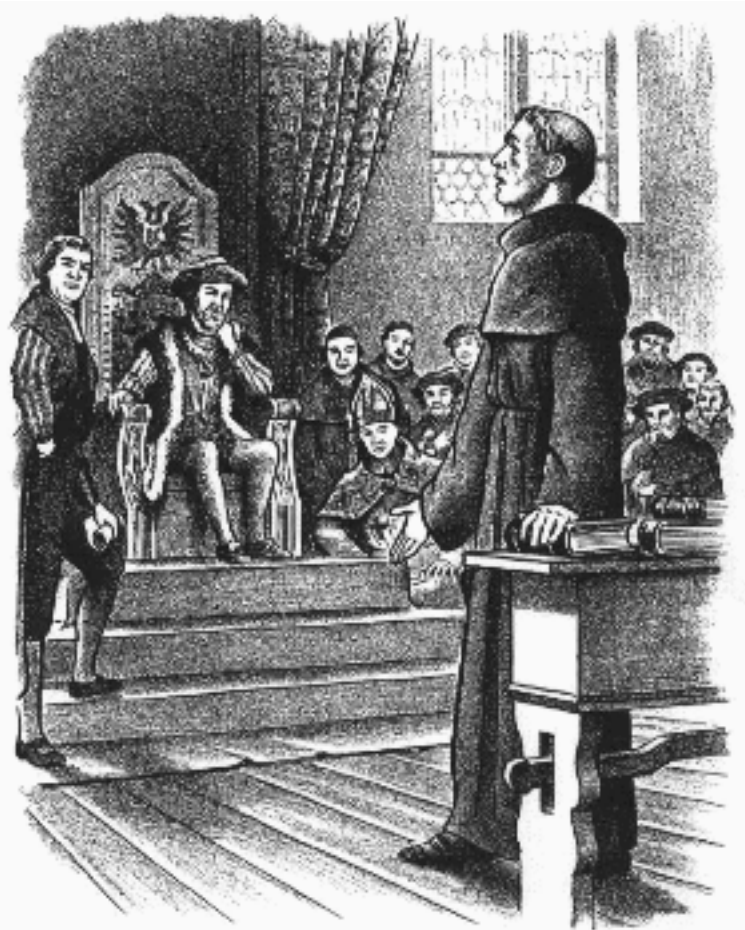


A Reference Chart of Teaching Differences



*Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms
taking his stand on the Bible*

**“Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise
God help me. Amen.”**

FOREWORD

Two great concerns led to the founding of the Church of the Lutheran Confession in 1960:

1. Concern for upholding the full truth of God’s Word and the precious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, apart from whom there is no salvation.
2. Concern over the mixing of the false teachings of men with the true Word of God. False teaching poses a serious threat to the faith of Christians. Satan tries to use it to undermine our confidence in the authority and reliability of the Bible. His ultimate aim is to destroy our faith completely by undermining our confidence in the Lord Jesus and His wonderful work of redemption.

This presentation is divided into two parts. The first part is a side-by-side listing of true doctrines of the Bible and false doctrines taught by various religious groups. The second part is a chart that identifies these groups with some of the errors they teach.¹

May this presentation prove helpful to you as you carry out your God-given responsibility to “test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). May the Holy Spirit bless you with an abiding love for God’s truth, guide you into all truth, and keep you in it unto eternal life. May He also help all of us to recognize and utilize opportunities that come our way for sharing God’s saving truth in Jesus with others.



¹The reader should bear in mind that not all pastors within a specific religious group will openly promote these errors. Some groups do not hold their leaders to a particular standard of doctrine. Others bodies, while not officially promoting a particular teaching error, tolerate in their midst those who do. If you have questions about whether a particular religious group is teaching God’s Word faithfully, ask your pastor. He will be happy to assist you.

ABBREVIATIONS

Christian Churches

Lutheran

ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
ELS	Evangelical Lutheran Synod (in fellowship with WELS)
LC-MS	Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
WELS	Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (in fellowship with ELS)

Non-Lutheran

BAP	Baptist
CHAR	Charismatic
CoC	Church of Christ
EPIS	Episcopal
HB	Holiness Bodies
RC	Roman Catholic
REF	Reformed ²
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist

Non-Christian Churches³

CS	Christian Science
J	Jewish
JW	Jehovah's Witnesses
LDS	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons)
U	Unitarian



² Some of the major denominations within this group include: Assembly of God, Baptist, Church of God, Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian, and the United Church of Christ.

³ Any religious group which denies the humanity and/or divinity of Jesus Christ or which rejects the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is not Christian.

Part 1 Teaching Differences Arranged By Doctrine

BAPTISM

True Doctrine

Baptism is a spiritual rebirth by the Holy Spirit through water and the Word. It is a means by which God dresses children in the robe of Jesus' righteousness and adopts them into His family. Titus 3:5.

Baptism washes away sin and saves. Acts 2:38, 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21.

Through baptism God forgives *all* sin (original sin and actual sin).

Baptism may be administered by sprinkling water, pouring water, or by immersion.

It is God's will that infants be baptized. Matthew 28:19, Mark 10:13-16, Acts 2:38-39.

Only baptisms administered in the name of the Triune God are valid. Matthew 28:19.

BEGINNING OF LIFE

True Doctrine

Life begins at conception. Every child, regardless of mental or physical condition, is a precious gift of God. Abortion is a transgressing of God's will in the Fifth Commandment. Exodus 20:13, Job 10:8-12, Psalm 127:3, Jeremiah 1:5.

BAPTISM

False Doctrine

Baptism is only a dedication of a child to God. It has no power to bring children into God's family. [REF]

Baptism only symbolizes the forgiveness of sins and salvation. [REF]

Baptism only forgives original sin and the sins we commit before our baptism. [RC]

All baptisms, to be valid, must be performed by immersion. [BAP]

Only those who have reached the age of discretion should be baptized. [BAP]

Baptisms are administered in the name of a god that is not Triune. [LDS]

BEGINNING OF LIFE

False Doctrine

It cannot be determined when life begins. Mothers have the right to choose whether or not to have an abortion. The destruction of a fetus is not murder. [many]

Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end.

Psalm 119:33.

BIBLE
True Doctrine

The Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God. It contains no mistakes, myths, or contradictions. 2 Peter 1:21, 2 Timothy 3:16, John 17:17, John 10:35.

All miracles recorded in the Bible (e.g. the story of Jonah, the virgin birth of Christ, Jesus changing water to wine, calming the storm, curing the sick, raising the dead) are historical events that really happened. John 20:30-31.

Christ made all the statements attributed to Him in the Bible.

We must look to the Word of God in the Bible -- SCRIPTURE ALONE -- for authoritative information about the way to heaven and for guidance in living a God-pleasing life. Proverbs 30:5-6, Revelation 22:18-19.

BIBLE
False Doctrine

Some historical data, geographical references, and matters of custom recorded in the Bible may not be the true Word of God. Holy Scripture contains the Word of God *and* the word of men. It is wrong to speak of the Bible as the inerrant Word of God. [ELCA, tolerated in LC-MS, some BAP, others]

Many miracles recorded in the Bible did not necessarily happen as they are recorded. They may have been added later by the early church. [tolerated in ELCA, many others]

Many of the statements attributed to Christ in the Bible were added by the early church. [tolerated in ELCA, many others]

Traditions of the church and the later witness of the church (supernatural visions, dreams, and revelations) are of equal authority to the Word of God in the Bible. [CS, LDS, RC]

*The law of the LORD is perfect,
converting the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple.
Psalm 19:7.*

*How sweet are Your words
to my taste, sweeter
than honey to my mouth!
Psalm 119:103.*

BORN AGAIN CHRISTIAN
True Doctrine

A born again Christian is a one who has been reborn spiritually by the power of the Holy Spirit through water and Word of Baptism. This spiritual rebirth happens to all Christians at the moment of their conversion. (Water baptism and Spirit baptism are identical.) John 3:3-5, Acts 2:38, 1 Peter 1:23, Titus 3:5.

The Spirit-filled life is evidenced in Christians by their confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and a life of Spirit-worked sanctification (fruits of faith). 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 12:3, Galatians 6:19-26.

CHURCH
True Doctrine

All people who believe in Jesus as their Savior from sin are children of God. John 1:12, Galatians 3:26.

Only believers in Jesus make up the spiritual body of Christ, the Holy Christian Church. Unbelievers and hypocrites aren't part of the Church. Romans 8:9, Ephesians 5:25-27, 1 Peter 2:4-9.

There is no salvation outside of the Holy Christian Church. 2 Timothy 2:19.

BORN AGAIN CHRISTIAN
False Doctrine

A born again Christian is one who has undergone a special religious experience. This spiritual rebirth is a "second blessing" that happens only to certain Christians after their conversion. (Water baptism and Spirit baptism are two different things.) [CHAR, some REF]

The Spirit-filled life is evidenced in Christians by their ability to speak in tongues. [CHAR]

CHURCH
False Doctrine

All people are children of God, whether or not they have faith in Jesus as their Savior. [tolerated in ELCA, some REF]

Everyone who claims to be a Christian is a member of the Church. [tolerated in ELCA and REF]

There is no salvation outside of membership in the outward organization. [RC]

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

True Doctrine

(compare "Religious Unionism" below)

It is God's will for Christians to be united in their confession of all that the Bible teaches before joining in the practice of religious fellowship (worshiping, praying, and celebrating Lord's Supper together) or engaging in church work. 1 Corinthians 1:10, Philippians 2:1-2, Acts 2:42, Romans 16:17-18.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

False Doctrine

(compare "Religious Unionism" below)

Worship and joint church work may be engaged in by Christians without regard for teaching differences and variations in religious belief. It is neither necessary nor possible for Christians to be united in their confession of all that the Bible teaches. Latitudes of opinion on what the Bible teaches should be tolerated in the church. [ELCA, tolerated in LC-MS, REF, others]

*If you abide in My Word,
you are My disciples indeed.
And you shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you free.
John 8:31.*

CONVERSION

True Doctrine

Unbelievers are converted to faith in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit working through *the Means of Grace, the Gospel in Word and Sacrament*. Romans 10:17, 1 Cor. 6:11, 4:15, 12:3; 1 Peter 1:23; Titus 3:4-5.

All human beings are born spiritually blind and dead in sin. Therefore they are unable to believe in Christ or make the decision to come to Him on their own. Romans 8:7; 1 Corinthians 2:14, 1 Corinthians 12:3.

No one is able to contribute in any way, or cooperate with God even a little, in his conversion. Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-9, 1 Corinthians 12:3.

CONVERSION

False Doctrine

Unbelievers may be converted to faith in Christ apart from the working of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel, "out of the blue," without any means. [CHAR, HB]

Human beings, though born sinful, still possess the ability to come to Christ on their own. They can, by an act of their own will, make a decision to believe. [BAP, CHAR, other REF]

Some are converted to Christ because they have a better attitude toward God than others or because they resisted the Holy Spirit's call to faith less than others. [ELCA, REF]

CREATION

True Doctrine

God created the world in six days by the power of His Word. The story of the creation, as recorded in Genesis 1, is a historical fact. See also Exodus 20:11, Hebrews 11:3.

Each of the creation days was an ordinary 24-hour day. Genesis 1.

Adam and Eve were real historical persons. Genesis 1:26-27, Matthew 19:4.

CREATION

False Doctrine

The account of the creation in Genesis 1 is a myth. Evolution is a possible explanation for how our world originated. [tolerated in ELCA, many others]

The creation days were long periods of time. [tolerated in ELCA, others]

Adam and Eve were mythical characters, not historical persons. [tolerated in ELCA, others]

HOMOSEXUALITY

True Doctrine

Scripture declares that homosexuality is sinful and contrary to God's intention in creating man and woman. We must warn the impenitent that homosexuality, like all sins, excludes people from eternal life. The church must not bless same-sex marriages, nor retain in the public ministry those who defend, condone, or persist in words or actions contrary to God's will. We are happy to assure the repentant who are struggling against this sin that they have forgiveness through the blood of Christ. God provides the remedy for all moral failure through faith in Jesus Christ and the life changing power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 1:18-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 John 1:5-9.

HOMOSEXUALITY

False Doctrine

Homosexuality is a predetermined orientation that is normal and natural for some, just as heterosexual orientation is normal and natural for others. Homosexuality is not sinful. It is simply the way that a minority of our population expresses human love and sexuality. The church should bless same-sex marriages. Openly gay or lesbian pastors may be ordained. [tolerated in ELCA, many others]

*God our Savior desires all men
to be saved and to come to the
knowledge of the truth.
1 Timothy 2:3.*

JUSTIFICATION

True Doctrine
(compare "Salvation" below)

God has justified (declared not guilty) all sinners for the sake of Jesus, who made atonement for the sins of the world by substitutionary His death on the cross. 2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 3:23-24, Romans 4:25.

We are justified by grace THROUGH FAITH ALONE. Romans 5:18-19, 1 Corinthians 5:18-21.

LORD'S SUPPER

True Doctrine

The body and blood of Christ are present in the Lord's Supper in, with, and under the earthly elements, bread and wine (doctrine of the Real Presence). Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:18-20, 1 Corinthians 11:24-25.

In the Lord's Supper Jesus gives the blessing of the forgiveness of sins to all believing communicants (Compare passages above.)

God blesses each believing communicant with the gift of salvation (eternal life in heaven) along with the gift of forgiveness. Luke 1:77.

When Christians commune with each other they give expression to the Spirit-worked unity of faith they share. It is Jesus' will that we practice close communion. John 17:20-23, Romans 5:5-6, 1 Cor.1:10, 10:17.

JUSTIFICATION

False Doctrine
(compare "Salvation" below)

God justifies sinners in view of their faith or because of a better attitude on the part of those who are saved. [ELCA]

We are justified by "grace infused" and the performance of good works. [RC]

LORD'S SUPPER

False Doctrine

The earthly elements bread and wine only symbolize Jesus' body and blood. [REF] The bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ. [RC]

The forgiveness of sins is only symbolized in the Lord's Supper. [REF] Communicants receive the blessings of God's love through the outward act of receiving the Lord Supper. [RC]

Salvation is not a blessing conveyed to communicants in the Sacrament. [REF] The blessings of God's love are obtained by the good work of communing. [RC]

When the Lord's Supper is celebrated all who are present are eligible to commune, even when they are not united in their beliefs and confession (open communion). [ELCA, REF, tolerated in LC-MS]

MISSION OF THE CHURCH

True Doctrine

The mission of the Church is to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission to proclaim and spread the saving message of His Gospel to all people. Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 24:47, John 20:21-23, 1 Cor.2:1-2.

The Church is to teach all that the Lord has commanded in Scripture ... and only Scripture. Matthew 28:20, 2 Timothy 4:1-5.

RELIGIOUS UNIONISM

True Doctrine
(compare "Church Fellowship" above)

False teaching is any teaching that contradicts the Truth of the Bible. (The teachings of the Bible are clear.) Jer.23:31-32, Psalm 119:105, John 8:31-32).

All religious teachings should be tested in the light of Scripture. Teachings contrary to Scripture should be rejected. Jer.23:25-29, 1 Thess.5:21-22, 1 John 4:1.

God tells us to avoid religious fellowship with false teachers as soon as it is noticed that they are defending or promoting ("sticking to") their error. Romans 16:17-18.

God tells us to avoid religious fellowship with false teachers out of love for the false teachers (to warn them of the danger to their faith) and out of love for our souls (to prevent our faith from being damaged or destroyed). 1 Cor. 14:8, Gal.5:9, 2 Timothy 2:17-19.⁶

MISSION OF THE CHURCH

False Doctrine

The mission of the Church is social in nature [many]

The Church is to teach what is in the Bible, plus the traditions of the church. [LDS, RC]

RELIGIOUS UNIONISM

False Doctrine
(compare "Church Fellowship" above)

It is not possible for anyone to know or teach the whole Truth. (Many teachings of the Bible are unclear.) [many]

Differences of opinion about what the Bible teaches should be tolerated in the Church. [ELCA, REF, tolerated in LC-MS].

Fellowship with false teachers may continue until you have reached the conviction that warning them about their error will serve no purpose, or as long as you believe there is hope of leading them back to the way of truth. [ELS, LC-MS, WELS]

To avoid religious fellowship with false teachers and their adherents is unloving.

*Contend earnestly for the faith which was
once for all delivered to the saints.*

Jude 3.

⁴Weak brothers (Christians who exhibit weakness in faith or ignorance in their knowledge of the Bible) are not to be avoided. In their case God directs us to provide patient instruction in the Word so their Bible knowledge may grow and their faith in Jesus may be nurtured and strengthened. Romans 15:1-2, Galatians 6:1-2.

RESURRECTION

True Doctrine
(compare "Second Coming
of Christ" below)

Jesus rose physically from the dead on Easter morning. Matthew 28, Luke 24, 1 Corinthians 15.

All the dead will rise on the Last Day. Believers will enter eternal life in heaven. Unbelievers will suffer eternal punishment in hell. Job 19:26-27, Matthew 25:31-46, John 5:28-29, 1 Cor.15:51-57.

RESURRECTION

False Doctrine
(compare "Second Coming
of Christ" below)

Jesus did not rise physically from the dead. [J, many others]. The biblical account of His resurrection is a myth and not a historical event. [tolerated in ELCA, others]

Some will be taken to heaven bodily before the Last Day. [CHAR, JW, SDA, tolerated in ELCA, all who espouse the millennialist teaching of a 1,000 year earthly reign of Christ]

*If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus
and believe in your heart that God has raised
Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Romans 10:9.

SALVATION

True Doctrine
(compare "Justification" above)

Jesus died on the cross for all sinners and God has declared all of them forgiven for Jesus' sake. Romans 5:6, 2 Corinthians 5:19, 1 John 2:2.

The sinner is saved BY GRACE ALONE through faith in Christ, apart from the works of the law. Romans 3:24, Ephesians 2:8-9.

God wants everyone to be saved. 1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9.

Jesus Christ is the one and only way to heaven. Acts 4:12, John 14:6, 1 John 5:11-12.

SALVATION

False Doctrine
(compare "Justification" above)

Jesus died on the cross only for those who end up in heaven. [some REF]

The sinner is saved by "grace infused" and by doing works of the law. [RC]

God chose some people to be saved and others to be damned. [REF]

There are other ways to get to heaven besides Jesus. [CS, J, U, others] All who are sincere in what they believe will be saved. [tolerated in ELCA, others]

*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My
words will by no means pass away.
Matthew 24:35.*

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

True Doctrine
(compare "Resurrection" above)

On the Last Day the Lord Jesus will come from heaven to the judge the living and the dead. Matthew 25:31-46, John 5:28-29; Acts 1:11, 10:42, 17:30-31; Romans 2:5-6.

The return of Christ for judgment at the end of the world is certain. The exact time of His return and of the end can't be determined. Matthew 24:36, 1 Peter 4:7, 2 Peter 3:10.

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

False Doctrine
(compare "Resurrection" above)

Before the Last Day He will come from heaven to take believers off the earth in a secret rapture. Later He will return to rule visibly on earth from the city of Jerusalem for 1,000 years. Still later, He will return for judgment on the Last Day (millennialism). [CHAR, REF, HB, JW, many others]

It is possible to calculate the exact time when the end of the world will happen. [JW, CHAR, REF, HB, many others]

SIN

True Doctrine

Man lost the perfect righteousness and knowledge of God's will (image of God) with which he was created. This happened when he was tempted by Satan and sinned (Genesis 3). Since the fall into sin, everyone is conceived and born in sin (original or birth sin). Everyone is inclined by nature to transgress God's law by evil thoughts, words, and deeds (actual sin). Psalm 51:5, Genesis 5:3; Matthew 15:19, 1 John 3:4.

All people are accountable to God for their birth sin and their actual sin, including babies. Both adults and children are liable for God's punishment for their sin. Romans 5:12, 6:23a.

SIN

False Doctrine

There is no such thing as sin. Evil is the result of the corrupt environment we live in. All talk of Satan and demons in the Bible is symbolic. [tolerated in ELCA]

God does not hold little children accountable for the sins they commit until they reach an age of discretion. [BAP, CoC]

TRINITY True Doctrine

The true God is Triune (one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). All three Persons of the Godhead are co-eternal, and co-equal in honor, power, and glory. Deuteronomy 6:4, Numbers 6:24-26, Matthew 28:19; the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.

The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.
2 Timothy 4:3.

VIRGIN BIRTH True Doctrine

Jesus Christ was miraculously conceived in Mary's womb by the power of the Holy Spirit. He was born of a virgin. Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, Luke 2:35.

WOMEN'S ROLE True Doctrine

God limits the pastoral office to men. 1 Timothy 2:11-14, 3:2; 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

The exercise of headship or authority in church and home is to be carried out by men. Genesis 3:16, Ephesians 5:22-25, 1 Peter 3:1-5.

TRINITY False Doctrine

The true God is not Triune. [CS, J, JW, LDS, U, tolerated in ELCA] Jesus was a mortal man, not the eternal Son of God. [CS, J, JW, LDS, U, tolerated in ELCA]. The Holy Spirit is an impersonal force. [JW]

VIRGIN BIRTH False Doctrine

Jesus was born in a natural way like all others. [tolerated in ELCA, LC-MS, BAP, others]

WOMEN'S ROLE False Doctrine

Women are allowed to serve as pastors. [EPIS, ELCA, REF]

Woman suffrage is practiced in the church. [ELCA, EPIS, REF, practiced in LC-MS, others]

Part 2 False Teachings Arranged by Religious Group

HEATHENISM (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and others.)

The heathen religions teach...

Worship of a false god (idolatry)
The true God is not the Triune God
Jesus is not the eternal Son of God
Jesus is not the only Way to heaven
Good works are essential for salvation
The Bible is not God's Word
Many other unchristian beliefs

But the Bible Says ...

Exodus 20:3, Matthew 4:10
Matthew 28:19
John 1:1, John 5:23
John 14:6, Acts 4:12
Ephesians 2:8-9
2 Timothy 3:15-16

NON-CHRISTIAN CULT RELIGIONS

1. Jehovah's Witnesses

The Jehovah's Witnesses teach...

The Bible isn't the sole authority in matters of faith; beliefs are based on writings of men (*Watchtower Magazine*, etc.)
The true God is not triune
Jesus is a created being; He is not a Person of the Triune God
The Holy Spirit is an invisible force, not a Person of the Triune God
Christ's death isn't sufficient to atone for the sins of all
Christ rose from the dead with a re-created body
Only 144,000 will be saved
Christ will return to rule on earth for 1,000 years (millennialism)
Quote and apply Bible passages out of their context

But the Bible Says...

Proverbs 30:5-6, Luke 16:29, John 17:20

Matthew 28:19
John 5:23, Colossians 2:8-9

Acts 5:3-4

Romans 3:23-26, 5:1

1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Luke 24:38-40
John 3:16
John 18:36

2 Peter 1:20

Beware of false prophets who come to you sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.
Matthew 7:15.

2. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons)

The Latter Day Saints teach...

The Bible isn't the sole authority in matters of faith; beliefs based on writings of men and ongoing revelation (*Book of Mormon*, etc.)
The true God is not triune
Jesus is not the eternal God
Salvation is by faith and obedience to the laws and ordinances of the church
There are many gods; all male Mormons are striving to become a god
There will be eternal marriage in heaven
Baptism for the dead is practiced
Polygamy is practiced

But the Bible Says...

Proverbs 30:5-6, 2 Peter 1:21, Jeremiah 23:31-32

Matthew 28:19
John 1:1, John 5:23
Ephesians 2:8-9

Isaiah 43:10, 1 Timothy 2:5

Matthew 22:30, Romans 7:2
Hebrews 9:27
Genesis 2:24, 1 Corinthians 7:2

3. Christian Science

Christian Science teaches...

The true God is not the Triune God
Jesus is not the eternal God
Jesus is a "Way-shower," not a Savior
All sin, disease, death is unreal (overcome by faith and prayer)
Their book *Science and Health* supersedes the authority of the Bible

But the Bible Says...

Matthew 28:19
John 1:1, John 5:23
Ephesians 1:7
Romans 6:23, 7:18; Acts 14:22

2 Peter 1:21, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Other groups such as the Unification Church ("Moonies"), Unitarian and Universalist churches, and Spiritualists like to hide behind the guise of Christianity but are unchristian in their teachings and beliefs.

*Their message will spread like cancer.
Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,
who have strayed concerning the truth.
2 Timothy 2:17-18.*

Christian Groups

1. Roman Catholic Church

Roman Catholicism teaches...

The Pope is the representative of Christ on earth
Papal pronouncements are authoritative and infallible (on a par with the Bible)
There are three authoritative sources for religious teaching: The Bible, papal decrees, and church tradition
We are saved through faith in Christ and the performance of good works
There is no salvation outside the Catholic Church
We should pray to Mary and the saints
Indulgences (remission before God of temporal punishments for sin) should be dispensed in the church
The Mass (Lord's Supper) is a sin-sacrifice
Priests should not marry

But the Bible Says...

Matthew 23:9, 1 Timothy 2:5
1 Corinthians 3:11
Proverbs 30:5-6; Matthew 15:9, Jeremiah 23:31
John 17:17, 2 Peter 1:21

Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:28, 10:4; Galatians 3:10-11
John 3:16, Romans 10:9

Matthew 4:10, John 16:23
Psalm 32:5, John 19:30, 1 John 1:8-9

Hebrews 7:16-27, 10:18
1 Timothy 3:2, 4:1-3

2. Eastern (Greek) Orthodox Church

The body traces its roots back to the Great Schism of 1054, when it separated from Rome due to a power struggle in the church. The Eastern Orthodox Church is virtually identical in its teachings to the Roman Catholic Church, except that it does not accept the authority and infallibility of the Pope.

*Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth,
and the life. No one comes to the
Father except through Me.
John 14:6*

3. Reformed Denominations

Major denominations within this group include: Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, United Church of Christ, and Pentecostal groups such as Assembly of God and the Church of God. Most TV Evangelists also are Reformed in their beliefs.

The Reformed Churches teach...⁵

Babies are not born sinful (Or: God does not hold babies accountable for sin)
 Babies should not be baptized
 Water baptism does not forgive sin or save (it is only a sign of God's forgiveness)
 Christ's body and blood aren't present in the Lord's Supper, only symbolized
 Unbelievers have the ability to come to faith (decide for Christ) on their own
 Jesus' death on the cross was intended only for the salvation of some, not all
 Baptism of the Spirit is an event occurring after salvation; it is something some Christians will experience, not all
 We should expect the Holy Spirit to bestow charismatic gifts on Christians today (speaking in tongues)
 Confession that "Jesus is Lord" sufficient for the practice of religious fellowship
 Christ will return to rule on earth for 1,000 years (millennialism)
 The time of Christ's return can be predicted
 The pastoral office is open to women
 All Christians must tithe

But the Bible Says...

Psalms 51:5; John 3:5-6
 Romans 6:23a
 Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38-39
 Galatians 3:27, 1 Peter 3:21
 Luke 22:19-20,
 1 Corinthians 10:16
 1 Corinthians 12:3; John 6:44, 15:16
 John 1:29, 1 Timothy 2:4,
 1 John 2:2
 Romans 6:3-4,
 Ephesians 1:3-14
 Mark 16:17-18, 20; Acts 2:43,
 2 Cor. 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-5
 Romans 15:5-6, 16:17-18;
 1 Corinthians 1:10
 John 18:36
 Mark 13:32
 1 Timothy 2:11-14, 3:2;
 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.
 2 Corinthians 9:7

4. Seventh Day Adventists (SDA)

14 million adherents

In addition to many of the errors listed above

The SDA Church teaches ...

Saturday is the one divinely ordained worship day

But the Bible Says...

Colossians 2:16-17

*But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them.
 2 Timothy 3:13-14.*

5. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

Formed in 1988 by the merging of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), the American Lutheran Church (ALC), and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC).

The ELCA teaches...⁶

The Bible contains errors, myths, and contradictions
 The true God is not Triune
 Satan is not a real being, only a symbol
 It is questionable that Jesus rose from the dead physically
 Jesus Christ may not have been born of a virgin
 Salvation may be found in other religions
 Evolution is a possible explanation for the origin of the world
 "Agreement in the Gospel" is sufficient for the practice of religious fellowship
 Women may serve as pastors
 Abortion is a mother's choice
 Homosexuality/lesbianism is an acceptable lifestyle

But the Bible Says...

Proverbs 30:5; John 10:35, 17:17
 Matthew 28:19
 Ephesians 6:11, 1 Peter 5:8
 1 Corinthians 15:3-4,
 Luke 24:38-40
 Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23,
 Luke 2:35
 John 14:6, Acts 4:12
 Genesis 1, Exodus 20:11,
 Hebrews 11:3
 Romans 15:5-6, 16:17-18;
 1 Corinthians 1:10
 1 Timothy 2:11-14, 3:2;
 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.
 Psalm 127:3, 139:13; Jer. 1:5
 Romans 1:26-28, 1 Cor. 6:9-11

⁵ Note: Not *all* of these errors are taught by *all* Reformed denominations. These are only *general* areas of difference between Reformed churches and Bible-based confessional Lutheranism.

⁶ Note: Some of these errors are not part of the official doctrinal stance of the ELCA but are being taught or tolerated in some of their churches and seminaries.

6. The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LC-MS)

The Missouri Synod teaches...

Membership in lodges is allowed

Membership in scouting and fraternal benefit societies is allowed

Woman suffrage (voting privileges) is allowed

Joint church work engaged in with other churches without regard for teaching differences

Open communion is allowed

Doctrinal discipline is not carried out faithfully

But the Bible Says...

Romans 16:17-18,
2 Corinthians 6:16-17

Romans 16:17-18,
1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

1 Timothy 2:12-14

Romans 16:17-18,
1 Corinthians 1:10

1 Corinthians 1:10, 10:17

Romans 16:17-18

7. Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

(in fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod)

The Wisconsin Synod teaches ...

Religious fellowship with false teachers should be terminated when it appears that they are persisting in their error, and additional efforts to lead them back to the way of truth will serve no purpose

Membership in fraternal benefit societies (e.g. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans) is acceptable, though these societies provide financial support to false teachers

But the Bible Says...

Romans 16:17-18

Romans 16:17-18,
1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

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*Be faithful until death, and I will
give you the crown of life.*

Revelation 2:10

O Holy Spirit, grant us grace
That we our Lord and Savior
In faith and fervent love embrace
And truly serve Him ever,
So that when death is drawing nigh,
We to His open wounds may fly
And find in them salvation.

Help us that we Thy saving Word
In faithful hearts may treasure;
Let e'er that Bread of Life afford
New grace in richest measure.
Yea, let us die to every sin,
For heaven create us new within
That fruits of faith may flourish.

And when our earthly race is run,
Death's bitter hour impending,
Then may Thy work in us begun
Continue till life's ending,
Until we gladly may commend
Our souls into our Savior's hand
To rest in peace eternal.

The Lutheran Hymnal, #293



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This pamphlet is a revision of a work originally published in the 1980's by Pastors Daniel Fleischer and David Schierenbeck under the title: "Test the Spirits" 1 John 4:1 -- A Reference Chart of Doctrinal Differences

This revision prepared by Pastor Tom Schuetze for the parishioners of Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, Coloma, Michigan, June 2007

Biblical quotations are from The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., c1982)