



Responding To Denominationalism

Eph. 4:1-6



Denominationalism

- The prevalent and popular mindset in the religious world today.
- The very word “denomination” means a named or designated division. Denominationalism occurs when religious people and groups divide themselves on the basis of different human designations or church affiliations and different man made doctrines.
- The thinking is that...
 - One religious group is as good as another.
 - Makes no difference to what religious affiliation you have.
 - All that matters is a sincere heart.
 - There are many different religious bodies that God approves of.
 - They may wear different names, follow different standards of belief, practice different things, and all is acceptable to God.
 - Religious diversity is good. Each one can be a part of something that is fits/is pleasing to them.
 - All are just a part of God’s universal church which is comprised of denominations.
 - One is being rather narrow minded if they disagree with the above.

Eph. 4:1-6

- 1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,
- 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;
- 3 Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- 4 *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
- 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
- 6 One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all. (cf. Eph. 1:22-23)

The Beginning of the N.T. Church

- Matt. 16:18 → Upon this rock I will build my church. (cf. Eph. 3:10-11)
 - The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) are a record of the life, teaching, confirming miracles; and the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.
 - After His resurrection, Jesus gave instructions to His apostles to carry his message into the world.
 - Matt. 28:18-20 → Teach all nations, baptize in name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teach them to observe all things I have commanded you.
 - Mk. 16:15-16 → Go into all the world, preach the gospel. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - Lk. 24:47 → Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, beginning at Jerusalem.

The Beginning of the Church

- The Beginning of the church:
 - The Holy Spirit comes upon the apostles in Jerusalem as promised and prophesied and they proclaimed the gospel. (Peter: Acts 2:14-40)
 - Those who gladly received the word were baptized, (Acts 2:41) and the Lord added them to His church. (Acts 2:47; 5:11; 8:1; 11:26, etc.)
 - The church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. (Eph. 2:20)

The Beginning of the Church

- The spread of the gospel and growth of the church:
 - Acts 1:8 →
 - Acts 8:1 → Persecuted Christians scatter to regions of Judea and Samaria
 - Acts 11:19 → The gospel goes to Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch (Syria)
 - Acts 13-21 → Three missionary journeys of Paul.
 - First: Cyprus and Southern Galatia
 - Second: Europe; 18 months in Corinth
 - Third: 3 years in Ephesus.
 - Journey to Rome: Acts 27-28; cf. 28:30-31
 - Colossians 1:23 → gospel...preached to every creature which is under heaven.

Distinctive Traits of the Church That Jesus Built

- Preaching and receiving the teaching of the apostles.
 - Acts 2:42 → “they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine” (cf. Jn. 16:13; 14:26)
 - Contrary teaching was condemned. (Gal. 1:6-9; II Jn. 9)
 - The same message was proclaimed in every church. (I Cor. 15:11; I Cor. 4:17)
 - The truth of the gospel was essential. (I Thess. 2:13; II Thess. 2:13; cf. 9-12)
 - Differences and questions were settled by the word of God. (Acts 15:1-28)
 - Teaching that gave standard for daily living. (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:16-5:3; I Cor. 6:9-11)
 - Preaching that contained warnings against apostasy. (I Tim. 1:19-20; Acts 20:28-32)

Acts 20:28-32

- 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.
- 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.
- 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.
- 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.
- 32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Departures From The Truth

- **Judiazers** – taught necessary to circumcise and keep the Law of Moses
- **Gnostics** – denied that Jesus came in the flesh.
- **Marcionism** (140) – Denied that the O.T. God was the true God.
- **Montanism** (170) – Claimed to utter prophecies without control (charismatic)
- **Monarchianism** (190) – Claimed that Jesus was born just a man and became God at his baptism.
- **Manichaeism** (250) – Mani believed he was the manifestation of Christ on earth.

Departures From The Truth

- Arianism (300) – Arius taught that Jesus was a created being and not a part of the Eternal Godhead.
- **Paulicians** (500's) – Taught that only the Gospels and Paul's epistles were inspired, the others from an evil spirit.
- **Roman Catholicism** (600) – Full blown as a result of acceptance of human tradition, accommodation of paganism and abandonment of God's organization.

Departures From The Truth

- The Protestant Reformation (1500's)
 - Lutheran Church (Martin Luther)
 - Presbyterian (John Calvin, John Knox)
 - Church of England (Henry VIII)
- Baptist Church (1600)
- Methodist Church (1700)
- 1800's
 - Latter Day Saints
 - Seventh Day Adventist
 - Christian Science
 - Jehovah's Witnesses
- Pentecostalism (1900)
- Various movements to unite: Evangelicalism, Ecumenism, Community churches, etc.

Distinctive Traits of the Church That Jesus Built

- Unity among brethren based on truth.
 - Acts 2:42-46 → 42 And **they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine** and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And *all that believed were together*, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all [men], as every man had need. 46 And they, *continuing daily with one accord* in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and *singleness of heart*,
 - *Consider also: (Jn. 17:17-21; Eph. 4:1-6; I Cor. 1:10-13)*

Jn. 17:14,17-21

- 14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.
- 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.
- 18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.
- 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.
- 20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;
- 21 **That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.**

I Cor. 1:10-13

- 10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.
- 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.
- 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.
- 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Distinctive Traits of the Church That Jesus Built

- Those who were added to the church that Jesus built were called “Christians”. (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Pet. 4:16)
- They were also described in terms such as “saints” (I Cor. 1:2), “brethren (Gal. 6:1)”, “children of God” (Gal. 3:26-27), and “disciples” (Acts 20:7).
- Local churches were designated as “churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16); “church of God” (I Cor. 1:20; -- terms that relate to its Builder or Planner.
- Each local church was to have its own overseers (elders, bishops) Acts 14:23; I Pet. 5:1-3)

“Called” Christians

- Matt. 2:12 And **being warned of God in a dream** that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.
- Matt. 2:22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, **being warned of God in a dream**, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:
- Acts 10:22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, **was warned from God by an holy angel...**
- Acts 11:26 → “...And the disciples were **called** Christians first in Antioch.

“Called” Christians

- Rom. 7:3 → 3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, **she shall be called** an adulteress:
- Heb. 8:5 → Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as **Moses was admonished** of God when he was about to make the tabernacle:
- Heb. 11:7 → By faith Noah, **being warned** of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house;
- Heb. 12:25 → See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that **spake** on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

Distinctive Traits of the Church That Jesus Built

- Early Christians worshipped after a simple pattern:
 - Came together for the Lord's supper on the first day of each week. (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:23-34)
 - Gave of their means on the first day of the week. (I Cor. 16:1-2)
 - Taught and received teaching from the word of God. (Acts 20:7; 2:42)
 - Sang psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
 - Engaged in prayer. (I Cor. 14:15; Acts 2:42)
- When they did these things as instructed by the Apostles, they were following the teaching of Jesus. (Matt. 28:20)

Distinctive Traits of the Church That Jesus Built

- Became Christians and were added to the church by obeying God's conditions to receive his grace.
 - **Heard** the word of God. (Acts 18:8)
 - **Believed** the gospel. (Acts 8:12)
 - **Repented** of their sins. (Acts 2:38; 3:19)
 - **Confessed** their faith in Jesus as the Son of God. (Acts 8:37-38; Rom. 10:9-10)
 - **Were baptized** in water for the remission of their sins. (Acts 2:38)
 - **The Lord added them to His church**, they became members of the body of which Jesus is the Savior. (Eph. 5:23) The seed is the word of God. (Lk. 8:11)