

Bible Special 06-07-04b

Let's resume our study now. We are looking at cults. We're looking at the Unitarians.

And as I look out at you all, and see so many of you with the same exact shirt on, I could easily believe that you were Unitarians. Because your shirt says, One Nation Under God Indivisible. And if it wasn't for the comma, One Nation Under God Indivisible.

It's an indivisible God. It's only the comma that saves your shirts from being cult shirts. So don't let that... Is there a comma on there? There's no comma? Is there a comma after God? So see, now it becomes a textual question, doesn't it? Is it the nation that's indivisible, or is it God that's indivisible? The reason I bring that up is that these are the kinds of questions that come up when people look at the Word of God to either support their position or to shoot down someone else's position.

They'll change the text. And we've had the Pledge of Allegiance ever since the mid-1950s that says, One Nation Under God. Up until President Eisenhower, I think it was, the Pledge of Allegiance said, One Nation Indivisible.

And there was no question. But with the rise of the Red Scare and Communism and so forth, and we have In God We Trust on our money, so they added Under God to the Pledge of Allegiance in the 1950s. And that's what's on your shirt.

But think about it. You have two nouns, and then you have an adjective. You have the nation and you have God, and then it says indivisible.

Well, now what does indivisible refer to? You know the answer to this because you know what the Pledge of Allegiance means. What is it that's indivisible? It's the nation. Of course, is God divisible? You're afraid to answer, aren't you? As well you should be.

Can God be divided? The Apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, when he said, I hear there are wars and divisions among you, he said, Is Christ divided? May it never be. God is not divisible, but God is three persons in one. So there are divisions in God.

There's the Father division, the Son division, and the Holy Spirit division. But God doesn't divide any further. So if something is divisible, it means it's currently unified, but you can divide it.

Well, I bring that up because this is the kind of game playing that goes on with cults who appeal to Scripture, and they will take verses out of context. Now, we've been talking about the Unitarians, and there's a real famous Unitarian, Ralph Waldo Emerson. Did you ever hear of him? He was a Unitarian.

He created a whole branch of the Unitarian Church in the United States. Well, there was a big sort of shaking out and falling together of the Unitarians back in the early 1960s. And so now they all have kind of a big sort of denomination or umbrella organization called the Unitarian

Universalist Association.

And there are lots and lots of people who claim to be Unitarians. Also, there are people who say, I'm not a Unitarian, I'm a Baptist, or I'm not a Unitarian, I'm a Presbyterian. But they are practicing Unitarians, and we call them in the religious world.

This is not the political world, this is the religious world. They are religious or Christian liberals. There's a liberal Christianity, and liberal theology, liberal beliefs within Christianity, sends a lot of people into non-Christianity, into not orthodoxy.

For example, liberals generally do not believe the Bible is the Word of God. They sometimes say it contains the Word of God, or it is a witness to the Word of God. It's sort of a pale reflection, and if you look, you can get a hint of the Word of God.

But they don't believe that it is inspired. They don't believe that it's inerrant. They don't believe it's infallible.

They think it's full of mistakes. They do not believe that you can put any faith in doctrines derived from the Bible. That if you compare Scripture with Scripture and draw conclusions from the Bible, that they are trustworthy.

They say, no, no, no. Things full of errors, you can't draw any conclusions from it. They don't really believe God is personal.

By personal, I mean they don't really think of God as God the Father being a person. The Lord Jesus Christ being a person. The Holy Spirit being a person.

They think, well, there's a divine force. There's a, you know, this gets into your sort of Star Wars view of God. What does the little green guy always say to Luke Skywalker? May the force be with you? Well, now, if you wish that to somebody in the Star Wars universe, who decides whether the force shows up and does its thing for you or not? Does the force have a brain? Does the force have a consciousness? Does the force think? Does the force say, oh, Luke, I'm going to help you.

Here's your father about to chop off your hand. Does the force think? How about the dark side of the force? So, if the force is sort of pseudo-God, does God have a dark side? Or are there two forces? The light force and the dark force? I mean, if you really start thinking about the whole Star Wars thing, it's bogus. It doesn't hold up.

Is it an impersonal force? It's just kind of a magnetic sphere or something. And if you tune yourself in, you can access this power. It's just sort of raw, unthinking power.

And there's dark power and there's good power. And you can be, you know, Darth Vader or you can be the good guys. Well, this is what liberal theologians think about God for real.

They think in this universe, in real life, that God is really more of an impersonal sort of force

field that you can sort of tap into. And He's not really a personal God. He doesn't have a plan and a purpose.

He doesn't think. He doesn't speak. He doesn't create from His own mind and His own imagination.

And when the Bible says, let us create man in our image and after our likeness, that's just a fable. There's not really a thinking, sentient God up there. Well, this is just not Christianity, is it? How can you have the person and work of Christ? How can you have the lost and fallen condition of man? What did we fall from? The force? We fell to the dark side? Is it like the Chinese thing with the yin and the yang and the dragon eating its own tail? And that sort of, I mean, you might as well just become a Hindu or you might as well just become a hedonist.

If I wasn't going to be a Christian, I'd be a hedonist. I would say, let's grab for the gusto. Let's have as much fun as we can.

Let's ride the biggest, tallest, fastest roller coaster and run into a brick wall at the end. Because what else is there? Have a good time and wink out. Be like a meteorite streaking across the sky.

Live fast, die young. Good looking corpse. End it.

That's it. Why not? What else is there? If there's no accountability, if there's no future, if you're just dead meat when you die, then you better grab for the gusto because when you go to sleep, you're never waking up. You're taking a big dirt nap, as they say.

So, this is what liberal theology tries to steer Christians into. God is impersonal. He's not really there.

You can't trust the Bible. Well, who's running that little sock puppet? Who's speaking those words? We have a name, don't we? We know who's running that little game. That's Satan.

Satan wants to erode faith in God. He's been doing it ever since the garden. He did it in the garden.

He did it to Job. He tried to do it to the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will try to do it to you and to me. There is a lot of, you know, if you think about a straight path, a little narrow path that goes through a little narrow gate to life, how many other directions? We talk about degrees in a circle.

If you had to steer a course, and you had to go a long distance, and you had to say, okay, the course through this straight gate is straight up zero. It's due north. How many other degrees are there in the circle? There's 359 other directions you can go and miss it, right? Well, Satan loves, if he can just get one degree of deflection, we'll miss it.

If he can get two or three degrees of deflection, we'll really miss it. And if he can get 90 or 180, why so much the better? This is what liberal theology does. So, Unitarianism, denial of God.

As soon as you deny the Trinity, you deny Christ. You cannot have the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, what was the phrase? A little pop quiz here.

What did we say about Jesus? He is undiminished deity, true humanity in one person forever. Unitarians don't believe that. Liberals don't believe that.

And you can be lost if you don't believe that. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The scripture says, he that hath the Son, doesn't say he that hath the force, does it? He that hath the Son hath life.

And as soon as you say you have the Son, that means you believe in the Father. And as soon as you believe in the Father and the Son, well, you're pretty close to the Trinity there. You can't be a Unitarian and believe in the Son.

It's either or. Unitarians are lost unless they got to Unitarianism after being saved, in which case they're just in for big trouble at the judgment. Well, Unitarians, therefore, don't believe that man is a sinner.

Why would he be a sinner when there's really not the need for a Redeemer? They believe that man just needs his character improved. He needs to learn to be better. What does this sound like? You remember back a couple of weeks ago? Who's the religion who thinks that you need education to be a better person? You need better knowledge.

You need to study the Vedic hymns and get the wisdom of the ages so that you can ascend and work your way out of the mundane world and get into the spirit world. That's Hinduism. That's Eastern mysticism.

Well, that's what Unitarians have mixed in with the Bible. So, if there's no sin, then there is no eternal punishment. They don't believe in hell.

They don't believe in the lake of fire, specifically. We don't tend to talk about hell in our church because that is a much misunderstood term and it is translated in your King James and New King James in all the wrong places. We have to be more specific.

The word may be Hades. It may be Gehenna. It may be Sheol.

And we understand the difference between those. But the Unitarians don't believe in any of those. They don't believe in flames.

They don't believe in divine judgment whatsoever. Unitarianism is just another name for humanism. Now, if you haven't learned about humanism yet, you will.

Humanism has its roots in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason. When you study history, does any of that ring a bell? Any of y'all that have had history? Come out of the Dark Ages and the Middle Ages and then you have the Enlightenment and the Renaissance and everybody rediscovers the Greeks and philosophy and, oh, we're going to paint and we're going to sculpt and we're going to... You know, I'm a Renaissance man. I've got

all this great knowledge and wisdom and man is going to improve the race and improve society and improve himself by learning all these neat things about geometry and how to make concrete and so on.

Don't laugh. Concrete is a lost art. The concrete that the Romans used, modern guys are trying to chip that stuff and figure out how they made it because we can't make concrete as well as they made it.

Can't figure out how they put the pyramids together and got those blocks so precise. They can't figure out how the Incas and the Aztecs put their things together. And so they're trying to have this sort of second Renaissance where they go back and study the pyramid builders and the Incas and so on, trying to figure out how they did what they did.

How did that guy in Florida move his big coral blocks all up and down the property there? A little shriveled up man and he'd have a wall of these great giant many tons of coral blocks. They'd come in the next morning and they were all moved a couple of miles down the road. And they said, how did you do that? He didn't have a forklift.

He didn't have a truck. Well, he had some kind of knowledge that nobody else has got. I don't know how he did it.

I'll tell you this, Unitarians don't believe in hell and they don't believe in Christ. So what does that make them? Lost. And it comes out in humanism.

It comes out in secularism where man by man's efforts can make himself better. And that is a characteristic of all cults. Man will expend an effort and make himself better.

Now, what's the difference in that and what we believe? Should we be trying to get better? Should we be putting out some kind of effort so that we can become better? What is the difference in us trying to be better and a cult person trying to be better? What is the process by which we become better? Romans 12, 1 and 2. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice. It's the mercy of God. And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed how? By your education? By the stuff you do? Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Bible study, Bible class. Learning the Word of God. Not just Bible study and Bible class, but your personal meditation.

Do you want to be a better person? Do you want to be the person that someone can fall in love with? Do you want to be the person that someone can stay in love with? Do you want to be the kind of person that is a great friend, a great colleague, a great co-worker, a great son or daughter, a great parent, a great brother or sister? Do you want to be a worthy, worthwhile person? All of us need transformation. And it's a lifetime process. But the only way that transformation takes place, it's not secularism, it's not humanism, it's not Unitarianism.

It is being transformed by the renewing of our minds. Bible class is a great place to start, but Bible class will not make you a better person. Hearing me or anybody else teach the Word of God doesn't make you a better person.

Think about it. What makes you transformed? How is your mind renewed? It's what you do with what you hear. When you hear the Word of God, do you think about it? Do you say, well, if that is true, then what? How should I live? How should I think? How should I decide? How should I act? What should my thought process be in this relationship, in this decision point, in this task? What should my attitude be as I go through this circumstance? And trust me on this, all of us have work to do.

It doesn't matter if you're a Bible teacher. It doesn't matter if you're saved yesterday. All of us need God's grace and God's transforming power.

But the difference is, it is not man by man's efforts working himself up to God or up to a God-like state. It is man in his hopeless and helpless and useless condition asking and seeking and knocking and receiving God's grace. And God transforms us.

God renews us to the extent that we let Him. And we have to do that by meditating on the Word of God. Most of you know our memory verse from Psalm 1. Blessed is the man that turns away from certain things, turns away from the Unitarian point of view, turns away from the secular humanist point of view.

Blessed is the man that does what? Walks not in the counsel of the ungodly. What's the counsel of the ungodly? Well, here's the decision point. Now, we've said that verse dozens of times here in church.

But if you go to school, if you go to work, if you're circulating, who are the ungodly? Do you pick your friends from the ungodly? Do you try to break into the social circle of the ungodly? Do you try to impress the ungodly? Does it make your day if somebody from the ungodly crowd says, hey, come with us. Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel. That's the thought process.

That's the trendiness. That's the clickishness. That's the acceptability and the thought life of the ungodly.

Who do you want to choose your friends from? Do you want friends who have the Spirit of God? Who share your enthusiasm for the Word of God? Who are going to be there with Christ? And you want to be there with Christ in the eternal future? Or do you want the counsel of the ungodly? You can't just hear it in church. It has to be something that makes a difference. What do you think about? Who do you want to associate with? Do you want God to transform you or not? And you have to plant yourself by the river of water and bring forth your fruit.

Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly and doesn't stand in the way of sinners. A lot of Christians say, well, you know, I can stand here and this sin is all around me and I just won't partake. I can be associated with the sinners.

They're walking all around me and I'm just standing here. You know, the way is not a standing place. It's not a parking lot.

The way of sinners, that's where they walk. Well, the man who stands in the way... Have you ever been in a movie that was packed? Every seat was full? And when the movie's over and you stand up, what happens? When people start moving, do you stand still? If you're standing in the way of the people trying to leave the theater, what happens? You just get swept right out. If somebody yells fire in a crowded room and people start sweeping out, people can get trampled and people can die.

You see this on the news every so often where there will be a big crowd and when the crowd starts moving, if somebody can't move or doesn't move or falls down, you can be killed. The man who stands in the way of sinners. We choose who we associate with.

We choose our companions. Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, doesn't stand in the way of sinners, doesn't sit in the seat of the scornful. There's a lot of scorn in the world today.

All you have to do is look at public school and you find a lot of scorn. There's scorn for authority. There's scorn for tradition.

There's scorn for morality. There's scorn for good values. Now, a lot of people say, well, I have a choice.

I can either be scorned or I can be a scorner. Well, sitting in the seat, that's a picture of judgment. The ones who would sit in the seat, these were the judges at the city gate and they would sit.

In later times in the Greek world, it was called the bema. It was the judgment seat and they would sit there and get all full of themselves and look scornfully down and say, well, you're a widow. You're an orphan.

Go away. If you don't have any money for me, are you going to bring me a fattling calf? You're not? Well, get the hints. Poor people have no right.

And they would sit in the seat of the scornful. That's the judgment seat. And you look down and you just heap abuse and scorn on things.

Well, it's popular. It's cool now to scorn everything and to mock a lot of things that have value and a lot of things that have their roots in the Bible. Well, are you going to sit in the seat of the scornful or not? This is the difference between humanism, human wisdom, human ideas buying into the ideas of the group or sticking with the Bible.

You can either be transformed by the renewing of your mind or not. Well, none of these have worked. They've been trying Unitarianism for 2,000 years and it never measures up.

It is always expelled from biblical Christianity. It's been condemned in counsel after counsel and doctrinal statement after doctrinal statement because you're either trusting man or you're trusting God. You're either trusting in human nature and human wisdom or you're trusting God.

Now, that sounds like a nice theological statement, but what about us? How do we go day by day? Do we look to people? Do we hope in people? Are we waiting for people to follow through and carry through? Or are we trusting God? Now, God uses people. Don't get me wrong. Every blessing I've received has generally come through people, but there's a difference.

You might mix up the source and the means. If you order something, have you ever ordered something from Amazon.com? Have you ever gone to the Amazon bookstore online and ordered a book? Well, you order it from a publisher or from Amazon or whoever and then it comes by UPS or it comes by FedEx or it comes in the U.S. Postal Mail. Well, now, who sent you the book? Do you say, oh, thank you, Mr. Postman, for this great book.

I really appreciate you making this book. The postman just brought it. It's Amazon that sent it.

If grandma sends you a birthday card with money inside, you don't get down on your knees and thank the postman or thank the UPS guy. Oh, I love this \$20 bill. Thank you so much.

Grandma sent it, right? And you don't mix up the messenger with the person who sent it. Well, in the same way, blessings can come through people but we don't trust in those people. We trust God.

We thank God. We rely on God to send those emissaries, to send those postmen to deliver the provision and the blessing that God has for us. That's something that these cultists all miss.

They put their faith in a man. They put their faith in a leader. They put their faith in a philosophy that says, I can make myself good enough to get saved.

I've joined the cult, so I'm good. Well, that's Unitarianism. In your number one brochure, you'll see, in addition to some others, our four major cults.

We've already talked about Unitarianism. You can see there's also a Unification Church. That's like a whole different thing.

But Unity, you can read some things there about Unity. I'm not sure that that's Unitarianism because it talks about some lady named Myrtle Fillmore, who I've never heard of. But the other three that we're going to talk about are on here.

And you'll see your blue column is Mormonism. Your pink column is Jehovah's Witnesses. And your amber column is Christian Science.

Have you ever heard of Christian Science? Christian Scientists? I sure have. These are the major cults that we're going to take a look at. And the next one we're going to look at is the Jehovah's

Witnesses, or as we like to call them, the JW's.

Jehovah's Witnesses. Have you ever seen the people riding their bicycles? There's usually two of them with white shirts and backpacks. They ride bikes and they come and ring your doorbell.

You know why they do that? Because they are Jonadabs. They are wannabes. They've got to work their way into salvation.

And they do that by accosting you with their Jehovah's Witness stuff. The interesting thing is apparently for well over 5,000 years, almost 6,000 years, apparently nobody got saved because there weren't any Jehovah's Witnesses until the 1800s. There was a man named Charles Taze Russell.

No offense to the Russells in the room, but there was a man named Charles Taze Russell. He was born in Pennsylvania in 1852. And he is the inventor, he's the cult leader for the Jehovah's Witnesses.

He got scared to death when he was growing up over hell. He heard these hellfire and brimstone sermons and it just absolutely scared him to death. He had a morbid fear of hell.

Well, then when he was about 17 years old, he got into a discussion with somebody who said, ah, there's no hell. There's no such thing. Kind of a Unitarian sort of thing.

There's no hell. And he was so greatly relieved and he said, boy, I sure feel better not believing in hell. So, then about a year later, he wandered into a church where they were talking about the second coming of Christ.

And that nobody knew when Jesus was coming back. And he thought, well, I ought to be able to figure that out. So he got a Bible and he started trying to figure out when Jesus was going to come back.

And people have been arguing over this and trying to figure out God's timing for what, 2,000 years? Ever since Jesus came the first time? Well, he sat down for several weeks and decided he had it all figured out. So he published a book and it was called The Object and Manner of the Lord's Return. And he said, I've solved it.

Jesus is coming back. Now, are you ready? You'll want to mark your calendar. Jesus is coming back in 1874.

Oops. Of course, he had this big, long explanation of how he'd figured this out. Jesus is coming back in 1874.

Well, see, he was born in 1852. So he was going to be, what, 30? How old is that? 22? Yeah, he would be 22 years old when Jesus came back. Well, of course, 1874 came along.

Jesus didn't come back. And he said, oh, I made a mistake. It's going to be 1914.

So he pushed it out another... He had goofed by 40 years. He forgot the Israelites wandering in the desert or something. And so it was going to be 1914.

And then he said also, oh, by the way, and when Jesus does come back, it was a big disappointment when Jesus didn't come in 1874, he said he's going to come in 1914, but it's going to be a spiritual coming. Nobody will see it. It's an invisible coming.

So when he comes, don't be expecting to see anything. He'll come and go, and that'll be it, but it's 1914. So the Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus came back in 1914.

They don't like to talk about it, but Jesus has already come back. Why are we still here? I have no idea. Jesus evidently didn't decide to start up the kingdom or do any of the things he's supposed to do when he comes back.

Well, the Jehovah's Witnesses have developed from this 17-year-old guy, 18-year-old, 22-year-old guy, and his speculations about Jesus coming back and that there is no hell into this huge religion that exists today. How did it come about? What do they believe? We'll see it next time, but here's the point. It is a cult, and they do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

They do not believe in eternal punishment. All of these classic cult-like things. Can Jehovah's Witnesses be Christians? Not if they don't believe Jesus is the Son of God.

They cannot. Well, be thankful that you have the Word of God and that you have the Spirit of God to lead us into truth because there's a lot of strange malarkey out in the world. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for your Word. Thank you for your Spirit. Thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ who has saved us and redeemed us and promises us a bright future if we will be seekers, if we will be obedient, if we will put the things that belong to your plan and purpose first in our lives.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress those truths in our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.