Why Are There So Many Churches?

Buddy Payne · Matthew 16:16–19 · Series: **A History of The Churches**

INTRODUCTION

- You were born, even the oldest of you in the audience, into an age of great religious confusion.
- Why are there so many churches in existence today, all of whom are claiming to follow the Bible, and all claiming some kind of allegiance to Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 The Bible Teaches One Church

Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4–6; Ephesians 1:22–23

- And upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
- In the first place, Jesus speaks of building his church. In the second place, you'll note that the word church is singular there.
- There is one body and one spirit. Even as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism.
- The Bible doesn't teach 1200. It teaches one.

2 The One Church Divided Into Denominations

- The unity of the one church has been taken and divided into not ten, but hundreds of parts, each of which is a denominator or a denomination of the whole thing.
- I don't want to have any part in any denomination of the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to be a part of the church that Jesus built, plain and simple,.
- A denomination is a dissenting party from an established or parent church.

3 False Prophets and a Falling Away

Matthew 7:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:1–4

- Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.
- Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first.
- The Church of Jesus Christ has not and will not ever change. It is the same. Because it is based on God's word, which never changes.
- God said through Christ and through his apostles that there would be false prophets, teachers that would lead people away from the truth, and many would follow them in the falling away.

4 Men Arise Speaking Perverse Things

Acts 15:1; Galatians 1:6–8; Acts 20:28–30

- Except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved.

- And so what developed from that was a new church. A splinter group, a denomination.
- Of your own self shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them.
- Because the Nicolaitans infected a bunch of churches and led disciples off after them and started another one.

5 The Falling Away in Church Government

2 Thessalonians 2; Matthew 28:18

- There were already men, who were claiming to be chief elders. More important than the elders.
- One president or bishop presided over the church. Whereas the Bible called the elders all bishops or overseers.
- Do you know where that dates to? The second century, not the first. It dates to the falling away of the early church, not to the church of Jesus Christ.
- To the point that we had one man dictating to the entire worldwide, Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

6 The Farther We Go, the Worse It Gets

- And so there was developed a special priesthood. Men claiming to have the authority and the place of God even to forgive sin.
- Why are there so many churches? Because, brethren, the farther we go, the worse it gets.
- And out of these great men and their movements, limited as they were, came all kinds of churches. Because when they died, their followers collected their works and established churches.
- Let's speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. And there was a tremendous movement back to the one church of Jesus Christ.
- But I say with weeping that it was but a few years when those groups began to splinter and formed hundreds of other churches.

> THE CHALLENGE
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> **I would challenge you as we close tonight to go to that word and find what it tells you and do it as closely as is humanly possible for you to do with what capabilities God has given you.**

MY NOTES