

# **The Deception Of Denominationalism**

*By Ron Boatwright*

There are hundreds of different religious denominations, all wearing different names, teaching different doctrines, practicing different forms of worship, promulgating different plans of salvation, and each with its own earthly headquarters. How could anyone conclude that scripture authorizes this present confusion or that God is at all pleased by the wholesale abandonment of His plan? “For God is not the author of confusion” (1 Corinthians 14:33), but man is.

The people of all denominational churches call Jesus, Lord. But Jesus says in Matthew 7:21-23, “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. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.” On Judgment Day there will be many people pleading with the Lord that they had prophesied and done many wonders in His name. They hadn’t done “the will of My Father in heaven”, but man’s will. Because of this they will be horribly surprised when they are told by Jesus, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness”. This is the worse thing that will ever be said to an individual because he will be eternally lost in Hell forever. This is very serious. They practiced lawlessness because they did not do what God says but what man said in following their many, various, and differing denominational creeds. One must do the will of the Father in heaven, and not the will of man, if he expects to go to heaven. Doing the will of the Father has never put one into a denomination. People must do something more or less than what the Bible says to become a member of a denomination.

Satan uses many devices to deceive man into accepting his way and to reject God’s way, so man will be eternally lost. We read in 2 Corinthians 2:11, “Lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.” Satan and his ministers pass themselves off as ministers of Christ. We read in 2 Corinthians 11:14-15, “For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness.” Satan and his ministers are still hard at work today.

Denominationalists falsely claim to be the ministers of Christ. They urge people to reject the Lord's one plan of salvation and substitute one of Satan's plans, such as to "accept Jesus as their personal Saviour" and to say the "Sinner's Prayer" to be saved; but where in the Bible is any of this found? It is not there because this plan has come from Satan, "who changed the truth of God into a lie" (Romans 1:25). Satan's ministers persuade people into believing they are saved without doing what Jesus says we must do to be saved, so they are still lost. They urge people to reject Christ's one true church and to accept a man-made denomination. They urge people to reject the worship of God in truth as found in the New Testament (John 4:24) and substitute man-made worship which is more entertaining. Denominations are one the cleverest and most deceptive things Satan has ever done.

Christ died for His one church and purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20-28). He did not purchase nor die for any of the hundreds of differing denominations. When the Book of Mormon is planted into the human heart, the result is a Mormon, not a Christian. When the Baptist Church Manual is planted, it results in one becoming a Baptist, not a Christian. When the Methodist Discipline is planted it brings forth a Methodist, not a Christian. It takes Catholic Catechism to make one a Catholic, not a Christian. Etc. Each man-made denomination has a different name that separates it from all the other man-made denominations. Each teaches a different doctrine from its own man-made creed. Obeying any of these false doctrines will never make one a member of the Lord's one true church. All denominations exist without divine authority and those who remain in them will be eternally lost. Denominationalism exists because something other than God's word is taught. Anything taught that is more than, less than, or different from the Bible is false doctrine, which is designed by Satan to cause people to be eternally lost in Hell. From where did all this religious confusion come? "But evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13). If all people were following the Bible and the Bible only, there would be no denominations.

The Lord only has "one body" (Ephesians 4:4) and the Bible says His "one body" is His one church (Ephesians 1:22-23). After Peter confessed to Jesus "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16), Jesus promised "Upon this rock I will build My church" (Matthew 16:18). The church of Christ was established in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost after the resurrection and ascension of Christ into Heaven as we read in Acts chapter two. The church Jesus built is not a denomination. The Lord did not say He would build many churches, but He said "My church",

singular, and it belongs to Him. None of the many differing denominational churches belong to the Lord. They all belong to Satan.

Many denominational churches react in bitterness and hatred when the truth about denominationalism is presented. This is similar to the hatred and bitterness we read of in the four gospels, when Jesus taught the truth and was crucified for it. In the book of Acts, all the apostles were imprisoned and beaten and commanded to no longer teach the truth (Acts 5:17-42). Stephen was stoned to death (Acts 8:58-60) and the apostle James was killed with a sword for teaching the truth (Acts 12:1-2). Secular history tells us that all the apostles died a violent death, except the apostle John who was exiled to the Isle of Patmos, for teaching the truth. Satan's war against the truth of God's word continues in full force today, with false doctrine being his main tactic.

Jesus came into this world to establish one and only one church to which only the saved are added. When one obeys the Lord's command, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16), it is then "the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). There are no unsaved people in the church of Christ. Men may join their own denominations, but the Lord adds only the saved to His one church. No Protestant denomination can trace its beginning back farther than the 1500's. There are hundreds of different denominations, each founded by different men at various times and different places. Psalms 127:1 says, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it." Because the Lord did not build any of the many denominational churches, many people are laboring in vain. Denominationalism promotes the false notion that any of the denominations are just as valid as the Lord's one true church. This is what Satan wants people to believe.

"Christ is the head of the church and He is the Saviour of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). Christ has only promised to save His one body, which is His one church. Many people refuse to accept that the Lord only has one church that He is going to save. But what is going to happen to the hundreds of differing denominational churches which men have started? Jesus says, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted" (Matthew 15:13). If one is in any of the many denominational churches, he will be uprooted and thrown into the eternal fires of Hell forever. This is sad because it doesn't have to be this way.

Satan's main tactic in causing people to be lost is deception. Denominationalism offers a deceptive satisfaction to many people which will only lead them to be eternally lost. It does great harm by elevating

human opinion over the truth of God's word as found in the Bible. Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." Man doing what seems right in his own eyes will end in his spiritual death, which is being eternally separated from God (Isaiah 59:2). Many people do not want the truth. The Bible says, '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 a lie that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth' (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). If one doesn't love the truth of God's word, he is going to be condemned on Judgment Day.

Many people applaud the system of denominationalism. We hear it stated, to "attend the church of your choice". God doesn't give us a choice of churches so we can select the one we like best. We must select the church of God's choice so we can be saved and go to Heaven? The process by which one becomes a member of a man-created denomination is not the process by which one becomes a Christian and a member of the Lord's one church for which He gave His life (Ephesians 5:25).

Consider all the exclusive and conflicting doctrines held by the hundreds of different denominations and they all are deceived into thinking they are going to Heaven. Denominationalism does great harm by fostering a false sense of security. Its lies have caused multiplied millions of people to go through life believing they are saved. This destroys any capacity to examine their condition in light of scripture. People in denominations are "tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, but the trickery of men, in cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting" (Ephesians 4:14). People must seek the truth of God's word if they expect to go to heaven.

If one will only take the Bible and obey only the instructions therein without adding to, deleting from, or changing it in any way, then he becomes a Christian and a member of the church of Christ. The church of Christ is composed of all the saved in Christ but all those outside His one church are deceived and are lost. It will not be a joking matter to find out on the Day of Judgment that the Lord is not going to save anyone in the hundreds of different man-made denominational churches, since they are not His. If we really want salvation, it must be on the Lord's terms, not ours. Horrible surprises will greet many on Judgment Day. The Judgment will be final. There will be no second chances or appeals. We must get it right the first time.