- He is, therefore, infallible on matters of morals and doctrine. Other bishops are his lieutenants. He is the symbol of the episcopate's unity.

Role of the Pope objections

- The Orthodox church does not elevate the Pope to an infallible state. He is subject to mistake and err just as any other human is.
- The Orthodox Church teaches that all bishops are equal. To be sure, there are different ranks of bishops (patriarch, archbishop, metropolitan, bishop); nevertheless, a bishop is a bishop. Such differences apply to the administration of a church or group of churches, not to the nature of the bishop.
- Orthodoxy teaches that every bishop, "the living icon of Christ," and his flock constitute the Church in a certain place; or, as St. Ignatius the God-bearer says, the Church of Christ is in the bishop, his priests and deacons, with the people, surrounding the Eucharist in the true faith. All bishops and their flocks so constituted, together composing the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Purgatory

- From the Catechism of the Catholic Church: "All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but, after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of Heaven. The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned" (cf. No. 1030-32).
- Catholics use this verse to support their belief in Purgatory: 2 Mac 12:44-46 - for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin.
- They also quote the words of Jesus Christ, "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. (Matt 12:32)

Purgatory objections

- The quote from the book of Maccabees and our Savior's words can only prove that some sins will be forgiven after death; but whether by means of punishment by fire, or by other means, nothing is known for certain.
- What has forgiveness of sins to do with punishment by fire and tortures?
- Only one of these two things can happen: either punishment or forgiveness, but not both at once.
- In his book entitled 'Why Do We Reject Purgatory?', Pope Shenouda III refers to 1 Thess 4:16,17, "And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord", in which St. Paul describes the Last Day saying that those faithful who are still alive will meet the Lord with those who rise from the dead and then remain with Him always.
- He then asks the question, "Are these faithful (alive on the Last Day) exempt from Purgatory? Or is God showing partiality towards them?"

Celibacy of Priests

- Catholics require their priests to lead a celibate life, although they have ordained hundreds of married converts as priests.
- One argument made for celibacy has been that the commitment to celibacy frees someone to love all people in a way that the commitment to marriage does not.

Celibacy of Priests objections

- The Orthodox Church does not deny a celibate priesthood, that is why priest-monks exist. Only celibacy is voluntary and not imposed
- Most married priests understand family problems far better than celibate priests.
- Where priests are not married, there are no wives to give support. A married priest is someone who shows his intimate connection with the people of God and their daily life.

Development of Doctrine

- Roman Catholicism, in order to justify new doctrine, erected in the last century, a theory of "doctrinal development."
- Following the philosophical spirit of the time, Roman Catholic theologians began to define and teach the idea that Christ only gave us an "original deposit" of faith, a "seed," which grew and matured through the centuries.
- The Holy Spirit, they said, amplified the Christian Faith as the Church moved into new circumstances and acquired other needs.
- Consequently, Roman Catholicism, pictures its theology as growing in stages, to higher and more clearly defined levels of knowledge.
- The teachings of the Fathers, as important as they are, belong to a stage or level below the theology of the Latin Middle Ages (Scholasticism), and that theology lower than the new ideas which have come after it, such as Vatican II.

- All the stages are useful, all are resources; and the theologian may appeal to the Fathers, for example, but they may also be contradicted by something else, something higher or newer.
- On this basis, theories such as the dogmas of "papal infallibility" and "the immaculate conception" of the Virgin Mary are justifiably presented to the Faithful

Development of Doctrine objections

- The Orthodox Church does not endorse the view that the teachings of Christ have changed from time to time; rather that Christianity has remained unaltered from the moment that the Lord delivered the Faith to the Apostles (Matt. 28: 18-20).
- She affirms that "the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) is now what it was in the beginning. Orthodox of the twentieth century believe precisely what was believed by Orthodox of the first, the fifth, the tenth, the fifteenth centuries.
- To be sure, Orthodoxy recognizes external changes (e.g., vestments of clergy, monastic habits, new feasts, canons of ecumenical and regional councils, etc.), but nothing has been added or subtracted from her Faith.
- The external changes have a single purpose: To express that Faith under new circumstances; nevertheless, their has always been "one faith, one Lord, one baptism" (Eph. 4: 4).

Orthodoxy vs. Episcopalianism

Background

- The Episcopal Church is the official name of the Province of the Anglican Communion in the United States.
- The Anglican Church traces its origins to the English Reformation in the Sixteenth Century. Henry VIII rejected the authority of the Catholic Pope, broke with Rome, and formed the Church of England in 1534, though most of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church remained.
- Under the next king, Edward VI (1547-1553), Archbishop Thomas Cranmer introduced into the Anglican Church thorough reform in both doctrine and practice.
- When Edward died, Queen Mary I (1553-1558), attempted to forcibly return England to Roman Catholicism.
- Apart from the time of England's Civil War and Commonwealth Period (1643-1660), Anglican theology has been the official theology of the Church of England.
- The first Anglican service in America was held in 1579 in what is now San Francisco. An Anglican chaplain was present at Jamestown, VA, in 1607.
- Prior to the Revolutionary War, Anglicans were numerous, especially in the Maryland and Virginian colonies. Both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were Anglicans.
- After the War (in 1783, 1789), Anglicans chose a new name, "The Protestant Episcopal Church," and reorganized to distance themselves from England and to adapt to the American scene.
- Today it is divided into nine provinces and has extra-territorial dioceses in Taiwan, Central and South America, the Caribbean and Europe.
- The Episcopal Church considers itself a middle way, between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.
- It was active in the Social Gospel movement of the late nineteenth century and since the 1960s and 1970s has played a leading role in the progressive and liberal movements in church and secular politics.
- In its resolutions on secular issues the Episcopal Church has taken both sides on the abortion debate, opposed the death penalty, and supported affirmative action and the civil rights movement.

Major Differences

- Ordination of Women
- Role of Homosexuals
- Worship & Liturgy
- Doctrine & Sacraments

Ordination of Women

- In July 1976, after much heated debate, the 72nd General Convention in Philadelphia passed a resolution declaring that "no one shall be denied access" to ordination into the three orders of ministry: as deacons, priests or bishops, on the basis of their sex.

- One bishop, Rev. Jack Iker of Fort Worth, said that he planned to undertake "*active resistance to the directive...I cannot compromise my conscience because I have serious theological reservations.*" He decided to continue to refuse to ordain women, referring them to another diocese instead.
- In 1997, only 4 Episcopal diocese still refused to ordain women
- By 2002, approximately one in four Episcopal clergy was female
- In 2004, the drive for full access to ordination by women within the Episcopal Church, USA was almost complete. Only three of the 100 domestic dioceses still refused to ordain women.
- In June 2006, the Right Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori, Bishop of the Diocese of Nevada, was elected the 26th Presiding Bishop-elect of the Episcopal Church in the USA. This places her at the highest level of power in the Anglican Communion.
- Ten other primates of the Anglican communion have stated that they do not recognize Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori as a primate.
- In addition, eight American dioceses have rejected her authority and have asked the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams to assign them another national leader.

Ordination of Women objections

- HH Pope Shenouda III gives examples of many admirable women, but none of any woman who ever held the office of priest.
- In the Old Testament, God chose His priests from the sons of Levi.
- In the New Testament, although women worked in the service, Our Lord chose men for the establishment and continuation of the new order of priesthood.
- Of all the female righteous or martyrs, no woman is to have the office of priest, because it is not in God's good will for them to do so. Each of God's children has a distinct calling, role, and purpose.
- "Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness..." (Ephesians 4:1-6).
- 1 Corinthians 14:34, "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says."
- 1 Timothy 2:10-14, "But, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression."
- St. Paul did not mean to belittle women nor their role in the church but wanted them to have a role that is more appropriate to their nature.
- St. Paul did not deny the great role of St. Timothy's grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice in teaching him the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim 3:15).
- St. Paul did not ignore Priscilla and the role she had played with her husband in their service to others in many countries; and how they led Apollos to the knowledge of truth (Act 18:26).
- He also commends Phoebe, the servant of the church in Cenchrea, for her help to many (Rom 16:12).
- Some godly women were simple, like Jochebed, the mother of Moses, Aaron the Priest, and Miriam the Prophetess, or Hannah, the mother of Samuel.
- Some were prominent such as Queen Esther, Deborah the Judge, and Anna the Prophetess.

Role of Homosexuals

- The Episcopal Church affirmed at the 1976 General Convention (GC) that homosexuals are "children of God" who deserve acceptance and pastoral care from the church.
- It also called for homosexual persons to have equal protection under secular law. This was reaffirmed in 1982.
- In 1994, the GC determined that church membership would not be determined on "marital status, sex, or sexual orientation".
- The GC also discourages the use of reparative therapy to "change" homosexuals into heterosexuals.
- Despite these affirmations of gay rights, the GC affirmed in 1991 that "physical sexual expression" is only appropriate within the monogamous, lifelong "union of husband and wife."
- Although some dioceses within ECUSA bless same-sex unions, the church as a whole does not.
- The first openly gay priest, Robert Williams, was ordained by Bishop John Shelby Spong in 1989.
- The next year Barry Stopfel was ordained a deacon by Bishop Spong's assistant, Walter Righter. Because Stopfel was not celibate, this resulted in a trial under canon law. The church court dismissed the charges on May 15, 1996, stating that "no clear doctrine" prohibits ordaining a gay or lesbian person in a committed relationship.
- The first openly homosexual bishop, Gene Robinson, was elected on June 7, 2003 at St. Paul's Church in Concord, New Hampshire.
- Robinson was consecrated on November 2, 2003 in the presence of Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold and 47 bishops.
- Since the ratification of Robinson as bishop, some clergy and lay members have left the Episcopal Church. In October 2003, an emergency meeting of the Anglican primates (the heads of the Anglican Communion's 38 member churches) was convened. The meeting's final communique included the warning that if Robinson's consecration proceeded, it would "tear the fabric of the communion at its deepest level."
- Defenders of the ordination responded that, "a person living in a same gender union may be considered eligible to lead the flock of Christ."

Role of Homosexuals objections


- As Christians, we base our faith and beliefs on the Holy Bible, which is the inspired Word of God. The Holy Bible teaches us that "But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female'" (Mk 10:6).
- Sexual expression is permitted only within marriage, between man and woman, male and female. Anything else is an abnormality and against nature.
- God condemns homosexuality. In the Old Testament, homosexuality was considered a sin, an abomination a capital offense, that is, punishable by death. "If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them" (Lev 20:13).
- "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination" (Lev 18:22).
- The New Testament considers homosexuality as depraved passion, "For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against

nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due" (Rom 1:26-27).

- The Holy Bible is clear, homosexuals will not enter the kingdom of heaven, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9-10).

Worship & Liturgy

- Varying degrees of liturgical practice prevail within the church, and one finds a variety of worship styles:
 - ❖ Traditional hymns and anthems
 - ❖ Praise and worship music
 - ❖ Anglican chant
 - ❖ Liturgical dance
 - ❖ Charismatic hand movements
 - ❖ Vested clergy, and clergy in street clothing
 - ❖ Book of Common Prayer
- Three main types of worship services:
 - ❖ High Church
 - ❖ Low Church
 - ❖ Broad Church
- High Church
 - ❖ Ritually inclined towards embellishments such as incense, formal hymns, and a higher degree of ceremony.
 - ❖ In addition to clergy vesting in albs, stoles and chasubles, the lay assistants may also be vested in cassock and surplice. The sung eucharist (celebrated with singing) tends to be emphasized in High Church congregations, with Anglo-Catholic congregations and celebrants using sung services almost exclusively.

			
A deacon wearing an alb and cincture with a purple stole.	A modern chasuble	An Anglican priest wearing a single-breasted cassock.	An Anglican priest wearing a cassock, academic hood, surplice, and tippet as his choir dress.

- Low Church
 - ❖ Simpler service that may incorporate other elements such as informal praise and worship music.
 - ❖ "Low" congregations tend towards a more "traditional Protestant" outlook.
 - ❖ The spoken eucharist (does not involve singing) tends to be emphasized in Low Church congregations.
- Broad Church
 - ❖ Incorporates elements of both low church and high church.
- Eucharist
 - ❖ In the Eucharist or Holy Communion service, the Book of Common Prayer specifies that bread and wine are consecrated for consumption by the people.
 - ❖ Those wishing for whatever reason to avoid alcohol are free to decline the cup.
 - ❖ A Eucharist can be part of a wedding to celebrate a sacramental marriage and of a funeral as a thank offering (sacrifice) to God and for the comfort of the mourners.
- Veneration of saints
 - ❖ The veneration of saints is practiced by the Episcopal Church
 - ❖ The usage of the term "saint" is similar to Catholic and Orthodox traditions. Those inclined to the Anglo-Catholic traditions may explicitly invoke saints as intercessors in prayer.

Doctrine & Sacraments

- Jesus Christ is fully human and fully God.
- He died and was resurrected from the dead
- Jesus provides the way of eternal life for those who believe
- God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit, are one God, and are called the Holy Trinity, "Three and yet one"
- The Old and New Testaments of the Bible were written by people "under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit".
- The Apocrypha are additional books that are used in Christian worship, but not for the formation of doctrine.
- The two great and necessary sacraments are Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist
- Other sacramental rites are confirmation, ordination, marriage, reconciliation of a penitent, and unction.
- Belief in heaven, hell, and Jesus' return in glory.

Conclusion

- While the Episcopal church shares many common beliefs and practices of an apostolic church, it has been plagued with social pressures to conform to a liberal society and has departed from the original faith

Orthodox Views on Protestantism

The Orthodox Perspective

- Five Solas
 - ❖ Sola Scriptura: Scripture Alone
 - ❖ Sola Fide: Faith Alone
 - ❖ Sola Gratia: Grace Alone
 - ❖ Solus Christus: Christ Alone
 - ❖ Soli Deo Gloria: Glory to God Alone
- Eternal Security
- Infant Baptism
- Communion

Sola Scriptura

- Every text demands to be interpreted; Holy Scripture is no exception. In Nehemiah, we read that the Levites “helped the people to understand the law” (Neh.8: 7) and that they “gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading” (Neh.8: 8).
- Our Lord Jesus Christ interpreted many Old Testament passages to His disciples, “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Lk.24: 27).
- He also challenged the views of the Pharisees about the Sabbath by introducing the correct interpretation of the commandment, “If you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice’ you would not have condemned the guiltless...Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (Matt.12: 7-12).
- There is a sense in which the history of Christian theology can be regarded as the history of biblical interpretation.
- Irenaeus insisted that the apostolic Church faithfully preserved the ‘rule of faith’, and that it had found its expression in the canonical books of Scripture.
- The Church had faithfully proclaimed the same gospel from the time of the apostles until the present day.
- Irenaeus thus emphasized the continuity of the teaching and preaching office of the Church and its officials.
- Tertullian adopted a related approach. Scripture, he argued, is capable of being understood clearly, provided that it is read as a whole.
- However, he conceded that controversy over the interpretation of certain passages was inevitable.
- Heretics, he observed gloomily, can make Scripture say more or less anything they like.
- For this reason, the tradition of the church was of considerable importance, as it indicated the manner in which Scripture had been received and interpreted within the church.
- The right interpretation of Scripture was thus to be found where true Christian faith and discipline had been maintained.
- A similar view was taken by Athanasius, who argued that Arius’ Christological mistakes would never have risen if he had remained faithful to the church’s interpretation of Scripture.

- Tradition was thus seen as a legacy from the Apostles, by which the church was guided and directed toward a correct interpretation of Scripture.
- It was not seen as a 'secret source of revelation' in addition to Scripture, rather it was seen as a means of ensuring that the church remained faithful to the teaching of the Apostles, instead of adopting idiosyncratic interpretation of Scripture.
- Martin Luther argued that every individual had the right to interpret Holy Scripture as he or she pleased, without adhering to tradition.
- The way was thus opened for individualism, with the private judgment of the individual raised above the corporate judgment of the Church resulting in the myriad of Protestant denominations we see today.

Sola Fide & Sola Gratia

- Those who believe in salvation by faith alone base their belief on one verse or part of a verse.
- For instance, Eph 2:8-10 states "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."
- Alone, this verse seems to support the concept of Sola Fide, however the next verse states: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them"
- The term faith is a multi facet term:
 - ❖ Living faith: "Faith without works is dead" (Jas 2:20). Such dead faith, void of works, cannot save anyone, "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?" (James 2:14). St. James also says, "Even the demons believe and tremble" (Jas 2:19), does this mean that the devils are saved?
 - ❖ Faith working through love: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love" (Gal 5:6).
 - ❖ Faith and love: St. Paul says, "And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor 13:2).
- Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself informed us about Judgment Day.
- He will discriminate between people based on their previous performance on earth, putting some to His right hand, and others to His left hand.
- "I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in" because of such good works He said to those on the right, "Come, You blessed of My Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mt 25:31-46).
- St. Peter also speaks about judgment according to works, "And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear" (1 Pet 1:17).
- Many take the thief on the right side of the Cross as an example of someone who has attained salvation through faith alone.
- This is not the case, since the thief did not only believe in the Lord in the midst of very hard circumstances, but he also declared a complete confession of the Lord, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Lk 23:42).
- He confessed his own sins and admitted that he deserved to be punished.
- He rebuked the thief on the left cross saying to him, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds" (Lk 23:39-41).

- He also evangelized in defending the Lord "but this Man has done nothing wrong" (Lk 23:41).

Solus Christus & Soli Deo Gloria

- The Orthodox Church believes in a "royal priesthood" which encompasses all believers. However, it recognizes that the Lord set apart certain individuals for specific roles, some were Apostles, others healers, others teachers.
- In order to establish and maintain good order within the community of believers, certain individuals were specifically ordained by the laying on of hands to specific ministries, particularly that of bishop and deacon.
- The Lord gave the power to forgive and retain sins to the Apostles, not to all believers. The Apostles delegated this authority to the bishops, but not to deacons.
- In the fullness of time, as congregations grew beyond the ability for a single bishop to administer, the office of presbyter was established. Specific men were chosen, ordained by the laying on of hands, to be the officiator in place of the bishop in the parishes for the Eucharist.
- Even as there was a Levite priesthood and the priesthood of the order of Melchizedek for ancient Israel, we have the ordained priesthood and the royal priesthood in the New Israel.

Eternal Security

- Our Lord Jesus Christ says that "I will give them eternal life and no one will snatch them out of my hands", and "they are in my Father's hands."
- However, in the book of Hebrews, it says it is impossible for someone who had accepted our Lord Jesus Christ and tasted the heavenly gifts, when he falls to be restored.
- Who are the ones that shall never perish? The verse that proceeds gives the answer: and the condition for not perishing. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27).
- Those who continue to hear Christ's voice, and to follow Him, shall never perish.
- In the Holy Book of Hebrews 3:12 and 6:6, St. Paul is referring to deliberate apostasy, as a defection from the faith.
- If a sinner rejects the only available sacrifice of the New Testament, Jesus Christ, then his repentance for sin would be vain, and their salvation impossible.
- Matt 7:22-23: "Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"
- 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you are disqualified."

Infant Baptism

- The mention of infant baptism is quite clear in the writings of the early fathers. Here are just few examples.
- Infant baptism is assumed in Irenaeus' writings (since he affirms both that regeneration happens in baptism, and also that Jesus came so even infants could be regenerated).
- **Irenaeus:** "He [Jesus] came to save all through himself; all, I say, who through him are reborn in God: infants, and children, and youths, and old men. Therefore he passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, sanctifying infants; a child for children, sanctifying those who are of that age... [so that] he might be the perfect teacher in all things, perfect not only in respect to the setting forth of truth, perfect also in respect to relative age" (Against Heresies 2:22:4 [A.D. 189]).
- **Hippolytus:** "Baptize first the children, and if they can speak for themselves let them do so. Otherwise, let their parents or other relatives speak for them" (The Apostolic Tradition 21:16 [A.D. 215]).
- **St. John Chrysostom:** "You see how many are the benefits of baptism, and some think its heavenly grace consists only in the remission of sins, but we have enumerated ten honors [it bestows]! For this reason we baptize even infants, though they are not defiled by [personal] sins, so that there may be given to them holiness, righteousness, adoption, inheritance, brotherhood with Christ, and that they may be his [Christ's] members" (Baptismal Catecheses in Augustine, Against Julian 1:6:21 [A.D. 388]).

Communion

- The Lord Jesus Christ Himself instituted the Holy Communion on the Thursday of the Covenant, in the Upper Room of Zion, a few hours before His arrest and trial.
- After He had celebrated the Rite of the Jews' Passover, He rose and washed His holy disciples' feet as a sign of repentance and preparation; and then He sat down and instituted the Passover of the New Covenant that is the Sacrament of Holy Communion.
- "He took bread, blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat this is My Body, then He took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying: Drink from it all of you, for this is My Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins'" (Matthew 26:26-28) and St. Paul repeats these same words 1 Cor 11:23-25.
- There is no delineation or actual words from the Lord Jesus Christ, which speak as to how the change occurs. Therefore the Lord Jesus Christ's actual words are intended as a Mystery.
- There are so many very important biblical verses about the Holy Communion that allude to its Mystery:
- "He who eats My Flesh, and drinks My Body abides in Me, and I in him" (John 6:56). By receiving this Sacrament "we become members of His Body, of His Flesh and of His Bones" (Ephesians 5:30) also we become partakers of the Divine Nature (Peter 1:4).
- It gives us eternal life, "Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day. He who eats this Bread will live forever" (John 6:54,58).
- It grants us growth in the Spirit, holiness and life in the Lord Jesus Christ as He said, "For My Flesh is food indeed, and My Blood is drink is indeed. As the living Father sent me, and I live in Him because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me" (John 6:55,57).

- Just like when we eat substantial food we nourish our bodies making them strong and healthy; likewise when we eat the Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ we strengthen our souls and God's grace grows continuously in us.
It gives remedy to the soul, body, and spirit, as we say in the Offertory Mystery: "That they (Holy Body and Precious Blood) may become to us all for participation and healing and salvation for our souls, bodies, and our spirits."

Protestantism I

Outline

- Background & Birth of Protestantism
- Foundation of Protestant Belief
- Five Solas
- Modern Protestant Belief
 - ❖ Scripture
 - ❖ Trinity
 - ❖ Priesthood

Background

- Protestantism was born out of the Protestant Reformation that began in Europe in 1517
- The movement began as an attempt to reform the Catholic Church which at the time suffered from several corrupted doctrines and practices including the teaching and sale of indulgence and the buying and selling of church positions (simony).
- The protests against Rome began in earnest when Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk and professor at the university of Wittenberg, called in 1517 for reopening of the debate on the sale of indulgences.
- An indulgence was sold by the Catholic Church to a sinner to release him/her from punishment in Purgatory before going to Heaven.
- In protest, Luther nailed his *95 Theses* to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church, which served as a notice board for university-related announcements. These were points for debate that criticized the Church and the Pope.
- Luther's dissent marked a sudden outbreak of a new and irresistible force of discontent which had been pushed underground but not resolved.
- Luther, in the beginning favored maintaining the bishops as an elite class for administrative purposes, though he denied that their succession from the Apostles gave their consecration any special sacramental value.
- While Luther rejected many of the Catholic sacraments, the practice of indulgences, and salvation through both faith and good works (as opposed to the Protestant "faith alone"), he firmly upheld the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist.
- After this first stage of the Reformation, following the excommunication of Luther and condemnation of the Reformation by the Pope, the work and writings of John Calvin were influential in establishing a loose consensus among various groups in Switzerland, Scotland, Hungary, Germany and elsewhere.
- Protestantism quickly spread to Switzerland, Scandinavia, England, Scotland, Netherlands, and France.
- The Reformation led to a series of religious wars that culminated in the Thirty Years War.
- From 1618 to 1648 the Catholic Habsburgs, who ruled Spain, Austria, the Spanish Netherlands and most of Germany and Italy fought against the Protestant princes of Germany, supported by Denmark and Sweden.

- The Reformation Era came to a close when Catholic France allied herself, first in secret and later on the battlefields, with the Protestants against the Habsburgs.
- For the first time since the days of Luther, political and national convictions again outweighed religious convictions in Europe.

Churches Born of the Reformation

- Anglicanism
- Anabaptism
- Calvinism
- Lutheranism
- Zwinglianism

Post-Reformation Churches

- Baptists
- Pietism
- Pentecostalism
- Puritanism
- Today there are over 33,000 Protestant denominations

Foundation of Protestant Belief

- The Five Solas are five Latin phrases (or slogans) that emerged during the Protestant Reformation and summarize the Reformers' basic theological beliefs in contradiction to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church of the day.
- The Latin word sola means "alone," "only," or "single" in English.
- The Five Solas were believed to be the only doctrines needed for salvation.
- Listing them as such explicitly excluded other doctrines that Protestants believed hindered salvation.

Five Solas

- Solus Christus: Christ Alone
- Sola Scriptura: Scripture Alone
- Sola Fide: Faith Alone
- Sola Gratia: Grace Alone
- Soli Deo gloria: Glory to God Alone

Solus Christus: Christ Alone

- Protestants characterize the dogma concerning the Pope as Christ's representative head of the Church on earth, the concept of meritorious works, and the idea of veneration of the saints, as a denial that Christ is the only mediator between God and man.

Sola Scriptura: Scripture Alone

- Protestants believe that the doctrines of Apostolic churches obscure Bible teaching by convoluting it with church history and doctrine.
- Specifically oral tradition and teachings of the Fathers are rejected as human tradition and not authoritative.
- Tim 3:15-17, “and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Sola Fide: Faith Alone

- Protestants believe that faith in Christ alone is enough for eternal salvation as described in Ephesians 2:8-9, whereas Apostolic churches believe that the phrases "faith without works is dead" (as stated in James 2:20) and "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only." (James 2:24); points to salvation needing to be earned.
- Protestants, pointing to the same bit of scripture, believe that practicing good works attests to one's faith in Christ and his teachings.

Sola Gratia: Grace Alone

- The Reformers posited that salvation is a gift of God (i.e., God's act of free grace), dispensed by the Holy Spirit owing to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ alone, and not depending on good works.
- Consequently, they argued that a sinner is not accepted by God on account of the change wrought in the believer by God's grace, but instead that the believer is accepted without regard for the merit of his works — for no one deserves salvation.

Soli Deo Gloria: Glory to God Alone

- All glory is due to God alone, since salvation is accomplished solely through His will and action—not only the gift of the all-sufficient atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross, but also the gift of faith, created in the heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit.
- The reformers believed that human beings, even saints canonized by the Roman Catholic Church, the popes, and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, are not worthy of the glory that was accorded them.

Modern Protestant Belief: Scripture

- Few Protestants would suggest that the Bible was verbally and plenary inspired as some biblical inerrantists maintain.
- This view holds that the Bible as we have it is the result of God's Holy Spirit directly revealing His **words** to its authors.

- There is a general consensus that scripture must be interpreted both through the lens of the culture in which it was originally written, and examined using God-given reason.
- Neither of these methods is believed to diminish the importance of scripture or is an indication that scripture is not the revelation of God's Word.

Modern Protestant Belief: The Trinity

- Most mainline denominations are Trinitarian, meaning they accept doctrine that God exists as three persons of one essence: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.
- However, many mainline denominations take a more "hands-off" approach and do not require belief in the Trinity. Many mainline denominations also believe in the virgin birth of Christ.

Modern Protestant Belief: Priesthood

- Most Protestants today recognize only one mediator between them and God the Father, and that is God the Son, Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5). The Epistle to the Hebrews calls Jesus the supreme "high priest," who offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 7:23-28).
- Protestants believe that through Christ they have been given direct access to God, just like a priest; thus the doctrine is called the priesthood of all believers. God is equally accessible to all the faithful, and every Christian has equal potential to minister for God.
- The vast majority of Protestants nonetheless draw some distinction between their own ordained ministers and lay people, but regard it as a matter of church order and discipline rather than spiritual hierarchy.

Conclusion

- Given the wide gamut of Protestant belief, it is difficult to define what Protestants as a whole believe about any given doctrine.
- Also, because Protestants believe that scripture is subject to private interpretation, there are many variations of belief even among those of the same denomination.

Protestantism II

Major Protestant Churches Today

- Lutherans
- Baptists
- Methodists

Lutheran Origin

- Lutheranism is a major branch of Protestant Christianity that identifies with the teachings of the sixteenth-century German reformer Martin Luther.
- Unlike the Reformed Churches, Lutherans have retained many of the sacramental understandings and liturgical practices of the pre-Reformation Church.
- Lutheran theology differs considerably from Reformed theology in its understanding of divine grace and predestination to eternity after death.
- Today, nearly 70 million Christians belong to Lutheran churches worldwide; furthermore, the world's 400 million Protestant Christians can trace their tradition, at least in part, back to Luther's reforming work.
- The Evangelical-Lutheran church is or was the state church of several countries in northern Europe.

Lutheran Beliefs

- Infant baptism is practiced
- Baptism and Communion are the only two sacraments
- Belief in Monergism – Salvation is by God's act alone
- Some Lutherans reject the term “Eucharist”

Lutheran Beliefs: Monergism

- In its simplest form Monergism states that salvation is all from God, as opposed to synergism, which, in its simplest form, insists that God performs some action(s) leaving salvation incomplete until man performs some action(s) to complete salvation.
- According to Monergism, a sinner is given pardon for sin by the death of Jesus, acceptance with God by the imputed righteousness of Jesus, and faith in Jesus by the Holy Spirit.
- Sanctification then begins either instantaneously according to some, or as an ongoing progressive process according to others. But to remain consistent to Monergism, justification must be entirely of God.
- Lutherans reject the doctrine that humans in their fallen state have a free will concerning spiritual matters.
- They believe that although humans have free will concerning civil righteousness, they cannot work spiritual righteousness without the Holy Spirit, since righteousness in the heart cannot be wrought in the absence of the Holy Spirit.

- Lutherans believe that the elect are predestined to salvation and that Christians should be assured that they are among the predestined.
- However, they disagree with those that make predestination the source of salvation rather than Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection.
- Unlike some in Calvinism, Lutherans do not believe in a predestination to damnation. Instead, Lutherans teach damnation is a result of the unbeliever's rejection of the Holy Spirit.

Lutheran Beliefs: Eucharist

- Some Lutherans use the term Eucharist to refer to Communion; however, others reject the term on the basis that the word Eucharist ("thanksgiving") puts the emphasis on the human response to the sacrament, which is contrary to the Lutheran emphasis on God's omnipotence and human powerlessness.
- Lutherans believe that the Body and Blood of Christ are "truly and substantially present in, with and under the forms" of the consecrated bread and wine (the elements), so that communicants eat and drink both the elements and the true Body and Blood of Christ Himself
- Lutherans use the terms "in, with and under the forms of [consecrated] bread and wine" and "sacramental union" to distinguish their understanding of the Lord's Supper from those of the Reformed and other traditions.
- More liberal Lutheran churches tend to practice open communion, inviting all who are baptized to participate.
- Conservative Lutheran churches are more likely to practice closed communion (or "close communion"), restricting participation to those who are in doctrinal agreement with them.
- This might involve the formal declaration of "altar and pulpit fellowship", another term for Eucharistic sharing coupled with the acceptance of the ministrations of one another's clergy.
- Open communion is a thoroughly modern practice, as most Lutheran bodies as late as the 20th century would often preclude their own members from partaking in communion, such as divorcees and men and women who lived together outside of marriage; this was a carryover from the church's roots in Catholicism.

Baptist Origin

- Baptists today are the third largest Protestant group in the world. Their history can be traced back to the early days of the Protestant Reformation - specifically, the radical wing of the Reformation which was rejected by major Protestant leaders like Luther and Zwingli.
- Baptists were originally nicknamed "Anabaptists," which means "re-baptists," because the baptism of mature church members rather than children is one of the original defining marks of this denomination - when they first appeared in the United States, this was a particularly radical position to take.
- Baptists number over 110 million worldwide in more than 170,000 congregations, and are considered the largest world communion of evangelical Protestants, with an estimated 22 million members in the North America.
- Other large populations of Baptists also exist in Asia, Africa and Latin America, notably in India (2.4 million), Nigeria (2.5 million), Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (1.9 million) and Brazil (1.7 million).

- According to a poll in the 1990s, about one in five Christians in the United States claims to be a Baptist. U.S. Baptists are represented in more than fifty separate groups.
- Ninety-two percent of Baptists are found in five of those bodies:
 - ❖ The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)
 - ❖ National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (NBC)
 - ❖ National Baptist Convention of America, Inc. (NBCA)
 - ❖ American Baptist Churches in the USA (ABC)
 - ❖ Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI)

Baptist Beliefs: Eternal Security

- Eternal security is a controversial Christian doctrine which maintains that none who are truly saved can be condemned for their sins or finally fall away from the faith.
- The doctrine appears in two different forms: (1) the traditional Calvinist doctrine found in the Reformed Christian confessions of faith, and (2) the non-traditional doctrine found in some Baptist and other evangelical churches.
- In a sense, both can describe Christian believers as "once saved, always saved", but the two forms attach a different meaning to the word saved — namely, whether or not it necessarily involves sanctification, the process of becoming holy by rejecting sin.
- Baptists hold the non-traditional view of eternal security and has been espoused by Charles Stanley, Norman Geisler, Zane C. Hodges, Bill Bright, and others. This view, like the traditional Calvinist view, emphasizes that people are saved purely by an act of divine grace that does not depend at all on the deeds of the individual, and for that reason, advocates insist that nothing the person can do can affect his or her salvation.
- The non-traditional doctrine views the person's character and life after receiving the gift of salvation as independent from the gift itself, which is the main point of differentiation from the traditional view, or, in other words, it asserts that justification (that is, being declared righteous before God on account of Christ) does not necessarily result in sanctification (that is, a progressively more righteous life).
- The doctrine sees the work of salvation as wholly monergistic, which is to say that God alone performs it and man has no part in the process beyond receiving it, and therefore, proponents argue that man cannot undo what they believe God has done, even by denying the very existence of that God.
- The traditional doctrine teaches that a person is secure in salvation because he or she was predestined by God, whereas in the non-traditional view, a person is secure because he or she has believed the Gospel message.

Baptist Beliefs: Baptism

- Baptism, commonly referred to as believer's baptism among Baptists and some other groups, is administered by full immersion in water after a person professes Jesus Christ to be Savior.
- It is seen as an act of obedience to the example and command of Jesus given in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). It is an outward expression that is symbolic of the inward cleansing or remission of their sins that has already taken place. It is also a public identification of that person with Christianity and with that particular local church.
- Most Protestants do not practice infant baptism because they believe parents cannot make a decision of salvation for an infant. Related to this doctrine is the disputed concept of an "age

of accountability" when God determines that a mentally capable person is accountable for their sins and eligible for baptism.

- This is not a specific age, but is based on whether or not the person is mentally capable of knowing right from wrong.
- Thus, a person with severe mental retardation may never reach this age, and therefore would not be held accountable for sins. The book of Isaiah mentions an age at which a child "shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good."
- Baptists insist upon baptism by full immersion, the mode Baptists believe Jesus received when he was baptized by John the Baptist.
- Baptist theology considers that no saving grace is conveyed during baptism and that original sin is not washed away. Baptists have traditionally believed that baptism is a symbol.
- The candidate is lowered in water backwards while the baptizer (a pastor or any baptized believer under the authority of the local Baptist church) invokes the Trinitarian phrase found in Matthew 28:19 or other words concerning a profession of faith. Baptism by immersion is a representation of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.
- Some Baptist churches will recognize "age of accountability" baptisms by immersion performed in other Christian churches of "like faith and order," while others only recognize baptisms performed in Baptist churches.
- Baptists are known for re-baptizing converts to their faith who were previously baptized as infants or small children. Because of this, the first Baptist congregations were dubbed "Anabaptists", which means re-baptizers.
- Baptist churches will not accept:
 - ❖ Prior baptisms by any means other than immersion
 - ❖ Baptisms performed as an infant or child too young to make a personal decision to accept Christ
 - ❖ Baptisms performed by any means, including immersion, if administered by a church not considered to be of "like faith and order" by the Baptist congregation.

Methodist Origin

- The Methodist movement traces its origin to the evangelistic teachings of John Wesley, who was an Anglican priest.
- It originated in 18th century Great Britain, and through vigorous missionary activity, spread throughout the British Empire, the United States, and beyond.
- Originally it appealed especially to workers, agricultural workers, and slaves.
- Soteriologically, most Methodists are Arminian or on rare occasions moderately Calvinist, emphasizing that Christ accomplished salvation for every human being, and that humans must exercise an act of the will to receive it (as opposed to the traditional Calvinist doctrine of monergism).
- Methodism is traditionally a low (contemporary) church in liturgy (although this varies greatly between individual congregations; the Wesleys themselves greatly valued the Anglican liturgy and tradition).
- In 2006, Methodism claimed some seventy-five million members worldwide.

Methodist Beliefs

- Free will (as opposed to pre-destination)
- Trinity
- Affirm the Nicene Creed
- Baptism and Communion are the two recognized sacraments
- Believes in the real presence of Jesus Christ in Communion (not simply a remembrance)
- Tradition is a source of authority
- Do not believe in Monergism