

Gateway Bible Church
Sunday, September 16, 2012
“Differences” Series # 7

Baha'i



TERMS

Baha'i is a movement started by an Iranian wool merchant and Shi'ite Muslim to reform Islam

Many Muslims had been waiting for another prophet to succeed Mohammed (source: So What's the Difference, Fritz Ridenour, page 162)

Mirza Ali Mohammed – He came along in **1844** and claimed to be the one who would herald the coming of the new prophet

Mohammed became known as “**The Bab**” (Bob), which means “Gate”

His followers were called **Babists** (or Bobis)

He was executed in **1850** by Muslim zealots that did not want reform (He was only 31 years old)

In **1863** one of Mohammed's followers, **Mirza Husayn Ali** (1817-1892) took the name

Baha'u'llah and announced that he was the long awaited prophet

He wrote and organized what has become known as the Baha'i faith

The Most Holy Book is the most important book he wrote

After his death, his son **Abdu'l Baha'** (1844-1921) became the leader of the movement

He brought Baha'i to the United States

He led in the building of a Baha'i temple in Wilmette, Illinois (north of Chicago)

In 1921 his grandson, **Shoghi Effendi** became leader of the movement

He died in 1957 and did not have a successor

Leadership of the Baha'i faith was then transferred to the nine-member **Universal House of Justice**, based in Haifa, Israel, and a worldwide parliament

Serving in this parliamentary body are nine elected Baha'i representatives from each country where the church is active

(source: Handbook of World Religions, Len Woods, page 11)

At the heart of the Baha'i faith is the belief that God has revealed himself in human history through **nine great manifestations**:

1. Abraham
2. Krishna
3. Moses
4. Zoroaster
5. Buddha
6. Jesus
7. Muhammed
8. The Bab
9. Baha'u'llah

The **core doctrines** of the Baha'i faith can be attractive in their simplicity:

- 1) Adoration of one God and the reconciliation of all major religions.
- 2) Appreciation of the diversity and morality of the human family and the elimination of all prejudice.

3) The establishment of world peace, equality of women and men, and universal education.

4) Cooperation between Science and Religion in the individual's search for truth. To these may be added certain implicit beliefs and practices:

5) A Universal Auxiliary Language.

6) Universal Weights and Measures.

7) God who is Himself unknowable nevertheless reveals himself through manifestations.

8) These manifestations are a kind of progressive revelation.

9) No proselytizing (aggressive witnessing).

10) The study of different Scriptures besides simply Baha'i books.

11) Prayer and worship is obligatory and much of that according to specific instructions.

(Source: www.gotquestions.org)

Things in common with Christianity

Personal integrity

There is one God

Differences

The **Baha'i** view of God is the same strict monotheism of Judaism or Islam (God is one, period)

Biblical Christianity believes in the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)

The **Baha'i** faith teaches that God is unknowable in His essence. (source: www.gotquestions.org)

Biblical Christianity teaches that God can be known

Romans 1:20 (NASB)

²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

The **Baha'i** faith sees Jesus just as another man whose career as Lord ended when Mohammed founded Islam in the 7th century

The **Baha'i** faith rejects Jesus' incarnation

Biblical Christianity believes Incarnation is a term used by theologians to indicate that Jesus, the Son of God, took on human flesh.

The **purpose** of the Incarnation was not just to taste food or to feel sorrow.

IMPORTANT: The Son of God came in the flesh in order to be the Savior of mankind.

First, it was necessary to be born "under the law"

Galatians 4:4 (NASB)

⁴But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

All of us have failed to fulfill God's Law.

Christ came in the flesh, under the Law, to fulfill the Law on our behalf

Matthew 5:17 (NASB)

¹⁷"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Galatians 4:5 (NASB)

⁵so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Second, it was necessary for the Savior to shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins

Hebrews 9:22 (NASB)

²²And according to the Law, *one may almost say*, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

A blood sacrifice, of course, requires a body of flesh and blood. And this was God's plan for the Incarnation

Hebrews 10:5 (NASB)

⁵Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, But a body You have prepared for Me;

IMPORTANT: Without the Incarnation, Christ could not really die, and the cross is meaningless.

God did an incredible work in sending His only begotten Son into the world and providing us with a salvation we do not deserve.

(Explanation from: www.gotquestions.org)

The **Baha'i** faith rejects the bodily resurrection of Jesus

Biblical Christianity believes the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important event in history, providing

irrefutable evidence that Jesus is who He claimed to be – the Son of God.

The resurrection was not only the supreme validation of His deity; it also validated the Scriptures, which foretold His coming and resurrection.

It, also, authenticated His claims that He would rise on the 3rd day

John 2:19-21 (NASB)

¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" ²¹But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

The **Baha'i** faith claims that Baha'u'llah is the fulfillment of Christ's promise of the Holy Spirit. The Baha'i faith reduces Jesus to something that has passed and been replaced by a more recent and greater manifestation

Biblical Christianity believes Christ clearly claims His deity

John 14:1-9 (NASB)

¹“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴And you know the way where I am going.” ⁵Thomas *said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” ⁶Jesus *said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. ⁷If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.” ⁸Philip *said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” ⁹Jesus *said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

The **Baha’i** faith does not believe Christ is the only way to God (They believe truth is relative, not absolute, and revelation is continuous and never final)

(source: Effendi, Baha'u'llah, page 133 [as quoted in So What’s the Difference, by Fritz Ridenour, page 164])

Biblical Christianity believes Jesus is the source of life and truth

John 1:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 18:37 (NASB)

³⁷ Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say *correctly* that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”