

He say about those who believe a lie? "...because they **did not receive the love of the truth**, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong **delusion**, that they should **believe the lie**, that they all may be **condemned who did not believe the truth** but had pleasure in **unrighteousness**" (2 Thess. 2:10-12, emph. mine DP).

Any person ought to be saddened by the fact that there are men who will be lost. Even God does not want any to perish (2 Peter 3:9). There are many, however, who allow their emotions to draw them away from the truth of the matter. But God has told us that the only way we can be saved is by coming to a knowledge of the truth, repenting of our sins, and obeying His gospel (1 Timothy 2:4).

"What if they are sincerely seeking the truth?"

If members of a denomination are honestly seeking the truth then praise be to God for that. However, a person is not saved by simply seeking the truth, but by obeying the truth (2 Thessalonians 3:14; Hebrews 5:9). It is for this reason that Paul commanded us to beware lest anyone cheat us (Colossians 2:8). Men are cheated when they are lead astray by false doctrine. Those who are in the denominations are cheated so long as they continue to be deceived. The very religion that they follow is contrary to the doctrine of Christ. Whether or not they have been baptized for the forgiveness of sins has no bearing on their salvation so long as they continue in error, for their faith and their hope are not in Christ but in a lie. Jesus said "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven*" (Matthew 7:21). There are many who claim to follow Jesus and who call Him Lord. There are many who sincerely believe that they are pleasing Him with their sacrificial service. But Jesus is very clear, if we want to enter the kingdom of heaven we must do the will of the Father in heaven. Our service will not do us any good unless it conforms to the pattern set forth in God's word. All men must understand this if we are going to be saved.

Conclusion

If you are reading this and you are a member of a denomination, remember that every point made in this article was taken directly from scripture. How many of the doctrines that you currently believe are supported in this way? God gives us all things that pertain to life and godliness. At times what we need most is correction and a wake-up call (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 4:2). If you truly want to please God then you will obey His commandments (John 14:15) and throw off anything that is not from Him (Romans 13:12). Jesus is calling all men to repent and turn their hearts to Him. If you desire truth and righteousness then come to Jesus today. He is waiting!

(To learn more about the New Testament church please contact us with the information provided below)

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Contact Information:

1606 Glen Willow Rd.
P.O. Box 421
Avondale, PA 19311
Phone: (610) 268-2088
David Phillips: (302) 733-7920
Email: gospelstudies@verizon.net

Assembly Times:

Sunday
Morning Bible Study: 10:00am
Morning Worship: 11:00am
Evening Worship: 6:00pm
Wednesday
Evening Bible Study: 7:00pm

What About All The Denominations?

By David Phillips



As you therefore have received
Christ Jesus the Lord,
So walk in Him
Colossians 2:6

WHAT ABOUT ALL THE DENOMINATIONS?

It is not hard to notice that denominationalism is becoming more prevalent in the world as time goes by. With such a great presence, the idea of denominationalism has become the standard in most people's view of the church. Where once Christians were asked, "With which congregation do you meet?" or "Of which church are you a member?", of late the question has become, "Of which *denomination* are you a member?" The thought of a non-denominational church has become foreign to most.

In spite of these developments, the person who is honestly seeking the truth ought to consider the fact that the church described in the Bible is never referred to as a denomination. Nowhere in the Bible do we read of one congregation acting as head over other congregations. Nowhere do we see the apostles trying to establish a central organization to govern all the other churches in the world. On the contrary, the scriptures firmly establish Jesus as the only head of the church and each individual congregation as functioning independent of all the others.

Because of the differences between what the Bible teaches and what we see in the world today, it is extremely important for us to learn what the Bible says about the organization of the church. If the church in the New Testament was not a denomination, then we should strive to understand what God thinks about denominationalism today. When we understand this, we will be able to know whether or not we are in the church that Jesus established.

One Pattern

The Holy Spirit makes it very clear that there is only one pattern of life and godliness and that all who do not conform to that pattern are in sin (1 Corinthians 4:6; Philippians 3:17). Therefore, we must believe exactly what the scriptures say about God and His Son (1 John 4:1-3). We must believe what they say concerning the hope that we have if we obey God (1 John 3:2-3), and the judgment we will face if we disobey Him (2 Thessalonians 1:8). We must believe what they say about how to worship God (John 4:23; Matthew 15:9) and how we must live our lives

before Him (1 Corinthians 4:6; Galatians 6:16). In fact, when we step back and look at the whole picture we will find that every aspect of our lives is to be conformed to the pattern that we have in the scriptures, for in them we have "*all things that pertain to life and godliness*" (2 Peter 1:3). With this in mind we now ask...

What Does God Say About Denominationalism?

The definition of the word "denominationalism," is "sectarian spirit or policy; the tendency to **divide** into denominations or sects" (Webster's). To illustrate, in a fraction the *denominator* is what a number is *divided* by. In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul gives strong instruction concerning such division within the church. "...speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you" (1 Corinthians 1:10). "*For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, 'I am of Paul,' and another, 'I am of Apollos,' are you not carnal*" (1 Corinthians 3:3-4)? In short, Christ's church is not to be divided or denominated. The church that belongs to Christ today is no more to be named after Luther, Wesley, Menno Simons or any or any other man or doctrine than it was to be named after Paul or Apollos in the New Testament. The church is one body, the body of Christ, and its members are individual souls not various churches.

The scriptures also teach us that the church has only one head—Christ (Ephesians 5:23)—and that the only other offices within the church are the apostles, prophets, evangelists, deacons, and elders and teachers, (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:8-13). The denominations, on the other hand, have their own heads which are different from Christ. The Jehovah's Witnesses have the Watchtower, the Mormons have their prophets and modern-day apostles, and the Catholic Church has the pope and the diocese. All of these heads claim to have Christ as their ultimate head, yet (oddly enough) they all go beyond the doctrine of Christ in order to justify their doctrines. In truth, the denominations take Christ away as head of their churches and exalt men in His place.

Most of the doctrines that distinguish one denomination from another (and from the church found in the Bible) cannot be found in the Bible. Denominationalism teaches men that they can be saved in names other than that of Jesus Christ (Luther, Calvin, Mormon, the Seventh Day, Baptists, etc.). Some will argue that even though they are members of these churches, they are still called Christians. If this were true, then why do they wear the

name of these men instead of just the name of Christ? God calls us to be Christians, not Lutherans, Presbyterians, or Methodists. "*Now I say this, that each of you says, 'I am of Paul,' or 'I am of Apollos,' or 'I am of Cephas,' or 'I am of Christ.' Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*" (1 Corinthians 1:12-13). In Acts 4:12 the Bible teaches, "*there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*" than that of Jesus Christ!

This information proves that denominationalism is unscriptural. When we consider all the facts we will find that denominationalism also opposes what the Bible teaches. The Bible says there is one faith (Ephesians 4:5), but the denominations condemn those who teach that. The Bible teaches that we must not go beyond what is written for our authority (1 Corinthians 4:6), but the denominations scoff at the idea of using the Bible only. Denominationalism opposes the efforts of Christ on the cross to unite all men as one body through the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 2:14-16). Jesus died to take down the wall of separation, but the denominations seek to put one back up. If this were not true, then they would not need the names and terms of men in order to distinguish themselves and their doctrines from all the others. All Christians are commanded to speak the same things (1 Corinthians 1:10), but the denominations are content to speak differing things. In 1 Corinthians 1:11-13; 3:2-4 the apostle Paul condemns division by calling ourselves after the names of men. Yet this is exactly what the denominations have done. Jesus died to reconcile all men into one body; the denominations seek to have many bodies. Thus, the denominations are against all for which Jesus died (2 Thess. 2:9-10).

What is the Spiritual Status of People in the Denominations?

Some will argue, "People in the denominations cannot be condemned because they have been deceived and just do not know any better." God has made it very clear, however, that ignorance will never save a person. What does