

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mrs. Calvert, Mrs. Douglas, Mr. Douglas' mother, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Kelly Hall, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Mrs. Lowery, Lamar Mathis, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mrs. Siota, Mr. Winns.
Out of Town: Mrs. Aline Law

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:
www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com.
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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The Sin of Denominationalism

By Derek Long

Denominationalism refers to the religious system of many different churches all constituting part of the whole. A common idea among many is there is only one body (Ephesians 4:4) or one church Jesus established (Ephesians 1:22-23; Matthew 16:18) but they would teach the one body consists of all the various denominations. Does the Bible endorse or condemn the existence of denominations?

Denominationalism requires division to exist. If everyone was in agreement and unity, the need for denominationalism would go away. God's desire is for His people to be united. Ephesians 4:1-6 says, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." When God's people walk as they should, division will not exist but they will be perfectly united upon what the Spirit has revealed in the word of God. Remember Jesus prayed for unity among His disciples. He said, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me" (John 17:20-23).

Denominationalism promotes division while Jesus prayed for unity. Denominationalism is not in harmony with what Jesus desires. Paul told the church at Corinth, which was dealing with division, "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). Denominationalism does not seek to conform to these instructions given by an inspired apostle. Denominationalism is sinful because of the division it produces.

Denominationalism has people wearing different names. If you were to ask people what they were religiously, many people might say they were a "Baptist," "Catholic," "Methodist," "Presbyterian," "Episcopalian," "Lutheran," "Mormon," "Jehovah's Witness," "Seventh Day Adventist," or a host of other different names. The problem with these different names is we do not find the Bible using these terms to describe God's people. The early disciples were "first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:26), Agrippa was almost persuaded "to become a Christian" (Acts 26:28), and Peter encourages individuals not to be ashamed for suffering "as a Christian" (1 Peter 4:16). Christians would have been referred to as disciples (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 11:26), saints (Romans 1:7), etc. You will not find Christians being called the names we mentioned earlier though. In addition, if you were to ask what kind of Christians these early disciples were, you would find they were not a particular kind of Christian but were simply Christians. Paul rebuked the Corinthians for taking on different names besides the name of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:11-13). If they were not to wear the name of Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, why would we assume God is okay with people wearing the name "Baptist," "Catholic," etc. today?

Denominationalism tries to develop an unscriptural form of unity. Efforts are put forth by many in denominationalism to unite with others in different denominations. Each group will keep their own particular doctrines which are contradictory but they will work in unison with one another. An example of this sentiment can be seen in the following quote, "Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His word as

revealed in the New Testament" (*The Baptist Faith and Message*. Retrieved from <http://www.sbc.net/bfm200/bfm200.asp>). I have heard of situations where those who are Baptists may go and attend an event put on by the Methodist church and yet these two groups differ on the issue of whether baptism is immersion or sprinkling. I have heard of situations where individuals will attend a Baptist church on Sunday morning and a Pentecostal church that evening. The Baptist church and Pentecostal churches though disagree in what they believe about the Bible. The Bible clearly tells us, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them" (Ephesians 5:11). How can a group who believes using sprinkling instead of immersion is wrong have fellowship with a group who teaches sprinkling is acceptable? How can a group who believes it is sinful to have women preachers have fellowship with a group who teaches it is acceptable and has women preachers? 2 John 9-11 tells us, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds." Denominationalism encourages people to share in the evil deeds of others. If someone does something in violation of the will of God, we need to oppose it not simply overlook it and agree to disagree. Denominationalism encourages people to view everyone no matter what doctrine they believe or what church they attend to think they are all okay. God teaches we should be people who "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3) instead of compromising the truth by giving into the sinful concept of denominationalism.

Much more could be written about the sin of denominationalism but I hope these thoughts will cause us to stop and consider what God's plan is. If you would like to study the topic of denominationalism further, please feel free to contact us. We would like to help you avoid becoming a part of some denomination built by men and instead find the church built by Christ.