Why Are There So Many Churches?

Buddy Payne · Matthew 16:16–19

INTRODUCTION

- The responsibility for determining what God has to say and how he will direct your life through his word ultimately rests with you, the hearers.
- 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.
- How on earth could God, if He gave us the Bible, have given us such a document that would produce hundreds and hundreds of different groups, all claiming to follow the Bible and yet all teaching contradictory doctrines.

1 Jesus Built His Church, and There Is One

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.
- Jesus speaks of building his church. I will build my 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 Foretold

Matthew 7:15–16; 2 Thessalonians 2:1–4

- Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits.
- 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 The Falling Away Begins in the New Testament

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

- Except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved.
- There be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ.
- 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 Church Government in the Falling Away

- There were already men who were claiming to be chief elders. More important than the elders.
- There's no authority in the Bible for one elder or a group to have any authority over another church, even in the same city.
- 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.
- Why are there so many churches? Because, brethren, the farther we go, the worse it gets.

6 Reformers, a Movement Back, and More Splintering

- 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.
- But I say with weeping that it was but a few years when those groups began to splinter and formed hundreds of other churches.
- Why are there so many churches? The devil won't let us alone.

> 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