

of John Wesley” (founder of the Methodist church), “I’m of John Smyth” (founder of the Baptist church) or “I’m of Charles Parham (founder of the Pentecostal churches). Christ is not divided; therefore we should get away from all human organizations that were founded upon the teachings of some man, and get back to the original teachings of Jesus Christ and His church.

RESTORING THE ORIGINAL CHURCH

Jeremiah 6:16— We are to ask for the _____ paths and walk therein. Only then can we have rest for our souls. We should seek the church that follows the original doctrine of Christ, just as Christ delivered it.

Genesis 1:12 — Each tree and herb produces seed after its _____. An apple tree doesn’t produce watermelon seeds. In the same way, when we plant the original doctrine of Christ today in the hearts of men, we won’t get a manmade denomination; we will get the original church of Christ. If we plant a doctrine of man (a doctrine different than that which was originally delivered in the New Testament), will we get a manmade church? _____

Matthew 7:15-20 — False teachers appear to be harmless sheep, but inwardly they are _____ wolves. We know and recognize false teachers and false churches by their _____. Their fruit is their doctrine. For example, a church that uses mechanical instruments of music is bearing bad fruit. A church that teaches that you are saved without water baptism as Jesus taught is bearing bad fruit. These churches cannot be good, because Jesus said, “A good tree cannot bear _____ fruit.” The only fruit these denominations can bear is bad fruit, because they are deceiving people and giving people false hope. “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the _____.”

Summary: With so much religious division in the world, why not escape from it all, and be a member of the original church of Christ that teaches and practices the truth just as it was taught by Jesus and his apostles back in the first century? In our next lesson, we will discuss the folly of delaying obedience to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

OPEN BIBLE STUDIES

By Paul Melton

THE APOSTASY

Lesson 14



Name _____

Address _____

Directions: Please locate in your Bible the following references and read each verse carefully before answering each question.

We studied in lesson 5 and 7 that originally there was only one church, and every Christian was a member of that church. Today, there are hundreds of denominations which wear different names, practice different styles of worship, and preach different doctrines, yet they all claim to be following Jesus their own way. Does this please God? Are there faithful Christians in every church? If Jesus originally established only one church where did all these modern “Christian” denominations come from?

THE ORIGINAL CHURCH

In the last few lessons, we studied some of the key doctrines and practices held by the church of Christ originally in the first century.

- (1) Each congregation was united in doctrine and practice (LESSON 7)
- (2) Each church believed and practiced baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by immersion for the forgiveness of sins (LESSONS 4 & 6)
- (3) Each Christian partook of the Lord’s supper and gave a monetary offering on the first day of each week (LESSON 9).
- (4) Each congregation ate the Lord’s supper each week using one loaf and one cup (LESSON 10)
- (5) They sang without mechanical instruments (LESSON 11).
- (6) The public teaching was carried out by men only (LESSON 12)

But how things have changed! Today different “Christian” denominations are found on practically every street corner, wearing different names and teaching doctrines and practices nothing like those practiced by the original church.

Galatians 1:8 — The inspired apostle warned that if an apostle or even an _____ from heaven preach any other gospel than that which was originally preached, let him be _____.

This departure from the original doctrine and the establishment of human churches was prophesied by the inspired writers of the New Testament.

THE GREAT APOSTASY

1 Timothy 4:1-3 — This is a clear prophecy from the Holy Spirit that in latter times some would _____ from the _____. Instead of following the original faith and teachings of Jesus they would give heed to demonic doctrines and to deceiving spirits. Verse 3 says that two of the doctrines which those who departed from the original church would teach were that certain people would be forbidden to _____, and they would command people to _____ from certain foods. Just as this verse prophesied, a few hundred years later the Roman Catholic church began to force all those who would become priest to take the vow of celibacy. They also commanded people to abstain from eating meat on certain holy days, and to not do so was considered sin.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 — This text says that before the second coming of Christ there would be a _____ away and the _____ of sin would be revealed. Who was the man of sin? Verse 4 states that he would make himself out to be God on earth, and would sit as God in the _____ of God. This happened historically when in A.D. 606, Boniface III, the bishop of Rome, exalted himself above all other bishops in the world and sat down as “Supreme Pontiff” over the church or temple of God. Just as was prophesied, the falling away from the original church of

Christ took place and then arose the man of sin who has been called throughout the ages the Vicar of Christ, and even by some “our Lord God the pope.”

Acts 20:28-30 — The apostle Paul told the elders to “shepherd the _____ of God which he purchased with his own _____.

He says that savage _____ would come in among them, not sparing the flock, and that from among the very eldership of the church men would _____ up speaking perverse things, to draw away _____ after themselves. These spiritual leaders would depart from the original church of Christ and start their own churches with their own disciples which they were able to draw away after themselves with their false teachings.

2 Timothy 4:3 — People would get to the point where they would not _____ sound doctrine. They would turn their ears away from the narrow teachings of Jesus and would heap up for themselves _____ who scratch their itching ears, speaking to them entertaining and comforting words that would make them feel saved and at peace with God without their having to walk the difficult way that Jesus says leads to heaven (Matt.7:14,15).

Historically speaking, after the departure of the Roman Catholic church from the original church of Christ as the Bible predicted, many other churches departed from the Roman church, especially after the time of the 16th century reformation led by Martin Luther. This resulted in the rise of thousands of protestant and evangelical denominations, all established by men and upon the doctrines of men.

1 Corinthians 1:10-13 — God is not pleased when he sees doctrinal division. He wants us to _____ the same thing, and that there be no _____ among us, but that we be _____ joined together in the same _____ and in the same judgment. God does not want Christians to be divided into different religious groups with some saying “I am