

General Topics :: Orthodox Church**Orthodox Church - posted by drifter (), on: 2020/1/1 15:01**

This is a good article for understanding the Orthodox Church and its soteriology.

"Many years of missionary work in Eastern Europe and Russia have led me to conclude that the gospel is not often proclaimed in the Orthodox Church. Church services are ritualistic exercises that focus on the icons and the sacraments. It is all too easy to trust in those sacraments to save one and on the icons to sanctify one rather than in the finished work of Christ on the Cross in our behalf. Though we cannot judge what is in the heart of another, we can certainly assume that most people in the Orthodox Church need to hear and respond to the good news of Jesus Christ and need to turn to Him for forgiveness of sins and to trust in His work on the Cross for their salvation." -Dr. D. Trent Hyatt

The full article can be read here:

<https://answersingenesis.org/world-religions/eastern-orthodoxy/>

Re: Orthodox Church - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2020/1/1 18:42

He ends the article on an interesting note:

"A Concluding Question

One last question might trouble some. Is it possible for a born-again believer to be a practicing member of the Orthodox Church? Of course it is as long as they repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and His death, burial, and Resurrection! As Jesus told Nicodemus, the Spirit blows where He wills (John 3:8). There are without doubt born-again believers in all kinds of places and churches. What is not possible is to claim that all in any particular church or denomination are saved just because they are members of that church or denomination. This certainly applies to the Orthodox Church, but it also applies to Protestant churches. Salvation and membership in the Body of Christ, the Church universal, is dependent on a personal relationship with the Christ of Scripture that comes about by personal repentance and faith in Him, not through belonging to any particular local church, denomination, or tradition. The Lord knows those who are His (2 Timothy 2:19)!

Many years of missionary work in Eastern Europe and Russia have led me to conclude that the gospel is not often proclaimed in the Orthodox Church. Church services are ritualistic exercises that focus on the icons and the sacraments. It is all too easy to trust in those sacraments to save one and on the icons to sanctify one rather than in the finished work of Christ on the Cross in our behalf. Though we cannot judge what is in the heart of another, we can certainly assume that most people in the Orthodox Church need to hear and respond to the good news of Jesus Christ and need to turn to Him for forgiveness of sins and to trust in His work on the Cross for their salvation. This is, indeed, the message that all people need to hear."

Well there you go, you could say the same of a southern baptist church were many were "raised" in the church and assented to a "sinners prayer" without really repenting.

What is mis-leading is the word "cult" hanging over the article, that is clearly not the case as he gives grace to the Orthodox in the end to be saved "as long as they repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and His death, burial, and Resurrection!"

Re: - posted by passerby, on: 2020/1/1 20:50

We could say that the true church is not composed of groups or churches but by individuals who put their faith in the gospel of Christ and heed their lives to His teaching and guidance as laid down in the bible.

It is our individual participation and obligation as a christian to race for life, to finish it, and dedicate our lives for it.

The prime task in which the apostles were told to do is to proclaim the way of salvation through faith in Christ and to teach in what manner we ought to live.

The only orthodoxy that matters is the one that faithfully follows the teaching of Christ and His apostles. Beware of rituals, ceremonies, and nobilities.

Re: - posted by ArthurRosh (), on: 2020/1/1 21:28

James McQuilkin who overhearing a Mrs Colville (a Baptist missionary from England) talk to a lady about knowing she was saved, and feeling this lady had a lack of theological learning quizzed her if she was a Calvinist. She responded by saying "I do not care to talk on mere points of doctrine. I would rather speak of the experience of salvation in the soul. If one were to tell me what he knows of the state of his heart towards God, I think I could tell him whether he knows the Lord Jesus savingly."

Re: heart-state - posted by savannah, on: 2020/1/1 22:22

"If one were to tell me what he knows of the state of his heart towards God, I think I could tell him whether he knows the Lord Jesus savingly."

Maybe it'd go something like this;

<https://youtu.be/iUV5T9JIJZ0>

Re: a sharp two edged sword - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2020/1/2 11:03

That sword of the Spirit which we use to discern and weigh the doctrines being preached in various churches and denominations is able to part biblical truth from actual practices and beliefs. So this author did part greek orthodoxy in doctrines from biblical revelation.

However as others have wisely considered, the other side of that sword parts our own beliefs and practices from the truth of scripture as well.

I have witnessed first hand in a mainline Pentecostal Church the congregation had almost no understanding of Romans 4 and righteousness by faith. Their preaching on divine love and Holy Spirit indwelling never included God's revelation that we are justified by faith, not by works.

The congregation as a whole was amazed and astounded at the teaching of one of its lay ministers who addressed the topic of righteousness by faith...it was as though they had never heard of such a wonderful truth.

Their repentance from dead works...as great as any that might be found in a Greek Orthodox or Catholic Church was made manifest in their own confessions that they feared the loss of their salvation because they were not righteous or serving God as God had commanded.

This year, let us all believe and live out the word of God so that we are all living epistles known and read of all men.

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2020/1/2 19:54

My posting this article is not meant to be a blanket indictment of all Orthodox christians. I know there are sincere christians among them. I believe the true church has nothing to do with denominations; it is the Body of Christ and is composed of every blood bought believer.

I agree with you, Greg, many southern Baptists are not saved, they think saying a prayer is a magic formula to keep the out of hell. The same can be said for many denominations.

I was raised Anglican. When I was baptized at age seven, I remember all the kids from Sunday school asking me "Do you feel different?" I honestly answered "No." I took communion many times, that never had any magic cure for sin either. No one in the church, including my parents, made any attempt to explain to me how to know God. I went to a private christian school for three years. Again, I hadn't the foggiest clue of how to be saved. When I was 10 and my parents separated, my father (who was a drug addict, he had relapsed after being clean for 14 years) asked me to say the sinner's prayer. I did; I was given the impression that was all I had to do to be a christian. Nothing happened. My heart was not changed. I was baptized again when I was 18, by my own choice (I was under tremendous conviction of sin then.) Again, no change.

It grieves me to see people staking their souls on some religious hocus pocus, whether that hocus pocus is the Baptist variety, the Orthodox variety, the Catholic variety, the Pentecostal variety or any other.

If and when Orthodox priests actually preach the gospel and souls are saved, and I'm sure it does happen, I leap for joy. I would go to an Orthodox church if the presence of God is there (not a solemn, reverent atmosphere some people mistake for the presence of God.)

What concerns me about their particular denomination is 1. their tendency to elevate tradition above scripture and, 2. their claim to be the only true church (any time a denomination says this you can be sure they aren't.)

Re: - posted by CalvaryCom (), on: 2020/1/2 20:24

Like the Roman Catholics, the Orthodox pray to Mary. The Catholics pray to "saints" and so do the Orthodox. The former bow to statues, and the latter to icons (flat images).

Religiosity is not relationship.

I have many born again Greek friends who came out of the Orthodox church once they were saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and especially after being baptized in the Holy Spirit. They could no longer remain in a dead church.

B. H. Clendennen, a classical pentecostal preacher & founder of the School of Christ International, said that the biggest enemies of the underground church in Russia were not Russian police or government soldiers, but the Orthodox church prelates who vigorously persecuted those who preached the full Gospel.

Re: - posted by itysmang, on: 2020/1/4 13:06

Did you read Gandhi? Truth is like a big tree. The trunk is one, but many branches and leaves. How to find out who is actually wrong?

Re: - posted by CalvaryCom (), on: 2020/1/4 13:56

Sadhu Sundar Singh, perhaps India's most famous Christian of the early 20th century, said that if Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore had not visited Europe they would likely have become Christians. When Gandhi met Singh in 1922 Gandhi said, "Finally, a real Christian!" for he had seen so much hypocrisy from nominal followers of Jesus Christ in the western world and from the British colonists in India.

As for what is the true way, have a look at the Bible: 66 books written over the space of 1,600 years by 39 different men inspired of God, and yet their testimony agrees as one. The Bible tells us that God gave the Law, prophets, and Messiah to Israel, and from there the Gospel has gone forth to all nations. There is no other book like it----not the Bhagavad Gita, the Quran, the Granth Sahib, or any other.

The Bible contains both reliable history and prophecy (much fulfilled, and some soon to be), besides being a guide for life in this world, and revealing the means for eternal salvation in the next.

One can be a Christian in any culture because the kingdom of God is above all nations. When one turns from sin and self-reliance to the living God and receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour he has crossed over from death and condemnation to a life and light that will never fade, though this outward body will perish.

Buddhists seek for emptiness, but in Christ there is fullness of joy. Islam says Allah is unknowable, but Jesus Christ reconciles each born again believer to God the Father, and He calls us by name. Hindus seek to pay a karmic debt through millennia of suffering, hoping to be reincarnated into a higher life form until reaching Brahma, but Christ paid all of mankind's sin debt once for all time on Calvary's cross, and the Bible tells us that it is given to each man to die *once*, and afterwards the judgment.

I hope this helps you.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2020/1/4 14:13

Saints,

as this thread is about the Orthodox Church, I would recommend some of these links for reading and research. I have spent much time reading the earliest Christian writings and as an evangelical this has been a whole new world to me. The orthodox not only understand these writings but they have based much of their beliefs off the genuine traditions of Apostles and early church leaders.

So at the very least I find it is well worth studying them:

<https://www.orthodoxroad.com/voices-from-the-past/>

<https://orthodoxchurchfathers.com/fathers/> (searchable early church fathers)

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/orthodoxbridge/getting-know-church-fathers/>

As the article states clearly, orthodox "are" Christians or at least "can" be in his mind. So it would do well for evangelicals to be more educated on their beliefs and also see what things they value that we minimize or could implement and understand better as evangelicals.

I also personally published 3 volumes on the early church fathers, sharing freely some of the simplicity of their writings, they are free on Amazon Kindle:

Early Church Father Series: St. Ignatius of Antioch

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07N3TFJBW/>

Early Church Father Series: St. Polycarp of Smyrna

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1999524829/>

Early Church Father Series: St. Clement of Rome

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0995892687>

Re: Orthodox Church - posted by CalvaryCom (), on: 2020/1/4 18:15

I thoroughly disagree, Greg. It is much better to hold to the Word of God, and not the traditions of men.

The apostle Paul wrote in Acts 20:29-31:

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

These things came to pass in the first century A.D.

Many of the early church fathers taught strange things that contradict the Scriptures. If you like, I will start a new thread and clearly outline who taught what, and where it deviates from the Bible. Much research has been conducted in this area of history by reliable Christian scholars.

Re: Acts 20:29-31 - posted by savannah, on: 2020/1/4 19:50

"If you like, I will start a new thread and clearly outline who taught what, and where it deviates from the Bible."

Alec,

I'd appreciate it if you would please start such a thread.

Thanks

Re: - posted by CalvaryCom (), on: 2020/1/5 6:26

I was surprised to see this refutation of the Orthodox church on the Answers in Genesis website:

Salvation and the Sacraments

“What must I do to be saved?” This was the question the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas in Acts 16:30. It remains the critical question for all of mankind. Indeed, if we are given the wrong answers to this question, a catastrophic loss is the prospect we face. Strangely, in contrast to both Protestants and Catholics, the Orthodox do not seem to focus very much on this question. There are, of course, reasons for this.

Like Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy places great emphasis on the sacraments. Like Catholicism, Orthodoxy sees baptism as bringing about the regeneration of the person receiving the sacrament. The Orthodox typically baptize infants, but, of course, adult converts to Orthodoxy are baptized as well. In contrast to Roman Catholics, the Orthodox baptize by immersion. Immersion is carried out three times in succession, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Unique to the Orthodox is a second sacrament applied immediately following baptism, called chrismation. Chrismation is performed by the priest on the newly baptized individual by anointing him or her with oil and making the sign of the cross over the various parts of the body (the forehead, eyes, nose, mouth, ears, chest, hands, and feet) of the newly baptized and saying, “The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit, Amen.” According to Orthodox teaching, this sacrament brings about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the newly baptized individual. In the Orthodox view then, even if the individual being baptized is an infant, he or she is consequently a full member of the church from that point on. The oil used in the anointing of the person being baptized is called the chrism. According to Orthodox belief, the chrism may be administered by a priest but the chrism must have first been blessed by a bishop.

The Orthodox do not believe that faith on the part of the person being baptized is necessary in order for these sacraments to be effective. Indeed, Orthodox theologians take great pains to clarify and emphasize that the effectiveness of the sacraments is entirely independent of any faith or particular desires for God or sanctity. To quote a prominent Orthodox theologian: “In no way is the efficacy of the sacrament contingent upon the faith or moral qualifications of either celebrant or recipient.”

<https://answersingenesis.org/world-religions/eastern-orthodoxy/>

Re: - posted by HaveMercy, on: 2020/1/9 16:46

Quote:
-----Like the Roman Catholics, the Orthodox pray to Mary. The Catholics pray to "saints" and so do the Orthodox. The former bow to statues, and the latter to icons (flat images).

Religiosity is not relationship.

I have many born again Greek friends who came out of the Orthodox church once they were saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and especially

lly after being baptized in the Holy Spirit. They could no longer remain in a dead church.

B. H. Clendennen, a classical pentecostal preacher & founder of the School of Christ International, said that the biggest enemies of the underground church in Russia were not Russian police or government soldiers, but the Orthodox church prelates who vigorously persecuted those who preached the full Gospel.

Respectfully, as an Orthodox Christian, this is incorrect depending upon what you mean. I would also suggest that the Catholic beliefs about Mary cannot be wholly applied to the Orthodox, as there is a difference in emphasis.

Orthodox no more pray "to" Mary than you ask a friend to pray for you when you are undergoing trouble in your life. No faithful Orthodox believes Mary to be a deity.

Mary's life and submission to the will of God points to Christ, which is why the Orthodox venerate her as important. She is the one person in the whole of human history through which God chose to be Incarnate. That's kind of a big deal, and it makes sense that she would be given a lot of honor.

For this reason, at the Council of Ephesus (431) about 100 years after the legalization of Christianity in the Roman Empire, Mary was declared to be the "Theotokos," which means "Mother of God." No one believes that she is literally the mother of the Holy Trinity, but it is a statement intended to project - rather forcefully - her importance in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

As to the saints.

We are surrounded, are we not, by a great cloud of witnesses? If the Resurrection is real, and if the Transfiguration is to be believed, then those in Heaven are more alive than you and me! This is clear from the book of Hebrews and elsewhere, too. We have no reason to think that those in Heaven are not able to intercede for us.

Even growing up in a Bible church, I believed that my dead relatives who had strong faith were "looking down" on me somehow.

It is worth asking what the earliest Christians did, and whether they felt it was worthwhile to venerate the memory, and ask the prayers, of those who had died in great faith and as martyrs. The early days of the Christian church confirm that they did.

All of this is not to say that there are not Orthodox Christians who go astray, of course there are. The Orthodox Church is filled with imperfect people, as all churches are. However, it would be incorrect to ascribe the feelings of some who have left the Church to all Orthodox Christians.

One last thing: to your final point, about preaching the Gospel. Growing up in several different large Protestant churches, I rarely heard the Word of God actually read and talked about. Usually, the preacher would talk about what was in the Scriptures, but layer onto it a lot of personal opinion and conjecture.

The Orthodox services are filled with Scripture and in fact almost every line of the Divine Liturgy, as well as the Vespers service usually practiced on Saturday evenings, are from Scripture. Orthodox monastics read the entire Book of Psalms every week, and Orthodox bishops are expected to know it by heart before being tonsured.

Just a few things to hopefully add to this discussion. On a side note, while newly registered, I have enjoyed SermonIndex for years and have found much edifying material here!

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2020/1/10 6:25

Quote:

-----Just a few things to hopefully add to this discussion. On a side note, while newly registered, I have enjoyed SermonIndex for years and have found much edifying material here!

Thank you dear brother for your well thought out responses that you have done so gracefully.

Really people are scared mostly of what they do not understand or know.

As you alluded to Catholic belief strongly differs to some points in Orthodox older belief. Really orthodox would agree with many if not most problems modern evangelicals have with the catholic church.

Hence the orthodox cut fellowship with the catholic church a long time ago (over 1000 years ago) long before reformers left it.

Re: - posted by CalvaryCom (), on: 2020/1/10 6:46

I have relatives in the Orthodox church.

Did you know that one of the famous Orthodox creeds refers to Jesus as "created?" Orthodox teaching speaks of one God, One Father---and that Jesus and the Holy Spirit were "created." Take a look online. I can provide links, if necessary.

Re: - posted by CalvaryCom (), on: 2020/1/10 7:16

Here are some Orthodox prayers to "Mary":

<http://saintandrewgoc.org/home/2017/8/16/prayer-to-the-ever-virgin-mary-the-theotokos>

Of course, they will say, "We don't pray to Mary; we just ask her to intercede for us to her Son." That *is* prayer. There is only One Who intercedes for us to the Father---Jesus Christ the righteous Advocate.

It is impossible to pray that prayer to Mary without grieving the Holy Spirit.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2020/1/10 9:49

Quote:
-----Did you know that one of the famous Orthodox creeds refers to Jesus as "created?" Orthodox teaching speaks of one God, One Father---and that Jesus and the Holy Spirit were "created." Take a look online. I can provide links, if necessary.

Brother,

Please share the link as I believe you are mis-informed on this one.

Re: - posted by CalvaryCom (), on: 2020/1/10 20:01

You are correct on this point, Greg. I misread the contents of this link:

<https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/doctrine-scripture/the-holy-trinity/wrong-doctrines-of-the-trinity>

Nevertheless, the other links and points I shared are indeed what the Orthodox church teaches which is contrary to sound doctrine:

Praying to Mary to intercede for us to Jesus - absolutely non-Biblical and an insult to God.

Praying to "saints" for help in time of need.

Regarding Scripture as merely a part of a larger (Orthodox) church tradition, and therefore giving extra-Biblical tradition as much, or even more weight than the Word of God which should always be our final arbiter.

Being saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ is *not* sufficient to get you to heaven. One must be saved through the Orthodox church and by works, according to their teachings.

That one is indwelt by the Holy Spirit at baptism and "chrismation" in the Orthodox church, regardless of whether the person has any faith in God at all.

I didn't even mention the Filioque controversy. Familiar with that? And there is so much more.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2020/1/10 20:12

Quote:

-----Praying to Mary to intercede for us to Jesus - absolutely non-Biblical and an insult to God.

Praying to "saints" for help in time of need.

Regarding Scripture as merely a part of a larger (Orthodox) church tradition, and therefore giving extra-Biblical tradition as much, or even more weight than the Word of God which should always be our final arbiter.

Being saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ is *not* sufficient. One must be saved through the Orthodox church and by works, according to their teachings.

That one is indwelt by the Holy Spirit at baptism in the Orthodox church, regardless of whether you truly believe in Christ or not.

I didn't even mention the Filioque controversy. Familiar with that? And there is so much more.

Brother,

from my knowledge.

- In most prayers that reference saints it is to God to have them pray. God in Scripture does put emphasis on the importance of the prayers of believers for each others. It is part of His plan.
- Jewish believers had such a high regard for Moses that for Moses to appear with Christ was very moving. It is the same with Mary and other Apostles, they were the ones that were closest to Christ so in a sense their prayers have weight and value. Orthodox from my perspective are not like Catholics in the way prayers are made to saints.
- Orthodox put very strong weight to scripture, but the interpreter of scripture are the early believers and those who carry the apostolic traditions. So it is not the Church (like Catholics) but rather the passed on interpretations that are from the beginning that they hold to. This is much different than Catholics who make up new beliefs of which the Orthodox are against.
- We are all saved by Christ. Part of that Salvation is the work of grace to make us like Christ and we are not finally saved till we are resurrected with Christ. Orthodox put the weight of the meaning of the cross on Christ overcoming sin, Satan and death.
- I would believe they would hold to everyone who is baptized would be saved, and if not the works will manifest it. Just like a Baptist who makes confession but in the end his life does not bear witness to the gospel.

Just my thoughts brother, I believe many are ignorant of the Orthodox church, I have studied early church fathers for a few years so I have begun to understand how they think and why some things are important to them.

I believe we are doing a dis-service to ourselves to not understand early Christianity and see if there are things there that we are missing in modern evangelicalism.

Re: - posted by CalvaryCom (), on: 2020/1/10 20:18

Greg,

The earliest Christianity is clearly outlined for us IN THE BIBLE. As I shared before, the apostle Paul said that wolves would come after his death, not sparing the flock. He did not lie. The Orthodox church teaches that you cannot be saved apart from *their* organization.

<https://www.versebyverseministry.org/bible-answers/is-the-orthodox-church-a-true-christian-church>

The following is from the above link:

Is the Orthodox Church (i.e., Greek Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox) a true Christian church? Are their beliefs consistent with the Bible?

The Orthodox Church was established in AD 1045 following a schism of the Roman Empire which split the church in the east from the church in the west. The church in the east, the Eastern Orthodox church, renounced all ties to the church in the west, the Roman Catholic church, including denying the authority of the pope.

Though the Orthodox Church does not recognize the authority of the Roman pope and rejects various other Catholic practices (notably, celibacy for priests), nevertheless the church holds many of the same doctrines and beliefs as Catholicism, including a false gospel preaching mysticism and human works as the means to salvation in keeping with the teaching of the Catholic Church. In fact, the official name of the Eastern Orthodox church is the Orthodox Catholic Church (as opposed to the Roman Catholic Church).

Of most concern, the Orthodox church holds that salvation is not by faith alone in Christ, but like Catholics, they teach that other requirements (i.e., penance, good works) are required for salvation. Essentially, the Orthodox church's teaching on salvation is the same as Catholic teaching in this area.

Secondly, the Orthodox church venerates Mary as do Catholics, calling her the "Most Holy Mother of God." Mary is praised in their hymns as "more honorable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim," suggesting that Mary (a human being) is higher than angels, which directly contradicts scripture (see Psalm 8:4-5).

Going even further, the church says Mary is the "Mother of the Church" it is in Her person that the Church glorifies motherhood. Notice they even capitalize any pronoun referring to Mary as if Mary were equal with deity. To glorify Mary in this way is nothing short of blasphemy, as God does not share His glory with anyone (see Isaiah 42:8). Again, this is very Catholic.

The Orthodox church equates church tradition with scripture, including erroneously holding that water baptism washes away our sins, at least initially. To quote official church teaching:

"The sacrament of Baptism occurs only once in a person's life. In Baptism the human person is granted freedom from original sin and forgiveness of all his personal transgressions. However, Baptism is only the first step in the human person's ascent towards God. If it is not accompanied by a renewal of one's entire life and a spiritual regeneration, it might be fruitless. The grace of God, received in Baptism as a pledge or as a seed, will grow within the person and be made manifest throughout his whole life so long as he strives towards Christ, lives in the Church and fulfills God's commandments."

Finally, the Orthodox church venerates (i.e., assigns spiritual power to) the dead, calling them "saints" and praying to them for spiritual blessing. As with Catholics, this practice is blasphemous and contrary to Scripture.

There are other similarities with Catholic doctrinal, but these serious departures from Scripture are certainly sufficient for us to conclude that the Orthodox church is a false church teaching a false Gospel that cannot save.

Important Footnote:

We must allow for the possibility that from time-to-time true Christians may be found attending the Orthodox Church. Like the Catholic Church the Orthodox Church does not preach the true Gospel nor does it practice biblical Christianity, but that does not mean God's Spirit is incapable of bringing true faith to someone within this community. Nevertheless, should a member of the Orthodox Church come to saving faith in Jesus Christ, we would say the person was born again despite

ite the church's negative influence, not because of the church.

Furthermore, we encourage all born-again Christians to seek fellowship in churches that hold to the true Gospel. Remaining closely tied to a false church can have serious, negative influences on the believer's walk of faith.

Re: - posted by CalvaryCom (), on: 2020/1/10 20:27

Lots of footnoted information on the Orthodox church in the middle of this article onwards:

<https://www.thebereancall.org/content/church-tradition-or-christ>

Re: - posted by CalvaryCom (), on: 2020/1/11 5:51

Greg wrote: God in Scripture does put emphasis on the importance of the prayers of believers for each others.

The Bible says:

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." James 5:16

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." 1 Timothy 2:1

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2020/1/11 7:03

Quote:
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Brother,

Again I am not an authority on this but I can definitely fill in some blanks and help clarify. There are a lot of wrong statements you made (not blaming you it's just true).

fyi the bereancall I cannot even think of responding to anything mostly on that website, it is very judgemental and though maybe some things are right in it, overall I do not agree with the tenor and way as a fundamental baptist he looks at things.

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From my readings of history the "eastern" church existed since the age of the apostles and carried on through passing traditions and the scriptures themselves. The Church west (Rome) and east existed in fellowship as "one" till AD 1054 when the schism happened. The entire church since the 2nd century had the title "Catholic Church" meaning universal. Do not let that confuse you as the entire church was not Roman Catholic in what we would consider it today.

The West started some wrong decisions after the 5th century that started to create rifts with the east. What we say "orth

odox" is what the eastern church mostly has always been since the 3rd and 4th century. So orthodox is not a new "group" created in 1054 but what we call Roman Catholic Church was formally formed in 1054 when they split from those keeping the more sound faith ie the orthodox.

- The gospel preached by orthodox is not false, the view of atonement differs from modern protestants and the challenge to us is to consider is our view not wholistic. Orthodox have a trust in Christ and his atonement.

- Towards good works, I firmly believe as many have in history that without good works our salvation is not complete, meaning trust in Christ's death produces good works and godly living. Not sure where you get that orthodox teach penance as roman catholics do?

- Mysticism - Tozer was a mystic, I myself am glad to seek God in a way that would be considered mystical. Our rational mind cannot fully explain God, and our worship does not have to appeal to the rational mind. Tozer would prostrate himself at times with very few words but just to be before Him whom all things consist.

- Towards mary the term they call her is Theotokos, this is a theological term that came from the great council in the 3rd century where we get the Nicene Creed from I believe. The term Theotokos in greek means "God-Bearer" Theo = God Tokos = Bearer. The term itself is a defence and apologia for the incarnation of God in the flesh. Only 1 woman in history has ever been chosen to bear God himself in the flesh, it is asountounding and a miricale to even consider. And its the core of our very faith. Honour is definetly given to Mary for such a role. The incarnation, life and resurrection of Christ is the highlight of all human history and the salvation of mankind, all prophets point to this very fact and all apostolic ministry points back to it. It is the pinnacle.

The apostle John also shares how this is how we can tell of the spirit of antichrist of those who deny the incarnation in any form.

I believe the view of Mary is much different between the east older view and the roman catholic view. Catholics look to mary as more of an example, help, and even co-redemmer which is not true. Though she is part of all of our salvation that she helped bore God in the flesh for our salvation. Orthodox honour her for the latter for her role in the incarnation and what that stands for theologically in the gospel.

I hope that helps even a small bit to bring some balance and clarity. I feel we can definetly learn from our eastern history of the church that did stay more pure then the west and unfortunately all protestants come from the west in reaction and have very little knoweldge or understanding of the east.

Re: - posted by CalvaryCom (), on: 2020/1/11 7:50

You mentioned A. W. Tozer: he was with the Christian & Missionary Alliance, and he espoused the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking with tongues. In contrast the Orthodox church teaches that the gifts of the Spirit ceased at the end of the first century. Tozer was correct.

Greg, in regards to the Orthodox sacrament of penance:

<https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-sacraments/penance>

Re: - posted by CalvaryCom (), on: 2020/1/11 8:10

Greg wrote: The West started some wrong decisions after the 5th century that started to create rifts with the east. What we say "orthodox" is what the eastern church mostly has always been since the 3rd and 4th century.

The West was already in huge trouble by the early 300s when Constantine founded his syncretist religion which became the basis for Roman Catholicism.

Savannah, I will indeed start another thread on the Early Church Fathers and where their teachings aligned with - and d

eviated from - the Scriptures.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/1/11 9:40

Alec wrote:

Quote:
----- You mentioned A. W. Tozer: he was with the Christian & Missionary Alliance, and he espoused the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking with tongues.

Following is an extract from
<https://azusareport.com/a-b-simpson-meets-the-holy-ghost/>

A.B. SIMPSON AND TONGUES

He is like many through history that struggled to believe that praying in tongues was the initial evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Many believed it and many did not. It is believed that Simpson did pray in tongues but did not believe you have to in order to be baptized in the Holy Ghost.

The Christian Missionary Alliance developed a position that the fruit of the Spirit was the evidence of the Holy Ghost baptism and it was proved by a fruitful ministry. This was in direct conflict with the position that became the view of the Assemblies of God later, "The baptism of believers in the Holy Spirit is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance."

FOLLOWING IS A STATEMENT FROM THE CHRISTIAN & MISSIONARY ALLIANCE WEBSITE <https://www.cmalliance.org/about/beliefs/perspectives/spiritual-gifts>

What is the evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit?

There are some who believe that the gift of tongues is the "initial, physical evidence" of being filled with the Spirit. Again, we affirm tongues as a valid gift for today. But we do not believe that the Scripture supports tongues as the only evidence of the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Paul, as he writes to the believers in the Ephesian church, commands them to "be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)". "Filled with the Spirit" is a frequent expression in the Book of Acts describing the source of the mighty power of God working in believers in Christ. This expression implies being under the control of the Holy Spirit. We believe this is still a valid command for today, and every believer should seek to be filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit. So, what is the evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit?

Though there is a record of people receiving spiritual gifts when they were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; 10:44-48; 19:6), there are other instances of people being filled with the Holy Spirit where there is no mention of spiritual gifts (Acts 4:8, 31; 8:15-17; 9:17-18; 13:9, 52). Though some may speak in tongues when they are filled with the Holy Spirit, others do not. While rejecting the "initial evidence doctrine" we must be careful to say there "should be" and "will be" evidence that a person has been filled with the Holy Spirit. As Tozer strongly notes, "no one ever received the Holy Spirit's power without knowing it" (Keys to the Deeper Life, p. 57). A creed of power without the experience of power is worthless. One phrase that could describe our posture in this encounter with God is "Expectation without Agenda." It would seem to be a dangerous thing to try and convince someone they have been filled with the Spirit if there is no manifest evidence in their lives. Our expectancy should be that God will meet His people in a powerful way. However, it would be equally dangerous to demand a specific agenda or manifestation in that moment. Again, we should come to the Lord with great expectation, while seeking to free ourselves from human agendas or motives.

Regardless of the gifts or manifestations a believer may experience, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, as described in Galatians 5:22-23 is the primary evidence of the Spirit-filled life. These qualities are produced by the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. The fruit of the Spirit shows that the Holy Spirit is in control of the believer's life.

Another strong evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit is a fruitful ministry. In Acts 1:8 Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would give power to be His witnesses. We often mention the scope of our ministryâ€“Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth, but we also need to focus on the source of power for our ministryâ€“the Holy Spirit, who wants to fill us for a holy life and effective service.

Finally, 1 Corinthians 12 lists a variety of manifestations that occur when the Holy Spirit is ministering. We have no reason to believe this is an all-inclusive list of manifestations or evidences. Weeping, for instance, is not mentioned. Yet many believers have experienced tears as a manifestation of the Spiritâ€™s work and power. Others may experience a manifestation of â€œjoy unspeakableâ€ and Godâ€™s love, but never shed a tear. Rather than demanding a single gift or manifestation as the evidence of the filling of the Holy Spirit, we ought to gratefully embrace all the gifts, manifestations and fruit that the Lord desires to bring into our lives.

Quote:
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Re: - posted by CalvaryCom (), on: 2020/1/11 10:21

Jade, I knew a C&MA pastor in my area who flat-out denied the baptism of the Holy Spirit was legitimate. The denomination as a whole has backed away from the theology Simpson and Tozer held in this matter.

I only brought this up at all since Greg cited Tozer, and in stark contrast the Orthodox church doctrine is that the spiritual gifts have ceased millennia ago.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2020/1/11 10:25

Quote:
-----The sacrament of penance exists in the Church to allow for the repentance and reconversion of Christians who have fallen away from the life of faith. There are three main elements to the act of formal penance. The first is a sincere sorrow for sins and for the breaking of communion with God. The second is an open and heartfelt confession of sins. At one time this confession was done publicly before all men in the midst of the Church, but in recent times it is usually done only in the presence of the pastor of the Church who stands in behalf of all. The third element of penance is the formal prayer of absolution through which the forgiveness of God through Christ is sacramentally bestowed upon the repentant sinner.

Their view of penance is basically the same as what you quoted the bible verse below:

The Bible says:

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." James 5:16

Except they believe it should be confessed to the main pastor. The catholic idea of do so many rosaries etc is not in the orthodox thinking so it is good to clarify that. they are very biblical in their approach and desire for people to not come to sunday worship with major sins being practiced. Maybe the baptist need to start doing this also?

also fyi I personally believe the context of the passage in James 5 clearly means that the request of prayer is for elders specifically ie: "Let them call the elders of the church" v 14

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2020/1/11 10:35

Quote:
-----You mentioned A. W. Tozer: he was with the Christian & Missionary Alliance, and he espoused the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking with tongues. In contrast the Orthodox church teaches that the gifts of the Spirit ceased at the end of the first century. Tozer was correct.

Again I am pretty ignorant but on doing a web search I found this quote that clarifies their position some:

"The Greek Orthodox Church does not preclude the use of Glossolalia, but regards it as one of the minor gifts of the Holy Spirit. If Glossolalia has fallen out of use it is because it served its purpose in New Testament times and is no longer necessary. However, even when used, it is a private and personal gift, a lower form of prayer. The Orthodox Church differs with those Pentecostal and Charismatic groups which regard Glossolalia as a pre requisite to being a Christian and to having received the Holy Spirit."

from: <https://www.goarch.org/-/speaking-in-tongues-an-orthodox-perspective>

Re: - posted by CalvaryCom (), on: 2020/1/11 14:23

Actually, Greg, the Pentecostal and charismatic position is the Biblical one: that everyone who is born again in Christ has received the Holy Spirit at salvation. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, however, is regarded as a subsequent empowerment for service where the spiritual gifts are evidenced. Regardless of whether a believer operates in these gifts or not, we need to be filled daily since we are like leaking vessels --- not that He departs from us, but we are the ones who drift off course.

My next door neighbor attended (until recently) an Ethiopian Orthodox church. We have had many discussions about his experiences there. Believe it or not, I mostly listened. He spoke of harsh religiosity there, and that the priests claimed the Orthodox church was the *only* church going to heaven (how many times have we heard that claim from other exclusive groups?). I encouraged him to read the Word for himself daily, and to regularly enter the secret closet of prayer.

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2020/1/11 16:19

I am quite troubled with the promotion of "orthodox" churchianity here on SI. I admit that there surely must be true believers among them as there are in Catholic church, too. I also admit, many main denominations are guilty of similar things, and we witness many defections from the once delivered holy faith these days.

I am in the leadership of a church where a number of people had lived in Russia and suffered persecution both from the Communists and the Orthodox church.

- * They practice many pompous and elaborate rituals that are neither mentioned nor encouraged in the bible.
- * They maintain a priesthood that has been long been abolished with Christ.
- * Asceticism is widely practised, the bible only encourages fasting.
- * They do not encourage bible study and exposition of the word
- * They practise infant baptism, thus giving a false impression that those baptized are saved and need not to repent and confess Christ. This by default causes a chasm with those whose practice biblical baptism. Believers baptism by immersion is the only biblical practice and non-negotiable.
- * They do not preach that you must be born again, but rather join their church.
- * They believe in a covert form of transubstantiation.
- * They display icons of saints, maintain altars, flowing robes, bells and smells, and a priestly system of rank and hierarchy set apart from the "common layity"
- * They keep an unholy alliance with earthly governments and either usurp power or exercise stately power by proxy.

Nowhere in the NT are these things encouraged. In fact, Col 2:16-23 warns against such practices. It serves as a substitute for true worship. In Judaism, the temple worship was a shadow of things to come. When you continue in the provisionary temple sacrifices while the true has already come, you despise and reject true worship.

This is why God removed the temple soon after Christ's resurrection.

True worship is in Spirit and truth. The NT church does not need any of these things mentioned above. We have everything in Christ, he is the high priest who forever lives and intercedes on our behalf, anyone assuming the role of a priest on earth antagonizes Christ - and is a type of anti-Christ. Icons and statues of saints lure into idol worship.

This system rarely produces true saints; most of them die in the illusion of having believed the truth all their life and being children of God only to find out that it was a grand lie. Then there will be no remedy and they have to bear the eternal consequences.

This is not a small thing. We have some very good teachings available here on SI by some of the finest preachers I know. Why promoting this beggarly religious system, that leads millions into deception? Did Paul not rebuke the Galatians for returning to ordinances that were abolished in Christ?

Should we not take utmost care to preach the truth and maintain the purity and simplicity of Christ?

Forgive me, but I cannot find kinder words as I fear that the faith of dear brothers and sisters may become unsettled by these things.

Re: - posted by ArthurRosh (), on: 2020/1/13 17:28

Personal Testimony of Eusebius Stephanou 10-12-91
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAh8M_LVVas