

Learn Your Bible

Lesson #6

"There is one body." Ephesians 4:4

"Head over all things to the church, which is His body." Ephesians 1:22,23

In this lesson, we will study the nature of the church. It is a little known fact that the church Jesus built, can be identified today, strictly from the pages of the New Testament, **without** the innovations of man.

Historically, we can trace the development of many churches, but in the Bible we find only one... In order to explain the modern religious developments, many try to say that all these are branches of the same church. "I am the vine, you are the branches." (John 15:5) is the most commonly abused text in this respect. A quick look at the context points out Jesus is speaking of individuals, not of churches.

Another common rationalization is that we are all going to heaven, and we are just following different roads to get there. "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:13-14)

Regardless of how well intentioned we may be, it becomes obvious from Matthew that Jesus certainly didn't believe or teach that! He taught that men would try all kinds of things, but only a few would follow the right road! He also taught "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted." (Matthew 15:13) We are faced with the eternally important question: How may I know what is my heavenly father's plant, and what is just a weed?

While the answer is simple, it is also difficult to abide by. In Luke 8:11 "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God." Jesus compares the word of God to a seed. What grows plants? ... seeds! If we abide by the word of God (ALL of it - not merely a part that may appeal to us), we will be that plant.

DATE	PLACE	FOUNDER	CHURCH
606 AD	Rome	Boniface III	Roman Catholic
1520 AD	Germany	Martin Luther	Lutheran
1534 AD	England	Henry VIII	Episcopalian
1536 AD	Switzerland	John Calvin	Presbyterian
1550 AD	England	Robert Browne	Congregational
1607 AD	Holland	John Smythe	Baptist
1739 AD	England	John Wesley	Methodist
1830 AD	America	Joseph Smith	Latter Day Saints
1830 AD	America	William Miller	Adventists
1866 AD	America	Mary Baker Eddy	Christian Scientists
1872 AD	America	Charles T Russell	Jehovah's Witness

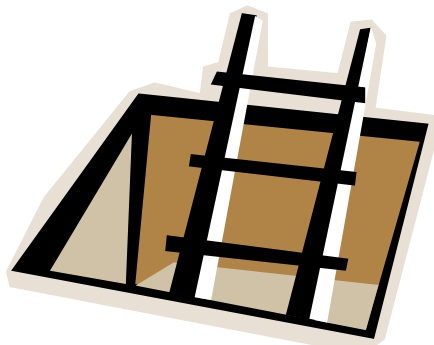
**from James R Cope The One True Church

One way to identify the church is to look at when it was founded. When was Christ's church founded? The answer is found in Acts 2, (AD 29-33) The oldest church on the list above did not come about until approximately 600 years too late.

These all contain various doctrines other than that of the divine seed. They don't adhere to the "one faith" (Ephesians 4:5). Jude tells us to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints." (Jude 3). Many today believe that there are several acceptable faiths. We find the Bible does not teach that.

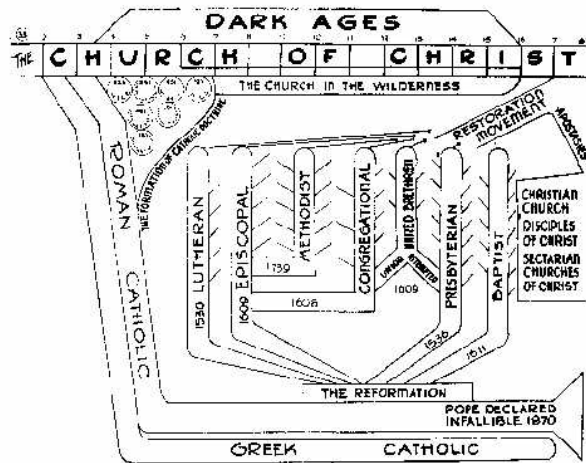
What we are striving at is that the Catholic Church, Lutheran, Baptist, etc. are not the same church! No one really believes that one church is as good as another, or they wouldn't drive past one church building to attend "the church of their choice."

The thing that matters isn't the church of *our* choice, but the church of **Jesus' choice!** "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to



Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless." (Ephesians 5:25-27). **Hinduism says "As one may ascend to the housetop by ladder, rope or bamboo, so there are many ways to reach God." Not Christianity!**

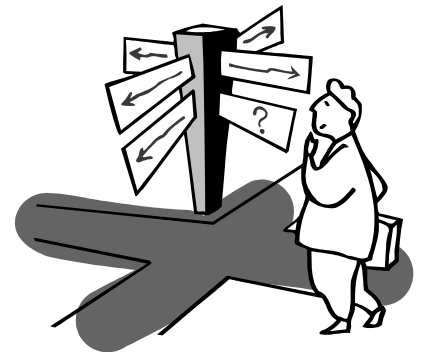
I want to be a part of that New Testament church founded in Acts 2... it accepts the word of God as its only seed, without the blemish of man's innovations and traditions! **WHAT THE WORLD SAYS AND WHAT JESUS SAYS... ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS!**



During the 1800's in our country, there was a great cry for "back to the Bible!" As people began to look around at the religious "mess" they began to see that none of these denominations were free from man's (Satan's) handiwork.

They began to turn their backs on these various "manmade religions" in favor of Christ's church! The same seed that made Christians *then* will indeed make Christians *now*. For example, it takes a Bible plus a catechism to make a Catholic; a different catechism and the Bible to make a Lutheran; A Bible plus a certain creed book will make a Methodist, change the creed book and you'll have a Presbyterian, Baptist, etc.... the Bible alone will make Christians!

In other words, the pure seed makes Christians, hybrid seed makes a member of a denomination... which is it for you? A Christian or a Denominationalist?



- 1) Matthew 16:18 What did Jesus call the church? _____
- 2) Read Ephesians 4:1-6 There is one _____ and one spirit.
- 3) There is one Lord, one _____, one _____.
- 4) Colossians 1:18 Jesus is the head of the _____, which is the _____.

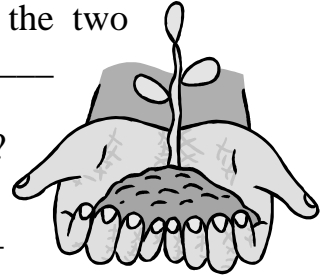
5) Ephesians 1:22,23 He governs all things concerning the _____, which is His _____.

6) What does this do to the idea of God being the founder of 300 denominations? _____.

7) a) I Corinthians 14:33 With the religious confusion obvious, who is the founder of denominationalism? _____.

b) Matthew 21:25 According to Jesus, what are the two sources of authority? _____ and _____

8) What “grew” Christians during the first century? (see Matthew 13:3-9 and 13:18-23) _____



Was anything mixed with the seed? _____

9) Matthew 13:24-30 and 37-43 Who's work is it to mix the seed? _____

10) Does it make sense that the same seed will raise the same plant? _____ explain: _____ If you plant a wheat seed what kind of plant grows? _____

11) Matthew 15:12-14 Explain in your own words how this passage would relate to us: _____



12) Does it matter which church you are a part of? _____ Explain: _____

13) Refer back to chart. What was the shortcoming of the reformation?

14) a) One of the restoration pleas, "Where the Bible speaks, we will speak, where it is silent, we will be silent," sought to go all the way back to the original seed rather than reform... just one of the many apostasies of these churches. Explain the necessity of doing this:

b) Read I Peter 4:11 does this plea have a Bible basis? _____

15) Romans 16:16, Matthew 16:18 Can you find your church mentioned in the New Testament? _____ Jesus' church is.

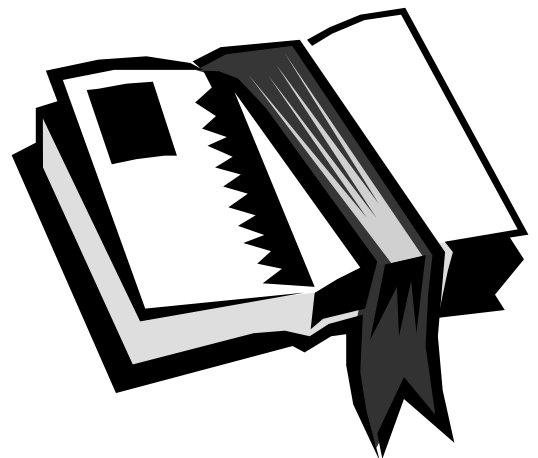
16) I Timothy 4:1-3 Pick out two doctrines that can still be seen in the Catholic church today: _____

In what light are these spoken of? _____

17) Acts 20:17 Who was Paul talking to? _____
Now Vs 28-31; From where were the false teachers to come?

18) Many look on this great falling away from the truth as a limiting power of God, but the fact is that he foretold it, and who would cause it. Recall I Timothy 4:1-3. What apostasy does this resemble? _____

19) II Timothy 4:1-4 What warning does this have for us? _____



APPLICATION

20) Matthew 15:1-9 and Acts 20:17, 28-31 Relate what we have just learned to I Thessalonians 5:21 and apply it: _____

21) II Corinthians 13:5 Again make an application: _____

22) Since Jesus founded only one church, it is important to be a part of it. Read I Corinthians 12:13 Can this be said of you? _____
Explain: _____

23) One of the passages we studied confirms to us that God didn't found denominationalism. What passage is it? _____

24) Are you a part of this One Body, or of a denomination? _____
Explain:



25) Acts 2:47 and Ephesians 5:25 Where are the saved? _____

