

Bible Correspondence Course

Lesson 8

YOU CAN BE JUST A CHRISTIAN

Since the establishment of the Church by Jesus in A.D. 33, some two thousand years have passed. But through the centuries the simplicity and purity still glisten undimmed and unchanged. During the last few lessons, we have studied prominent characteristics of the church as revealed in the Bible. The last lesson studied taught that a person must obey the gospel requirements for pardon and having his sins removed, he is then added to the church by the Lord. Other lessons taught that we “*baptized into Christ...*” (Galatians 3:27), and that true baptism is a burial in water for the remissions of sins (Romans 6:3-5; Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21). It was also studied that this church established by Jesus, partook of the Lord’s Supper each Sunday, and sang with no instrument of music accompanying the singing (Acts 20:7; Ephesians 5:19; Revelation 22:18,19).

WHY ARE THERE SO MANY CHURCHES?

With these biblical truths so evident, then why are there so many conflicting denominations today, and by what authority do they exist?

As we have noticed before, there has always been a tendency in mankind to improve on the directions God has given, and in so doing depart from God’s way. Solomon points out, “*There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways if death*” (Proverbs 14:12). This tendency was true in the days of King Saul (1 Samuel 15:1-24), and in the time of Nathan (II Kings 5:1-14), and is true down through the ages. History teaches us that this is exactly what took place after the Apostles died. Gradually men began making human changes both in the organization and worship of the church so that eventually the original design of God was lost and a man-made organization remained.

THE DEPARTURE FORETOLD

Both Jesus and the Apostles understood and knew that soon after they passed away, men would begin changing God’s laws, adding and subtracting from what had already been said. “*And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved*” (Matthew 24:11-13). The Apostle Paul also said, “*For I know this, that after my departing, grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples*

after them” (Acts 20:29, 30). Again we read, “Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith...” (I Timothy 4:1).

Throughout the New Testament, we read of prophecy after prophecy warning and predicting the times in which there would be a “falling away” from the divine truths. These warnings did not say that people would stop being religious, or that they would cease believing in Christ, but that they would claim to be following him and be doing a great work in his name (Matthew 7:22). Paul said, “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall come, except there come a falling away first...” (II Thessalonians 2:3).

PROPHECIES FULFILLED

Shortly after the days of the Apostles, these prophecies began to be fulfilled. The changes were gradual as one after another items were altered, but they eventually produced religious organizations that were completely different from the New Testament Church. A close look at religious history will show the more prominent human changes.

PROMINENT HUMAN CHANGES

USE OF HOLY WATER – 120 A.D. this was borrowed from the Jew’s religion.

INFANT BAPTISM – First expressly mentioned and condemned in the third century by Tertullian (See Acts 8:36-39; Matthew 28:19).

FIRST HUMAN CREED – Written in 325 A.D. at Nicea in Bythynia by 318 uninspired men and called the “Nicean Creed”. It should be noted that the “Apostles’ Creed” was not written by the apostles and does not appear in its present form earlier than 650 A.D.

LATIN MASS – Began in 394 A.D.

PURGATORY – The doctrine that one may suffer punishment after death and then go on to heaven began in 593 A.D. (See Luke 16:19-26).

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC – First introduced into Christian worship in about 666 A.D.

CELIBACY – Priests were not allowed to marry after 1015 A.D. (See I Timothy 4:1-3).

AURICULAR CONFESSION – to priests began in 1215 A.D.

SPRINKLING FOR BAPTISM – was legalized by the Council of Ravenna in 1311 A.D. the first known isolated case was of Novation in about 251 A.D. Other such human changes include: the sale of Indulgences, communion under one kind, penance, the Lord’s Supper monthly or quarterly, Immaculate conception, women preachers, praying to Mary, the mourner’s bench, etc. (See Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelations 22:18,19).

THE RISE OF DENOMINATIONS

Throughout the centuries, the tendency was to let man's thoughts about religion take the place of God's divine plan. As more and more opinions and human practices developed, new groups began to form, each holding different human doctrines, mixed with various religious beliefs.

In Jamaica, we have over 200 different denominations, all similar on the surface, yet holding different human opinions and teaching human doctrines peculiar to their particular group. The present wide-spread religious differences then, began, is not based upon what the Bible teaches, but rather upon the human opinions and doctrines developed since the days of Jesus and the Apostles (Matthew 15:9; I Timothy 1:3)

The only **real basis for Christianity then lies in a complete return to the New Testament pattern** (Matthew 28:20)

UNDENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIANITY

It was a beautiful sunny morning as the two Jamaican men, Neville and Henry, walked along the road to Linstead. In the past, both men had preached on various occasions, but they had never attempted to devote their whole life to this, even though they were vitally interested in it. As they left Bog Walk, Neville began the discussion of changes in the churches. After all, there were so many with different changes and the majority was not as the Bible taught. Henry then repeated Jesus' statement. "*Upon this Rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*" (Matthew 16:18). Neville then asked. "If Jesus established one church, then where is it and why are there so many today?" Henry said' "Neville, I'm not sure, but most of the denominations were started long after Jesus died and they use the name of their founder." As they neared Linstead, Neville commented, "I read that the early followers were called Christians and nothing else. Wouldn't it be good if we could just follow that example and be satisfied?"

As they entered Linstead, they separated to their shopping and agreed to meet later that afternoon for the walk back home.

The sun was sinking behind the tall trees on the hill as Neville and Henry started on their way home. Neville said, " Henry boy, I've been thinking about what you said this morning and I agree. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could just be like those people long ago? Why couldn't we? If we did not join any denomination, and did not become either Catholic or Protestant, but only did as Jesus commanded, then we, too, would only be Christians." "Neville" Henry said, "You have a good idea – let's talk to some of our friends about it."

THE LORDS CHURCH versus HUMAN DENOMINATIONS

In order to find the Lord's Church today, we must find the Church which was established at the right time, the right place, and by the right person. Even though many good things can be said about and found in human denominations, they do not correspond exactly to that pattern evidenced in the New Testament. Any religious group established at any place other than Jerusalem, at any time later than 33 A.D. or by anyone other than Jesus himself, cannot possibly fit the description found in the Bible. All such organizations exist without Christ's authority and contrary to his prayer for unity(John 17:20, 21).

IS IT POSSIBLE?

The question often arising is, "Is this still possible?" The answer is a most positive "Yes!" Not only is it possible, but millions of people all over the world are practicing this belief right now. These people are returning to the teachings of the simple New Testament pattern set down by Jesus for His church. Upon obedience to the gospel they have confidence that Jesus will add them to His Church as stated in Acts 2:47. They have been "*Buried with Him in baptism...for the remission of sins,*" just as the Bible commands (Colossians 2:12; Acts 20:7). In Roman 16:16 the Bible states, "*The Churches of Christ salute you.*" These disciples are then named after their founder – Christ and are known as members of Christ. No human name can compare to this one, and none other is needed but Christ.

WORSHIP DOCTRINE PRACTICE

In worship, doctrine, practice, the Church of Christ today is endeavoring to be the pattern of the Church in the New Testament. It is therefore neither Catholic nor Protestant any more than was the Church of Christ in the days of the Apostles. For those who wish to live in a way that is safe and sure – then the church Jesus established is your answer. There is no firmer ground than that of complete return to the New Testament and following the pattern of the Apostles, laid down by Jesus.

YOU ARE INVITED

You are invited to investigate the Church of Christ for yourself, and see if it is the restored church of the Bible. If it is not as the Bible teaches, there is a need for a change. But if it stands as the true Church, you must accept this way of believing, repenting, confessing Christ, and being scripturally baptized and allow Christ to add you to His Church. May the Lord continue to bless you in the study of His Church. May the Lord continue to bless you in the study of His divine word.

Questions

Instructions

This course of Bible Study has been written and printed in Jamaica especially for you living in this Country. It is designed to help you learn about the Bible and what to do to be saved in eight simple lessons. Before beginning, please make sure you understand what to do.

1. Read each paragraph carefully making sure you understand the information given before proceeding to new material.
2. As you come across Bible references be sure and use your Bible to read each scripture mentioned.
3. When you have completed a study of the given material, try to answer all the questions from memory without looking back to the information.
4. When you have answered the questions, please check them with the given material so as to have the correct answer.
5. When the test has been completed, be sure to include Name Address and Date in The space provided below

Name _____

Address

Date ____/____/____

How Much Have You Learned?

Instructions

In order to get the most from this lesson, the student should answer all the questions in this section. Complete the test and mail it to the sponsor of the Correspondence Course. It will be graded and returned to you along with the next lesson.

True or False

Circle "T" if statement is true, and circle "F" if any part is not true

- (T F) 1. The Nicene Creed was written in about 325 A.D.
- (T F) 2. Jesus prayed in John 17:20 that there would be many denominations.
- (T F) 3. The terms "Protestant" and "Catholic" are found in the New Testament.
- (T F) 4. The Bible says in I Peter 3:21 "baptism doth not save us."
- (T F) 5. Sprinkling for baptism was legally substituted in 1311 A.D.
- (T F) 6. Acts 4:12 teaches there is nothing in a name.
- (T F) 7. There are over 200 denominations in Jamaica today.
- (T F) 8. Jesus and the Apostles knew that after their departure men would change their teachings.
- (T F) 9. Neville and Henry wanted to start another denomination.
- (T F) 10. Jesus said, "And upon this rock I will build my churches."

Name The Person: Put the correct name in the blank

- _____ 1. The founder of the New Testament Church (Matthew 16:18)
- _____ 2. He warned the Ephesians elders of the coming departure (Acts 20:29, 30).
- _____ 3. Name the king mentioned in I Samuel 15:1-29.
- _____ 4. Name the man to whom Paul was writing in II timothy 4:1

Find The Scripture

"There is a way which seems right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death."

- A. Acts 10:48
- B. Proverbs 14:12
- C. Deuteronomy 4:2

"...And some shall depart from the faith."

- A. Matthew 7:22
- B. Matthew 24:11
- C. I Timothy 4:1

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways."

- A. John 17:20, 21
- B. Isaiah 55:8,9
- C. Revelation 22:18, 19

“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

- A. Matthew 16:18
- B. I Peter 3:21
- C. Acts 2:47

“The churches of Christ salute you”

- A. Romans 16:16
- B. Matthew 15:9
- C. Acts 20:29,30

Please Notice

1. Friends may be enrolled in this Bible Correspondence Course upon request without cost or obligation.
2. A beautiful certificate of completion will be presented to those who successfully complete all eight lessons.
3. Bible questions are welcomed. Write them in the space provided below on this page.
4. Contact the address sending the Bible correspondence Course for any assistance in spiritual needs or problems.

Questions

Bible Answers to Above Questions

Sponsoring Congregation

This Correspondence Course is being sent to you by:

Patrick Gardens Church of Christ
6 Waterhouse Drive
(Off Washington Blvd.)
Kingston 20
Tel. 876 933-5550

Join us for worship

Sunday	9:45 am	Bible School (for adults and children)
	10:30 am	Morning Worship
	5:00 pm	Youth Meeting
	7:00 pm	Evening Worship
Wednesday	7:30	Bible Study and Prayer Meeting (In this session you are permitted to ask questions and make comments.)

You are also invited to listen to **“Preparing for Eternity”** Wednesdays at 4:45am on
RJR

Write to Us at: P.O. Box 369 Kingston 8