

A Study Of Scientology

Introduction. According to their website, the word "Scientology" literally means "the study of truth." It comes from the Latin word "scio" meaning "knowing in the fullest sense of the word" and the Greek word "logos" meaning "study of." Scientology is supposedly the study and handling of the spirit in relationship to itself, others and all of life. The religion comprises a body of knowledge extending from certain fundamental truths. Primary among these: Man is an immortal, spiritual being. His experience extends well beyond a single lifetime. His capabilities are unlimited, even if not presently realized -- and those capabilities can be realized. He is able to not only solve his own problems, accomplish his goals and gain happiness, but also achieve new, higher states of awareness and ability. They also claim that, "Through Scientology, people all over the world are achieving the long-sought goal of true spiritual release and freedom."

As we will see through the course of this lesson, Scientology is one of the strangest religious "doctrines" ever created by man. In fact, the claims of Scientology often sound more like science fiction than religion! Peter's description of false teachers in 2 Peter 2:12-19 is fitting for what we will see in Scientology.

I. **Background Of Scientology**

- A. Scientology is the creation of a writer named L. Ron Hubbard. He was moderately successful as a science fiction and novel writer until he created and published a systematic presentation of his quasi-psychotherapeutic and religious ideas in May 1950.
 1. This book, entitled *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, described Hubbard's self-improvement techniques. With *Dianetics*, Hubbard introduced the concept of "auditing," a two-person question-and-answer therapy that focused on painful memories. According to Hubbard, dianetic auditing could eliminate emotional problems, cure physical illnesses and increase intelligence. In his introduction to *Dianetics*, Hubbard declared that "the creation of dianetics is a milestone for man comparable to his discovery of fire and superior to his inventions of the wheel and arch."
 - a) *Dianetics* sold 150,000 copies within a year of publication and has now totaled millions of copies.
 - b) Until his death in 1986, Hubbard wrote prolifically about his revolutionary new way to promote mental, emotional and spiritual perfection in dozens of Scientology books.
 2. Upon becoming more widely available, *Dianetics* became an object of critical scrutiny by the press and the medical establishment.

- a) Consumer Reports, in an August 1951 assessment of *Dianetics*, dryly noted "one looks in vain in *Dianetics* for the modesty usually associated with announcement of a medical or scientific discovery," and stated that the book had become "the basis for a new cult."
 - b) They warned their readers against the "possibility of serious harm resulting from the abuse of intimacies and confidences associated with the relationship between auditor and patient," an especially serious risk, they concluded, "in a cult without professional traditions."
 - c) Numerous mental health organizations, professionals and periodicals (including *Today's Health* and *Psychology Today*) have decried Scientology for its unorthodox methods which some see as psychologically dangerous. Other more general periodicals (including *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Life*, *Time* and *People*) have chronicled the many problems with Scientology over the years.
- B. In mid-1952, Hubbard expanded *Dianetics* into a secular philosophy which he called Scientology. In December 1953, Hubbard declared Scientology a religion and the first Church of Scientology was founded in Camden, New Jersey. He moved to England at about the same time, and supervised the organization from an office in London.

II. **Beliefs Of Scientology**

- A. Hubbard claimed to have conducted years of intensive research into the nature of human existence; to describe his findings, he developed an elaborate vocabulary with many newly coined terms. He codified a set of Scientology truths and an "applied religious philosophy" that promised to improve the condition of the immortal human spirit, which he called the "thetan." Most of Scientology focuses on the "rehabilitation" of the "thetan."
- 1. Hubbard's followers believed his "technology" gave them access to their past lives, the traumas of which led to failures in the present unless they were audited. By this time, Hubbard had introduced a biofeedback device to the auditing process, which he called an "electropsychometer" or "E-meter."
 - 2. It was invented in the 1940s by a chiropractor and Dianetics enthusiast named Volney Mathison. This machine, related to the electronic lie detectors of the time, is used by Scientologists in auditing to evaluate "mental masses" surrounding the "thetan." These "masses" are claimed to impede the "thetan" from realizing its full potential.

B. Scientology teaches that as these immortal spirits move from life to life they retain suppressed memories of all the bad that have happened to them.

1. Members of Scientology start out as "preclears." As they work through the various counseling sessions they advance through various levels until they are declared "cleared," meaning freed from the aberrations of the mind. They are now called an "Operating Thetan."
 - a) When someone reaches the advanced levels above the state of "clear" they encounter the story of Xenu. Xenu was supposed to have gathered up all the overpopulation in this sector of the galaxy 75 million years ago, brought them to Earth and then exterminated them using hydrogen bombs. The souls of these murdered people, called "body thetans," are then supposed to infest the body of everyone.
 - b) On the advanced levels of Scientology a person "audits out" these "body thetans" telepathically by getting them to re-experience their being exterminated by hydrogen bombs. So people on these levels assume all their bad thoughts and faulty memories are due to these "body thetans" infesting every part of their body and influencing them mentally.
 - (1) Hubbard claimed a good deal of physical disease was psychosomatic, and one who, like himself, had attained the enlightened state of "clear" and become an "Operating Thetan" would be relatively disease free.
 - (2) According to biographers, this is why he went to great lengths to suppress his recourse to modern medicine, attributing symptoms to ancient attacks by spiritual and earthly malicious forces.
 - (3) In 1952, Hubbard said, "Of all the ills of man which can be successfully processed by Scientology, arthritis ranks near the top. In skilled hands, this ailment, though misunderstood and dreaded in the past, already has begun to become history. Twenty-five hours of Scientology by an auditor who fairly understands how to process arthritis can be said to produce an invariable alleviation of the condition. Some cases, even severe ones, have responded in as little as two hours of processing, according to reports from auditors in the field" (*Journal of Scientology*, Issue 1-G).
2. Hubbard claimed that the only possibility for spiritual salvation was a concerted effort to "clear the planet," that is, to bring the benefits of Scientology to all people everywhere, and attack all forces, social and spiritual, hostile to the interests of the movement. "Operating Thetans" then work through a whole new set of levels to learn how

to spread Scientology and become auditors for others. Scientologists call this path to "enlightenment" the "Bridge to Total Freedom."

3. This really makes you wonder how people could possibly believe in Scientology.
 - a) Dr. Charles Tart first used the term, "altered states of consciousness." He says that during deep hypnosis, "a transition to a new state of consciousness" takes place, a state in which the hypnotized subject's identity "is potentiality, he's aware of everything and nothing, his mind is absolutely quiet, he's out of time, out of space."
 - b) Whether in cults or churches, the objective of achieving an altered state of consciousness is always the same: to dull the critical thinking process because the mind is seen as the obstacle to enlightenment.
 - c) Scientology indoctrination achieves these altered states of consciousness. The indoctrination usually begins with the Communication Course Training Routines. These are supposed to enhance the ability to communicate, but have been called by one expert "the most overt form of hypnosis used by any destructive cult."
 - (1) In the first Training Routine, two people sit silently facing each other, with their eyes closed. In the second, they stare at each other, sometimes for hours on end, inducing hallucinations and an uncritical euphoria.
 - (2) Repetition during these routines makes the individual more susceptible to direction from Scientology.

C. Scientology teaches that it is a supplement to other religions.

1. In other words, people in Scientology believe you can be a Christian, or a Buddhist, or a Jew and a Scientologist at the same time.
2. However, the teachings of Scientology are in direct contradiction to the teachings of the Bible. Consider the following examples:
 - a) "There are gods above all other gods, and gods beyond the gods of the universes" (L. Ron Hubbard, *Scientology 8-8008*, 1953, 1967, pg. 73). What does the Bible say (Isaiah 43:10-11; 44:6)?
 - b) "You will find the cross as a symbol all over the universe, and the Christ legend as an implant in preclears a million years ago" (L. Ron Hubbard, *Professional Auditor's Bulletin #31*). What does the Bible say (1 John 1:1-3)?
 - c) "Neither Lord Buddha nor Jesus Christ were OTs ["Operating thetans," kc] according to evidence. They were just a shade above clear" (L. Ron Hubbard, *Certainty Magazine*, Vol. 5, no. 10). What does the Bible say (Colossians 1:15-17)?

- d) "Handling truth is a touchy business ... Tell an acceptable truth" (L. Ron Hubbard, *The Missing Ingredient*, 1970). What does the Bible say (Matthew 5:37)?
 - e) "It is despicable and utterly beneath contempt to tell a man he must repent, that he is evil" (L. Ron Hubbard, *Professional Auditor's Bulletin #31*). What does the Bible say (Luke 19:10; Mark 2:17)?
 - f) "... personal salvation in one lifetime [is] freedom from the cycle of birth and death [reincarnation].... Religious practice of all faiths is the universal way to wisdom, understanding and/or salvation" (L. Ron Hubbard, *Scientology: A World Religion*, 1974, ppg. 16, 35). What does the Bible say (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)?
 - g) "... hell is a total myth, an invention just to make people very unhappy and a vicious lie" (L. Ron Hubbard, *Professional Auditor's Bulletin #31*). What does the Bible say (Matthew 25:41, 46)?
- D. Scientology discourages any inquiry into its teachings or methods.
1. Scientology has a large legal and public relations department dedicated to ruthlessly protecting the interests of Scientology from any critics or detractors.
 - a) "Never permit an 'open-minded' approach ... Never let them be half-minded about being Scientologists" (L. Ron Hubbard, *Keeping Scientology Working*, HCO PL February 7, 1965). What does the Bible say (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; 1 John 4:1)?
 - b) "The law can be used very easily to harass ... the purpose of the suit is to harass and discourage rather than to win.... The law can be used very easily to harass, and ... will generally be sufficient to cause [the enemy's] professional decease. If possible, of course, ruin him utterly" (L. Ron Hubbard, *The Scientologist: A Manual on the Dissemination of Material*, reprinted in *The Technical Bulletins of Dianetics and Scientology*, Volume 2, pp. 151-171, 1979. Also, *Magazine Articles on Level O Checksheet*, American Saint Hill Organization, 1968). What does the Bible say (Matthew 5:25; I Corinthians 6:7)?
 - c) "An enemy ... may be injured by any means or tricked, sued, or lied to or destroyed" (L. Ron Hubbard, *HCO Policy Letter*, 1967). What does the Bible say (Luke 6:27-31)?
 2. Books critical of Scientology have been swiftly removed from the market by publishers unwilling to fight the intense pressure against them.
- E. Scientology has been blasted by courts in different countries.
1. In 1984 a High Court of London judge stated that Scientology is "dangerous, immoral, sinister and corrupt" and barred Hubbard

- from the United Kingdom. He furthermore wrote, "Scientology is both immoral and socially obnoxious.... It is corrupt, sinister and dangerous. It is corrupt because it is based on lies and deceit and has its real objective money and power for Mr. Hubbard.... It is sinister because it indulges in infamous practices both to its adherents who do not toe the line unquestioningly and to those who criticize it or oppose it. It is dangerous because it is out to capture people and to indoctrinate and brainwash them so they become the unquestioning captives and tools of the cult, withdrawn from ordinary thought, living and relationships with others."
2. A justice in the Supreme Court of Victoria, Australia passed a judgment which was very critical of the organization: "Scientology is evil; its techniques are evil; its practice is a serious threat to the community, medically, morally, and socially; and its adherents are sadly deluded and often mentally ill.... (Scientology is) the world's largest organization of unqualified persons engaged in the practice of dangerous techniques which masquerade as mental therapy."

III. ***Scientology's Links To Gnosticism***

- A. It is clear from analysis that Scientology is a mixture of borrowed beliefs from a variety of religions, and not always the best selection either.
 1. One system of beliefs that stands out is ancient Gnosticism. "Gnostic" comes from a Greek work meaning "to know."
 2. One feature of Gnosticism is the control of knowledge.
 - a) Information is doled out piece by piece. Only the inner most circle of believers have the complete set of knowledge.
 - b) Many religions and pseudo-religions share this control of knowledge, such as the Freemasons.
- B. Scientology uses this layered approach to fund itself.
 1. In 1949, Hubbard is quoted as saying to Lloyd Eshbach, "Writing for a penny a word is ridiculous. If a man really wants to make a million dollars, the best way would be to start his own religion." In 1972, he said, "Make money, make more money."
 2. If true, then it was a success because in Scientology one must pay to advance to the next level. The costs are disguised as training courses and therapy sessions.
 3. The religion is divided into a seemingly endless series of levels to be obtained -- each with their associated costs. An estimate in 1995 placed the cost to reach "Clear" at \$125,000 and "Operating Thetan Level VIII" to be between \$365,000 and \$380,000! This is in great contrast to the Bible (Matthew 10:8; Luke 6:30).

C. The Gnostics believed there was a higher god trapped in the material world due to a flaw in that god's wisdom. They believe that Genesis told of how the "Jewish god" trapped souls in material bodies. To save these trapped souls, the higher god sent a messenger into this world to inform people of their divine origins. Those who understood the message were empowered to rise above the material world to enter the realm of the higher god.

Conclusion. Although official estimates from Scientology headquarters place the number of adherents at around eight million, more realistic estimates are about 100,000 to 200,000. However, those are still souls who need to be taught the true gospel of Christ. If we do ever have the opportunity to teach a Scientologist, let us do our best to pull them out of the fire (Jude 23). We must also remain on guard lest we be swept away by false doctrine (1 Corinthians 10:12).