

**HANDBOOK  
FOR  
TEACHING  
CHRISTIANS  
MORE  
EFFECTIVELY  
SEMINAR**

**Prepared by  
Dr. David F. Young**

**(Revised 12/99)**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pre-Course Self Assessment Quiz.....	3
Common Questions Asked by Christians with answer pages given.....	4-6
Goals of Course.....	7-8
Common Apprehensions of Christians.....	9
Why Bahá'ís Need to Prepare to Teach Christians.....	10-12
Spiritual Preparation for Teaching.....	13-17
What Bahá'ís Believe About Christianity, Christ, the Apostles and the Bible.....	18-19
Some Doctrines Shared by Christians and Bahá'ís.....	20-21
What Many Christians Believe About the Bahá'í Faith.....	22
Interpretation of the Bible: Literal or Spiritual?.....	23-25
How Jesus was God, But Not God Incarnated.....	26-29
Perfect Mirror Analogy for Manifestation is Biblical.....	30
Paradigm for Answering Difficult Questions Asked by Christians.....	31-32
Objections of Christians to Bahá'u'lláh Same as Those to Christ.....	33-35
Anti-Christ, False Prophets, the Beast.....	36-37
Satan and the Devil.....	38-41
Formula for Difficult Christian Questions.....	42
Can't Add to the Bible or Preach Any Other Gospel.....	43
Yesterday, Today and Forever.....	44
No Other Name Under Heaven.....	45
One Mediator Between God and Men.....	46
Every Eye Shall See Him.....	47-48
Only Begotten Son of God.....	49
Christ Sacrificed Once and For All Time.....	50
Sinlessness Only Applies to Christ.....	51
Baptism.....	52-53
The Rapture.....	54
Original Sin Unsupported in the Bible.....	55
Miracle is Not the Best Proof.....	56-58
The Resurrection of Christ.....	59-63
Why Christians Must Investigate Bahá'u'lláh.....	64
Biblical Proofs for Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ.....	65-70
Some Prophecies given by Bahá'u'lláh that have been fulfilled.....	71
Bahá'u'lláh's Name Mentioned in the Bible.....	72
Formula for Presenting Bahá'u'lláh.....	73
Proofs of the Manifestation from the Kitáb-i-Iqán.....	74
Some Helpful Points in Teaching Christians.....	75
Summary of Presentation.....	76
Comparative Religion Quotations.....	79-84
Armageddon.....	85
Approach to Socio-Political Issues of Liberal Christians.....	86
Four Stages to Acceptance of New Understanding.....	87
Answers to Comparative Religion Quiz.....	88
Christ is Greater than Moses.....	89-90
Literal Fulfillment of All Unfulfilled Prophecies by Second Coming.....	91
Role-Play of Common Mistakes in Bahá'í-Christian dialogue.....	92-93
Hell is Not a Literal Place.....	94
Heaven is Not a Literal Place.....	96
Bahá'í Explanation of Heaven and Hell.....	98
Abbreviations Used for Bahá'í Sources.....	100
Alphabetical Subject Index.....	101

## TEACHING CHRISTIANS

1. What are the three (3) most common questions Christians ask when you are first teaching them the Bahá'í Faith?
  - (A)
  - (B)
  - (C)
2. What questions asked by Christians give you the most difficulty in teaching about the Bahá'í Faith?
3. Do the Bahá'í Writings support the belief in the claim that Jesus was God?
4. Do the Bahá'í Writings accept the virgin birth of Jesus the Christ?
5. Do the Bahá'í Writings accept the physical resurrection of Christ?
6. Do the Bahá'í Writings accept that the genuine text of the Heavenly Gospel exists among the Christians?
7. Do Bahá'ís accept the words of Paul and the other Apostles as of equal authority as the words of Jesus Himself in the Bible?
8. Do Bahá'ís believe that Faith is more important than deeds?
9. Are Bahá'ís “born again”? saved? Do they believe in a “personal God”? Are they “forgiven of their sins”? Do they believe in the Sonship of Jesus?
10. Name the four (4) Gospels:
11. Who gave the Sermon on the Mount?
12. What event of Jesus Christ's life is so crucial that Paul says Christianity would not exist without it?

## DIFFICULT QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED BY CHRISTIANS

1. I'm worried that Bahá'u'lláh is a false prophet. (p 36)
2. I'm worried that Bahá'u'lláh is the Anti-Christ since you Bahá'ís talk so much about world peace and world government. (p 36)
3. You Bahá'ís are nice enough but the devil can put one drop of poison in with the good which is enough to send you straight to hell? (p 38)
4. Jesus was God. Why should I follow anyone but God? (p 26)
5. Jesus rose from the grave and conquered death and left behind an empty tomb. Where is Bahá'u'lláh buried? (p 59)
6. “For God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16). Can Bahá'u'lláh be anything as important as God's only Son? (p 49)
7. Why should I believe in Bahá'u'lláh when Christ said “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6) (p 65)
8. The Bible says “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ (Timothy 2:15). How can Progressive Revelation be true? (p 46)
9. Christ led a sinless life. Moses killed a man. How can you say Moses or any other man was equal to Christ? (p 51 & 89)
10. If Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ, why haven't I heard of Bahá'u'lláh when the Bible says “Every eye shall see Him”? (p 47)
11. “The blood of Jesus His Son shall cleanse us from all sin” (1 John 1:17). Have you been washed in the blood of the Lord and had your sins forgiven? (p 21)
12. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Where were you baptized? (p 52)
13. Are you saved? (p 6)
14. Have you been born again? (p 21)
15. Do you have a personal relationship with God? (p 20)

## DIFFICULT QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED BY CHRISTIANS (Continued)

16. In Galatians and Revelation, the Bible says you can't add to the Scripture. How can the Bahá'í Faith be true if you're adding to the Bible? (p 43)
17. "Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb 13:8). How can Bahá'u'lláh just change Christ's Laws? (p 44)
18. What about the Rapture? Since I'm a good Christian, if Bahá'u'lláh was the Return of Christ, I would have been already raptured up to heaven! (p 54)
19. "We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb 10:10). Are you Bahá'ís saying Christ's sacrifice wasn't enough and we need Bahá'u'lláh when the Bible says Jesus' sacrifice was perfect and needed once only for all time? (p 50)
20. Where is the name of Bahá'u'lláh mentioned in the Bible? (p 72)
21. If Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ, why haven't all the prophecies regarding the Return been literally fulfilled? (p 33)
22. I'm a good Christian. Why should I be interested in the Bahá'í Faith? (p 64)
23. The Bible says there is "no other name under heaven" by which we can be saved and isn't Bahá'u'lláh a different name? (p 45)
24. Do you Bahá'ís believe the Bible is the Word of God? (p 18)
25. Do you Bahá'ís believe that we are saved by Grace? (p 21)
26. Do you Bahá'ís believe Faith is more important than Deeds? (p 20)
27. How can you say all the religions are one when they teach different things?  
(pp 77-84)
28. Jesus claimed to be God. Does Bahá'u'lláh claim to be God? (p 26)
29. Aren't the miracles of Jesus greater than those of Bahá'u'lláh? (pp 35,36)
30. Do you believe that Jesus on His Return will fulfill all the prophecies of the Old Testament literally that He hasn't already fulfilled? (pp 33,91)
31. Do Bahá'ís believe in Heaven and Hell? (pp 94-99)

## SHORT ANSWERS TO COMMON CHRISTIAN QUESTIONS

1. **Do Bahá'ís believe in Jesus?** Bahá'ís believe in “the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ” (PDC, p 109). Bahá'u'lláh refers to Jesus as “Lord of the visible and the invisible” (GI, p 56) and “The Lord of all being”. (ESW, p 100)
2. **What do Bahá'ís believe about the Bible?** Bahá'ís believe it is the Word of God. (KI, p 84)
3. **Is Bahá'u'lláh a false prophet?** No, as false prophets deny Jesus and show greed and licentiousness. (2 Peter 2:1-3)
4. **Is Bahá'u'lláh the Anti-Christ?** No, as the Anti-Christ “denies that Jesus is the Christ.” (1 John 2:22)
5. **Are Bahá'ís followers of the devil?** No, as Bahá'ís believe in Jesus and “there is no truth in him (i.e., the devil)” (John 8:44)
6. **Do Bahá'ís accept the virgin birth?** Yes. (LOG, 2nd Ed., p 489)
7. **Are Bahá'ís saved?** Yes as “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31)
8. **Do Bahá'ís believe we must be born again?** Yes, as “...man must be born again...” (PUP, p 288) (p 21\*)
9. **Do Bahá'ís believe in a personal God?** Yes. (LOG, p 477)
10. **Do Bahá'ís believe that Christ died for our salvation?** Yes. “...the purpose of their Lord and Savior... is the salvation of mankind...” (p 21\*)  
(Shoghi Effendi: Arohanui: Letters to New Zealand, Page: 3)
11. **Do Bahá'ís accept that Jesus was without sin?** Yes. (SAQ, p 170)
12. **Do Bahá'ís believe we are saved by grace and not by works?** Yes. (GI, p 193) (p 21\*)
13. **Are Bahá'ís righteous?** Yes as “Little children, let no one deceive you.” “He who does right is righteous, as He is righteous.” (1 John 3:7)
14. **Are Bahá'ís condemned?** No, as “He who believes in Him is not condemned.” (John 3:18)
15. **Do Bahá'ís believe Jesus is the “Only Way,” the “Only Begotten Son,” and the “Only Mediator Between God and Man?”** Yes, and Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of the “Only Way”, the “Only Begotten Son,” and the “Only Mediator.”
16. **Are the sins of Bahá'ís forgiven?** Yes, as “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:21)
17. **Do you believe in the Resurrection of Jesus?** There are as many verses in the Bible that speak of the Resurrection as a spiritual event as there are that speak of it as a literal event. Even without a physical resurrection, I believe that Jesus has power over death and has the power to resurrect and provide everlasting life to those who follow him. (pp 59-63\*)

\*(refers to page number(s) in this handbook)

## GOALS OF TEACHING CHRISTIANS EFFECTIVELY COURSE

1. Recognition that presentation of a correct attitude and personal spiritualization are the most important and effective tools in teaching.
2. Appreciate how the Kitáb-i-Iqán, “Foremost among the priceless treasures ... of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation...” (GPB, p 138) “unlocks” the Scriptures for all Christians, which is in fulfillment of prophecy of both the Old and New Testaments, and is Bahá’u’lláh’s own explanation of His proofs.
3. Gain confidence and skills for presenting Bahá’u’lláh to Christians in a way they can understand and are likely to accept using the Bible as our shared Holy Book and arbiter of truth.
4. Understand teaching not as mere dispensing of information (e.g., always beginning with Progressive Revelation and the Twelve Principles) but as striving to directly address the mindset, beliefs, and language of the Christian community.
5. See teaching as including the preparation for answering and developing the skills to anticipate the likely questions and concerns Christians will have.
6. Gain confidence that referring Christians to “scriptural Christianity” from the Bible itself (as opposed to popular Christian theology) leads to the proofs that Bahá’u’lláh is Christ’s Return and will convincingly answer most questions.
7. Gain confidence and skills in referring to the Bible systematically, recognizing most Christians will not listen seriously unless you can support Bahá’í beliefs by referring to the Bible.
8. Learn how to avoid criticism and argument, and build bridges of agreement and mutual respect with our fellow believers in Christ.
9. Develop the mindset of the Christian Message as “our” religion too.
10. Appreciate that Christians have insights to help us learn how to teach them as well as deepen our own Faith and understanding of both Christianity and the Bahá’í Faith.
11. See teaching as removing the barriers between a soul and its Lord (especially barriers of FEAR” and ignorance!).
  - A. **Christian ignorance:** Most characterizations of the Faith are bizarre in Christian books (e.g., “cult” and “anti-Christian”).

- B. **Christian Fear:** Most Christians have **fear** of being led to Hell by the Devil, a False Prophet or the Anti-Christ.
  - C. **Bahá'í Ignorance:** don't defend scriptural Christianity as our Faith too, can't show Bible scriptures lead directly to Bahá'u'lláh and can be used to effectively answer most Christian's questions, and present the Faith as an "alternative religion." Hence, Bahá'ís often stereotype Christians as unteachable.
  - D. **Bahá'í Fear:** That all Christians will forcefully attack the Faith upon hearing Bahá'u'lláh' is the Return of Christ.
12. Strengthen awe and appreciation of the "stupendous nature of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh" and "the fundamental verities of our Faith" as the fulfillment and explanation of the Old and New Testaments.
13. Learn skills for and gain confidence in a systematic method to remove barriers for Christians to recognize their Lord's Return and to resolve their objections based on the approach of the Kitáb-i-Iqán to interpretation of Scripture:
- A. Spiritual preparation for teaching by steps directed in the Writings. (p 13)
  - B. Avoid criticism and dispute. (D&J, p 14)
  - C. Always begin by establishing points of agreement:
    - 1. Bahá'ís accept Christ and the Bible. (p 18)
    - 2. Bahá'ís and Christians have many similar beliefs/doctrines. (p 20)
    - 3. Bahá'ís are willing to resolve differences of understanding and interpretation by referring to the Bible: "As a Bahá'í, I believe in the Biblical explanation of (fill in the subject). Let us turn to the Bible and see what scripture says."
  - D. Interpret the Bible, often symbolically and spiritually to establish:
    - 1. Proofs that Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ as no Bahá'í teachings may seem relevant or make sense to Christians without this point being made first. (pp 65-70)
    - 2. Objections to Bahá'u'lláh are not Biblical and are the same as those of the Jews to Christ and by this same logic Jesus must also be also denied. (pp 33-35)
    - 3. Biblical inconsistency of some Christian doctrines that conflict with Bahá'í teachings (e.g., original sin). (p 55)
  - E. Whatever proofs Christians apply to confirm their belief in Jesus, these very same proofs apply equally well to establishing their belief in Bahá'u'lláh. Whatever their objections, in principle these same objections also apply to Jesus, as the Jews demonstrated. (pp 33-35)
  - F. Redirect questions on doctrinal issues to proofs of Bahá'u'lláh.

## COMMON APPREHENSIONS OF CHRISTIANS UPON ENCOUNTERING THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

### 1. **Instruction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as “first” task of teaching:**

“They must **first** (emphasis added) try and remove any apprehensions in the people they teach” (Individual and Teaching #27)

### 2. **Some common apprehensions to be removed by the Bahá'í teacher:**

- A. FEAR! of “non-Christian”, non-Biblical sources of information as coming from false prophets, the Anti-Christ, the devil, etc.
- B. Diminishing the uniqueness of Christ’s Station: (e.g., the **Only Way**, the **Only Begotten Son**, the **Only Mediator** between God and man, the **Only Sinless Life**, the **Perfect Sacrifice** for all sinners, **God in the flesh**, etc.)
- C. Diminishing the uniqueness of Christ’s power: (to resurrect on Judgment Day; to forgive sins; to perform the greatest miracles the world has ever seen; to offer Himself selflessly to atone for the sins of all; to fulfill prophecy of the Old Testament; to raise Himself from the dead, etc.)
- D. Replacing a personal relationship with their Lord and Savior.
- E. Replacing the uniqueness of the Bible as the Only Word of God.
- F. Context of Bahá'í Faith as described by Christian writers as a cult, an eastern religion, new age, eclectic, a branch of Islam, as for those who have not understood the Bible or been touched by the Spirit.

# WHY BAHÁ'ÍS NEED TO SPECIFICALLY PREPARE TO TEACH CHRISTIANS

## No Other Recourse

“If, for example, a spiritually learned Muslim is conducting a debate with a Christian and he knows nothing of the glorious melodies of the Gospel, he will, no matter how much he imparts of the Qurán and its truths, be unable to convince the Christian and his words will fall on deaf ears. Should, however, the Christian observe that the Muslim is better versed in the fundamentals of Christianity than the Christian priests themselves, and understands the purport of the Scriptures better than they, he will gladly accept the Muslim’s arguments, and he would indeed have no other recourse.” (SDC, p 36)

(Please read substituting “Bahá’í” for Muslim and “Bahá’í Writings” for Qurán)

## Fundamental Prerequisite for Any Successful Teaching

“Nor should any....overlook the fundamental prerequisite for any successful teaching enterprise, which is to adapt the presentation of the fundamental principles of their Faith to the cultural and religious backgrounds, the ideologies...whom they are called upon to enlighten and attract” (C of F, p 25).

## Different People Must be Approached in Different Ways

“He fully agrees with you that different people must be approached in different ways and that valuable work for the Bahá’í Cause can be done within the Christian Churches by promoting the “Christianity of Christ”. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá said that when people become true Christians, they will find themselves Bahá’ís.” (Unf Dest, p 421)

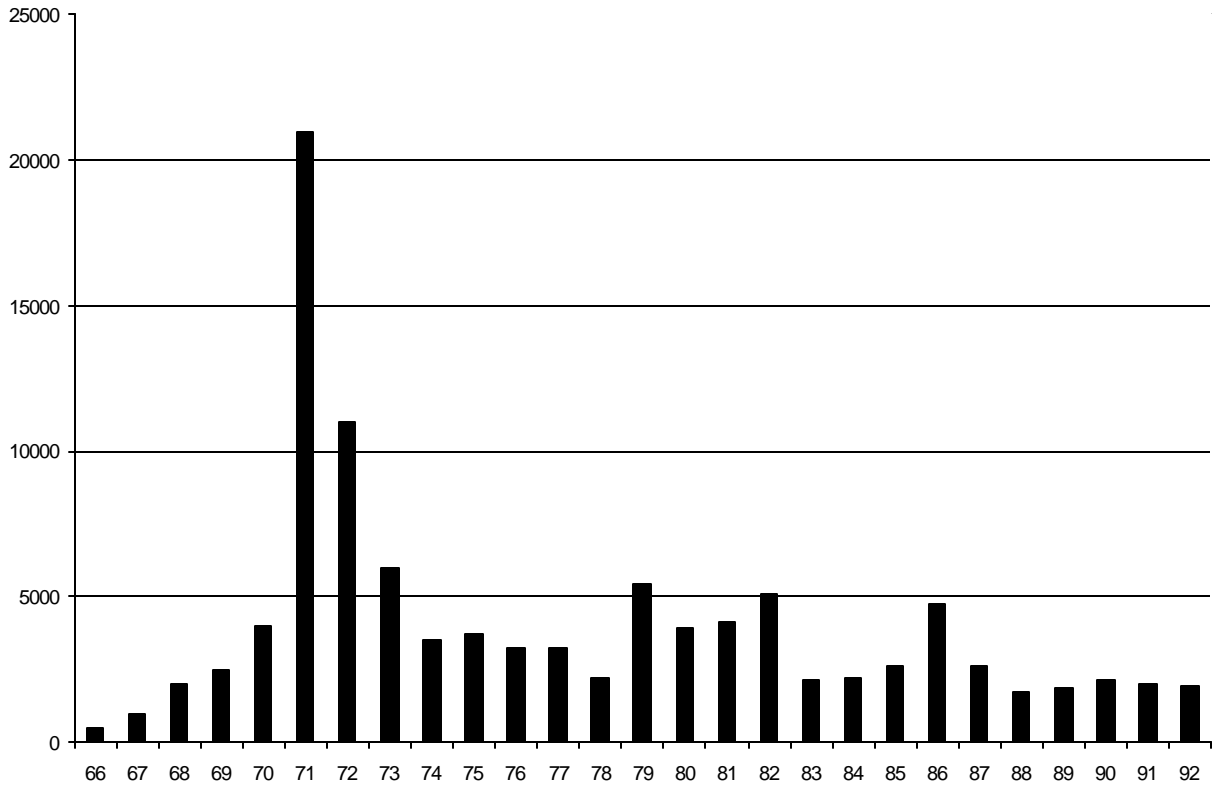
## Nothing More Important

“In this Day, there is nothing more important than the instruction and study of clear proofs and convincing arguments for therein lie the source of life and path of salvation (IDKUF #31). It is very good to memorize the logical points and proofs of the Holy Books.... those proofs and evidences which establish the fact that Bahá’u’lláh is the fulfillment of the Promise of the Holy Book. These proofs ought to be collected and memorized.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, Star of the West, Vol 3, No 11 9/27/12)

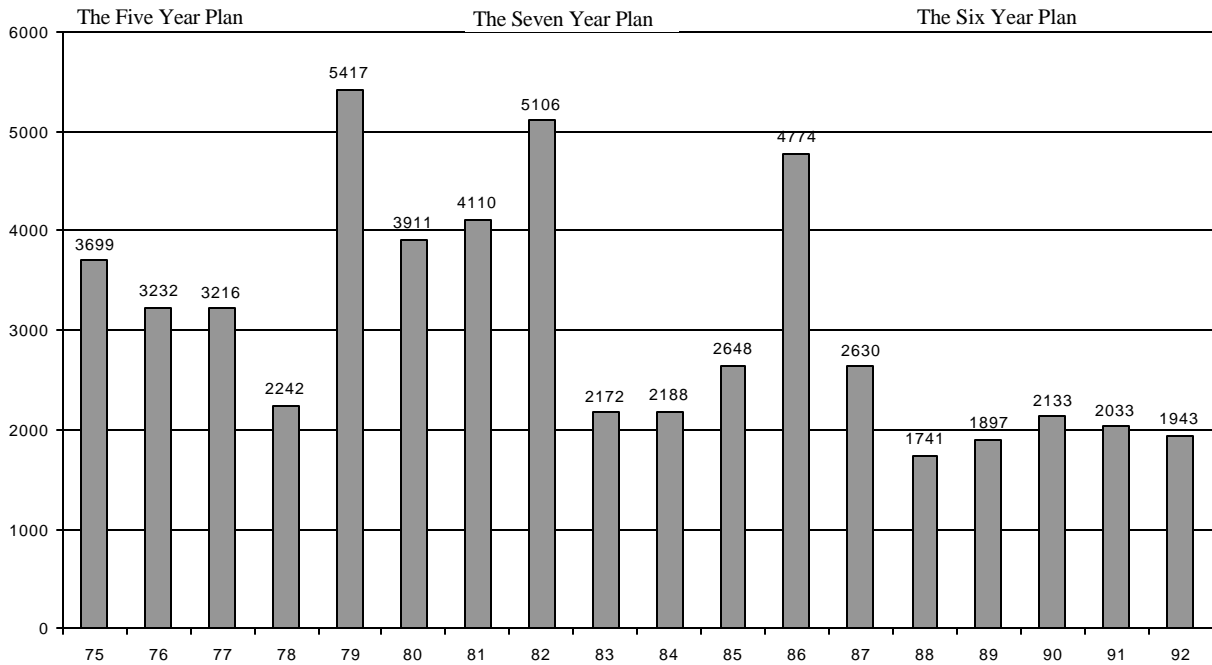
## ‘Abdu'l-Bahá’s Prayer

“I beg of God through the confirmation and assistance of the True One that thou mayest show the utmost eloquence, fluency, ability and skill in teaching the real significance of the Bible.” (TAB, Vol 2, p 243) [Therefore, our Writings exhort us to teach by using the “proofs of the Holy Books.” (As in the Bible)]

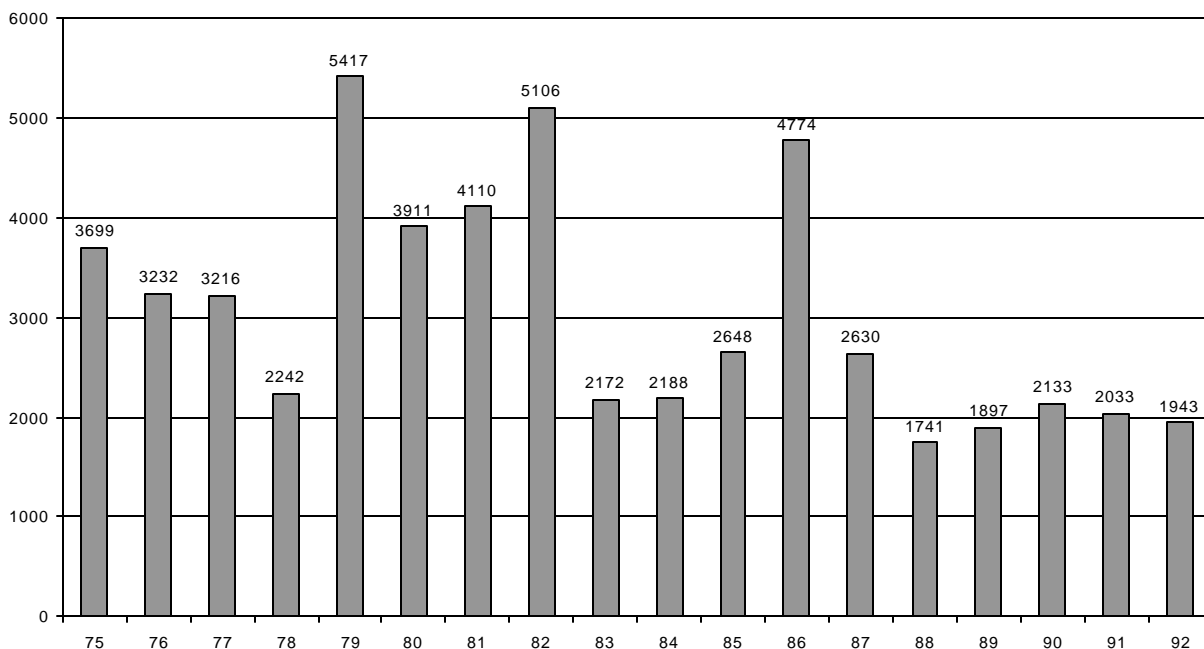
**Enrollments in the US  
from 1966**



**Enrollments in the U.S  
Since 1974-75.**



**Enrollments in the U.S  
Since 1974-75.**



1975-1979 Average

**3,608**

**5-Year Plan**

1980-1986 Average

**3,671**

**7-Year Plan**

1987-1992 Average

**2,063**

**6-Year Plan**

1993-1996 Average

**1,945**

**3-Year Plan plus  
Holy Year**

1997-1999 Average

**1,719**

**75% of 4-Year Plan  
Completed**

# SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR TEACHING

## 1. Understanding the Importance of Teaching

- A. What is the “greatest gift” we have as human beings?
- B. What is the “highest service” that can be given to God?
- C. What is the “most meritorious of all deeds”?
- D. What is “our first obligation”?
- E. What should be “the dominating passion of our life”?
- F. What is “the greatest glory and honor which can come to an individual?”
  - (1) “The most \_\_\_\_\_ of all deeds” (GL, p 278)
  - (2) “It draweth unto us the Grace of God and is our \_\_\_\_\_.” (WT, p 25)
  - (3) “Of all the \_\_\_\_\_, the greatest is the \_\_\_\_\_ of teaching” (WT, p 25)
  - (4) “It is better \_\_\_\_\_ than to possess all that is on earth” (SWB, p 77)
  - (5) “To assist me is to \_\_\_\_\_ My Cause.” (TAB, p 196)
  - (6) “The most essential, the most \_\_\_\_\_ of all our obligations” and what must be “the \_\_\_\_\_ of our life” (I&T, p 15)
  - (7) “Although teaching the Cause \_\_\_\_\_ of every real Bahá’í, and must be our \_\_\_\_\_ in life.” (I&T, p 20)
  - (8) “The greatest glory and honor which can come to an individual is to bring the light of \_\_\_\_\_ to some new soul.” (I&T, p 98)

## 2. Personal spiritualization and the spirit you bring to teaching are the most important and effective tools and are therefore the most important preparation for teaching:

- A. **Personal Spiritualization:** “If he be kindled with the fire of His love, if he forgoeth all created things, the words he uttereth shall set on fire them that hear him.” (ADJ, p 42) ... “his sanctified breath will even affect the rock” (TDP, p 54)
- B. **Detachment:** “If anyone should refuse it, leave him unto himself, and beseech God to guide him. Beware lest ye deal unkindly with him.” (Gl, p289)
- C. **Kindly Tongue is the Lodestone:** “Consort with all men ... in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship ... A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men.” (Gl, p 289)

- D. **Humility:** “In accordance with the divine teachings in this glorious dispensation we should not belittle anyone and call him ignorant, saying: ‘you know not, but I know.’ Rather we should look upon others with respect and when attempting to explain and demonstrate, we should speak as if we are investigating the truth, saying: ‘Here these things are before us. Let us investigate to determine where and in what form the truth can be found.’... The teacher should not see in himself any superiority: he should speak with the utmost kindness, lowliness, and humility, for such speech exerteth influence and educateth the souls.” (SWAB, p 30) [Teaching should be a mutual exploration of the Word of God.]
- E. **Knowledge is secondary in importance to devotion:** “A humble man without learning, but filled with the Holy Spirit, is more powerful than the most nobly born, profound scholar without that inspiration.” (PT, p 156) “The first and most important qualification of a Bahá’í teacher is indeed unqualified loyalty and attachment to the Cause. Knowledge is of course essential but compared to devotion it is secondary in importance. What the Cause now requires is not so much a group of highly cultured and intellectual people who can adequately present its teachings, but a number of devoted, sincere, and loyal supporters, who in utter disregard of their own weakness and limitations, and with hearts afire with the love of God, forsake their all for the sake of spreading and establishing His Faith.” (WOG, p 128)
- F. “Teach for the sake of the love of the Faith (“love of My Beauty” Gl, p 232) and not for reward.” (SWB, p 77)
- G. Teach to remove barriers between a soul and its Lord for Bahá’u’lláh is their Lord returned.
- H. Teach as an opportunity to share your belief and love of Christ.
- I. Always leave as friend and fellow believer in Christ and the Bible.
- J. “Nothing spiritual is ever communicated in an argument” and it always takes two to argue. “Do not argue with anyone and be wary of disputation...If he is obdurate, you should leave him to himself, and place your trust in God. Such is the quality of those who are firm in the Covenant.” (I&T, p 13)
- K. Unhelpful attitudes:
  - (a) Teaching is a competition with losers, winners and points scored.
  - (b) Teaching is merely a knowledge transfer activity from teacher to student by means of eloquent, logical argument and instruction.
  - (c) A believer must choose between Christianity and the Bahá’í Faith which is an “alternative religion.”
  - (d) The Bible is corrupted and untrustworthy.

### 3. **Specific Preparations for Teaching**

- A. Pray daily to meet a receptive soul. (PMDA, p 20)
- B. “It is now \_\_\_\_\_ for every Bahá’í to set for himself individual teaching goals.” (M/UHJ, p 35)

- C. “They must first try and remove any apprehensions in the people they teach. In fact, every one of the believers should choose one person every \_\_\_\_\_ and try to establish ties of friendship with him, so that all his fear would disappear.” (I&T, p 27)
- D. “From the texts of the wondrous, heavenly Scriptures they should \_\_\_\_\_ phrases and passages bearing on various instances... So potent is their influence that the hearer will have no cause for \_\_\_\_\_” (TB, p 200).
- E. “Surely the ideal way of teaching is to prove our points by constant \_\_\_\_\_ to the actual words of Bahá’u’lláh and the Master.” (IDKUF, p 32)
- F. “It is very good to memorize the logical points and \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Books. These \_\_\_\_\_ ought to be collected and memorized. As soon as someone will ask you ‘what are your \_\_\_\_\_?’ you may cry out at the top of your voice and say, ‘here they are!’ (IDKUF, p 18)
- G. “It is \_\_\_\_\_ to acquire the knowledge of divine proofs and evidences, and to acquaint oneself with convincing testimonies.” (IDKUF, pp8-9)
- H. The essential requisite of teaching. (I&T, p 15)
- I. The greatest help to letting spiritual power recreate us. (PMDA, p 18)
- J. “What is needed to achieve success in the teaching field is \_\_\_\_\_ dedication on the part of the individual, consecration to the glorious task of spreading the Faith; and the living of the Bahá’í life, because that creates the magnet for the Holy Spirit, and it is the Holy Spirit that quickens and confirms.” (I&T, p 88)
- K. “Success will crown the efforts of the friends on the home front, when they meditate on the teachings, pray fervently for divine confirmations for their work, study the teachings so they may carry their \_\_\_\_\_ to the seeker, and then \_\_\_\_\_; and above all persevere in \_\_\_\_\_.  
When these steps are followed, and the teaching work carried on sacrificially and with devoted enthusiasm, the Faith will spread rapidly.” (DG, p 71)
- L. Perhaps the reason why you have not accomplished so much in the field of teaching is the extent you looked upon your own \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to spread the Message. Bahá’u’lláh and the Master have both urged us repeatedly to disregard our own handicaps and lay our whole reliance upon God. He will come to our help if we only arise and become an active channel for God’s grace.” (I&T, p 42)

M. “Do you think it is the teachers who make converts and change human hearts? No, surely not. They are only pure souls who take the first step, and then let the spirit of Bahá’u’lláh move them and make use of them. Should he, even for a second, consider his \_\_\_\_\_ as due to his own capabilities, his work is ended and his fall starts... The criterion is the extent to which we are ready to have the will of God operate through us.” (PBA, p 26) [Teaching is fundamentally a mystical process and not under our direction.]

4. The myths in the minds of the Bahá’í community regarding teaching are the main barriers to a significant advance in the process of entry by troops and are in direct opposition to the clear guidance of the Writings.

**A. Myth #1: “People aren’t interested.”**

(Response) “...endowed every soul with the capacity to recognize...”  
(GI, p 105) The Faith speaks to what is most important in every person’s life. It is for the Bahá’ís to relate the Faith to what is most important in the life of the seeker after the Bahá’í knows the seeker well enough to determine what indeed is most important to them.

(Second Response) “...the Bahá’í teacher must be all confidence. Therein lies his strength and the secret of his success. Though single handed, and no matter how great the apathy of the people around you may be, you should have faith that the hosts of the Kingdom are on your side.” (I&T, p 23)

**B. Myth #2: “I can’t teach the Faith...I’m not a teacher.”**

(Response) “\_\_\_\_\_ can find some effective method of teaching.”  
(UHJ, p vii. Individual & Teaching)

**C. Myth #3: “I don’t know enough to teach.”**

(Response) “...the words he uttereth shall set on fire them that hear him...”  
(if what? \_\_\_\_\_) (ADJ, p 42)

**D. Myth #4: “I don’t meet enough new people.”**

(Response) In this country, anyone can meet new people.

**E. Honorary Myth #5: “Teaching is something that only happens at meetings.”**

(Note: the above myths were identified as the most common barriers to teaching in a survey conducted by the Oregon DTC and answered by over 300 Bahá’ís in Oregon)

5. **Requisites for our Spiritual Growth:**

“Bahá’u’lláh has stated quite clearly in His Writings the essential requisites for our spiritual growth, and these are stressed again and again by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in his talks and tablets. One can summarize them briefly in this way:

- 1. The recital each day of the Obligatory Prayers with pure-hearted devotion.**
- 2. The regular reading of the Sacred Scriptures, specifically at least each morning and evening, with reverence, attention and thought.**
- 3. Prayerful meditation on the Teachings, so that we may understand them more deeply, fulfill them more faithfully, and convey them more accurately to others.**
- 4. Striving each day to bring our behavior more into accordance with the high standards that are set forth in the Teachings.**
- 5. Teaching the Cause of God.**
- 6. Selfless service in the work of the Cause and in carrying out our trade or profession.”**

(Universal House of Justice, Irish Bahá'í News, Nov/Dec 1973)

## WHAT BAHÁ'IS BELIEVE ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

1. “As to the position of Christianity, let it be stated without any hesitation or equivocation that its divine origin is unconditionally acknowledged, that the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ are fearlessly asserted, that the divine inspiration of the Gospel is fully recognized, that the reality of the mystery of the Immaculacy of the Virgin Mary is confessed, and the primacy of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, is upheld and defended. The Founder of the Christian Faith is designated by Bahá'u'lláh as the “Spirit of God,” is proclaimed as the One Who “appeared out of the breath of the Holy Ghost,” and is even extolled as the “Essence of the Spirit.” His mother is described as ‘that veiled and immortal, that most beauteous countenance,’ and the station of her Son eulogized as a ‘station which hath been exalted above the imaginings of all that dwell on earth,’ whilst Peter is recognized as one whom God has caused ‘the mysteries of wisdom and of utterance to flow out of his mouth.’” (PDC, pp 109-110)
2. “We have also heard a number of the foolish of the earth assert that the genuine text of the heavenly Gospel doth not exist amongst the Christians, that it hath ascended unto heaven. How grievously they have erred! How oblivious of the fact that such a statement imputeth the gravest injustice and tyranny to a gracious and loving Providence!” (KI, Page: 89)
3. “Referring to the Gospel, Bahá'u'lláh states, ‘Reflect: the words of the verses themselves eloquently testify to the truth that they are of God.’” (KI, p 84)
4. “The Apostles of Christ were even as letters, and Christ was the essence of the Word Itself; and the meaning of the Word, which is grace everlasting, cast a splendor on those Letters. Again, since the Letter is a member of the Word, it therefore, in its inner meaning, is consonant with the Word.” (SWAB, p 60)
5. “This Book is the Holy Book of God and of sacred inspiration. It is the Bible of salvation, the noble Gospel.” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, p145)

6. “You must know the Old and New Testament as the Word of God.” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá quoting Muhammad) (PUP, p 201)
7. “Our belief regarding Christ is exactly what is recorded in the New Testament; however, we elucidate this matter and do not speak literally or in a manner based merely on blind belief.”  
(ODP, p 117)
8. “When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states we believe what is in the Bible, he means in substance. Not that we believe every word of it to be taken literally or that every word is the authentic saying of the Prophet.” (LOG, p 494) [There are no Aramaic Bibles from the time and in the language that Jesus spoke and therefore we do not have the exact wording of what He said.]
9. “The Cause of Bahá’u’lláh is the same as the Cause of Christ.” (BWF, p 400)... “When Christians act according to the teachings of Christ, they are called Bahá’ís. For the foundations of Christianity and the religion of Bahá’u’lláh are one. The foundations of all the divine Prophets and Holy Books are one. The difference among them is one of terminology only.” (PUP, p 247) (Therefore, Christianity is our religion too and we are fellow believers in Christ and the Bible. The differences between Bahá’ís and Christians are in “terminology only” which can be resolved by reinterpretation of the Bible for Christians to demonstrate the common foundation of Christianity and the Bahá’í Faith. See also **Comparative Religion Quotations**, pages 77-84)

## **SOME DOCTRINES SHARED BY CHRISTIANS AND BAHÁ'ÍS**

<u>Christian</u>	<u>Bahá'í</u>
Atonement	“...have borne the misfortunes of the world for your salvation.” (TAB, p 10) “He in truth has offered His life as a ransom for the redemption of the world.” (Gl, p 315)
Repentance	“Wherefore, hearken ye unto My speech, and return ye to God and repent, that He, through His grace, may have mercy upon you, may wash away your sins, and forgive your trespasses.” (Gl, p 130)
Belief before Deeds	“On the Day of His manifestation, unless thou truly believest in Him, naught can save thee from the fire, even if thou performest every righteous deed.” (SWB, p 110) “...since deeds are secondary to faith in Him.” (SWB, p 133)
Everlasting Life	“All the tokens of God have been sent down as a token of His grace. The waters of everlasting life, have, in their fullness, been proffered unto men.” (Gl, p 34)
Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ	“...the Sonship and divinity of Jesus Christ are fearlessly asserted...” (PDC p 109)
The Virgin Birth	“Bahá'u'lláh confirms, however indirectly, the Catholic conception of the Virgin Birth” (DG, p 40)
Divine Inspiration of the Gospel	“...the divine inspiration of the Gospel is fully recognized...” (PDC, p 110)
Personal God	“Within a compass of two hundred pages it proclaims unequivocally the existence and oneness of a personal God, unknowable, inaccessible, the source of all Revelation...” (GPB, p 139)

## SOME DOCTRINES SHARED BY CHRISTIANS AND BAHÁ'Í'S

<u>Christian</u>	<u>Bahá'í</u>
Christ is Without Sin	“For these Holy Souls are pure from every sin and sanctified from faults.” (SAQ, p 170)
Trinity	“Then he (‘Abdu’l-Bahá) explained the puzzling question of the “Trinity” and demonstrated...that “trinity” not only exists in every religion but in philosophy as well.” (SOW, V12:7; also see TAB, p 117)
Grace	“The tie...between the creature and the Creator should be regarded as a token of His gracious favor unto men and not as an indication of any merit they may possess.” (GI, p 193)
Justification by Faith	“We are cognizant of thy righteous deeds, though they shall avail thee nothing; for the whole object of such righteousness is but recognition of God, thy Lord, and undoubted faith in the Words revealed by Him.” (The Báb: SWB, Page: 34)
Reborn in Faith	“Man must be born again. As the babe is born into the light of this physical world, so must the physical and intellectual man be born into the light of the world of Divinity.” (PUP, p 288)
Forgiveness of Sins	“Thou art indeed the One Who forgiveth the sins of all mankind.” (The Báb: SWB, Page: 4)  “...that haply ye may ask forgiveness of Him, ...may truly repent, may realize your misdeeds, ... may atone for the things that have escaped you, and be of them that do good.” (GI, p 130)
Salvation: “Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31)	“Blessed is the man that hath acknowledged his belief in God and His signs, and recognized that ‘He shall not be asked of His doings.’ ...such is the teaching which God bestoweth on you, a teaching that will deliver you from all manner of doubt and perplexity, and enable you to attain salvation in both this world and in the next.” (GI, p 87)

## WHAT MANY CHRISTIANS BELIEVE ABOUT THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH AND ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

- I. “The cardinal doctrines of the Christian Faith (1), including the absolute authority of the Bible, the doctrines of the Trinity, the Deity of Jesus Christ, His Virgin Birth, Vicarious Atonement, Bodily Resurrection and Second Advent are all categorically rejected by Baha’ism [sic]. They maintain that Christ was a manifestation of God, but not the ‘only manifestation’ of the Divine Being.”

“There is very little indeed that a true Christian can have in common with the faith of Bahai [sic]. There is simply no common ground on which to meet or to talk once the affirmations have been made on both sides of Jesus Christ, as opposed to Bahá’u’lláh. Of course there is common ground of Scripture upon which we can meet all men (emphasis added) to proclaim to them the indescribable gift of God in the Person of Christ, but there can be no ground for fellowship with the Baha’i [sic] Faith, which is, at its very core, anti-Christian theology.” (Martin, Walter, The Kingdom of the Cults, 1982 edition; p. 258)(2)

- (1) Though variably expressed, these doctrines are indeed the central Christian beliefs broadly accepted by Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and most Protestant sects which number over 23,000 and include over 1.8 billion people. The page numbers where the present compilation deals with these doctrines are as follows: (1) Authority of the Bible ( 18 ); (2) the Trinity ( 21 ); (3) Deity of Jesus Christ (26 ); (4) Virgin Birth (20); (5) Vicarious Atonement for Sins of Humanity (20 ); (6) Bodily Resurrection (59); Second Advent ( 65). Bahá’ís can accept these central doctrines of Christianity as interpreted in the Bahá’í Writings with the exception of Bodily Resurrection.
- (2) The Kingdom of the Cults is the most widely read reference book by a Christian used by Christians when studying the Bahá’í Faith. It is a theological distortion of Bahá’í beliefs.

- II. Fundamentalism originated in 1895 as a “transchurch” movement in response to historical criticism of the Bible, the theory of evolution, comparative religion studies, and other advances in science: (1) Inerrancy of the Scriptures; (2) Deity of Jesus; (3) Virgin Birth; (4) Substitutionary Theory of Atonement; and (5) Bodily Resurrection and Imminent Bodily Second Coming. (The Church in the Age of Revolution, Vidler, p 241)

## INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

- I. There are obvious limitations to an exclusive literal reading. For example, the straight forward literal reading of the Ten Commandments contrasts to the following from the Gospels and the Hebrew Bible:
  - A. “You must be born again.” (John 3:3)
  - B. “Let the dead bury their dead.” (Luke 9:60)
  - C. “Circumcise the foreskin of your heart.” (Deut 10:16)
  - D. “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” (Luke 3:16)
  
- II. Therefore, portions of the Bible must be understood symbolically as the Bible itself clearly says:
  - A. “Real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal” (Rom 2:29)  
“...For we are the true circumcision, who worship God in spirit.” (Phil 3:3)
  
  - B. “This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught us by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor 2:13-14, NIV)
  
  - C. “Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.” (2 Peter 3:16, NIV)
  
  - D. Both Christ (Matt 17:13) and the Apostles (Luke 3:2-6) and (Acts 2:14) interpret the Old Testament spiritually to explain the fulfillment of prophecy when there was no literal fulfillment. Therefore, Christ and the Apostles give authority and examples for interpreting the Bible spiritually. (See **II in Objections of Christians to Bahá’u’lláh are the same as the Jews to Christ** (p 33) for other examples of spiritual interpretations by Jesus.)
  
  - E. “All the texts of the holy Testaments have intrinsic spiritual meanings. They are not to be taken literally.” (PUP, p 460)
  
- III. The over 23,000 sects of Christianity (World Christian Encyclopedia; D. Barrett) arise from the difficulty of interpreting the Bible which we are warned of in both the Hebrew and New Testaments:

- A. "...words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end..." (Dan 12:9). (God tells Daniel that the meaning of scripture is closed and sealed until the end times.)
- B. All men and angels unable to "loose the seals" and open scriptures until "Lamb of God" appears (Rev 5:1-5) (Again the scriptures in the New Testament are also sealed as to their meaning until Christ returns. Bahá'u'lláh is indeed the Return and has opened the scriptures as prophesied.)
- C. "Judge nothing before the time until the Lord come" (1 Cor 4:5) (Paul tells Christians disputes of doctrine will only be settled by the Return of Christ.)

**IV.** Why would God make scripture so challenging and difficult to interpret?

- A. "For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb 4:12)
- B. "Know verily that the purpose underlying all these symbolic terms and abstruse allusions, which emanate from the Revealers of God's holy cause, hath been to test and prove the peoples of the world; that thereby the earth of the pure and illuminated hearts may be known from the perishable and barren soil. From time immemorial such hath been the way of God amidst His creatures, and to this testify the records of the sacred books." (KI, p 49) (Therefore, interpreting the scriptures is a testing for the purity of one's faith and detachment from all save God in both the Bible and the Kitáb-i-Iqán.)

**V.** The key to understanding interpretation of any scripture, including the Bible, is the "**Twofold Language**" as elucidated in the Kitáb-i-Iqán.

- A. "It is evident unto thee that the Birds of Heaven and Doves of Eternity speak a two-fold language. One language, the outward language, is devoid of allusions, is unconcealed and unveiled, that it may be a guiding lamp and a beaconing light whereby wayfarers may attain the heights of holiness, and seekers may advance into the realm of eternal reunion. Such are the unveiled traditions and the evident verses already mentioned. The other language is veiled and concealed, so that whatever lieth hidden in the heart of the malevolent may be made manifest and their innermost being be disclosed." (KI, p 254-255)

- B. “Wert thou to cleanse the mirror of thy heart from the dust of malice, thou wouldst apprehend the meaning of the symbolic terms revealed by the all embracing Word of God made manifest in every Dispensation, and wouldst discover the mysteries of divine knowledge.” (KI, p 74)
- C. “Also, most of the miracles of the Prophets which are mentioned have an inner significance. Our purpose is not to deny such miracles, our only meaning is that they do not constitute decisive proofs and that they have an inner significance.” (SAQ, p37-38)

**VI. Summation: In the “last days” and at “the end times” the seals of the Scriptures were to be unloosed and words unsealed; and now at the close of the Prophetic Cycle, Bahá’u’lláh has indeed unlocked the Scriptures of all Faiths and provided the scriptural keys for the unity of the world and the establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth.**

# HOW JESUS WAS GOD BUT NOT GOD INCARNATED

## Basis of Christian Belief:

“For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col 2:9)

- I. Jesus was God.
  - A. “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9)
  - B. “I and My Father are one.” (John 10:30)
  - C. “I am He (the Father)” (John 8:24)
  - D. “I am in the Father and the Father in Me” (John 14:11)
  - E. “And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me” (John 12:45)
  
- II. Jesus was also not God.
  - A. “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared him.” (John 1:18)
  - B. “I am going to the Father, for My Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28)
  - C. “I can of Mine own self do nothing...not My own will, but the will of the Father which has sent Me.” (John 5:30)
  - D. “I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.” (John 8:28)
  - E. “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.” (Matt 24:36) (If Jesus was God, Incarnate, He would know all God knows.)
  - F. “And when He had sent them away, He departed into a mountain to pray.” (Mk 6:46) (Does Jesus pray to Himself?)
  - G. “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” (Mk 15:34)
  
- III. The word **trinity** does not occur in the Bible, and is usually referred to as a mystery that can't be understood, and was a doctrinal attempt to explain why Jesus said He was and also was not God.
  
- IV. Bahá'u'lláh's explanation in the Kitáb-i-Iqán of the mystery and nature of the Manifestation is the **Two Fold Station**:
  - A. “Unto this subtle, this mysterious and ethereal Being (Prophet of God) He hath assigned a twofold nature; the physical, pertaining to the world of matter, and the spiritual, which is born of the substance of God Himself. He hath, moreover, conferred upon Him a double station. The first station, which is related to His innermost reality, representeth Him as One Whose voice is the voice of God Himself. ...The second station is the human station, exemplified by the following verse: ‘I am but a man like you.’” (Gl, pp 66-67)

# HOW JESUS WAS GOD BUT NOT GOD INCARNATED (Continued)

- B. “These Manifestations of God have each a twofold station. One is the station of pure abstraction and essential unity. In this respect, if thou callest Them by one name, and dost ascribe to Them the same attribute, thou hast not erred from the truth. ... The other is the station of distinction, and pertaineth to the world of creation and to the limitations thereof. In this respect, each Manifestation of God hath a distinct individuality, a definitely prescribed mission, a predestined Revelation, and specially designated limitations ...” (KI, p 152. 176)
1. “Were any of the all-embracing Manifestations of God to declare: ‘I am God!’ He verily speaketh the truth, and no doubt attacheth thereto. For it hath been repeatedly demonstrated that through Their Revelation, Their attributes and names, the Revelation of God, His Name and His attributes are made manifest in the world.” (KI, p 178)
  2. “The essence of belief in Divine unity consisteth in regarding Him Who is the Manifestation of God and Him Who is the invisible, the inaccessible, the unknowable Essence as one in the same.” (GI, p 167)
  3. “The recognition of Him Who is the Bearer of divine Truth is none other than the recognition of God, and loving Him is none other than loving God.” (SWB, p 121)
  4. “Therefore, whosoever, and in whatever Dispensation, hath recognized and attained unto the presence of these glorious, these resplendent and most excellent Luminaries, hath verily attained unto the ‘Presence of God’ Himself, and entered the city of eternal and immortal life.” (KI, p 143)

# HOW JESUS WAS GOD BUT NOT GOD INCARNATED (Continued)

## BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S CLAIM TO BE GOD

1. “When I contemplate, O my God, the relationship that bindeth me to Thee, I am moved to proclaim to all created things ‘Verily I am God!’” (World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p 113)
2. “Naught is seen in My temple but the Temple of God, and in My beauty but His Beauty, and in My being but His Being, and in My self but His Self, and in My movement but His Movement, and in my acquiescence but His Acquiescence, and in My pen but His Pen, the Mighty, the All-Praised. There hath not been in My soul but the Truth, and in Myself naught could be seen but God.”  
(World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p 109)

## THE BÁB'S CLAIM TO BE GOD

1. “Verily, verily, I am God, He besides Whom there is none other God, and I am the Ancient of Days.” (SWB, p 58)
2. “Verily God and every created thing testify that there is none other God but Me, the Almighty, the Best Beloved.” (SWB, p 31)
3. “He who doeth good unto Me, it is as if he doeth good unto God.” (SWB, p 15)
4. “This is a letter from God (the Báb) the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, unto God (Bahá'u'lláh) the Almighty, the Best-Beloved, to ....express my undoubting faith that there is no God but thee.” (SWB, p 15)

## BAHÁ'U'LLÁH SUPPORTS JESUS' CLAIM TO BE GOD

1. Bahá'u'lláh refers to Christ as “Lord of the visible and the invisible” (Gl, p 56) and “the Lord of all being” (ESW, p 100).

# HOW JESUS WAS GOD BUT NOT GOD INCARNATED (Continued)

## INCARNATION OF GOD'S ESSENCE DID NOT OCCUR IN CHRIST

1. But will God indeed dwell on earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain you. (1 Kings 8:27 NKJV)
2. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. (John 1:18 NKJV)
3. Whom no man hath seen nor can see. (1 Tim 6:16)
4. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape.  
(John 5:37 NKJV)
5. The Son Himself will also be subject to Him (God). (1 Cor. 15:28) NKJV)
6. I am going to the Father, for My Father is greater than I. (John 14:28 NKJV)
7. **Summation:** Both the Old and New Testaments confirm that no one has seen God at any time and that God is greater than Jesus. Yet Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Iqán, p 178, makes it clear that Christ or Bahá'u'lláh or any Manifestation could truthfully declare they were God as it is through the Manifestation's Revelation and attributes the world of humanity comes to know all that we do know of God. (i.e., the Perfect Mirror of the Sun (God) analogy ... see **“Perfect Mirror Analogy for Station of Manifestation is Biblical.”**) (p 30) Christians tend to emphasize the Divine station of the Manifestation to the exclusion of the human station, and many Bahá'ís tend to reverse the emphasis. Perhaps we can learn from each other by referring to our Scriptures. It is this insight and understanding of the **Two-Fold Station of the Manifestation** along with the **Two-Fold Language of Revelation** that will “unlock” all the world's scriptures, bring about the understanding of the true unity of the world's religions, and the Golden Age of the Bahá'í Faith, God's Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven.

## **PERFECT MIRROR ANALOGY FOR STATION OF MANIFESTATION IS BIBLICAL**

1. “Who (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God .”(Col 1:15 KJV)
2. “Who (Jesus) ... the express image of His person (God).” (Heb 1:3 KJV)
3. “Lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (2 Cor 4:4 KJV) (Therefore in the Bible, Christ is the “Image of God” and “shines” the Word of God on humanity, the “Gospel of Christ,” as a Perfect Mirror, the Station of the Manifestation.)
4. “But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Cor 3:8, KJV)
5. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá explains the station of Christ and Bahá'u'lláh as the analogy of God as sun and Manifestation as a perfect mirror to reflect the rays of the Holy Spirit to humanity. (SAQ, p 130: the Trinity) .... Also: “The Lord Christ said, ‘He that hath seen me hath seen the Father’ — God manifested in man. The Sun (God) does not leave His place in the heavens and descend into the mirror, for the actions of ascent and descent, coming and going, do not belong to the Infinite, they are the methods of finite beings. In the Manifestations of God, the perfectly polished mirror, appear the qualities of the Divine in a form that man is capable of comprehending.” (PT, p 26)

# UNDERSTANDING AND REPLYING TO THE THINKING BEHIND DIFFICULT QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED BY CHRISTIANS

Most questions are based on literal interpretation of only some selected Biblical quotations addressing the subject and/or based on the claim of the uniqueness of Jesus the Christ (e.g., Only Jesus was the **Only Way**, the **Only Begotten Son**, the **Only One Mediator Between God and Man**, etc.). Such questions are intended to prove a division between the Bahá'í Faith and Christianity, prove Bahá'ís are not Biblical in their beliefs, and prove superiority of Jesus the Christ over Bahá'u'lláh. However, Bahá'ís seek unity and points of agreement by not accepting the literal mindset of the question, by establishing that Bahá'ís believe in Jesus the Christ and the Bible, and by pointing out one or more of the following answer paradigms:

Paradigm #1: Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ and therefore all the claims of uniqueness for the Station of Christ also apply to Bahá'u'lláh (e.g. Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ is also The Only Way, the Return of the Only Begotten Son, the Return of the Only Mediator between God and Man, etc.).

Paradigm #2: There are other Bible passages on the subject that clearly demonstrate a literal interpretation cannot always be correct and only a spiritual interpretation can make sense in all cases when applied to all the Bible verses referring to the question (e.g. Question: “Have you been baptized in a church? as the Bible says ‘He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.’” (Mk 16:16). **Paradigm #2 Answer:** However, the Bible also says Christ will baptize all believers with “the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Luke 3:16) which means true baptism is other than with water rituals. (see **Baptism**, p 52)

Paradigm #3: The method of literal interpretation used by Christians to reject Bahá'u'lláh and the Bahá'í interpretation was also used by the Jews to reject Christian interpretation of the Old Testament and Jesus. Therefore, Jesus cannot be the Messiah by the same literalist reasoning Christians use to reject Bahá'u'lláh. (See **Objections of Christians to Bahá'u'lláh are the same as Jews to Christ**, p 33) But by whatever Biblical proofs Christians accept Jesus, these same methods of proof apply equally well to Bahá'u'lláh.

1. Paul states the Bible must be “spiritually discerned” as it is “expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.” (1 Cor 2:13-14) and both Christ (Matt 17:13) and the Apostles (Luke 3:2-6, Acts 2:14-21) interpret the Bible in the Old Testament spiritually to explain the fulfillment of prophecy which was not fulfilled literally. Therefore Christ and the Apostles give the authority and examples for interpreting the Bible spiritually. (See **Interpretation of the Bible, II, p23**)

2. Paul interprets even passages that appear as literal factual accounts as indeed symbolic in meaning: "...not like Moses who put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not see the end of the fading splendor...for to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. Yes, to this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds, but when a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed." ( 2 Cor 3:13-16) (Exodus 34:30 recounts that after Moses spoke with God, His face shone so brightly He had to veil His face so the Israelites would not fear Him. Yet Paul recounts this veil as also spiritually symbolic and blinding the Jews to truly understanding the Old Testament and recognizing Jesus.)

Paradigm #4 Even if a literal interpretation is not supported by the Bahá'í Writings (e.g., Physical Resurrection of Jesus; Physical Existence of Satan), the spiritual principle being illustrated or referred to by the Bible is indeed supported and confirmed in the Bahá'í Writings (e.g., "satanic power" is confirmed though a physical Satan is not; and the Power of Jesus over death and His Divine Nature is confirmed though not His Physical Resurrection ... see **Satan** and **Resurrection** dialogue boxes for illustration). It is indeed the underlying spiritual principle and teaching all can agree upon and is the more important reality to begin with that must ultimately guide our Faith and actions ... i.e., Do the believers wish to avoid contact with a physical Satan or, more importantly, the influence of "satanic power?" ... Do the believers need Faith that the physical body of Jesus resides above the clouds in the sky, or, more importantly, that Jesus is Divine and has the power to conquer death and bestow life everlasting?

Paradigm #5: Both the Old Testament and the New Testament are sealed as to their interpretation until Jesus returns according to the Bible itself (see III under **Interpretation of the Bible**, p 23). There are over 23,000 sects of Christianity all of whom disagree over the interpretation of the Bible and none of whom on Biblical authority can confirm they have the correct interpretation of the Bible. Therefore, Bahá'í symbolic interpretations are at least as equally valid as any sect of Christianity and absolutely correct if the claims of Bahá'u'lláh can be proven.

## Objections of Christians to Bahá'u'lláh are the same as Those to Christ

**“If thou wishest to find truth, compare the days of the Manifestation of Abha with the days of Christ; consider this is identically like that and the same doubts and oppositions are put forth” (BWF, p 387)**

- I. Can't add anything to the New Testament (Rev 22:18-19; Matt 5:18; Gal 1:8) therefore Bahá'í Writings can't be scripture.
  - A. But Old Testament also states it cannot be added unto (Deut 4:2; 12:32) which would disallow New Testament as scripture. (see **“Can't Add to the Bible or Preach Any Other Gospel,”**p 43)
  - B. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Heb 13:8) (see **“Yesterday, Today and Forever,”** p 44) [Certainly the physical body of Jesus did change as He grew to manhood; and Jesus as the Word of God also changed as Jesus did change the laws of Moses and, therefore, the Word of God given to the Jews.]
  
- II. But not all prophecies of New Testament are literally fulfilled by Bahá'u'lláh.
  - A. But Jesus did not literally fulfill all the prophecies of the Old Testament either. (Jesus Himself interprets prophecy not literally but as spiritually fulfilled.)
    1. Elijah was to return before the Messiah (Malachi 4:5): John the Baptist, when asked by the Jews, said he was not Elijah (John 1:21) yet Jesus interprets spiritually that John the Baptist was the return of Elijah (Matt 17:10-13) clarifying the literal expectation of the Jews was an incorrect interpretation.
    2. Messiah was to come from an unknown place but “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46). The Jews said, “Yet we know where this man comes from; and when the Christ appears, no one will know where He comes from.” So Jesus proclaimed ... “You know me, and you know where I come from? But I have not come of my own accord; He who sent Me is true, and Him you do not know.” (John 7:27-29) [Again, Jesus Himself interprets spiritually and not literally.]
    3. Jesus was not literally of the lineage of David “of the fruit of thy body” (Psalms 132:11): (The Gospels trace Jesus' lineage to King David through Joseph, but Joseph was not Jesus' father. Mary was not of David's heritage per Who's Who in the Bible and nowhere in the Bible is Mary of David's lineage. Jesus was not Joseph's son.)
    4. Messiah was to live forever: “He said this to show by what death he was to die. The crowd answered Him, “We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up?” (John 12:33-34). [Again, only a spiritual fulfillment can make sense as Jesus did die physically.]
    5. Messiah's name was to be Emmanuel, not Jesus: “Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, ‘Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.’ (Matt1:23)... and he (Joseph)

called his name Jesus (Matt 1:25). [Jesus means “he who saves.” Once again, the Bible uses names as titles and not as literal requirement for prophecy to be fulfilled. Hence Bahá’u’lláh’s name does appear in the New Testament and Old Testament (e.g., Glory of the Lord), just as Jesus of Nazareth took the title Christ, Emmanuel, etc. See also quotes in **“Bahá’u’lláh’s Name Mentioned in the Bible”** (p 72) and **“No Other Name Under Heaven.”** (p 45)]

6. Messiah was to sit on the throne of David and re-establish the glory of the Jews (Amos 9:14-15): [Only a spiritual interpretation of “throne of David” allows fulfillment.]
7. Messiah was to carry a sword and defeat enemies of God’s Chosen People (Isaiah 66:16): [Jesus had not a physical sword but “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Eph 6:17) which triumphed over all. Again, only a spiritual interpretation allows fulfillment.]

**B.** Apostles Luke and Peter also interpret prophecy as fulfilled spiritually when clearly they weren’t literally:

1. The Glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together ... Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low (Isaiah 40:4-5) [Luke says all this was fulfilled when it clearly was not literally: “As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet ...Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low ... and all flesh shall see the salvation of God...” (Luke 3:4-6) [Clearly we still have valleys and mountains and all flesh did not see Jesus physically.] The above spiritual interpretation applies to the prophecy Christians claim Bahá’u’lláh must fulfill literally: “Every eye shall see Him” just as “all flesh shall see it together.” (see **Every Eye Shall See Him**, p 47)
2. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come (Joel 2:31). [In Acts the above is recounted as having been fulfilled: “But Peter, ... said unto them ... For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel ... I shall pour out my Spirit upon all flesh ... And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the

Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:14-21) [No historic record recounts any eclipse of the sun or the moon literally becoming blood which would of course be impossible to see in any form if the sun were dark as the moon only reflects the light of the sun. Also, clearly not “all flesh” literally witnessed “I shall pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.”]

**III. But Bahá'u'lláh Changes the Laws of Christ** which are to be the same “yesterday, today and forever.”

**A.** But Christ changed the law of the Sabbath (Matt 12:1) which was to be a “sign forever between me and the people of Israel” (Exod 31:17). Christ also changed the laws of marriage and divorce (Matt 19:7-9) and “eye for an eye” and “tooth for a tooth” (Matt 5:38-42) announcing He was changing the law as He spoke. Yet the Old Testament clearly states “You shall not add to the word I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you .” (Deut 4:2)

**IV. Miracles of Christ are “best”** (e.g., “Jesus rose from the dead! Where is Bahá'u'lláh buried?”)

- A.** But whose miracle is best when they are equally unexplainable? ... Jews saw splitting of the Red Sea as “best” as there would otherwise have been no Jesus and this provided a literal salvation of the Jews which they were expecting the Messiah to provide again by destroying the enemies of Israel.
- B.** Many rose from the dead in both the Old Testament and New Testament (Matt 27:52; Heb 11:35; 2 Kings 2:11, Eze 37:10, etc.) so not a unique miracle.
- C.** Miracle is not a proof all that one says is true or a proof in itself (e.g., if someone said  $1 + 1 = 3$  and disappeared in a puff of smoke, it would not make the  $1+1=3$ .)
- D.** A false prophet can show miracles too: “...false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.” (Matt 24:23) [Miracles can be used in support of a false prophet.]
- E.** Pharisees and Miracles of Christ were done by power of Beelzebub (Matt 12:24) [Therefore, a miracle doesn't prove the source is Godly.]
- F.** Proof of a prophet is His fruits (Matt 7:15 and Gal 5:22) and that He spiritually heals you. All prophets have miracles in their ministry and all miracles are equally unexplainably phenomenal making it difficult to rank “best.”
- G.** New Testament states anyone of great faith can perform miracles. (1 Cor 12:8-10)
- H.** See quotes in **Miracle is Nor the Best Proof and Resurrection.**

# ANTI-CHRIST

**The Biblical criteria for recognizing the Anti-Christ only occurs in 1 John**

1. Denies that Jesus is the Christ (1 John 2:22)
2. Denies the Father and the Son (1 John 2:22)
3. Denies that Jesus came in the flesh (1 John 4:3,1:7)
4. Equated with deceivers and linked with false prophets (1 John 4:1)
5. Already in the world during the writing of the epistles of John (100 AD) (1 John 2:18; 4:3)
6. Former Christians (1 John 2:19)

## FALSE PROPHETS

**The Biblical criteria for recognizing false prophets:**

1. Wolves in sheep's clothing (Jesus' flock) (Matt 7:15)
2. Will bear bad fruit (Matt 7:17)
3. Already in the world during the writing of 2 Peter (about 150 AD) (2 Peter 2:1)
4. Come at the end of the age and will deceive many, even the elect, with great signs and wonders (Matt 24:11; 23-24)
5. Will bring heresies into Christianity and will deny the Lord (2 Peter 2:1-3)
6. Will arise amongst the Christians (2 Peter 2:1)
7. Will show greed and licentiousness (2 Peter 2:3-4)

## THE BEAST

The Beast (in Rev 19:19-21) who, along with “the kings of the earth, and their armies,” is to make war on the Return of Christ is nowhere in the Bible equated with the Anti-Christ. Therefore, by Biblical criteria, there is no basis for claiming the Anti-Christ is the Beast or that Bahá'u'lláh meets the criteria for either by promoting world peace and disarmament. Furthermore, the followers of the Beast worship his image (Rev 19:20) and of course Bahá'ís do not worship Bahá'u'lláh's image.

**Summation:** Therefore, by the criteria given in the Bible, scriptural Christianity, Bahá'u'lláh can't be the Anti-Christ, or a False Prophet, or the Beast. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá encourages us “They must first try to remove any apprehensions in the people they want to teach.” (Individual and Teaching #27). The Bahá'í teacher may therefore wish to bring up the Christian's **FEAR** of the Anti-Christ, False Prophet, and Satan by referring to the Biblical criteria for recognizing each early in the teaching process in order that the Christian can seriously consider all that the Bahá'í teacher is presenting and not be distracted by their “apprehensions.” It may even be a kindness for the Bahá'í teacher to raise the question, as out of courtesy to the Bahá'í, the Christian may not wish to raise the issue themselves.

## FALSE PROPHETS (CONTINUED)...

1. “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? So, every sound tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit. A sound tree cannot bear evil fruit nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits.” (Matt 7:15-20, RSV) [Fruits of the Spirit identified by Paul: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal 5:22-24, RSV). Bahá’u’lláh teaches that all humanity must acquire these “fruits of the spirit” and demonstrated these same fruits in His own sacrificial life of suffering; therefore He can’t be a false prophet because His “fruit” is “good” and is the “fruits of the spirit” which only a good prophet can bear and an evil or false prophet cannot bear. Also, who in this day are the ones wearing the sheep’s clothing?]
2. “If anyone says to you, ‘Lo, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.” (Matt 24:23-24, RSV) [“Anyone” can include churches or clergy who say they have the true Christ in their midst. The Bible itself must be referred to for proof upon which to base faith and test the claims of Bahá’u’lláh.]
3. “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who brought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their licentiousness, and because of them the way of truth will be veiled. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words.” (2 Peter 2:1, RSV) [Bahá’u’lláh did not deny the Master, has not suffered swift destruction, or shown licentiousness or greed and therefore can’t be a false prophet.]
4. “O ye that are foolish, yet have a name to be wise! Wherefore do you wear the guise of shepherds, when inwardly ye have become wolves, intent upon my flock? (HW, Persian, #24) [Bahá’u’lláh uses the very same imagery as Christ, and may be referring to the clergy as “foolish, yet have a name to be wise!”]

## SATAN AND THE DEVIL

### I. Bahá'u'lláh can't, by criteria given in the Bible, be Satan or the Devil:

- A. “He (the devil)...has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him.” (John: 8:44) ... “And the great dragon was thrown down that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to earth.” (Rev 12:9) [Therefore, the Devil and Satan are the same being and there is no truth in him. Bahá'u'lláh can't be of the Devil or Satan because Bahá'u'lláh proclaims Jesus as the Son of God and the Christ.]
  
- B. “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? So every sound tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit. A sound tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.” (Matt 7:15-18) [Bahá'u'lláh teaches that all humanity must acquire the “fruits of the spirit” identified in (Gal 5:22) and demonstrated these same fruits in His own sacrificial life of suffering; therefore He can't be a false prophet because His “fruit” is “good” and is the “fruits of the spirit” which only a good prophet can bear and an evil or false prophet cannot bear.]
  
- C. “He (the Devil) ... has nothing to do with the truth because there is no truth in him.” (John 8:44) ... for God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor 14:33). [Therefore, God will not cause confusion and the Devil can tell no truth which makes the accusation of the Devil planting partial truths in Bahá'í teachings to confuse the Christian not Biblical and false.]
  
- D. “Put on all of God's armor so that you may be able to stand safe against all strategies and tricks of Satan. For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies, the evil rulers of the unseen world.” (Eph 6:11-12, TLB) [Bahá'u'lláh had a physical body and therefore could not be Satan or someone to fight against.]

## SATAN AND THE DEVIL (CONTINUED)

- E. “From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that he must go into Jerusalem ... and be killed. Then Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee. But He turned and said unto Peter, ‘Get thee behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to Me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men.’” (Matt 16:21-23) [Jesus here identifies Peter, His foremost disciple, as Satan with a capital “S” when he is on the side of men and not God. Therefore, Satan must be a symbolic title for being on the side of men opposing God as Christ founds His Church on Peter and gives him the “keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 16:19). Otherwise the Christian Church is founded on Satan who decides who gets into the kingdom of heaven.]
- F. “Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot being of the number of the twelve.” (Luke 22:3) [Did Peter actually enter the body of Judas or is Satan again a symbolic term?]
- G. “Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world (Satan) be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself. He said this to show by what death He was to die” (John 12:31). [Therefore, Bahá’u’lláh can’t be Satan as Satan has already been cast out of the world.]
- H. “In whom the god of this world (Satan) (2 Cor 4:4 and Eph 2:2 and 6:12) ... [and yet Christ claims He has the same power at the same time as Satan “since Thou hast given Him power over all flesh” (John 17:2). Again, only a spiritual interpretation could make sense of these two quotes.]
- I. “Indeed the actions of man himself breed a profusion of satanic power. For were men to abide by and observe the Divine teachings, every trace of evil would vanish from the face of the earth. However, the widespread differences that exist among mankind and the prevalence of sedition, contention and conflict, and the like are the primary factions which provoke the appearance of the satanic spirit ... a world in which naught can be perceived save strife, quarrels and corruption is bound to become the seat of the throne, the very metropolis of Satan.” (TB, p 177) [The word “Satan” appears at least 47 times in Bahá’í Writings and is used with a capital “S” in the same manner as the Bible. The actions of man can breed satanic power.]

## SATAN AND THE DEVIL (PAGE 3)

- J. “He (Chancellor to Muhammad Shah) will bring thee into grievous trouble ... and verily, he himself is Satan.” (SWB, p 25) [The Báb identifies Satan with a capital “S” in the same usage as Jesus.]
- K. “If his morals become spiritual in character, his aspirations heavenly, and his actions conformable with the will of God, man has attained the image and likeness of his Creator; otherwise, he is the image and likeness of Satan. Therefore Christ hath said, ‘Ye shall know them by their fruits.’” (PUP, p335)

**II. For selected Christians focused on FEAR of Satan, the following may be helpful: “The Power of Satan” could also be understood to cause Christians to miss recognizing Bahá’u’lláh as the Return of Christ just as the New Testament refers to this same “Power of Satan” blinding the Chosen People, the elect, the Jews from recognizing Jesus as the Christ if the reasons Christians give in failing to recognize Bahá’u’lláh are the same as the Jews gave in failing to recognize Jesus. [See “Objections of Christians to Bahá’u’lláh are the same as Jews to Christ.” (p 33)]**

- A. “In whom the god of this world (Satan) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.” (2 Cor 4:4) [If Bahá’u’lláh is the Return of Christ, then those who do not recognize Bahá’u’lláh “believe not” in Christ and may be being blinded by Satan.]
- B. “Besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of this evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” (Eph 6:16-17) [Therefore Christians can be assured that as long as they have faith in Jesus the Christ which Bahá’ís recognize as returned in Bahá’u’lláh, they are protected from the evil one. But if they fail to recognize Bahá’u’lláh as Christ, then possibly they will be subject to the darts of the evil one. The Christian can be asked to apply the same reasons they have faith in Christ to Bahá’u’lláh by examining the proofs of the Bible and applying them to Bahá’u’lláh to be sure they are not being blinded by Satan in any objections they have to Bahá’u’lláh.]

## SATAN AND THE DEVIL (PAGE 4)

### DIALOGUE BOX

**Christian:** “I believe in a literal Devil and you Bahá’ís don’t!”

**Bahá’í:** “I believe in the Bible and in Jesus the Christ and I know believers interpret the Bible differently. The Bahá’í Writings confirm satanic power. We know this power can prevent souls from recognizing their Lord just as the Bible tells us Satan blinded the minds of them “which believe not” (2 Cor 4:4) ... Many people oppose Bahá’u’lláh for the very same reasons the Jews rejected Christ, such as stating the prophecies were not literally fulfilled by Jesus, and that the laws of the Old Testament were not supposed to be changed, and that nothing could be added to the Scriptures. Could I show you what I mean about the power of Satan to blind men’s minds by pointing out the Bible passages illustrating why the Jews rejected Christ? And then we can look at the claims of Bahá’u’lláh using the Bible as our guide.”

Here the Bahá’í began with a point of agreement, referred to the Bible and then changed the focus from the literal existence of Satan to the ‘power of Satan’ to prevent souls from recognizing their Lord (which is the real threat posed by a literal or spiritual Satan) and then invited the Christian to refer to the Bible to see the danger of objecting to Bahá’u’lláh for the same reasons the Jews objected to Jesus. The conversation was refocused on the Biblical proofs of Bahá’u’lláh which is the most important question to resolve for the Christian and will eventually lead to the resolution of all their other questions.

## A FORMULA\* FOR DIFFICULT CHRISTIAN QUESTIONS

1. Recognize most problematic questions are based upon a literal interpretation of the Bible.
2. Start with point(s) of agreement with fellow Christians:
  - A. Bahá'ís believe in Christ and in the Bible as the Word of God.
  - B. Bahá'ís are eager to turn to the Bible to resolve questions.

**“As a Bahá'í, I believe in the Bible and the Biblical explanation of (Subject of the Question). Let us turn to the Scriptures and see what the Bible says.”**

3. Remove **FEAR!!!** of Christians (e.g., false prophet; Anti-Christ, devil, etc).
4. Always turn to the Bible verse itself, reading passages before and after (in context) and other Bible verses on the topic utilizing Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.
5. Resolve apparent contradictions and dilemmas from literal reading by spiritually/symbolically interpreting the Bible using principles given in the Kitáb-i-Iqán, especially the **“two-fold language”** and **“two-fold station of Manifestation”**:
  - A. If a word in one Bible passage must be understood other than literally, and clearly is therefore symbolic, the meaning of that word elsewhere in the Bible may also be understood to be symbolic although a literal reading might make perfect sense in other passages in the Bible, i.e. a word or concept must be understood in context of its full usage in the Bible everywhere it appears (e.g., see **Baptism**, p 52).
  - B. See other paradigm principles of interpretation on page 31.
6. Redirect doctrinal concerns to proofs of Bahá'u'lláh (e.g. Dialogue Box, p 41).
7. Always avoid dispute and criticism, remembering the spirit in which you speak is at least as important, and probably more important than the actual content of what you say.
8. Always leave as a fellow believer in Christ and the Bible and leave some of the Creative Word in the Christian's hand: This will keep the dialogue open for the seeker and capitalize on the mystical power of the Creative Word.

\*My best thinking only....You can do better!

# CAN'T ADD TO THE BIBLE OR PREACH ANY OTHER GOSPEL

## Basis of Christian Belief

- (A) “...preach any other gospel...let him be accursed...” (Gal 1:8)
- (B) “If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.” (Rev 22:18)
- (C) “Till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.” (Matt 5:18-19)
1. But **Revelations** (95-96 A.D.) and **Galatians** (50-60 A.D.) and **Matthew** were written well before the Gospel of **John** (130 A.D.), **2 Peter** (150 A.D.), **James** (200 A.D.), **1 Timothy** (185 A.D.) and **2 Timothy** (185 A.D.), and other books of the Bible (The New Testament and Early Christianity by J. B. Tyson).. Therefore the New Testament contains much revelation revealed after **Revelations** and **Galatians** and **Matthew**.
  2. Since Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ, His Gospel (Revelation) is the same Gospel of Christ as in the New Testament and is not “another” Gospel.
  3. “You shall not add to the word which I command you nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.” (Deut 4:2) “...What thing so ever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.” (Deut 12:32) Christ changed the laws of marriage and divorce (Matt 19:7-9), the sabbath which was to be a “sign forever between me and the people of Israel” (Ex 31:17; Col 2:16), the laws of “an eye for an eye” and “tooth for a tooth” (Matt 5:38-42), just as Bahá'u'lláh has also changed social laws. [In the quotes from Deuteronomy, the Old Testament forbids altering or adding to the Old Testament so a literal reading would disallow the New Testament as Scripture by the same argument that Christians utilize in quoting from Revelations and Matthew and Galatians to disallow Bahá'í Writings as scripture.]
  4. Both the New Testament and the Old Testament state the Return of Christ will add to the Scriptures: “I have many things to tell you yet...How be it when the Spirit of Truth shall come, He shall guide you unto all truth.” (John 16:12-18) “...He shall teach us His ways...” (Isa 2:3)
  5. See also **Yesterday, Today and Forever** explanation that spiritual core of religious teachings never changes but social laws do change with each Manifestation. Therefore, in a spiritual interpretation, these core spiritual teachings are the Gospel, which means “glad tidings” or “good news”, and the eternal commandments of the Lord of the Old Testament. Bahá'u'lláh says “**This is the changeless faith of God, eternal in the past, and eternal in the future.**” (Gl, p 136)

## YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER

### Basis of Christian Belief:

**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Heb 13:8, KJV)  
[Some Christians believe the physical body of Christ was resurrected  
and now lives and will return to rule this world.]**

1. “Before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8:58) ... “In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1) [The physical body of Christ did not exist from the beginning but the divine Christ did; Bahá’u’lláh is the Return of this divine Christ. Also, Christ as the Word of God changed the Word of God given to the Jews by changing the Laws of Moses even though (Deut 4:2, 12:32) forbids changing the Word of God. Therefore Jesus in physical form and as the Word of God has changed.]
2. The Bible recounts that Christ’s body was born and changed form and did grow into manhood; and therefore the physical body was not the changeless nature referred to. [Therefore, the Divine Nature of Christ and His Spiritual Teachings have always existed, are always the same, and exist in Bahá’u’lláh Who is the Return of Christ, and Who made the same claim for the eternal nature of His teachings. However, the physical nature of Christ’s body did grow and change and is not the same “yesterday, today and forever.”]
3. “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that who is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, and from everlasting.” (Micah 5:2) [The divine Christ has come and gone in the world many times but not with an unchanging physical form. Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever as Christ is Moses, Bahá’u’lláh, and all Manifestations as they have the same spiritual identity yet different physical forms.]
4. “The spiritual aspect of religion is ... the same yesterday , today and forever.” (PT, p 142) “...this is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future,” (GI, p 136) [The spiritual source and core of religious teaching is the same “yesterday, today and forever,” and is therefore the same in Christianity and the Bahá’í Faith.]

# NO OTHER NAME UNDER HEAVEN

## Basis of Christian Belief:

**Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.** (Acts 4:12)

1. Bahá'u'lláh is Christ Returned and therefore claims the same name “Christ.”
2. “And I will write on him My new name...” (Rev 3:12) [the Return of Jesus will have a new name.]
3. “I still have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth.” (John 16:12-13) [Spirit of Truth is a new name and another identity than Jesus as Christ says “he” will guide you, not “I” will guide you after “I (Jesus) go away.”]
4. Isaiah prophesied Messiah’s name would be Emmanuel (Isaiah 7:14) which means “God with us” and not Jesus which means “He who saves.” [Names therefore are titles in the Bible rather than surnames and refer to descriptions and roles rather than exact phonetic names. Christ is not the last name of Jesus. Therefore the Old Testament prophecy of the Messiah being named Emmanuel is not literally fulfilled by Jesus' name but in fact “God with us” did happen spiritually with the appearance of Jesus to the Jews.]
5. Jesus had many names: “...And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace...” (Isaiah 6-9:6) These names could also be interpreted as applying to Christ’s Return, and Revelations adds to the names of Christ’s Return: “His name is called the Word of God” (Rev 19:13); “And He has on His robe and on His thigh a new name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords” (Rev 19:16)
6. The prophet Elijah never died and ascended into heaven (2 Kings 2:11) but returned in the spirit of Elijah yet in the body of John the Baptist according to Jesus (Matt 17:10-13) even though John the Baptist himself denied he was literally the return of Elijah when asked by the Jews (John 1:19-21). Therefore by insisting that Bahá'u'lláh have the literal name “Jesus” and/or the same physical body of Jesus to be the Return of Christ, Christians make the same mistake the Jews did in denying Jesus because John the Baptist’s name and body were not literally Elijah’s.
7. See other references under **One Mediator Between God and Man** (p 46).

# ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MEN

## Basis for Christian Belief

**“For there is one God; and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”** (Tim 2:5)

1. Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ Jesus and therefore is this one mediator.
2. “And I will write on him My new name...” (Rev 3:12) [Return of Jesus will have a new name.]
3. Howbeit, when He the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth.” (John 16:12-13) [Spirit of Truth is a new name as Christ says “he” will guide you, not “I” will guide you. Some Christians say the Spirit of Truth came at Pentecost but, if this were true, the Christians would have all truth and the Trinity would not be a mystery and there wouldn't be 23,000 divisions of Christianity.”]
4. “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.” (John 14:16) [There will be another helper than the one mediator, Christ Jesus.]
5. “For if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart I will send Him to you.” (John 16:7) [Christ again makes it clear that the helper that is to come has a separate identity from the physical one mediator Christ Jesus who is to “go away.”]
6. See also “No Other Name Under Heaven” (p 45).

# EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM

## Basis of Christian Belief:

**“Behold, He is coming with clouds and every eye shall see Him.”** (Rev 1:7)

1. Luke (3:4-6) says that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled by the coming of Jesus the Christ and that “And all flesh shall see the salvation of God” when clearly not all humans alive literally saw Christ living in a physical body: “As it is written in the book of Isaiah the prophet, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’” [The interpretation must be spiritual as literally “all flesh” did not see Jesus and “every valley” was not “filled” and “every mountain” was not “brought low.” Hence, “Every eye shall see him” could be interpreted as it applies to Bahá’u’lláh as Luke interpreted Isaiah spiritually to claim Christ fulfilled “and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”]
2. “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, everyone who pierced Him.” (Rev 1:7) [Since the Roman soldier’s eyes (who pierced Jesus at His Crucifixion) are long ago returned to dust, it must be spiritual eyes that will “see him” or at least eyes unlike the ones we see with today. Also, (Rev 20:4) says the Romans would not be resurrected at first when Christ Returns, but 1,000 years later, indicating the Roman soldier’s eyes would not literally “see” Christ until 1,000 years after “every eye shall see Him.” Clearly only a spiritual interpretation applies.]
3. ***He shall come as a thief in the night*** suggests many literal eyes won’t see Him at His coming (Rev 3:3 and 16:15).
4. The quote is “every eye shall see Him” but not that every eye shall recognize Him. Just as (Luke 3:4-6) thought “all flesh” saw the salvation of God, yet few people became Christians at first just as few became Bahá’ís at first.
5. “As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For in those days, before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark; and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away; so will be the coming of the Son of Man...therefore, you must be ready for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” (Matt 24:36-44) [The people did not recognize until after Noah was gone that His Message was indeed from God and Christ states here that so it will be for His Return.]

6. “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven and the powers of heaven will be shaken; then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth...will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven.” (Matt 24:29-31)
  - A. How could every eye see Him when the earth is round and people on opposite sides of the earth could not visualize Him at the same time?
  - B. How could the sun be literally darkened and the moon cease to shine (Matt 24:29) and still there by light for “every eye (to)see him?”
  - C. How could the stars fall upon the earth at the same time “every eye shall see Him” when stars are many times the size of the earth and just one would destroy the earth?

7. **Bahá’í Interpretation:**

And now, concerning His words: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven." By these words it is meant that when the sun of the heavenly teachings hath been eclipsed, the stars of the divinely-established laws have fallen, and the moon of true knowledge - the educator of mankind - hath been obscured; when the standards of guidance and felicity have been reversed, and the morn of truth and righteousness hath sunk in night, then shall the sign of the Son of man appear in heaven. By "heaven" is meant the visible heaven, inasmuch as when the hour draweth nigh on which the Day-star of the heaven of justice shall be made manifest, and the Ark of divine guidance shall sail upon the sea of glory, a star will appear in the heaven, heralding unto its people the advent of that most great light. In like manner, in the invisible heaven a star shall be made manifest who, unto the peoples of the earth, shall act as a harbinger of the break of that true and exalted Morn. These twofold signs, in the visible and the invisible heaven, have announced the Revelation of each of the Prophets of God, as is commonly believed. (KI, p 61-62) And now regarding His words, that the Son of man shall "come in the clouds of heaven." By the term "clouds" is meant those things that are contrary to the ways and desires of men. These "clouds" signify, in one sense, the annulment of laws, the abrogation of former Dispensations, the repeal of rituals and customs current amongst men, the exalting of the illiterate faithful above the learned opposers of the Faith. In another sense, they mean the appearance of that immortal Beauty in the image of mortal man, with such human limitations as eating and drinking, poverty and riches, glory and abasement, sleeping and waking, and such other things as cast doubt in the minds of men, and cause them to turn away. All such veils are symbolically referred to as "clouds." (KI, p 71-72)

8. “This is the Day, O My Lord, whereon every atom of the earth hath been made to vibrate and cry out: ‘O Thou Who art the Revealer of signs of the King of Creation! I verily perceive the fragrance of Thy presence’” (Prayers & Meditations, p 279)  
[Spiritually, every eye hath seen and felt the power of the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, the Spirit of the Age.]

# ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD

## Basis of Christian Belief:

**“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son** (John 3:16)  
[Christ is much greater than Bahá’u’lláh as Christ is the only begotten Son of God]

1. Bahá’u’lláh is the Return of Christ and therefore the Return of the Only Begotten Son.
2. Christ was pre-existent before birth from Mary’s womb: “Before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8:58) and so a part of Christ existed before the fetus in Mary’s womb.
3. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1-2)... “and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...as the only son from the Father.” (John 1:14) [Again, a part of Jesus the Christ existed before the physical body in Mary’s womb so Christ was unlike an only son who comes into being only at conception.]
4. “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24) ‘...that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’ (John 3:6) [Therefore, Christ’s sonship must be a spiritual sonship.]
5. “No man ascended to heaven but He that came down from heaven even the Son of Man which is in heaven.” (John 3:13, KJV) “...For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) [Christ says He was in heaven at the same time He is saying He is the Only Begotten Son of God with his feet firmly planted on the ground. Therefore He is an entity unlike a human begotten son as He is in two places at once.]
6. The Pharisees said that the Messiah must be the lineal son of King David to fulfill Old Testament prophecy “of the fruit of thy body” (Psalms 132:11) and if Jesus is not the literal son of Joseph, the prophecy is not literally fulfilled by Virgin Birth, since Mary is not of the lineage from King David.
7. Adam was also a “son of God” (Luke 3:38) and clearly was the first son and clearly also begotten of God, making Jesus as the “only begotten Son” a title other than literal. [Begotten means “sired” or it means “created.”] Melchizedek also “was without father or mother” and has no end of life (Heb 7:3).

# CHRIST SACRIFICED ONCE AND FOR ALL TIME

## Basis of Christian Belief:

**“We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all ... But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins ... For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified...”** (Heb 10:10-15) [The argument is that Christ’s sacrifice once and for all is enough to sanctify all people and therefore Bahá’u’lláh is not needed.]

1. However, Hebrews also says: “So Christ having offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time...” (Heb 9:28). [Therefore Bahá’u’lláh is the Return of the same Christ Whose sacrifice was perfect and for all time and Whose Return is eagerly awaited.]
2. Revelations (19:19-21) indicates the Return of Christ will be fought against in battle, persecuted and attacked, i.e., further sacrifice will be necessary.
3. The literal body of Christ did die only once and for the benefit of all, but the Spirit of Christ, which did not die, has returned in Bahá’u’lláh. Therefore, any Christian following Christ’s teachings for which the body of Christ was only sacrificed once to establish for the benefit of all will find the Spirit of Christ and the fulfillment of these teachings using Biblical proofs in the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh.

# SINLESSNESS ONLY APPLIES TO CHRIST

## Basis of Christian Belief:

**“For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens.”** (Heb 7:26)

1. “Noah was a righteous man and blameless in his generations; and Noah walked with God.” (Gen 6:9) “Job, and that man was blameless and upright...”(Job 1:1) Zechariah and Elizabeth, parents of John the Baptist: “And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.” (Luke 1:6) [Noah, Job, Zechariah and Elizabeth were also sinless and blameless.]
2. “Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God.”\* (Mark 10:18) [Since Christ denies that He is perfectly good, how does the Christian explain Christ is without sin?]
3. “And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus and sought to slay Him because He had done these things on the Sabbath” (John 5:16) [Christ broke the law by healing on the Sabbath as interpreted by men, but not by God’s interpretation of the law. Could the same argument not be applied to the life of Moses and all the other Manifestations who literally appear to have broken the laws of man or the law of the previous dispensation?]
4. “And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves.” (Matt 21:12) [Again Christ disrupted temple worship and services breaking the law as man interpreted the law but, of course, He did not break the spirit of God’s law. Shortly after these actions, Christ was seized as a criminal and executed for His “crimes.”]
5. **Summation:** Christ, like all Manifestations, broke the laws of man and past religious laws, but only in accord with the will of God. No Manifestation broke the Law of God which They have the power to reveal and establish though it be contrary to past religious law and the expectations of those seeking the Promised One. Sinlessness must be interpreted spiritually as being in accord with the Will of God. See **Christ is Greater than Moses** (p 89)

\*Note: “ How often the Prophets of God and His supreme Manifestations in Their prayers confess Their sins and faults! This is only to teach other men, to encourage and incite them to humility and meekness, and to induce them to confess their sins and faults. For these Holy Souls are pure from every sin and sanctified from faults. In the Gospel it is said that a man came to Christ and called Him "Good Master." Christ answered, "Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but One, that is, God." This did not mean - God forbid! - that Christ was a sinner; but the intention was to teach submission, humility, meekness and modesty to the man to whom He spoke.” (SAQ, p 170)

# BAPTISM

## Basis of Christian Belief:

**“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”** (Mark 16:16)

1. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:16) [The rest of the verse makes it clear the penalty is for not believing, but no penalty is given for not having physical baptism with water. This is an excellent example of why an entire verse in context must be read to have a full understanding of the meaning which can be distorted easily in partial quotations. By believing in Jesus, Bahá’ís are saved without a water baptism: “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31)]
2. “John answered ... I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh; ... He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Luke 3:16) [After John the Baptist, all baptism should be with fire and the Holy Ghost, so it can’t be a literal baptism.]
3. “Peter and John who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for it had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 8:14-16) [Therefore, baptism does not automatically bestow the Holy Spirit or true faith but is a physical gesture or symbol.]
4. “Then Peter declared, ‘Can any one forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’” (Acts 10:47) [Again, baptizing with water is an independent event of receiving the Holy Spirit and faith and in this case occurred after receiving faith. Therefore, literal baptism is not necessary to achieve faith.]
5. “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 11:15-16) [Here Peter quotes Christ and gives a case where baptism occurs only with the Holy Spirit and water baptism is no longer necessary for having faith.]
6. “If the dead will not come back to life again then what point is there in people being baptized for those who are gone? Why do it unless you believe that the dead will someday rise again?” (1 Cor 15:29) [Clearly baptizing by proxy for dead people demonstrates the symbolic nature of baptism.]

## **BAPTISM (continued)**

7. “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 Cor 12:13) [The Spirit does real baptism and “baptized” is clearly used symbolically.]
8. “When you came to Christ, He set you free from your evil desires, not by a bodily operation of circumcision but a spiritual operation, the baptism of your souls.” (Col 2:11, TLB) [Baptism is a “spiritual operation.”]
9. “Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43) [Jesus speaks these words to the criminal crucified at the same time as Jesus when this man accepts Jesus as his Lord. Therefore, this criminal was saved without water baptism.]
10. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Man cannot free himself from the rage of the carnal passions except by the help of the Holy Spirit. That is why He says baptism with the spirit, with water and with fire is necessary, and that it is essential - that is to say, the spirit of divine bounty, the water of knowledge and life, and the fire of the love of God. Man must be baptized with this spirit, this water and this fire so as to become filled with the eternal bounty. Otherwise, what is the use of baptizing with material water? No, this baptism with water was a symbol of repentance, and of seeking forgiveness of sins. But in the cycle of Baha'u'llah there is no longer need of this symbol; for its reality, which is to be baptized with the spirit and love of God, is understood and established.” (SAQ, p 92)

# THE RAPTURE

## Basis of Christian Belief:

**“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”** (1 Thess 4:16-17) [Some Christians believe that if Christ had returned they would no longer be on earth but along with these Christians who died believing in Christ at their death they would all be lifted into heaven together to meet the physical body of Jesus in the clouds.]

1. See **Every Eye Shall See Him** (p 47) discussion of (Matt 24:29-31) that outlines stars falling on earth before Christ returns which would incinerate humankind making Rapture impossible: “The stars fall from heaven ... then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds.”
2. Revelations, Chapters 20 & 21 details an entirely different set of events than “the Rapture” with a First Resurrection of beheaded Christian martyrs and later a Second Resurrection of all other Christians and the remaining dead on earth 1,000 years later.
3. Also see **One Mediator Between God and Men** (p 46) quotes which establish another physical being than Jesus will be sent as Christ’s Return with a “new name”: Spirit of Truth, the Helper, the Comforter, etc. This did not happen at Pentecost as Christians would know all truth which they do not as there are 23,000 sects and they openly state that the “Trinity” is a mystery to them, and Paul states after Pentecost that “Now I know in part...” (1 Cor 13:12)
4. Christ will return as a “Thief in the night...” (1 Thess 5:24) (2 Peter 3:10) (Matt 24:42-44) (Rev 3:3; 6:15). [When do you know a thief has come?]

**Note: Quotes 1 through 4 detail four different accounts that are literally mutually exclusive of the events that will surround the actual appearance of the Return of Christ. Therefore, the interpretation must be spiritual.**

5. “Therefore you must also be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” (Matt 24:44) [ The hour that would be least expected is in the past]
6. “Watch ye therefore and pray always that ye may (emphasis added) be accounted worthy to escape all things that shall come to pass and stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:36) [Christ indicates Christians may recognize His Return, but it is not an automatic event.]

# ORIGINAL SIN UNSUPPORTED IN THE BIBLE

## Basis of Christian Belief:

**“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”** (1 Cor 15:22)  
[Many Christians believe all people have inherited the sin of Adam and Eve, the “Original Sin,” and only those who believe in Christ are forgiven of this inherited sin.]

1. “But if this man begets a son who sees all the sins which his father has done, and fears, and does not do likewise ... he shall not die for his father’s iniquity, he shall surely live.” (Eze 18:14-17) [The son will not be judged or die for the sins of his father and sin is not inherited.]
2. “Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father? When the son has done what is lawful and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live. The soul that sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.” (Eze 18:19-20)
3. “The righteous judgment of God Who will render to every man according to his deeds.” (Rom 2:5-6) ... “All were judged by what they had done” (Rev 20:13) [i.e., at the last judgment, all men, whether they lived before Christ or after, would not be judged in context of original sin but by their deeds. As otherwise, those men who lived before Christ would have no hope of salvation under the doctrine of original sin.]
4. Many people have argued for a doctrine of “original sin” i.e., sin that is “born into” persons as human beings. There is no passage in the Bible that directly teaches such a doctrine...Paul related the sinful condition of the human race to the original transgression of Adam, insisting at the same time, however, that the result of sin (death) “spread to all people” not simply because of Adam’s sin but “because all people sinned.” (Rom 5:12) (Harpers Bible Dictionary, p 955)
5. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Cor 15:22) ... “Adam is the cause of man's physical life; but the Reality of Christ - that is to say, the Word of God - is the cause of spiritual life....” (SAQ, p 119-120) “But the mass of the Christians believe that, as Adam ate of the forbidden tree, He sinned in that He disobeyed, and that the disastrous consequences of this disobedience have been transmitted as a heritage and have remained among His descendants. Hence Adam became the cause of the death of humanity. This explanation is unreasonable and evidently wrong, for it means that all men, even the Prophets and the Messengers of God ... have become without reason guilty sinners.” (SAQ, p 120)

## MIRACLE IS NOT THE BEST PROOF

1. If someone comes into the room and says “ $1 + 1 = 3$ ” and then disappears in a puff of smoke, would you then believe  $1 + 1 = 3$ ? A miracle is not a proof that every thing one says is true; and a miracle worker is not necessarily a Messiah.
2. False prophets can show miracles too: “...false prophets will arise and show great signs so as to deceive...” (Matt 24:24) [Of course Bahá'u'lláh discourages the mentioning of His miracles as a proof of His Revelation.]
3. “To one is given through the Spirit, the utterance of wisdom ... to another the working of miracles.” (1 Cor 12:8-10) [Many have been given the power to do miracles and therefore these are not a proof of being a Messiah.]
4. “But when the Pharisees heard it they said, ‘It is only Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.’” (Matt 12:24) [Pharisees argued that miracles could be performed by Satan and evil powers and miracles as proof could therefore deceive and mislead.]
5. “But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him; it was that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled...” (John 12:37-38) [Isaiah had prophesied that a miracle would not be sufficient proof.]
6. “...and (the devil) said to Him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down’ (from the top of the temple) ... and Jesus said to him, ‘Again it is written, ‘you shall not tempt the Lord your God.’” (Matt 4:1-7) [The devil asked Jesus to do a miracle to prove His mission and Jesus said to ask for proof of a miracle is wrong. Therefore to ask for a miracle as proof is following the devil’s example.]
7. “The Pharisees came and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven to test Him. And He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, ‘Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.’” (Mark 8:11-12) [Here, Jesus refuses to produce miracle as a proof when Pharisees say this is the proof they seek for belief. Therefore they sought the wrong proof in asking for miracles.]
8. “Verily, verily I say unto you, ye shall seek Me, not because ye saw miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you ... So they said to Him, ‘What sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness’ ...Truly, truly I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the true

bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world ...Jesus said to them 'I am the bread of life.'" (John 6:26-35) [Jesus says to believe not because of miracles but because His teaching gives spiritual food and life to the world.]

9. "For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor 1:22-24) [Here Paul says the Jews seek a miracle for proof but Paul points out it is Christ's teachings and His pure sacrifice that are the greater proofs and show the power and wisdom of God.]
10. Which religion has the greatest miracles would become the test for which religion to follow if miracle-working was the greatest proof. The Jews were looking for the promised Messiah to perform the "great miracle" of the literal salvation of the Jewish people as Moses had done by splitting the Red Sea, thereby saving the Jews from Pharaoh's army, and the Jews felt a physical resurrection of one person, by and for Jesus was not the "greater miracle" they were looking for and had already been done by others before Jesus. For example, Ezekiel resurrects many bodies (Eze 37:10). By testing God and demanding Jesus perform to their standard of miracle working, the Jews missed the Messiah.

11. **Summation:**

**Therefore, faith in Christ should not be based on miracles as stated by Christ and Paul. Even the physical Resurrection, whatever rank in comparative miracle working, would not establish that Jesus was the Christ.**

12. **Bahá'í Position on Miracles as Proof by 'Abdu'l-Bahá:**

"The meaning is not that the Manifestations are unable to perform miracles, for They have all power. But for Them inner sight, spiritual healing and eternal life are the valuable and important things." (SAQ, p 102)

“... if we relate to a seeker, a stranger to Moses and Christ, marvelous signs, he will deny them and will say: "Wonderful signs are also continually related of false gods by the testimony of many people, and they are affirmed in the Books. The Brahmans have written a book about wonderful prodigies from Brahma." He will also say: How can we know that the Jews and the Christians speak the truth, and that the Brahmans tell a lie? ... The same may be said of other religions: if one is true, all are true; if one is accepted, all must be accepted. Therefore, miracles are not a proof...For if they are proofs for those who are present, they fail as a proof to those who are absent.” (SAQ, p 100-101)

“For if they are proofs for those who are present, they fail as proofs to those who are absent.” (SAQ, p 101)

“...many wonderful things were done by Báha'u'lláh, but we do not recount them, as they do not constitute proofs and evidences for all the peoples of the earth, and they are not decisive proofs even for those who see them: they may think that they are merely enchantments.” (SAQ, p 37)

“Recollect that Christ, solitary and alone, without a helper or protector, without armies and legions, and under the greatest oppression, uplifted the standard of God before all the people of the world, and withstood them, and finally conquered all, although outwardly He was crucified. Now this is a veritable miracle which can never be denied. There is no need of any other proof of the truth of Christ. The outward miracles have no importance for the people of Reality. If a blind man receives sight, for example, he will finally again become sightless, for he will die and be deprived of all his senses and powers...But for Them (the Manifestations) inner sight, spiritual hearing and eternal life are the valuable and important things....As this inner sight, hearing, life and healing are eternal...”

(SAQ, p 101-102) [Therefore, “outward miracles” as physical miracles are not irrefutable proofs of being a Manifestation according to both the Bible and Bahá’í Scripture. The triumph of the Manifestation against all worldly opposition in establishing the Word of God which brings “inner sight, spiritual healing and eternal life” is “absolute proof” (see p. 69).]

# THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

## Basis of Christian Belief:

**Many Christians believe that after Christ died and was buried, His physical body rose on the third day and appeared to many of His followers, and entered heaven after forty days. The same physical body they believe will return to earth.**

1. Paul speaks of the spiritual nature of the Resurrection: “So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body ...I tell you this brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.” (1 Cor 15:42-44, 50, RSV)
2. Christ distinguishes and separates spiritual identity from flesh identity: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit...” (John 3:6) ... “God is a spirit” (John 4:24) [The essence of Christ is the Spirit and is born from God; and flesh is not the same essence.]
3. Christ refers to the Resurrection as spiritual: “I am the resurrection and the life...” (John 11:25) [Christ says He is the “Resurrection” before He dies and therefore “resurrection” is clearly symbolic usage.]
4. Christ says His physical body is of no avail compared to the “body” of His teachings: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him ... This is the bread which came down from heaven ... he who eats this bread will live forever ... Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending where He was before? It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” (John 6:56-63)
5. Symbolic nature of saying “ascended to heaven”: “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is the Son of Man who is in heaven.” (John 3:13, NKJV) “...For I came down from heaven.” (John 6:38) “They (the Jews) said, ‘Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” (John 6:42, RSV) [It is clear that being “in heaven,” “ascended to heaven,” and “come from heaven” all have spiritual meanings. What does it mean when Christ states, while His feet are walking on the earth, that He is already in heaven?]

6. The Kitab-i-Iqán explains spiritual meaning of “residing in heaven”: “These ancient Beings, though delivered from the womb of their mothers, have in reality descended from the heaven of the will of God. Though they be dwelling on this earth, yet their true habitations are the retreats of glory in the realms above. Whilst walking amongst mortals, they soar in the heaven of the divine presence.”  
(KI, p 67)
7. Resurrection appearances may not have been the physical body of Christ: Paul lists Resurrection appearances (1 Cor 15:5-8) and includes himself. Yet Paul only saw a bright light long after the Crucifixion. Therefore, appearances may have been very spiritual experiences such as Paul describes for his own.
8. After this Jesus revealed Himself to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias “... Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.” (John 21:1, 4, RSV) [Resurrected body was not the physical body that the disciples knew well and would recognize.]
9. “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” (1 Cor 12:27, RSV) “...and He (Christ) is the head of the body, the church...” (Col 1:18, RSV) “...Saul, Saul why do you persecute Me?” (Acts 9:4) [Body of Christ is symbolic for community of believers which Paul was persecuting before he believed.]
10. “God alone has immortality.” (1 Tim 1:16) “...God is a Spirit...” (John 4:24) [Physical body of Christ would therefore not be immortal if God alone is immortal and only the Spirit has immortality.]
11. “Who in the days of His flesh...” (Heb 5:7) [Days of flesh are spoke of in past tense meaning Christ no longer in the flesh.]
12. “Today thou shalt be with Me in paradise...” (Luke 23:43) [Christ says this to one of the men crucified at the same time with Him. Therefore, were both resurrected and did they both go to heaven that same first day of crucifixion?]
13. Resurrection was not unique to Christ and is not the single fact that makes Jesus the Christ:
  - A. “The tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of their tombs after His resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared unto many....” (Matt 27: 52-53) [Many non-Christians were resurrected along with Jesus.]

- B. Isaiah, Elijah, Ezekiel, Melchizedek, and Enoch all ascended bodily into heaven (and apocryphal scriptures say Moses did as well.)

(Wine of Astonishment, p 160)

- C. The Bible describes Ezekiel resurrecting many dead bones and therefore having power over death also. (Eze 37:7-10)

14. Paul says as Jesus was raised so will believers also be raised: “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection” (Rom 6:5) [The bodies of the believers to be resurrected are clearly not their physical bodies which no longer exist, so Christ’s body must be unlike any physical body we know anything about.]
15. “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Matt 12:40) [But Jesus died on Good Friday and rose on Easter Sunday (Luke 23:54, 24:2) making a literal interpretation of three nights impossible, emphasizing a spiritual interpretation.]
16. The “Doubting Thomas Argument” used by Christians says disciple Thomas thrust his hand into the wounds of Christ so that he might believe the physical body of Christ was resurrected. However, the Bible quote does not say Thomas actually touched Jesus: “Then He said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing.’ Thomas answered Him ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.’” (John 20:27-29) [Jesus says Thomas saw Him and not that Thomas touched Him. This quote could be interpreted that Thomas finally understood the wounds of Jesus as His willingness to sacrifice and a proof of His station and not a weakness. Christ then states blessed are those who never doubted His station to begin with. Furthermore, the physical body of Jesus suddenly materialized in a locked room.]
17. “Look at My hands and My feet. It is I Myself! Touch Me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have. When He said this, He showed them His hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement...”(Luke 24:39-41, NIV) [Again, the Bible does not say the disciples ever handled Jesus; He suddenly appears in their midst unlike the capability of a physical body; states He is not a ghost but that His body (i.e., His teachings or church) has reality. Still the disciples don’t believe until He explains the Scriptures and eats a fish, the symbol for Jesus as Messiah. Ultimately then, the Resurrected body was unlike a normal physical body in behavior and the disciples only recognized Jesus as the Messiah after they understood His explanation of the Scriptures and His claim to be the Messiah. Therefore, the appearance of the “body of Christ” itself did not cause belief but only the understanding of what that unphysical body that was not an apparition explained of the scriptures led to the recognition that Jesus was the Messiah by the disciples.]

18. See also **Miracle is Not the Best Proof** (p 58) references—for if the Resurrection is treated as a miracle it is not the best proof.
19. “...the disciples were troubled and agitated after the martyrdom of Christ. The Reality of Christ, which signifies His teachings, His bounties, His perfections and His spiritual power, was hidden and concealed for two or three days after His martyrdom, and was not resplendent and manifest. No, rather it was lost, for the believers were few in number and were troubled and agitated. The Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body; and when after three days the disciples became assured and steadfast, and began to serve the Cause of Christ, and resolved to spread the divine teachings, putting His counsels into practice, and arising to serve Him, the Reality of Christ became resplendent and His bounty appeared; His religion found life; His teachings and His admonitions became evident and visible. In other words, the Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body until the life and the bounty of the Holy Spirit surrounded it.” (SAQ, p 104)
20. “Attainment unto such presence is possible only in the Day of Resurrection, which is the Day of the rise of God Himself through His all-embracing Revelation. This is the meaning of the "Day of Resurrection," spoken of in all the scriptures...” (KI, p 143) [Recognition of the reality of God’s Revelation and His Manifestation is the true Resurrection which the disciples only fully recognized after Jesus’ death.]
21. “Resurrection is to be distinguished from resuscitation or reanimation of the physical body. It denotes a complete transformation of the human being (1 Cor 15:53-55). From (1 Cor 15:3-8) we learn that faith in the resurrection was based not on the empty tomb, which Paul does not mention, but on the appearances of the Lord. The word used for “appeared” is the same Greek word used elsewhere for “visionary experiences” (emphasis added). We may today characterize these experiences as revelatory disclosures from the transcendent realm. No distinction was drawn between the resurrection and ascension. The appearances are manifestations of the resurrected and already ascended Christ from heaven.” (Harpers Bible Dictionary, p 864, 1985)

**Dialogue Box:**

**Bahá'í:**

How does the Physical Resurrection of Jesus help you believe He was the Christ?

**Christian:**

(will often answer: This showed He conquered death or that He has the power to raise me at the second coming, etc.)

**Bahá'í:**

I believe in the Bible and in Jesus the Christ, and I know believers often interpret the Bible differently. I believe Jesus does have power over death (or does have the power to raise the dead, etc.) and this faith is what is important to both of us, whether or not we agree on a physical resurrection.

**Christian:**

But Bahá'u'lláh died and was buried and Christ still lives. This shows He was “better” than all the other prophets and Bahá'u'lláh.

**Bahá'í:**

The proofs of Bahá'u'lláh are the same as the proofs of Christ and the objections to Bahá'u'lláh are the same as the Jew's objections to Christ. Many Jews felt Moses' literal salvation of the Jews by parting the Red Sea was a greater miracle than the Physical Resurrection of Jesus. They denied Jesus because they were expecting the miracle of another literal salvation of the Jewish people rather than one person resurrecting only himself when the Bible had many examples of people being raised to heaven. Therefore, the believers should not reject the Messiah because He does not perform a miracle they want or expect, as the Jews did to Christ. What are the reasons you believe in Jesus and let's apply these proofs to Bahá'u'lláh.

## **CHRISTIANS MUST INVESTIGATE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

1. Christians must test the spirits to see if they are God's teachings: "But test the spirits to see whether they are of God..." (1 John 4:1) [Therefore a Christian is commanded to test the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.]
  - A. Jesus gives the test instructions to see whether spirits are of God: "My teaching is not mine, but His who sent me; if any man's will is to do His will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking from my own authority. He who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but he who seeks the glory of Him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood." (John 7:16-18) [Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings and life clearly show He did not seek His own glory but only God's glory as among other things Bahá'u'lláh gave up all His earthly wealth and position of power to serve God.]
  - B. Also, Christ says: "By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God." (1 John 4:2-3) [Bahá'u'lláh refers to Jesus as the Christ (G1, p 57), as quoted on p 68.]
2. "Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesying. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (1 Thess 5:19-21) [Christians are instructed to "prove all things" so as not to quench the spirit or miss the fulfillment of prophecy.]
3. "Watch at all times, praying that you may ... stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:36) [The word "may" implies that Christians must prayerfully consider the claim of Bahá'u'lláh and that recognition of the "Return" is not automatic.]
4. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the kingdom, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt 7:21) [Therefore, if Christians are not watching at all times, testing the spirits, proving all things, then they are not doing the will of the Father and are in jeopardy of not entering the kingdom.]

# BIBLICAL PROOFS FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AS THE RETURN OF CHRIST

## Six Points for a Brief Response:

1. Your Personal Testimony of the “Fruits of the Spirit”: Recognizing Bahá'u'lláh as Christ's Return has recreated your spiritual and personal life, brought you a closer and deeper relationship with the Spirit of Christ and has done so for over six (6) million Bahá'ís who are a cross-section of humanity. [Emphasize a renewed and closer relationship with the Holy Spirit and Christ in your life and Bahá'u'lláh's promise of the same for those who practice His Teachings. Personal testimony is a powerful proof but especially for Christians.] [see (V:B) below]
  2. The Proofs of Bahá'u'lláh are the same as those of Jesus, and the objections to Bahá'u'lláh are the same as those raised against Jesus. [See **Objections of Christians to Bahá'u'lláh are the Same as Those to Christ**, p 33]
  3. Bahá'u'lláh fulfills the prophecies of both the Old and New Testaments. [see (II) below].
  4. Bahá'u'lláh gave up a life of wealth and social prestige to lead a sinless life of suffering and self-sacrifice to proclaim His teachings. His life demonstrates the “fruits of the spirit.” [i.e., emphasize the suffering of Bahá'u'lláh] [See (IV) and (V:A) below]
  5. Bahá'u'lláh, in clear and unmistakable terms, claims to be the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, the Counselor that Christ promised the Father would send in His place [see (I) below] and can be shown to be so by Biblical criteria.
  6. Bahá'u'lláh calls upon all humanity to accept Jesus and the truth of His message as Christ prophecies His Return would do. Bahá'u'lláh has brought Buddhists, Hindus and Jews to accept Jesus who, normally, rarely do so. [see (I:A) and (I:B) below]
- I. Biblical Criteria for Bahá'u'lláh as the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, the Counselor (John 14:16, 15:26, 16:7-15) are fulfilled as follows, A through G:
- A. **Testify of Christ and glorify His station** (John 15:26, 16:14)
    1. “Say, this is the One Who glorified the Son and hath exalted His Cause.” (TB, p 12)
    2. “Say, verily, He hath testified of me, and I do testify of Him.” (TB, p 11)

## **BIBLICAL PROOFS FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AS THE RETURN OF CHRIST (continued)**

- B. Teach and declare the message of Christ and bring all things to the remembrance of the Christians...** (John 14:26, 16:15)
1. "Say this is the One Who glorified the Son and hath exalted His Cause." (TB, p 12)
  2. "Our belief in regard to Christ is exactly what is recorded in the New Testament." (On Divine Phil., p 117)
  3. "The essence of religion is to testify unto that which the Lord hath revealed, and follow that which He hath ordained in His mighty Book." (TB, p 155)
- C. Guide the Christians into all truth** (John 16:13)
- "...the Comforter whose advent all scriptures have promised is now come that He may reveal unto you all knowledge and wisdom." (WOB, p 104)
- D. Tell the Christians of things yet to come.** (John 16:13)
- [See prophecies of Bahá'u'lláh, p 71]
- E. Speak only by the authority of God** (John 16:13)
- "Verily, He Who is the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth. He speaketh not as prompted by His own self, but as bidden by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise." (TB, p 12)
- F. Be sent from the Father** (John 14:26, 15:26)
- "Not of My Own volition have I revealed Myself, but God of His Own Choosing, hath manifested Me." (ESW, p 11)
- G. Convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment** (John 16:8-11)
1. "So great is the folly and perversity of the people, that they have turned their faces toward their own thoughts and desires, and have turned their back upon the knowledge and will of God." (KI, p 171)

## **BIBLICAL PROOFS FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AS THE RETURN OF CHRIST (continued)**

2. “Though immersed in the ocean of misbelief, yet with your lips ye profess the one true faith of God. Him whom I abhor ye have loved, and of My foe ye made a friend. Not withstanding, ye walk on My earth complacent and self-satisfied, heedless that My earth is weary of you and everything within it shunneth you.” (HW, Persian #20)
3. “Such has been the perversity of men and their transgressions, so grievous hath been the trials that have afflicted the Prophets of God, and their Chosen ones, that all mankind deserveth to be tormented and to perish.” (Gl, p 76)

### **II. Some Prophecies referring to the Second Coming Fulfilled by Bahá'u'lláh:**

- A. **Place of His Coming:** Carmel and the Plain of Sharon shall see Him. (Isaiah 35:1-2)
- B. **Where He Comes From:** From Assyria and the fortified cities... (Micah 7:11) ... from the way of the East (Eze 43:2)
- C. **How He Would Come:** As a thief in the night (2 Peter 3:10) and unexpectedly (Matt 24:36)
- D. **Come With a New Name:** (Isa 62:2) and (Rev 2:17) and His New Name is “Glory of the Lord” (Bahá'u'lláh) (Isa 35:1-2)
- E. **Time of His Coming:** Prophecy of Daniel as explained in (SAQ, 41-44) to be 1844.
- F. **Accompanying Events (less specific):** Gospel preached throughout the world (Matt 24:14); Wars and rumor of wars...(Mk 13:7-10); terrible troubles (Dan 12:1)
- G. **Prophecy (general):** Thief in the Night and The Wine of Astonishment, both by William Sears.

### **III. Bible Gives Test as to Who is of God:**

- A. “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God.” (1 John 4:1-3)

## **BIBLICAL PROOFS FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AS THE RETURN OF CHRIST (continued)**

- B.** “Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor 12:3) [Bahá'u'lláh speaks by the Spirit of God as He repeatedly praises Christ as the “Spirit of God” Who has come in the flesh. (e.g., “Reflect how Jesus, the Spirit of God, was, notwithstanding His extreme meekness ... treated by His enemies ... Lord of the visible and invisible ... He had nowhere to lay His head.” (Gl, p57)

### **IV. Proof that Bahá'u'lláh's teaching is from God as He seeks only God's Glory:**

“My doctrine is not my own but His Who sent me. If any man's will is to do His will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God or whether I speak on My Own authority. He who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but he who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him is true. (John 7:16-18)

- A.** “Verily, He Who is the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth. He speaketh not as prompted by His Own Self, but as bidden by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.” (TB, p 12) ... “Not of My Own volition have I revealed myself but God, of His Own choosing hath manifested Me.” (ESW, p 11) ... “...the fact that abasement in the path of God is my true glory...” (ESW, p 125) ... “The glory of all greatness belongeth to God, the Incomparable, the All-Compelling.” (Gl, p 35)

- B.** Bahá'u'lláh gave up a life of great wealth in the noble class of Persia to declare His Teaching and led a sinless, self-sacrificing life of torture, banishment, imprisonment, and poisonings as well as abject poverty for His family.

1. Bahá'u'lláh's Will specified: “Earthly treasures We have not bequeathed, nor have We added such cares as they entail.” (TB, p 219) as He had nothing to distribute to His heirs in worldly goods.
2. “We, verily, have come for your sakes, and have borne the misfortunes of the world for your salvation.” (TB, p 10)

## BIBLICAL PROOFS FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AS THE RETURN OF CHRIST (continued)

### V. Proof of the Fruits of the Spirit demonstrated in the Life of Bahá'u'lláh and created in His followers by His Words and Teachings:

“You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? So every sound tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit. A sound tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits.” (Matt 7:15-20) ...” The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control” (Gal 5:22) [Only a good prophet can bestow the “fruit of the spirit” and a bad prophet can only bestow evil fruit according to Jesus.]

- A. The sinless, self-sacrificing life of suffering of Bahá'u'lláh has been referred to above in (IV). “Bahá'u'lláh Who, during His life, bore innumerable trials and persecutions in order to show forth to the world of mankind the virtues of the world of divinity, making it possible for you to realize the supremacy of the spirit...” (PT, p 160)
- B. “The proof of the validity of a Manifestation of God is the penetration and potency of His Word, the cultivation of heavenly attributes in the hearts and lives of His followers and the bestowal of divine education upon the world of humanity. This is absolute proof.” (PUP, p 341) [The Bahá'í Writings therefore uphold and support the words of Jesus as to the proof of the fruits of the spirit as “absolute proof”. It is therefore powerfully effective for the Bahá'í teacher to give personal testimony as proof of “the fruits of the spirit”, “the heavenly attributes”, bestowed by “His Word”, Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, in his or her Bahá'í life:]
  - 1. “The Word of God brings Faith” (Rom 10:17) “Rebirth” (1 Peter 1:23) and “Everlasting Life” (John 5:24) and, as a Bahá'í (personal testimony by you), “the Words of Bahá'u'lláh have brought me Faith, Rebirth, Everlasting Life, and the Fruits of the Spirit” (Fruits of the Spirit are underlined below):
    - a. “...a deeper and closer faith and love in Christ through recognizing His Return (i.e., deeper faith and love)...”
    - b. “...the joy of the spirit in my deeper faith and love....”
    - c. “...peace in the knowledge of my salvation and deeper faith and love of the Lord....”

## **BIBLICAL PROOFS FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AS THE RETURN OF CHRIST (continued)**

- d. “...patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are continuing to come to me through the spiritual rebirth the Words of Bahá'u'lláh have inspired in me. [Therefore, the proof of the fruit of the spirit is in my life.]
2. There are over six (6) million Bahá'ís from every religious background who have come to know Christ or know Him more completely through recognizing His Return ... many from religions that rarely come to know Christ (Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism) ... and who have received the “Fruits of the Spirit” through a spiritual rebirth.
3. The surest test of Bahá'u'lláh from both the Bible and the Bahá'í Writings is for the Christian to examine the life of Bahá'u'lláh for the creation of the Fruits of the Spirit in the lives of His followers and then apply these teachings to their own life through faith. “This is absolute proof” according to ‘Abdu'l-Bahá (PT, p 160).
4. “One thing and only one thing will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred cause, namely the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendor of these eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh.” (Bahá'í Administration, p 66) [Shoghi Effendi confirms it is the “Fruits of the Spirit,” the “eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh,” demonstrated in the Bahá'í Community as the acquisition of spiritual attributes that “will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred Cause” and are “absolute proof” according to ‘Abdu'l-Bahá. (PT. p 160)

## **SOME PROPHECIES GIVEN BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH THAT HAVE BEEN FULFILLED**

“We have laid bare the divine mysteries and in most explicit language foretold future events, that neither the doubts of the faithless, nor the denials of the froward, nor the whisperings of the heedless may keep back the seekers after truth from the source of the light of the One True God.” (TB, p 241) “Though the prophecies He, in an unmistakable language, hath made have been fulfilled.” (GI, p 58) [Bahá'u'lláh states He has made fulfillment of His explicit prophecies as one of His proofs.]

1. “There will be no successful attempt to create sects in the Bahá'í Faith.” (GPB, p 99)
2. World War I and World War II as the destruction of the German Empire in two wars on German soil. (PDC, p 30)
3. The fall of Napoleon III and the loss of his empire. (PDC, p 30)
4. The fall and destruction of the Ottoman Empire. (PDC, pp 61-62)
5. The fall and destruction of the Moslem Caliphate. (GPB, p 231)
6. The fall and destruction of the Persian Qajar Dynasty. (PDC, pp 68-70)

**These are only some of the fulfilled prophecies of Bahá'u'lláh and focus on the warnings given to some of the most powerful empires of His day that refused to acknowledge His written summons and were destroyed by their lack of response to Him as He prophesied they would be.**

## **BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S NAME MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE**

- 1.** “For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels...”  
(Matt 16:27) [Bahá'u'lláh means “Glory of the Father.”]
- 2.** “The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.” (Isa 35:2) [Carmel is the mountain where Bahá'u'lláh walked with 'Abdu'l-Bahá to direct where the Shrine of the Báb was to be built and the Plain of Sharon lies at the foot of Mt Carmel.]
- 3.** “And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east.”  
(Eze 43:1) [Bahá'u'lláh arrived in Israel banished from the east and not of His own choosing.]
- 4.** “Glory of the Lord” appears 37 times in the Old Testament and three times in the New Testament.

## A “Formula”(\*) for Presenting Bahá’u’lláh

1. **“Why do you believe in Jesus?” is a good opening to teaching.**  
“These are the same reasons that I believe in Jesus and it is for these same reasons I believe that Bahá’u’lláh is the Return of Christ.” [Nothing of the Bahá’í teachings may be taken seriously or will make sense without the point that Bahá’u’lláh is the Return of Christ.]
2. **First Establish Points of Agreement:** “Bahá’ís believe in the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ and the Bible as the Word of God.” [Consider also emphasizing Bahá’ís share the same basic teachings of Christ.]
3. **Then present the Proofs of Bahá’u’lláh as the same as those that have caused the Christian to believe in Christ:**
  - A. **Your Personal Testimony:** The changes and fruits of the Spirit Bahá’u’lláh’s Teachings have brought to you are a spiritual recreation of your life, and your belief in Bahá’u’lláh has brought you to a greater understanding and love for Jesus Christ and the Bible.
  - B. Offer to present Biblical Proofs that Bahá’u’lláh is the Return of Christ (p 65)
4. **Anticipate and remove FEAR!!! of Christians (regarding false prophet, the Anti-Christ, the devil and the Beast). (p 36-41)**
5. **Anticipate and answer common questions by referring to the Bible itself and pointing out where appropriate: “Your objections are the same objections the Jews raised against Christ. Let us use the same lessons of interpreting the Bible that Christ and the Apostles used to prove to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.”**
  - A. See **Objections of Christian to Bahá’u’lláh Same as Jews to Christ**, p 33, for the common list of objections.
  - B. Point out that knowing the Bible verse is not enough as the Jews knew “every jot and tittle” of the scripture but missed the meaning and so missed the Christ. Offer to give interpretation of the Bible according to the principles in the Kitáb-i-Iqán (see paradigm for answering questions, p 31).
6. Present instructions of the Bible that Christians are obligated to investigate the claims of Bahá’u’lláh. (See **Christians Must Investigate Bahá’u’lláh**, p 64)
7. Leave some of the Creative Word in the hand of the Christian as it has a mystical power and always leave as a friend and fellow believer in Christ and the Bible.
8. Pray that this soul may overcome their barriers and recognize their Lord has returned.

(\*) **My best thinking only ... you can do better!**

## **PROOFS OF THE MANIFESTATION FROM THE KITÁB-I-IQÁN**

1. **He is opposed by the people** (p 12)  
⇒ Motives of those who oppose are a proof.
2. **Always foretells the coming of Another after Him.** (p 13)
3. **Gives signs that would herald Another after Him.** (p 13)
4. **Oppression envelopes the whole world.** (p 31-32)  
⇒ i.e., iniquity shall cover the earth and the seeker will not know where to see the knowledge of God.
5. **He will re-establish and re-emphasize the Law of Prayer.** (p 39)
6. **He will be fearless and steadfast in the face of persecution and rejection.** (p 45)
7. **He will be uneducated in the schools of the time.** (p 46)
8. **A star appears in the visible heaven and a star also appears in the invisible heaven.** (e.g., John the Baptist, Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim)
9. **He will produce a book of Divine Scripture.** (p 91, 205) “... In Mine hand I carry the testimony of God, your Lord and the Lord of your sires of old. Weight it with the just balance that ye possess, the Balance of the testimony of the Prophets and Messengers of God.” (G1, p 281)
10. **His own Self; the fruits of the Spirit.** (p 75)
11. **Small group of holy disciples of high character recognize first and are scorned by learned and wealthy and testify through their acts their Faith.** (pp 221-226)
12. **Transforming effect of His Words and Teachings on His followers.** (pp 221-226)
13. **All have been subjected to heinous cruelties for Their Teachings.** (p 6)
14. **All have suffered through the authority of religious leaders of the time.** (p 15)
15. **All subjected to poverty and afflictions, hunger, ills and chances of this world.** (p 73)
16. **Each possesses all attributes of God and sovereignty over all things.** (p 107)

## Some Helpful Points in Teaching Christians

- Key 1: The attitude and spirit of a Bahá'í teacher is the single most important and effective tool.
- Key 2: Avoid argument and establish points of agreement.
- A. Bahá'ís believe in Christ and the Bible;
  - B. Bahá'ís and Christians have similar beliefs/doctrines;
  - C. Bahá'ís are eager to turn to the Bible to resolve apparent differences of understanding: “As a Bahá'í, I believe in the Biblical explanation of (fill in the blank). Let us turn to the Bible and see what the Scripture says.”
- Key 3: Teach Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ, as nothing makes sense to Christians without this point.
- A. Ask for reasons Christian believes in Christ and then state that these are the same reasons that you believe in Christ and Bahá'u'lláh, and invite the Christian to test the proofs of Bahá'u'lláh using the Bible.
  - B. Point out that the objections they have to Bahá'u'lláh are no more Biblical than those of the Jews to Christ.
- Key 4: Interpret the Bible, often symbolically, to establish:
- A. Bahá'u'lláh is not a false prophet, the Anti-Christ or the Devil.
  - B. Scriptural proofs Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ.
  - C. Objections to Bahá'u'lláh are no more Biblical than those of the Jews for Christ.
  - D. Christians are obligated to investigate Bahá'u'lláh.
  - E. Explanation of Christian doctrines based on literal interpretations.
- Key 5: Treat Christians as Spiritual Brothers and Sisters who need to have their barriers removed to know that Bahá'u'lláh is their Lord Christ returned.
- Key 6: Speak from the mindset of Christianity as “our religion too.”
- Key 7: Realize most Christians are not seriously listening until you refer to the Bible to prove it is the bridge between scriptural Christianity and Bahá'í beliefs.
- Key 8: Avoid Bahá'í “jargon” (e.g., “Manifestation”, “Dispensation,” etc.)
- Key 9: Anticipate and offer to relieve the FEARS of Christians re: false prophets, etc.
- Key 10: Redirect questions on doctrinal issues to the proofs of Bahá'u'lláh. (p 41)

## Summary of Presentation

1. First you must be sanctified if your utterance is to have power.
2. The attitude and spirit a Bahá'í teaches with is the single most important and effective tool.
3. We must know what Christians believe so we can speak their language and use their concepts.
4. We must know what we, as Bahá'ís, believe about Christ and the Bible.
5. We must know how to use the Bible as a bridge between Christian and Bahá'í beliefs remembering the two keys from the Kitáb-i-Iqán:

- ⚙ Two-fold Language of Scripture

- ⚙ Two-fold Station of the Manifestation

6. We must know how to reinterpret the Bible for Christians to connect their hearts to Bahá'u'lláh.

- ⚙ Presenting the Biblical proofs of Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ.

- ⚙ Resolving objections by reinterpreting the literal reading of the Bible and demonstrating that the Jews had exactly the same literalist objections to Christ as the Christians have to Bahá'u'lláh and that the proofs of Jesus as the Christ are the same as Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ.

- ⚙ Explaining Christian beliefs inconsistent with the Baha'i Teachings and based on a literal reading of the Bible must be reinterpreted and understood spiritually if all the Bible verses on the subject are considered.

# PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

1. **“...Whenever there is a decline in righteousness and a rise of unrighteousness ... then I send forth Myself, for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness. I come into being from age to age...”**
2. **“I am not the first Buddha who came upon the earth nor shall I be the last ... in due time another Buddha will arise.”**
3. **“Think not that have come to destroy the law of the prophets: I have come not to destroy but to fulfill.”**
4. **“Verily We have sent Thee with the truth. A comforter and a warner, and there is not a people but a warner hath not passed among them.”**
5. **“Indeed no religion shall We ever inaugurate unless it be renewed in the days to come.”**
6. **“But thou, O Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, and from everlasting.”**

(See p 88 for References)

# THE ONLY WAY

1. **“I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”**
2. **“This is the path. There is no other that leads to vision.”**
3. **“Whoso seeks guidance elsewhere, God will lead him astray.”**
4. **“He that hath Me not is bereft of all things. Turn ye away from all that is on earth and seek none else but Me.”**
5. **“Abandoning all duties, come to Me alone for shelter.”**
6. **“There is only one religious way. This one way is that of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, the way of heaven, of light and of purity, of the infinite Creator.”**

(See p 88 for References)

# SALVATION

1. **“I was born into the world as the king of truth for the salvation of the world.”**
2. **“The Lord has made known His salvation ... all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our Lord.”**
3. **“We, verily, have come for your sakes, and have borne the misfortunes of the world for your salvation.”**
4. **“The longsuffering of our Lord is salvation ... for the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.”**
5. **“Leave all things behind, and come to Me for thy salvation. I will make thee free from the bondage of sin. Fear no more.”**
6. **“Those who for Me shall give heed and obedience to Him, shall attain integrity and immortality ... O Wise Lord ... Your kingdom of salvation let him who prays attain.”**
7. **“To those who believe and work righteousness ... for them will be gardens of eternity.”**

(See p 88 for References)

# Forgiveness of Sins

1. **“I will make thee free from the bondage of sins. Fear no more.”**
2. **“Return ye to God and repent, that He, through His grace, may have mercy upon you, may wash away your sins, and forgive your trespasses.”**
3. **“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”**
4. **“Despair not of God’s mercy, for all sins doth God forgive. Gracious, merciful is He. And return ye to your Lord, and to Him resign yourselves...”**
5. **“Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men...”**

(See p 88 for References)

# Everlasting Life

1. **“Witness the reddening sunset, witness the chariot of night as it drives on, witness the moon as it waxes, verily, ye too shall pass from stage to stage.”**
2. **“To one that is born death is certain, and birth is certain for one that has died.”**
3. **“The day of death is better than the day of birth.”**
4. **“Your gift is the life never-dying and continuous health your possession.”**
5. **“All the favors of God have been sent down, as a token of His grace. The waters of everlasting life have, in their fullness, been proffered unto men.”**
6. **“Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die ... I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.”**

(See p 88 for References)

# **The Unity of God**

- 1. “The Lord our God is one Lord.”**
- 2. “But just how many Gods are there? One.”**
- 3. “He is God alone: God the eternal ... and there is none like unto Him.”**
- 4. “Bear thou witness that verily He is God and there is no God but Him, the King, the Protector, the Incomparable, the Omnipotent.”**
- 5. “I am the Lord, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me.”**

(See p 88 for References)

# **God, the Unknowable Essence**

- 1. “Glory be to Him! And high let Him be exalted above that which they attribute to Him!”**
- 2. “Far, far from Thy glory be what mortal man can affirm of Thee, or attribute unto Thee.”**
- 3. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”**
- 4. “There is no likeness of Him Whose glory is infinite.”**
- 5. “No one has seen God at any time ... You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.”**
- 6. “There is, O monks, an Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed.”**

(See p 88 for References)

# The Quest for Peace

1. **“... they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”**
2. **“Let us now abstain from taking life. That is a good thing that we may take up and do. And they will abstain from slaughter, and will continue in this good way.”**
3. **“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”**
4. **“The believers are but a single Brotherhood: so make peace and reconciliation between your two [contending] brothers; and fear God, that ye may receive mercy.”**
5. **“O God, Holy Spirit, before all I pray to you in all humility with hands uplifted, for abiding peace, that all my deeds be inspired by righteousness; and for the wisdom of a good mind, so that I may bring peace to the soul of existence.”**
6. **“These fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away and the “Most Great Peace” shall come.”**

(See p 88 for References)

# ARMAGEDDON

(Hebrew for “Mount of Megiddo”)

1. “The word occurs only in Revelations 16:16 as a Greek translation of the term claimed to be Hebrew. It represents the location of the final cosmic battle of the forces of good and of evil, according to the apocalyptic view of the writer. However, no such term appears elsewhere in Hebrew, and there is no mountain known to ancient or modern geographers by that name. Megiddo (the city) is situated at the north end of the major pass through the Mount Carmel range.” (Harper’s Bible Dictionary, p 64) “...the Plain of Megiddo, stretching along the northern slopes of Mt Carmel to the Plain of Acco...” (Op Cit p 227)
2. Map 3 of the Oxford Companion to the Bible, p 880, shows the dominant mountain nearest the city of Megiddo to be Mt Carmel overlooking the pass to the sea where great battles were fought in ancient times.
3. “It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills; and people shall flow unto it, and many nations shall come, and say: ‘come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and we may walk in his paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide for strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.” (Mic 4:1-4) [Note: “The New Testament continues this imagery using the term ‘heavenly Jerusalem’ or ‘Zion’ metaphorically in reference to ... the place of God’s dwelling.” (Rev 14:1) (Harper’s Bible Dictionary, p 1166).]
4. “In this Dispensation, these laws are destined to flow from His Holy Mountain (Mt Carmel) even as in the Mosaic Dispensation the law of God was promulgated from Zion.” (EUHJ, p 442).
5. “Render thanks unto thy Lord O Carmel ... Rejoice, for God hath in this Day established upon thee His throne, hath made thee the dawning-place of His signs, and the dayspring of the evidences of His revelation ... Call out to Zion, O Carmel, and announce the joyful tidings ... ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee...” (GI, p 15-16)
6. Summation: The cosmic forces of evil will encounter the Word of God or Rule of God coming from Mt Carmel and be defeated, ushering in God’s Kingdom on earth. The Universal House of Justice governs from the new home of the Ark of the Covenant on Mt Carmel, God’s Holy Mountain, Zion, the New Jerusalem, and will ultimately triumph over the evil forces of the world and establish the Golden Age of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, God’s Kingdom on Earth.

## AN APPROACH TO SOCIAL/ECONOMIC/ ENVIRONMENTAL/POLITICAL ISSUES RAISED BY SOCIAL ACTIVISTS - “LIBERAL CHRISTIANS”

**1st** Agree there is a problem.

**2nd** Redefine the problem in spiritual (Bahá'í) principles.

⚙ Principle is often “justice” which is the “best beloved” in Bahá'u'lláh's sight.

**3rd** Emphasize the only lasting solution to the problem must be on spiritual principles.

A. “Material conditions are but a reflection of spiritual conditions.”

B. Lasting agreements are always based on spiritual principle.

**4th** \***Education:** Necessary to “induce” harmonizing effect of spiritual principle to create empathy and “induce” a dynamic will to implement solutions.

A. Society must be educated to change its values, and, thereafter, behavior will change.

B. Society must be offered a working model of that behavior based on the application of spiritual principles to the world's problems. (the Bahá'í Administrative Order)

**5th** **Consultation:** the “process” for problem-solving between opposing sides based on applying spiritual principles and seeking everyone's contribution.

**6th** Bahá'ís believe the spiritual principles and the process of consultation found in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh are the basis for the resolution of all the present problems facing Mankind.

⚙ Bahá'í community is roughly a cross-section of the world's population working systematically to employ these spiritual principles.

\*Based on (p 11) of the [Promise of World Peace](#).

**Comments:** This is an approach that will take the “activist/liberal Christian” from a focus purely on the social problem to a focus on spiritual principles as a solution, and ultimately to a focus on the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh as the source of these spiritual principles. Thereby a dialogue can be opened on the spiritual interpretation of the Bible as the Holy Book, the Word of God, that Bahá'ís understand is to teach humanity spiritual principles (not history, science, reliance on divine miracles, etc.), and that the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is a restatement of these same spiritual teachings of the Bible but with new social teachings (e.g., equality of men and women) clearly spelled out for today's societal and spiritual problems.

## FOUR STAGES TO ACCEPTANCE OF NEW UNDERSTANDING

<u>MINDSET</u>	<u>EMOTION</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
1. Denial	Apathy	Ignore
2. Rejection	Anger/Hostility	Opposition
3. Acceptance	Tolerance/Well-Wisher	Lack of Opposition
4. Commitment	Devotion	Active/Sacrificial Support

**Comment:** Therefore anger and hostility with opposition can be understood as only an expected, natural stage in some Christian's investigation of the new understanding of the religion of God that the Bahá'í Faith now represents. Therefore, such hostility should never be taken personally by the Bahá'í teacher. 'Abdu'l-Bahá warns **“Do not argue with anyone ... such is the quality of those who are firm in the Covenant.”** (Individual and Teaching, p 13) And Bahá'u'lláh warns **“if anyone refuses it ... Beware lest ye deal unkindly with him...”** (GI, p 289). Also, nurturing a Christian to acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh can be understood as only a step towards whole-hearted, devoted, self-sacrificing commitment. Thus, mere acceptance is not the completed stage of the teaching process and enrollment by a seeker may not necessarily signify commitment and devotion.

## ANSWERS TO COMPARATIVE RELIGION QUIZ

1. **PROGRESSIVE REVELATION:** 1. Hinduism, Bhagavad Gita (4:7-8);  
2. Buddhism, Mahaparinibbana Sutta; 3. Christianity, (Matt 5:17);  
4. Islám, Qurán (35:22) 5. Bahá'í, (SWB, p 159); 6. Judaism, (Mic 5:2)
2. **THE ONLY WAY:** 1. Christianity, (John 14:6); 2. Buddhism, (Dhammapada 20:274); 3. Islám, Imam 'Ali Hadith; 4. Bahá'í, (TAB, p 169); 5. Hinduism, Bhagavad Gita (18:66); 6. Zoroastrianism, the Teachings of the Magi, p 222)
3. **SALVATION:** 1. Buddhism, Digha-Nikaya (1:46); 2. Judaism, (Ps 98:2-3);  
3. Bahá'í, (TAB, p 10); 4. Christianity, (2 Peter 3:15) and (Titus 2:11);  
5. Hinduism, Bhagavad Gita (18:66); 6. Zoroastrianism, Gathas, Yasna (45:5 and 51:2); 7. Islám, Qurán (18:30-31)
4. **FORGIVENESS OF SINS:** 1. Hinduism, Bhagavad Gita (18:66);  
2. Bahá'í, (Gl, p 130); 3. Judaism, (Isa 55:7); 4. Islám, Qurán (34:54-55);  
5. Christianity, (Mk 3:28)
5. **EVERLASTING LIFE:** 1. Islám, Qurán (84:16-19); 2. Hinduism, Bhagavad Gita (2:27); 3. Judaism, (Eccl 7:1); 4. Zoroastrianism, Gathas, Yasna (33:8);  
5. Bahá'í, (Gl, p 34); 6. Christianity, (John 11:26, 10:28).
6. **UNITY OF GOD:** 1. Christianity, (Mk 12:29); 2. Hinduism, Upanishads;  
3. Islám, Qurán (112: 1-2,4); 4. Bahá'í, Tablet of Ahmad; 5. Judaism, (Isa 45:5).
7. **GOD, THE UNKNOWNABLE:** 1. Islám, Qurán (6:100); 2. Bahá'í, (Gl, p 4);  
3. Judaism, (Isa 55:9); 4. Hinduism, Upanishads; 5. Christianity, (John 1:18 and 5:37); 6. Buddhism, Udana.
8. **QUEST FOR PEACE:** 1. Judaism, (Isa 2:4); 2. Buddhism, Dialogues of Buddha;  
3. Christianity, (Matt 5:9); 4. Islám, Qurán (49:10); 5. Zoroastrianism, 1992 Multi-Faith Calendar; 6. Bahá'í, (PDC, p 116).

(Adapted from a presentation by Dann May, unpublished)

# CHRIST IS GREATER THAN MOSES

## Basis of Christian Belief:

**“For this man (Christ Jesus) was counted worthy of more glory than Moses.”**

(Hebrews 3:3)

1. “If, in the days of Jesus Christ, the Jews had forsaken imitation and investigated reality, they would assuredly have believed in and accepted Him, for the messianic effulgence was far greater than the Mosaic. The Sun of Reality, when it appeared from the dawning point of Christ, was in the midsummer sun in brilliancy and beauty.” (PUP, p 274)
2. “Likewise, must we set aside prejudice in considering other divine Educators by investigating reality. For instance, let us take Christ. He achieved greater results than Moses.” (PUP, p 345)
3. “These Manifestations of God have each a two-fold station. One is the station of pure abstraction and essential unity. In this respect, if thou callest them by one name, and dost ascribe to them the same attribute, thou hast not erred from the truth ... The other is the station of distinction, and pertaineth to the world of creation and to the limitations thereof. In this respect, each Manifestation of God hath a distinct individuality, a definitely prescribed mission, a predestined Revelation, and specially designated limitations.” (KI, p 152, 176) [Therefore, in one station, that of “pure abstraction and essential unity” Moses and Jesus are the same. But in the other station the “messianic effulgence” was greater in Jesus and “...He achieved greater results than Moses.”]
4. “To prevent an act of cruelty, Moses struck down an Egyptian and afterward became known among men as a murderer, more notably because the man He had killed was of the ruling nation.” (SAQ, p 15) ... “Reflect upon the strange and manifold trials with which He doth test His servants. Consider how He hath suddenly chosen from among His servants, and entrusted with the exalted mission of divine guidance Him Who was known as guilty of homicide... Likewise, reflect upon the state and condition of Mary .... How could she claim that a Babe Whose father was unknown had been conceived of the Holy Ghost?” (KI, p 55-56) “... why should the Qiblah have been changed, thus casting such dismay amongst the people, causing the companions of the Prophet to waver, and throwing so great a confusion into their midst? Yea, such things as throw consternation into the hearts of all men come to pass only that each soul may be tested by the touchstone of God, that the true may be known and distinguished from the false.” (KI, p 52) [God’s way is to test the hearts of all people with events in the life of the Manifestation that are contrary to the standards of conduct the people expect so that the hearts of the true believer can be known and tested before God.]

5. “All the divine discourses containing reproof, though apparently addressed to the Prophets, in reality are directed to the people ... every Prophet is the expression of the whole of the people. So the promise and speech of God addressed to Him is addressed to all. Generally the speech of reproach and rebuke is rather too severe for the people and would be heartbreaking to them ... when the children of Israel rebelled and said to Moses: "We cannot fight with the Amalekites, for they are powerful, mighty and courageous." God then rebuked Moses and Aaron, though Moses was in complete obedience and not in rebellion ... Furthermore, in Numbers, chapter 20, verse 23: ... for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah ... Observe: the people of Israel rebelled, but apparently the reproach was for Moses and Aaron. As it is said in the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter 3, verse 26: "But the Lord was wroth with Me for your sakes, and would not hear Me: and the Lord said unto Me, Let it suffice Thee; speak no more unto Me of this matter ... Now this discourse and reproach really refer to the children of Israel..." (SAQ, p 167-169)

# LITERAL FULFILLMENT OF ALL UNFULFILLED PROPHECIES IN THE HEBREW BIBLE BY THE SECOND COMING

## Basis of Christian Belief:

**There is no text in the New Testament supporting this view which is proposed to explain why Jesus did not fulfill all the prophecies of the Old Testament literally during his life.**

1. Jesus clearly interprets prophecies the Jews expected to be literally fulfilled as not being fulfilled literally but spiritually only (e.g., while the actual physical body of Elijah had not returned literally before the Messiah as the Jews expected, Jesus states that the spirit of Elijah did return in John the Baptist though John the Baptist denied that he was Elijah.) [See II in **Objections of Christians to Bahá'u'lláh are the Same as Those to Christ** for this and other examples, p 33]. Therefore, by the authority of Jesus Himself, spiritual fulfillment of prophecy is a valid interpretation even though this interpretation may be contrary to the expectation of most people for a literal fulfillment.
2. The Apostles similarly interpret prophecy spiritually to have been fulfilled when clearly a literal fulfillment did not take place. (e.g., every valley had not been filled, and every mountain had not been brought low even though Luke clearly says this prophecy was fulfilled. (See II, p 33, for this and other examples by the Apostles.) Therefore, by the authority of both the Apostles and Jesus, spiritual fulfillment of prophecy is a valid understanding of prophecy fulfillment in the Bible.
3. Jesus states that He will go away and another will come, “He” “the Spirit of Truth”, the “Comforter”, the “Counselor” (John 16:13) who will come with a “new name” (Rev 3:12) and reveal all truth and therefore the explanation of prophecies not currently understood as to whether they have already or will be fulfilled, and whether they are literally or spiritually fulfilled. Furthermore, we are warned that no one can interpret the Bible correctly until this “Spirit of Truth” unlocks the Scriptures (See III on p 23).
4. “Your king is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey.” (Zech 9:9) is an example of prophecy in the Hebrew Bible that was already fulfilled by Jesus according to Matthew 21:2. Yet, clearly, the Kingship of Jesus was spiritual though “riding on a donkey” into Jerusalem was literally fulfilled. Therefore, a requirement for all prophecies of the Old Testament to be literally fulfilled is not Biblically supportable.

# COMMON MISTAKES IN BAHÁ'Í-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

## I. Christian's Challenges:

- A. How do the Bahá'ís regard Jesus Christ?
- B. Do you accept the Bible as the Word of God?
- C. How do you know you're not following a false prophet from the Devil?
- D. Well the Bible warns against false prophets and the Anti-Christ coming in sheep's clothing ... the Bible also says Jesus Christ is the "Only Way" and the "Only Begotten Son of God."
- E. The Bible warns that many will come in the last days and even try to deceive the very elect ... Jesus was resurrected Lord and Savior and was God in the flesh. Where is Bahá'u'lláh buried?
- F. I fear you are following a false prophet and I hope you will study the Bible more closely ... Your religion isn't Christian!!! .... I'll pray for you!

## II. (Ineffective) Bahá'í Answers:

- A. He was a Manifestation like Moses and Muhammad and Bahá'u'lláh.
- B. Well, we know that it's inspired but it's been corrupted and edited with additions and deletions. But we believe it's a Holy Book for a past age. Bahá'ís follow the Bahá'í Writings which are for this day.
- C. Oh, Bahá'ís don't believe in the devil. We believe that evil is just the absence of good.
- D. We Bahá'ís believe that Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Jesus and is the latest Messenger from God. He has come to bring unity of all the religions and a New World Order.
- E. Oh, Bahá'ís don't believe Jesus was God; We believe that the Bible has just been misinterpreted. There's really no proof Jesus was physically resurrected. It's just a symbolic story.
- F. Well fine ... you do that. I'll pray for you too!

**Here the Bahá'í used Bahá'í terminology unlikely to be understood by the Christian, attacked the credibility of the Bible, and undermined the Bible as no longer relevant as a "Holy Book for a past age." The Bahá'í simply denies the Christian's belief in the devil and the resurrection and makes claims for**

**Bahá'u'lláh without once referring to the Bible, the common language and final arbiter of truth. The Bahá'í failed to start with a point of agreement and appeared anti-Christian and non-Biblical as well as arrogant, even hostile.**

### **III. Better Bahá'í Answers:**

- A. Bahá'ís believe in “the Sonship and Divinity” of the Lord Jesus the Christ (PDC, p 109) (See p 18)
- B. Bahá'ís fully recognize the divine inspiration of the Gospel and understand it to be the Bible of Salvation. (PDC, p 109) (See p 18)
- C. The Bible tells us that “there is no truth in him (the Devil)” (John 8:44), and all Bahá'ís believe in the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus, so Bahá'ís can't be following the Devil.
- D. The Bible tells us that false prophets “will deny the Master” (2 Peter 2:1-3) and that the Anti-Christ “denies that Jesus is the Christ” (1 John 2:22) ... So Bahá'u'lláh can't be the Anti-Christ or a False Prophet ... Bahá'ís accept that Jesus is the Only Way but believe Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ with a New Name that glorifies the Father and the Son, as Christ promised He would do.
- E. Let's turn to the Bible and apply the tests of the scripture to the claims of Bahá'u'lláh ... For the Bible tells us “to test the Spirits” (1 John 4:1), and gives us the proofs to recognize the Return, and warns us to be ever watchful for “He shall come as a thief in the night” with a “new name” “at an hour you do not expect!” ... The proofs of Bahá'u'lláh are in the Bible and I would like you to see for yourself what the Bible has to say! ... To be physically resurrected is not one of the proofs the Bible says the Return of Christ would do to establish His Truth as the fulfillment of scripture. What do you understand from the Bible to be the proofs the Return of Christ must fulfill?

**In the more effective answers, the Bahá'í starts with a point of agreement reassuring the Christian of Bahá'í belief in Christ and the Bible by quoting Bahá'í Scripture, and then proceeds to answer the Christian's questions by constantly referring to the Bible in a tone of mutual exploration of the Bible, the Word of God, which the Bahá'í obviously reveres. The Bahá'í concludes by quickly refocussing the Christian from the doctrine of the resurrection to the Biblical proofs of Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ, the Manifestation of this Day, the elucidation and proving of which is the foremost obligation of every soul and the focal point of all Bahá'í teaching.**

## HELL IS NOT A LITERAL PLACE

**Basis of Christian Belief:** “...the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment...for I am tormented in this flame.” (Luke 16:22-24) “Hell, an English word used to translate Sheol (Hebrew); Hades (Greek); and Gehenna (Hebrew). In Christian tradition it is usually associated with the notion of eternal punishment, especially by fire.” (Harper’s Bible Dictionary, p 382)

- 1. Hell is not a physical place:** “But he knoweth not the dead are there; and that her (a prostitute’s) guests are in the depths of hell.” (Proverbs 9:18) [Here Death and Hell occur from partaking and being in the presence of immorality.] “...And I looked, and beheld a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.” (Rev 6:8) [Hell is a rider on a horse and is clearly used symbolically to signify an evil force.] “...Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish’s belly; and said, ‘I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice’...Then I said, ‘I am cast out from thy presence; how shall I again look upon thy holy temple?’...And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.” (Jonah 2:1-10) [Hell is equated with being “cast out from thy presence,” the presence of the Lord, for if read literally, Hell is a wandering place in the belly of a fish.]
- 2. Those in Hell cannot be in eternal punishment:** “The King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who alone has immortality...” (1 Tim 6:15-16) [Eternal physical torment in Hell would make a person immortal, but God alone is immortal.]
- 3. Hell as a physical cannot be eternal either:** “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise; and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” (2 Peter 3:10) “...Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure.” (Psalms 102:25-26) “...Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” (Luke 21:33) “And Death and Hell were cast into the lake of fire.” (Rev 20:14) [Both the Old and New Testaments refer to the destruction of heaven and of the earth wherein Hell is said to exist. Therefore, Hell can’t be a place of eternal physical punishment and these verses must be interpreted spiritually.]
- 4. Reading the Bible literally, all those who are in Heaven and Hell eventually cease to exist:** [If no one is immortal but God, and both Heaven and Hell are to be destroyed (see #2 and #3 above), then all souls cease to exist and all receive the same ultimate destruction as judgement as if all deserved the same fate. Clearly a spiritual understanding is needed for these terms.]

## HELL IS NOT A LITERAL PLACE (cont'd)

5. **The physical body cannot reside in hell:** “For dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Gen 3:19) [Therefore, residing in Hell must be a spiritual condition as no physical body escapes returning to dust.]
6. **Hell is referred to as a spiritual condition:** Jesus says “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you traverse sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.” (Matt 23:15) [“Child of hell” and being in the “depths of hell” cannot in these verses make sense literally and therefore must be understood as spiritual conditions. Also in #1 above, Jonah equates Hell as being cast out of the Lord’s presence.]
7. **Paul never mentions Hell, but refers to death as a “sleep” from which those who are to be resurrected emerge “changed” into a new spiritual form:**  
“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men more to be pitied.” (1 Cor 15:17-19) “...We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed...and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality.” (1 Cor 15:51-53) [Paul indicates the punishment for unbelief is a “sleep” from which only the believers awake with a “changed” spiritual nature. Eternal physical torment is not indicated by “sleep” for the unbelievers and those who are not resurrected.]
8. **The Bahá’í Writings refer to Hell at least 51 times and in the same usage style as can be found in the Bible:** “Soon shall the blasts of His chastisement beat upon you, and the dust of hell enshroud you. Those men who having amassed the vanities and ornaments of the earth, have turned disdainfully from God—these have lost both this world and the world to come.” (G1, p 209) “...They that have disbelieved in God and rebelled against His sovereignty are the helpless victims of their corrupt inclinations and desires. These shall return to their abode in the fire of hell: wretched is the abode of the deniers!” (G1, pp 284-285)
9. **Summation:** Biblical verses demonstrate that Hell cannot literally be an eternal place of physical torment inside the earth in which human bodies suffer unending pain. However it is a term used repeatedly in both the Bible and Bahá’í Scriptures to refer symbolically to a soul’s spiritual condition in this world and the next.
10. See also **Satan** (p 38), **Heaven is not a Literal Place** (p 96), and **Bahá’í Explanation of Heaven and Hell** (p 98).

# HEAVEN IS NOT A LITERAL PLACE

**Basis of Christian belief:** “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11)

- 1. Symbolic nature of saying “ascended to heaven”:** “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is the Son of Man who is in heaven.” (John 3:13, NKJV) “...For I came down from heaven.” (John 6:38) “They (the Jews) said, ‘Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” (John 6:42, RSV) [It is clear that being “in heaven,” “ascended to heaven,” and “come from heaven” all have spiritual meanings. What does it mean when Christ states, while His feet are walking on the earth, that He is already in heaven? Are Christians making the same error the Jews did in denying Christ by demanding the Return of Christ come bodily to earth from heaven?]
- 2. The Kitáb-i-Iqán explains the spiritual meaning of “residing in heaven”:** “These ancient Beings, though delivered from the womb of their mothers, have in reality descended from the heaven of the will of God. Though they be dwelling on this earth, yet their true habitations are the retreats of glory in the realms above. Whilst walking amongst mortals, they soar in the heaven of the divine presence.” (KI, p 67)
- 3.** “And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven.” (Gen 1:6-8) “...and the windows of the heavens were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.” (Gen 7:11-12) [Taken literally, there is a body of water above Heaven that causes rain when the windows of Heaven open. Heaven must be understood other than literally as Heaven is referred to with a capital “H”.]
- 4.** “...the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he (the Lord) was wroth.” (2 Sam 22:8) “...The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his (God’s) re-proof.” (Job 26:11) [Heaven has pillars that hold it up and foundations that move and shake, but these must be other than literal as they are undetectable physically.]
- 5.** “I tell you this brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.” (1 Cor 15:44) “...No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is the Son of Man who is in heaven.” (John 3:13) [Yet Elijah (2 Kings 2:11) and Enoch (Heb 11:5) and Melchizedek (Heb 7:16) all arose bodily into heaven. Only a spiritual interpretation allows a resolution of the literal contradiction.]

## HEAVEN IS NOT A LITERAL PLACE (cont'd)

6. In that heaven and hell are to be destroyed, all those “rewarded in heaven” and “punished in hell” would have the equal ultimate fate of destruction (see #3 **Hell is Not a Literal Place**, p 94). Heaven as the dwelling place for eternal life would be contradicted by a literal understanding of the fate of heaven as outlined in both the Old and New Testaments.
7. A literal reading of (Matthew 16:19-23) would have Christ’s church founded on Satan (Peter) who was given the keys to heaven by Jesus and who decides who gets into the Kingdom of heaven. [See **Satan, E.**, p 39]
8. **Summation:** Heaven as a physical location skyward for physical bodies to ascend to for eternal life is not supported when all of the Bible verses on the subject are examined and only a spiritual interpretation of the nature of Heaven will reconcile all Biblical references. However, heaven as a spiritual state or condition is consistent with both Biblical and Bahá’í scriptural references.
9. See **Bahá’í Explanation of Heaven and Hell** ( p 98)

# BAHÁ'Í EXPLANATION OF HEAVEN AND HELL

- 1. A “Paradise” and a “Hell” are found in this world and the next just as the Bible indicates:** (See *Hell is Not a Literal Place*, p 94 and *Heaven is Not a Literal Place*, p 96) “The immortality of the spirit is mentioned in the Holy Books; it is the fundamental basis of the divine religions. Now punishments and rewards are said to be of two kinds: first, the rewards and punishments of this life; second, those of the other world. *But the paradise and hell of existence are found in all the worlds of God, whether in this world or in the spiritual heavenly worlds.* (emphasis added) Gaining these rewards is the gaining of eternal life. That is why Christ said ‘Act in such a way that you may find eternal life, and that you may be born of water and the spirit, so that you may enter into the Kingdom’” (SAQ, p 223)
- 2. The Rewards or Spiritual “Paradise” of this world:** “The rewards of this life are the virtues and perfections which adorn the reality of man. For example...he was earthly and he becomes heavenly; he was material and becomes spiritual. Through these rewards he gains spiritual birth and becomes a new creature. He becomes the manifestation of the verse in the Gospel where it is said of the disciples that they were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, (John 1:13): that is to say, they were delivered from the animal characteristics and qualities which are the characteristics of human nature, and they became qualified with the divine characteristics, which are the bounty of God.”(Op Cit, p 223). [Accepting Christ and the Return of Christ into a soul’s life therefore allows a spiritual rebirth that brings spiritual “virtues and perfections” which leads to spiritual fulfillment and true happiness: “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh; but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” (Rom 8:5-6)]
- 3. The punishment or the hell of this world:** “For such people, there is no greater torture than being veiled from God, and no more severe punishment than sensual vices, dark qualities, lowness of nature, engrossment in carnal desires...they consider that the spiritual punishment, that is to say the torture and punishment of existence, is to be subjected to the world of nature, to be veiled from God, ...to fall into carnal lusts, ...being immersed in satanic ideas; for them these are the greatest punishments and tortures.” (Op cit, p 224) [To be “veiled from God,” to not recognize and follow the divine guidance of Christ and the Return of Christ, is a spiritual punishment and a hell in itself while living this earthly life: “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit, you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” (Rom 8:13)]

## **BAHÁ'Í EXPLANATION OF HEAVEN AND HELL (continued)**

4. **The Rewards or Spiritual “Paradise of Heaven:** “Likewise the rewards of the other world are the eternal life which is clearly mentioned in all the Holy Books...The rewards of the other world are peace, the spiritual graces, the various spiritual gifts in the Kingdom of God, the gaining of the desires of the heart and the soul, and the meeting of God in the world of eternity.” (Op cit, p 224) [Christ promises the criminal who accepts him as they both were being crucified: “Today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43)] “For just as the effects and the fruitage of the uterine life are not to be found in that dark and narrow place, and only when the child is transferred to this wide earth do the benefits and uses of growth and development in that previous world become revealed—so likewise reward and punishment, heaven and hell, requittal and retribution for actions done in this present life, will stand revealed in that other world beyond.” (SWAB, p 185) [Again, as taught in the Bible, our actions in this world bring “reward and punishment,” “heaven and hell” in the next world.]
  
5. **The “Punishment” or the “Hell” of the next world:** “In the same way, the punishments of the other world, that is to say, the torments of the other world, consist in being deprived of the special divine blessings and the absolute bounties, and falling into the lowest degrees of existence. He who is deprived of these divine favours, although he continues after death, is considered as dead by the people of truth.” (SAQ, p 225) [Paul refers to the condition of being “considered as dead” by similarly describing unresurrected souls as “asleep”. (1 Cor 15:51)] (See #7 **Hell is Not a Literal Place**, p 95) Bahá'u'lláh states: “Where is Paradise, and where is Hell? Say: The one is reunion with Me, the other thine own self” (TB, p 118) which could apply to both this world and the next as indicated in both the Bible and Bahá'í Scriptures. Accepting Christ and the Return of Christ is “heaven” in both this world and the next while rejecting leaves a soul without the Word of God, in the greatest “tribulation” (Matt 24:21) and the greatest “famine...of hearing the words of the Lord.” (Amos 8:11), and the “hell” of the pursuit of selfish desires as indicated in both the Bible and Bahá'í Scripture.]
  
6. See also **Heaven is Not a Literal Place**, (p 96) and **Hell is Not a Literal Place**, (p 94)

## ABBREVIATIONS USED FOR BAHÁ'Í BOOKS

<b>ADJ</b>	<b>Advent of Divine Justice</b>
<b>BA</b>	<b>Bahá'í Administration</b>
<b>BWF</b>	<b>Bahá'í World Faith</b>
<b>C of F</b>	<b>Citadel of Faith</b>
<b>DG</b>	<b>Directives of the Guardian</b>
<b>ESW</b>	<b>Epistle to the Son of the Wolf</b>
<b>EUHJ</b>	<b>Establishment of the Universal House of Justice</b>
<b>GI</b>	<b>Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh</b>
<b>GPB</b>	<b>God Passes By</b>
<b>HW</b>	<b>Hidden Words</b>
<b>IDKUF</b>	<b>Importance of Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of the Faith</b>
<b>I&amp;T</b>	<b>The Individual and Teaching</b>
<b>KI</b>	<b>The Kitáb-i-Iqán</b>
<b>LOG</b>	<b>Lights of Guidance, 2nd Edition</b>
<b>MUHJ</b>	<b>Messages from the Universal House of Justice</b>
<b>ODP</b>	<b>On Divine Philosophy</b>
<b>PBA</b>	<b>Principles of Bahá'í Administration</b>
<b>PDC</b>	<b>The Promised Day is Come</b>
<b>PMDA</b>	<b>Prayer, Meditation and Devotional Attitude</b>
<b>PT</b>	<b>Paris Talks</b>
<b>PUP</b>	<b>Promulgation of Universal Peace</b>
<b>SAQ</b>	<b>Some Answered Questions</b>
<b>SDC</b>	<b>Secret of Divine Civilization</b>
<b>SOW</b>	<b>Star of the West</b>
<b>SWAB</b>	<b>Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá</b>
<b>SWB</b>	<b>Selections from the Writings of the Báb</b>
<b>TAB</b>	<b>Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbás</b>
<b>TB</b>	<b>Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh</b>
<b>TDP</b>	<b>Tablets of the Divine Plan</b>
<b>Unf Dest</b>	<b>Unfolding Destiny</b>
<b>WOB</b>	<b>World Order of Baha'u'llah</b>
<b>WOG</b>	<b>Wellspring of Guidance</b>
<b>WOTB</b>	<b>Writings of the Báb</b>
<b>WT</b>	<b>Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l Bahá</b>

# INDEX

Adding to the Bible.....	43
Anti-Christ.....	36
Armageddon.....	85
Atonement.....	50
Báb's Claim to be God.....	28
Bahá'í Explanation of Heaven and Hell.....	98
Bahá'u'lláh As the Return of Christ (Biblical Proofs).....	65
Bahá'u'lláh's Claim to be God.....	28
Bahá'u'lláh's Name Mentioned in the Bible.....	72
Baptism.....	52
Beast.....	36
Bible, Can't Add to or Preach Any Other Gospel.....	43
Bible Interpretation.....	23
Biblical Proofs for Bahá'u'lláh As the Return of Christ.....	65
Can't Add to the Bible or Preach Any Other Gospel.....	43
Christ Is the Only Begotten Son of God.....	49
Christ Is the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever.....	44
Christ, Resurrection.....	59
Christ Sacrificed Once and For All Time.....	50
Christ Was God But Not God Incarnate.....	26
Christians Must Investigate Bahá'u'lláh.....	64
Devil.....	38
Doctrines Shared by Christians and Bahá'ís.....	20
Every Eye Shall See Him.....	47
False Prophets.....	36
Forgiveness of Sins.....	21
Gospel, Can't Add to the Bible or Preach Any Other Gospel.....	43
Heaven is Not a Literal Place.....	96
Hell is Not a Literal Place.....	94
Interpretation of the Bible.....	23
Jesus Is the Only Begotten Son of God.....	49
Jesus is the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever.....	44
Jesus, Resurrection.....	59
Jesus Sacrificed Once and for All Time.....	50
Jesus Was God, But Not God.....	26
Jewish Objections to Christ.....	33
Mediator Between God and Men.....	46
Miracles Are Not the Best Proof.....	56
Mirror Analogy (Station of the Manifestation is Biblical).....	30
Moses, Christ Greater Than.....	89
New Name, (Christ will Return With).....	45
No Other Name Under Heaven.....	45
Objections of Christians to Bahá'u'lláh Are the Same as the Jews to Christ.....	33
One Mediator Between God and Men.....	46
Only Begotten Son of God.....	49
Original Sin Unsupported in the Bible.....	55
Perfect Mirror Analogy (Station of Manifestation is Biblical).....	30
Questions Asked by Christians.....	12
Rapture.....	54
Resurrection of Christ.....	59
Return of Christ (Biblical Proofs of Bahá'u'lláh).....	65
Sacrificed Once and for All time.....	50
Salvation.....	6
Satan.....	38
Sin, Original Sin Unsupported in the Bible.....	55
Sinlessness Only Applies to Christ.....	51
Spirit of Truth.....	45
Spiritual Interpretation of the Bible.....	23
Station of the Manifestation is Biblical (Perfect Mirror Analogy).....	30
Trinity.....	30
What Bahá'ís Believe About Christianity.....	18
What Many Christians Believe about the Bahá'í Faith.....	22
Why Christians Must Investigate Bahá'u'lláh.....	64
Yesterday, Today and Forever.....	44

## PREFACE

**This Seminar Handbook is designed to accompany the video course of the same name and is abstracted for easy reference in the teaching booklet “The Resurrection of All Mankind.” Its theme is the application of basic Bahá’í teachings, especially from the Kitáb-i-Iqán, to answering the most common questions Christians ask regarding Bahá’í beliefs. Its goal is to equip Bahá’í teachers with the skills and knowledge to confirm Christians, whether liberal or conservative, in the knowledge that the Bahá’í interpretation of the Bible is both entirely Biblical and most profoundly spiritual. Thereby, the true Christian can find scriptural Christianity confirmed as the foundation of the Bahá’í Faith and recognize its Author, Bahá’u’lláh, the “Glory of God,” as their Lord returned through the same profound proofs that the disciples came to recognize Jesus as the Christ.**

**However, rather than suggesting the Bahá’í teacher rely solely on citing scripture as the proof of the Bahá’í Revelation, this Handbook emphasizes that, in accord with the Writings, the most effective tool of the Bahá’í teacher is the attitude and personal spiritualization that the teacher brings to the teaching work which can be developed through the steps outlined in the Writings themselves. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá emphasizes that the “cultivating of heavenly attributes,” (PT, p 106) if evidenced by the Bahá’ís, is “absolute proof” and Shoghi Effendi confirms this:**

**“One thing and only one thing will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred Cause, namely the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendor of those eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá’u’lláh.”** (BA, p 66)

**It is anticipated by the author that the organizing principles demonstrated herein will encourage every reader to adapt and improve upon this effort.**

**David F Young  
Medford Oregon  
March 2000**

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO USE THESE MATERIALS EFFECTIVELY**

**Initial Note:** The Seminar Handbook Master is one sided, but is paginated for two sided printing. If possible, you want to have your copy shop change it from one sided to two sided. This will make 52 pages to staple and bind rather than 104. A late addition that you will find on top is the seven pages of reduced-size newspaper ads, two of which are mentioned in the video. These were already copied two sided, so you will need to separate those from the body of the booklet for copying purposes. You may wish to just make these available, stapled, separately from the Seminar Handbook itself, to the attendees at the seminar or to those invited to watch the video with you. —dg

### **Suggestions for how to use these materials successfully for teacher training:**

- 1. Play the first hour of the video for your community to invite the Friends and build enthusiasm for teacher training sessions to more effectively teach Christians.**
- 2. Arrange a series of teacher training sessions with set times wherein the tapes can be progressively played and stopped for discussion of any questions or until session time expires.**
- 3. Have seminar handbooks copied and available for each student.**
- 4. Begin and end sessions on time.**
- 5. After each section (especially between pages 36 to 72 wherein the actual questions Christians ask are studied) stop the tape and role-play poor, perhaps laugh-provoking, answers and then role-play better answers. If the group is large enough, divide into smaller groups to role-play several examples of poor and better Bahá'í answers.**
- 6. Label your Bible inside the front cover with Bible references for each question topic and use colored hi-liters to actually hilite the Bible verses, coding all verses dealing with a particular topic the same color.**
- 7. PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE! And then present role-play skits for other community members (e.g. at Feasts and other community gatherings) previously unable to attend the teacher training sessions, demonstrating poor and better Bahá'í answers to the common Christian questions.**
- 8. You may wish to apply these newly acquired skills in the following ways in your community:**
  - A. Designate and publicize a series of “firesides” as “Bible Studies” wherein the topics in these materials are presented and discussion is encouraged.**
  - B. Use newspaper publicity to invite the public to explore the relationship of the Bahá'í Faith to Christianity in a series of public meetings with a panel or individual speakers on the most common questions Christians ask about the Bahá'í Faith.**
  - C. Offer a systematic series of classes on the relationship of the Bahá'í Faith to Christianity specifically announcing that invitations are being sent to relatives,**

## Suggestions for using the TCE materials, page 2

spouses, and friends, especially of new Bahá'ís who are concerned or uncertain for the spiritual welfare of the new Bahá'í in their midst. These classes would be in a service and/or informational format, encouraging any and all questions rather than be openly expecting everyone attending to enroll.

- D. Systematically explore Bible Studies in the Christian Community where you live, prospecting for where the Bahá'í viewpoint would be welcomed and evaluating participants for their potential interest in coming to Bahá'í sponsored "Bible Studies."
- E. Offer a "presentation team" or "panel" on "The Relationship of the Bahá'í Faith to Christianity" to area churches and civic groups.
- F. Establish a "Specific Target Teaching Team" of Bahá'ís who set goals of proclaiming and teaching Christians as a team and individually who regularly debrief, mutually support, and re-evaluate and re-configure their efforts as frontline exploration troops to uncover successful local strategies and publicity in approaching Christians.
- G. This systematic approach can be used with specifically targeted audiences and groups (i.e. minority churches). Acquaintances that begin, in attendance at their Bible study for example, can then be furthered socially in Bahá'í homes, Bahá'í gatherings, as well as church-community gatherings, further demonstrating the Bahá'í ideals of the Oneness of Mankind and the Elimination of Racism. This will allow the Bahá'ís to show themselves as busy about the Lord's work, demonstrating their beliefs and elements of their community life, and they can thereby take advantage of opportunities to support their beliefs Biblically as well as from the Bahá'í Writings.
- H. Regular media proclamation designed to systematically present the common questions Christians have upon hearing of the Bahá'í Faith, answering these questions with Biblical scriptural references, culminating in a presentation to the public of the Biblical proofs of Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ with perhaps a panel of clergy invited to ask questions of a panel of Bahá'ís, under carefully agreed upon ground rules (i.e. that all questions must be Scripture based, etc).

***Bring on the Troops!***

(Revised 1/26/2000)