

DENOMINATIONALISM AND ITS DOCTRINES

[2019, March–May]

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Lesson 1: Differences ... Now what?

I. APOSTASY WARNED **2Th 2:2-3a** (51AD); **Ac 20:29-30** (58 AD); **2Tim 3:13** (65-68 AD)

Court of Appeal, Authority = Word of God - **2Th 2:15**; **Ac 20:32**; **2 Tim 3:16-4:5**

II. DIVERGENT VIEWS

- A. Judaism (1st cent.) **Ac 15:1**
- B. Gnosticism (2nd-3rd cent.) **1Tim 4:1-3**; **1Jn 2:3-4**; **2Jn 7**
- C. Montanism (2nd cent.) Holy Spirit in certain men and women - prophets and prophetesses; 2nd coming soon
- D. Arianism (4th century) Christ not eternally existent; Christ not equal with God — Nicean Council, 325 AD
- E. Augustinianism (Augustine 354-430 AD) “inherited depravity” “original sin”; no moral free-agency
- F. Pelagianism (Pelagius 360?-?420 AD) Opposed Augustinianism

III. NOW WHAT...? NEEDED: CLEAR VOICE OF AUTHORITY

- A. Human tradition **Mt 15:9**
- B. Church **Gal 2:6**
- C. Human creeds **2Th 2:1-2...15**; **Jn 7:47-48**

IV. LEARNING FROM HISTORY

Historical perspective can be a valuable teacher. **Lk 17:32**; **1Co 10:11**; **Heb 4:11**. Among the things that may be learned from the history of the origin and rise of denominations, the following lessons stand out clearly.

- A. BIBLE = SOLE AUTHORITY in religion **1Co 1:12-13**; **2:5**; **4:6**; **14:37**
- B. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY **Mt 7:15...20..21-23...24**; **1Jn 4:1**
- C. EXAMINE (and be willing to be examined) **Ac 17:11**; **1Th 5:19-22**

Questions on back

Questions

1. Do “Churches of Christ” and people in those churches have divergent views? Give some examples.
2. Should church tradition carry any weight? Explain.
3. Since elders are “overseers,” what is their role in curtailng apostasy?
4. Would you be okay with the church where you are a member writing a statement of belief? Explain.
5. Read Eph 4:1-3,11-15, and explain God’s plan for unity among brethren.

Lesson 2: Dissension in the 1st Century

I. THE ISSUE: Ac 15:1,5

II. DISSENSION - Ac 15:2,7

III. THE MEETING WITH “THE WHOLE CHURCH” (Ac 15:12,22)

- A. To lead them to understanding the truth, NOT for Paul to ascertain the truth - **Gal 2:1-9**
(This private meeting between **Ac 15:5** and **15:6**. Luke does not refer to it in Acts.)
- B. Consider “both sides” **Ac 15:4-5,7 (Pro 18:13,17)**
- C. Weigh objective evidence **15:7** (therefore”), **Ac 15:10,12,15** (harmony, “agree”), **15:19** (“Therefore...”)
- D. “Facts” in evidence: statements (or commands); events (“examples”); implications (necessary conclusions)
- E. Test - Revealed and confirmed Scripture, **15:15** (law of harmony)
- F. **Ac 16:4** - ? Jerusalem church issue “decrees” for other churches?

IV. REALIZE DISCUSSION MAY NOT END CONTROVERSY

Galatian letter; Roman letter; Philippian letter; I-III John.

In contrast to Acts 15, compare the alternative ways to solve dissension, Lesson 1, III. Also review the three points, Lesson 1, IV, in the light of this lesson.

Questions on back

1. How would you feel about divergent views being held in a local church of which you were a member? How can unity be achieved?

2. Are you in favor of people debating divergent views? Explain why you feel this way.

3. Provide at least one verse in Acts 15 that showed the following were appealed to as evidence:
 - a. Statements
 - b. Events
 - c. Necessary conclusions

4. Advertisement for a gospel meeting: “Bro. Preacher is a dynamic speaker and is in wide demand. He has authored several books. He acquired his Ph.D. degree from Christian University and is has traveled the world over holding seminars.” What do you think about this advertisement?

5. Does it bother you that divergent views are held in different “Churches of Christ”? Explain. Do you see a solution? Explain.

Lesson 3: Roman Catholicism's Answer to Divergent Views

I. DIVERGENT VIEWS - see Lesson 1

II. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PAPACY

- A. Clement of Rome (30?-?100 - WBD) - Unity achieved by obedience to the elders who were successors of the apostles
- B. Ignatius of Antioch (1st-2nd cent.) - Unity achieved only by one individual in each congregation assuming a position of authority
- C. Irenaeus (c. 130-200) - Orthodoxy and unity established by recognizing the authority of the bishops whose succession could be traced from the beginning to his day.
- D. In the 2nd century the "presiding elder" was called "bishop" and distinguished from the presbytery. Then bishops then ruled over provinces, and the bishops of the most important provinces were called "metropolitans" or "patriarchs." By the fourth century patriarchs were established in the four leading cities of the world, Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople, and the following centuries saw the patriarchs in these centers contending for supremacy over the whole church. "Pope" is from the Latin, papa, and means "father." While the term was used by bishops as early as the fourth and fifth centuries, Boniface III was crowned pope by the emperor Phocas in 606 AD, and by some historians is considered the first pope in the genuine sense. Waymon D. Miller, *A Survey of Church History*
- E. The Pope is considered in Roman Catholicism as "the Supreme Head of the Church" with "control of every department of the life of the Church; of the faith and formulas thereof, or Creeds ... He can legislate for the entire Church ... interpret, alter, abrogate any law made by himself or his predecessors ... "Pope" *The New Catholic Dictionary*, pp773f
 - Majesterium - "teaching office" in the Roman Catholic Church. To them "The task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on [tradition, srf], has been entrusted exclusively..." *The Documents of Vatican II*, p.117.

III. Mt 16:13-20

- A. "upon this rock I will build my church" - What is the "rock" or foundation of the church?
- B. "keys of the kingdom...bind...loose" - What this means

IV. SUCCESSORS TO THE APOSTLES?

- A. **Ac 1:20-26** - Matthias replaces Judas
- B. **1Tim 4:14; 2Tim 1:6; 2:2** - Timothy?
- C. **Ac 1:5-8** - Holy Spirit a "promise" to special men for special purpose
- D. **Mt 19:28** - 12 thrones; Paul, "untimely born" **1Co 15:8**
- E. Requisites
 - 1. **Ac 1:22; 1Co 9:1** - witness of the resurrection of Jesus
 - 2. **2Co 12:12** - "signs of an apostle"
- F. Absence of any indication *in Scripture* of succession. Roman Catholicism depends on tradition.

Questions on back

1. “I don't know if it is right or wrong, but I leave that to the elders. That's their responsibility because God put them in charge.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

2. Elders are to be “esteemed very highly,” 1Th 5:12-13. Explain this and contrast it with the dangerous trend in history of esteeming them too highly.

3. Where does the Bible forbid having a presiding elder in one church, or a bishop over a number of churches? What did this lead to according to history?

4. What are some things you could point out using the context of Mt 16:13-20 and harmony with other texts indicating Peter was not the “rock” or foundation of the church Jesus was going to build? (Other Scriptures to consider: Lk 22:24-27; Mt 19:28; Jn 20:22-23; 1Pe 2:5-7; Ac 10:25-26; Gal 2:6-9; 1Co 3:11; Eph 2:20.

5. Is the apostles’ doctrine authoritative? Explain. Does that include the teaching of successors of the apostles? Explain.

Lesson 4: Reformation Movement and Creeds

I. NEED FOR REFORM

The aim of the reformers was to reform the decaying and corrupt Roman Catholic Church. They held views that differed strongly with those of the Roman Catholic Church. This reform was based on an appeal to go back to the Bible, and while strides were made in encouraging men to study for themselves and in abandoning long held errors, their efforts fell short of the goal. These men did not intend to establish denominations wearing their name or owing allegiance to them. *But again people made the fatal error of looking to the wrong source of authority.* The result was the “Protestant” denominations that grew up in the 16th century and following, e.g., the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist.

II. NOTABLE REFORMERS

John Wycliff (1320?-1384); Martin Luther (1483-1546); Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531); John Calvin (1509-1564); Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609)

III. CREEDS

“Augsburg Confession” (1530) - Lutherans; “Westminster Confession” (1643) - Presbyterians; “Philadelphia Confession” (1688), “London Confession of Faith” (1689), “New Hampshire Confession” (1833) - Baptists; “Book of Discipline” (1784-many revisions since) - Methodists; etc.

A. Hinder Personal Growth

Instead of one being molded and guided by faith in Christ and increasing understanding of His will, one’s allegiance is to the creed and it determines what is right. **Jn 5:44; Gal 2:6,12**

B. Obstruct Unity

Instead of leaving the door open to growth through the interchange of ideas, it shuts the door on fellowship and puts a stamp on status quo. The “unity of the Spirit” is achieved by each individual growing into “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (**Eph 4:13**), not by subscribing to a statement of orthodoxy formulated by men. **1Co 1:12-13**

C. Cultivate Faith In The Wisdom Of Men

The wording of the creeds is often complex and uses technical theological terms. One must be dependent on the “scholars” either to understand what they say, or simply to accept it. **Jn 7:48,49; 1Co 2:1-5**

D. Bestow Unwarranted Authority

Put in the form of a creed, human traditions become law, decisions of a council of men become what men must confess (“confessions”). Besides the authority of the document itself, it also bestows unwarranted authority on those making such documents (councils, pope) and executing these documents (the “church”). **Mk 7:3-4; Mt 28:18...20**

Once the concept of human creeds is accepted, there is no end to the creeds that may be written with all the ills that follow in their wake. **Mk 7:3-5**

See three points in “Learning from History” in Lesson 1.

Questions on back

1. The preacher is always referred to as “brother,” while the other Christians are called by their first names - any problem with this? Explain using scripture.

2. Two brethren are discussing a religious issue and one is heard to respond in defense of his position, “Bro. Preacher (a capable, respected and loved gospel preacher) said...” What does this prove? What may this reflect about the brother who made this response? What, if any, legitimate appeal can be made to what Bro. Preacher has said?

3. In an effort to combat the inroads of apostasy, knowledgeable and respected preachers formulate a list of beliefs that a preacher must ascribe to before a congregation will consider support him. Do you agree or disagree with this practice? Explain.

4. In view of the diversity of views and practices sailing under the banner of “Church of Christ,” a church decides to write short statement of what it stands for titled, “What We Believe.” What do you think about this? Explain.

5. Does what the preacher preaches represent the official view of the church? Should it? Explain.

Lesson 5: Restoration Movement (18th-19th Centuries)

I. REFORMATION VS. RESTORATION

Both were movements of reformation. The reformers of the Reformation were men within the Catholic Church seeking to “reform” it. While the reformation movement aimed at repudiating the errors that had crept into the Roman Catholic Church, and acknowledging the Bible as the sole and sufficient source of authority, the reformers of the Restoration realized it failed of its purpose. The errors of the church continued to influence the thinking and practice, even of the “Protestants,” and while preaching a return to the Bible, there continued an allegiance to human creeds that resulted in denominations. The reformers of the Restoration movement sought to correct this and “restore” completely the teaching and practice of the New Testament pattern.

II. STATEMENTS OF THE REFORMERS THAT REFLECT THE SPIRIT AND AIM OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

“Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent”

“No book but the Bible; no creed but Christ; no name but the divine name”

“In faith, unity; in opinions, liberty; and in all things, charity.”

III. SOME LEADING REFORMERS OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

Thomas Campbell (1763-1854; “Declaration and Address” - 1809); Alexander Campbell (1788-1866); Barton W. Stone (1772-1884); Walter Scott (1796-1861)

IV. ASCERTAINING AUTHORITY

May we practice only what is not specifically forbidden, or, may we practice only what is authorized? While the later was a seed in the hearts of some of the reformers of the Reformation (e.g., see Zwingli) it was more fully applied by the reformers of the Restoration Movement. As it bore fruit it led men to lay aside many practices foreign to the New Testament, e.g. infant baptism, instrumental music. **Mt 28:20 (Dt 4:2; 5:32; 29:29); Ex 25:9; 2Tim 1:13; Rom 6:17; Heb 7:12-14**

See three points in “Learning from History” in Lesson 1.

Questions on back

Lesson 6: Denominationalism From A Sociological Perspective

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY CHRISTIANS

A. Believed they had the truth - Gal 2:4-5; Jude 3

- Willing to debate - Ac 6:9-10; 17:17; 18:28
- Knowledge of the truth emphasized (22 letters); Eph 5:6,17, morals; 1Jn 4:1-3, doctrine

B. Believed themselves to be the one church of the Lord - Eph 1:22,23; 4:4; 1Jn 5:18,19

C. Encouraged to be strict morally - Eph 5:3-5

D. Fervent - Ac 2:42; 4:34-35; 8:4; 15:35

II. “SECT-TO-DENOMINATION” PROCESS

Dr. David Edwin Harrell, Jr. in a booklet, *Emergence of the “Church of Christ” Denomination* (Athens, AL: C.E.I. Pub. Co., 1972) gives a view “from the perspective of a professional historian” as to “the psychological and sociological factors that shape both form and history of all religious institutions.” The historical observations in this lesson relative to the sociological characteristics of what historians call the “sect-to-denomination process” are drawn from this booklet.

Historically, according to sociologists, “sects” tend to evolve into “denominations.” What they mean by “sect” and “denomination” will help us to see what they have observed in history.

“SECT”	“DENOMINATION”
Members believe they have “the truth”	They are less dogmatic
They believe themselves to be “the church”	They are tolerant of other “churches”
They are strict morally	They generally accept the moral standards of the society in which they exist
They are fervent	Less active, fervent—more interested in the world around them

This transition does not take place overnight. Although it is a definite change, “it often takes place subtly...A man in the midst of the change often fails to recognize it. If he is perceptive enough to recognize it, he must have the additional ingredient of courage and moral honesty to admit it. It takes at least one generation to make the change and AT LEAST ONE MORE GENERATION TO UNDERSTAND AND ADMIT THE CHANGE.” Harrell, p. 16 (caps mine, srf). 1Pe 5:8; Ac 20:31; Rev. 3:17-19

Q: *WHERE ARE WE???*

Questions on back

1. “Mohammedans were brought up to believe in Mohammed; Christians were brought up to believe in Christ. I am a Christian and I wouldn’t want them trying to change me so I’m not going to try to change them.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

2. “Baptist Churches, Presbyterian Churches, and Methodist Churches teach that Jesus is the Christ and the Bible is the Word of God (at least some do), so I don’t believe we ought to ‘knock’ these other churches.” Agree or disagree? Explain.

3. “I don’t believe in arguing about the Bible.” Agree or disagree? Explain.

4. A man owns a successful retail business in town and is a prominent member of a local civic club. He opposes public preaching (newspaper, radio, etc.) that might anger people for fear it would adversely affect his business and create disharmony in the civic club. He favors teaching in a manner that will not offend anyone. What do you think?

5. A church is going to build a new building because a new location in a prominent location because they believe it will be conducive to growth. Several denominations have built in the area, and so they are willing to go through considerable extra expense for appearance features such as stained glass windows, a steeple, and special lighting. What do you think and why?

Lesson 7: Denominationalism From A Sociological Perspective (II)

See lesson 6. This is part 2 on this topic.

Following quotes are from *Emergence of the "Church of Christ" Denomination* Dr. David Edwin Harrell, Jr. (Athens, AL: C.E.I. Pub. Co., 1972)

Liston Pope, an eminent sociologist of religion, provided a list of "criteria for measuring the progress of a religious group toward denominationalism." *Ibid.*, p21. Some of these changes indicating this evolution from sect to denomination are (*Ibid.*, p21f):

1. "From propertyless to property-owning membership." That is, the membership moves to a different level of economic comfort and stability.
2. "From economic poverty to economic wealth, that is, value of church property, minister's salary." E.g., costly, elaborate buildings.
3. "From cultural periphery toward the cultural center of the community." Acceptance of the culture and by the society around them. Illustrated by advertising certain politicians, musicians, athletes, successful people in academic and business world, movie stars, etc. as members of the church.
4. "From a community excluding "unworthy members" to an institution embracing all who are socially compatible." E.g., unwillingness to discipline a member who is socially acceptable.
5. "From an unspecialized, unprofessional ministry to a professional ministry." E.g., specialized education in a college as a requisite to preach (compare "seminaries"), treating preachers as a special class (compare "clergy").
6. "From emphasis on evangelism to emphasis on religious education." Less zealous in converting others and more emphasis on what is socially acceptable: "Christian education."
7. "From stress on future in the next world to primary interest in this world." Basis for the "social gospel" - involvement in social services, political issues, etc.
8. "From noncooperation with other churches to cooperation"
9. "From fervor in worship to restraint."
10. "From a high degree of congregational participation to delegation of responsibility to a few."

Thus, historians observe a sociological basis underlying the change from "sect" to "denomination" involving the wealth, worldly success and prominence, and sophistication of the members. There are many exceptions to this (not all wealthy people "denominational" in thinking, nor do all poor people members of "sects"), but this is the over all pattern historically. Theological differences naturally arise from this sociological difference. Bro. Harrell observes, "The church is dividing BECAUSE THERE ARE TWO BASIC KINDS OF PEOPLE WITH THE MOVEMENT WHO ARE DEMANDING TWO VERY DIFFERENT KINDS OF RELIGION." (p23, caps mine, srf) **Mt 19:23; Jam 2:5; 1Co 1:26-29**

Q: *WHERE ARE WE???*

Questions on back

1. A church desires to find a preacher to work with them on a full-time basis. Among the requisites is that the preacher have two years of Bible at a brotherhood college. He must submit a resume showing his successes in past works. Also, he will be asked to preach a try out sermon to see if he is a dynamic speaker. Do you agree these are good criteria in seeking an evangelist? Explain.

2. A church is going to secure a well-known athlete who is also a Christian to speak to them. They send out advertisements to the community highlighting his name, records and accomplishments. What do you think?

3. You are moving to a new town. There are two "churches of Christ" in town. One has 500 members, a beautiful building, paved parking lot, a full-time preacher, and a budget of \$10,000 per week. The other has 50 members, a small, older building, gravel parking lot, and the members must assist in the preaching as the preacher they support works secularly also. Based on this data, which church will you join? Think.

4. In an assembly of the congregation for worship, should every Christian have the desire and feel the obligation to sing, or is it better to let those who know music and can carry a tune well do the singing and others simply enjoy and be edified by their good singing? Explain.

5. Do you think the local church should be more involved in providing social services and providing direction on political issues that affect the lives of people? Explain.

6. Do you think "churches of Christ" are in the midst of a transition to a "denomination" sociologically? Explain.

Lesson 8: Denominationalism From A Organizational Perspective

I. “DENOMINATION” AND “CHURCH” - COLLECTIVE NOUNS

A. “Collective noun”

“Gram. A noun that denotes a collection of persons or things regarded as a unit...Among the most common collective nouns are committee, company, clergy, enemy, group, family, flock, people, team.” *The American Heritage Dictionary* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1991)

B. “Denomination” collects *churches*

“5. an organized group of religious congregations.” *Ibid*

C. “Church” collects *people*

1. Universally

All saved *people* - **Ac 2:41,47; Heb 12:23**

If “body,” *people* = “members” **1Co 12:12-13,27**

If “flock,” *people* = “sheep” **Jn 10:16,27,28**

If “building” *people* = “stones” **1Pe 2:5**

2. Locally

Saved *people* working together in a given locality - **1Co 1:2; Php 1:1...4:15**

D. “Denomination” unknown to New Testament

Link -----Links -----Chain

Christian -----Christians -----Church **Mt 18:15-18**

Church -----Churches -----??? (Denomination)

1Co 1:2 -----Rom 16:16 -----???

II. DENOMINATIONALISTIC VIEWS OF THE “CHURCH”

A. “Church” = a specific denomination

E.g. Methodist “church” = Methodist “denomination,” i.e. collectivity of Methodist churches

B. “Church” = all denominations

E.g. The “church” will celebrate Christmas, i.e. all denominations will celebrate Christmas

C. “Church” = administrative body of a denomination

E.g. The “church” ruled to ordain homosexual priests, i.e. the ruling body of an organized group of churches so ruled (e.g., pope, synod, convention)

D. “Church” = all churches of Christ

E.g. “Congregations of the Church of Christ...”

Questions on back

1. Complete the chart: (The same thing is said about the individual in one passage that is said about the church in the other. What is it?)

Individual	Church	What was Done
1Co 6:11	Eph 5:26	_____
Ac 22:16	Eph 5:26	_____
Ac 2:47	Eph 5:23	_____
1Co 6:20	Ac 20:28	_____

2. Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches." (Jn 15:5) Show from the context that the branches are *people* and not denominations.
3. Someone asks, "What denomination are you a member of?" Would you answer, "Church of Christ"? Explain.
4. Three men are discussing religion. One says, "I'm Baptist." Another says, "I'm Methodist." The third says, "I'm Church of Christ." Which one is right? Explain.
5. "In our study the term 'church' and 'churches' are used interchangeably. They are so used in the New Testament. Acts 9:31 uses it to refer to the entire universal body [1 Cor. 14:33]. Acts 9:31 and Galatians 1:2 refer to the entire body of Christ in a particular region...In Romans 16:16 it is used to include many (all?) individual congregations (churches) as they constitute the universal, combined church (congregation)." Tom Estes, "*Why I Am a Member of the Church of Christ*" (Montgomery, Ala.: Bible and School Supply, 1972). Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

Lesson 9: Denominationalism From A Organizational Perspective (II)

See lesson 8. This is part 2 on this topic.

I. DENOMINATIONAL GOVERNMENT COMPARED TO NEW TESTAMENT

“denomination” - “3: a religious organization **uniting in a single legal and administrative body a number of local congregations**” *Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* (Mass.: G&C Merriam Co., 1970) “A large group of religious **congregations united** under a common faith and name, **usually organized under a single administrative and legal hierarchy.**” *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 5th Edit. Copyright © 2016, 2011 [boldmine]

“Some Christian **denominations include all their congregations in one comprehensive society, or ecclesiastical system, under some central authority, which legislates for and controls the whole. This comprehensive society they call the church.** Thus we speak of the Roman Catholic Church, the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church - where the word ‘church’ stands for the aggregate of all their local societies. ...

“...**A church, therefore, is not a system of congregations confederated under a general government**, but a single local congregation of Christian disciples associated in covenant and meeting together for worship. In this sense the word is commonly, almost uniformly, used in the New Testament.” Edward T. Hiscox, *A Standard Manual for Baptist Churches* (The American Baptist Pub. Society, 1958), pp. 10-11. [boldmine]

“Administrative” says it is able to execute the wishes of the member congregations. It necessitates some kind of common oversight and treasury.

A. Denominational centralization of oversight

Baptists -----Conventions

Methodists-----Conferences

Lutherans -----Synods

Catholics-----Bishops, Pope

Churches of Christ -----Boards (orphan homes), sponsoring church

B. New Testament

1. Universally - Christ **Jn 10:16; Eph 1:22**

His will known through His apostles and prophets - **Mt 19:28; Ac 2:42; Eph 2:20; 3:5; 1Co 14:37**

2. Locally - Elders **Ac 14:23; 20:28; 1Pe 5:2**

The **ONLY** religious organization authorized by the New Testament through which Christians work as one in those duties peculiar to being in Christ. There is **NO** authorization in the New Testament for churches to work as one, and thus no authority to provide oversight for that to happen.

Religious organizations **OTHER** than the local church are unknown to the New Testament. There is **NO** centralization of oversight among churches of the New Testament.

Questions on back

1. Fill in the blank

Churches		Administration		
Baptist churches	→	Convention	→	Baptist denomination
Methodist Churches	→	Conference	→	Methodist denomination
Lutheran churches	→	Synod	→	Lutheran denomination
Churches of Christ	→	Sponsoring church	→	_____

If the last is not a denomination, explain why.

- Denominations allow many churches to combine their resources to do what one church cannot. Moreover, it enables churches to select from a broader basis to find the most knowledgeable and capable men to lead. Is this good? Explain. (Note Rom 3:8; 6:1)
- If one were to argue that denominations have been around a long time, and are almost universally accepted among those who profess faith in the Bible, how would you answer?
- How many denominations are there in the US? See what you can find.
- If churches can combine their resources under a centralized oversight (board, conference, eldership, person) to accomplish a specific work (e.g. preach the gospel), can 30 churches do so? _____ 300 churches? _____ 3,000 churches? _____ All the churches in the world? _____ If a centralized oversight can oversee one specific work of all churches, could they oversee all their work? If not, why not?

Lesson 10: Denominational Attitudes (I)

What we say reveals how we think (**Mt 12:34**). The following statements reveal attitudes held in denominationalism. We will discuss these in class. Make appropriate notes as to how you would deal with these. Some Scriptures are given as suggested considerations. Do not feel you must comment on each one, nor feel limited to these—add your own. You can use these scriptures and your notes to answer the questions.

1. “My church says.” “My preacher says.”

Mt 4:6,7,10; 19:4; 22:31; Lk 10:26; 2Th 2:15; Mt 7:15-23; Ac 20:29-32; 3Jn 9-10

2. “Our church follows revered tradition.”

Mk 7:1-13; 2Th 2:15; Ac 20:29-32; Jn 16:13

3. “I have the witness of the Spirit in my heart”

“The Protestant Principle” - The “internal witness” of the Spirit is required to understand the Bible and certifies your interpretation is correct.

Ac 2:36-41; 8:11-12..16; 19:1-6 (Understood *before* or *after* the Spirit had any direct influence upon them?)

Ac 14:1; 17:11-12; Eph 3:4 (*How* did people come to understand the truth?)

Jn 16:8-13 (A promise - *what*, to *whom*, and *why*)

The “witness of the Spirit” - **Rom 8:14-16; 1Jn 2:27, 3:24, 4:13** (We will discuss in class.)

This attitude:

- Makes the “inner witness of the Spirit”—something *subjective*—become the final court of appeal, not the Scriptures.
- Relies on circular reasoning for proof. How do you know your interpretation is correct? By the “inner witness.” But, how do you know you have the “inner witness”? By the Scriptures. But, how do you know your interpretation of the Scriptures is correct.....?
- Is open to confusing a strong impression of the imagination with a divine witness of the Spirit.
- This approach is used by Mormons when they come to your door - read the Book of Mormon, pray about it, and God will let you know in your heart if it is true.

4. “I feel in my heart I'm right.”

Pro 14:12; Ac 26:9

Questions on back

1. "I cannot gamble." "Why?" "My church does not allow it." What is wrong with the response in this discussion?

2. "The Church of Christ has always taught that." "That has never been practiced in the Church of Christ."
 - a. Do these statements prove whether the Lord is pleased or displeased with something? Explain.

 - b. How is "Church of Christ" used here?

 - c. Should what churches of Christ always taught and practiced have any bearing on our efforts to determine what is right? Explain.

3. Do you believe the Holy Spirit dwells in you, and if so, explain what that means? What does He do for you?

4. Can we understand the Bible without additional power exerted upon our hearts by the Holy Spirit? Explain.

5. What is the function of the conscience? How does this affect whether how we feel about something proves whether we are right or not?

Lesson 11: Denominational Attitudes (II)

What we say reveals how we think (**Mt 12:34**). The following statements reveal attitudes held in denominationalism. We will discuss these in class. Make appropriate notes as to how you would deal with these. Some Scriptures are given as suggested considerations. Do not feel you must comment on each one, nor feel limited to these. These scriptures and your notes can be used to answer the questions.

1. "I like my church." "My church is active in the political and social issues that are important to me."

Amos 4:4-5; 1Tim 3:15

2. "All denominations are part of the church Jesus built. They are just different branches."

Jn 15:1-6; Eph 1:22-23; 2:16; 4:4-7

3. Denominationalism is good.

"Real competition serves purpose, even in religion. If they were all united into one organization, they might not reach as many people." Billy Graham, *My Answer*. (Taken from material by Darrell Hymel, "The Protestant Jesus.")

Mk 7:1-23; Jn 17:20-21; 1Co 1:10-13; Eph 4:3

4. "Attend the church of your choice."

Politically...? Religiously...?

Mt 28:20; Mt 7:21-23; 15:9,13; 1Co 4:17

Apply to: **1Co 7:17; 14:34,37,38; Ac 14:23; Tit 1:5f**

5. "As long as you believe in Jesus, you are saved."

I.e. works have nothing to do with salvation, e.g. baptism. The diversity in practice among denominations is unimportant as long as they confess Jesus as Christ.

Mt 28:18-20; Ac 2:37, 38; 22:16; Mt 7:21-23

Questions on back

1. Whether a Methodist attends the 1st Methodist Church or the 2nd Methodist Church, he still attends “The Methodist Church.” Whether a Christian attends the Humble Church of Christ or the Klienwood Church of Christ, is he still attending “The Church of Christ”? Explain.

2. Do you believe there are Christians in all churches? Explain. Do you believe all Christians are in churches of Christ? Explain.

3. What is the difference in denominations and the church of the Lord in (summary answer—we considered these in previous lessons)
 - a. Attitude toward authority? (Lessons 1-5)

 - b. Sociologically? (Lessons 6,7)

 - c. Organization? (Lessons 8,9)

4. What is the difference in an *objective* standard of authority and a *subjective* standard of authority?

5. Do members of the Lord's body ever manifest denominational attitudes? Explain.

Lesson 12: Faith, Works, Grace (I)

QUOTES REFLECTING DENOMINATIONAL TEACHING

“We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that **we are justified by faith only** is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.” Methodist Discipline, Art. IX. When denying “works” are requisite to salvation, this article means works “by which we assume to merit salvation or compensate God for any favor He bestows.” Henry Wheeler, *History and Exposition of the Twenty-Five Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1908), p. 199, 205. [boldmine]

“We **reject** as unscriptural the following teachings:...6. That man is indeed justified by faith, yet not because faith trusts in the merit of Christ, but **because it is a willing obedience to His Word**:...[groups listed who are supposed to believe this, srf] **Campbellites**...7. That man is justified through ‘the act of faith,’ and that his salvation rests upon his good works: **Campbellites**...” John Theodore Mueller, *My Church and Others* (St. Louis: Rudolf Volkening, Sixth Edit.), p. 27. [Evangelical **Lutheran** Church] [boldmine]

“We believe we are justified by faith in Christ; **not by baptism**, church connection, faith of parents, confirmation, the law, or any ordinance or ceremony.” J. G. Bow, *What Baptists Believe and Why They Believe It* (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention) p. 17. [boldmine]

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AND BAPTISM

That men are justified by faith anyone acquainted with the Bible must admit. But, what of baptism? Does “justified by faith” *include* or *exclude* baptism. The religious world is told that to make baptism necessary to justification is to nullify Paul’s teaching of justification without works, because baptism is a work.

Paul *does* teach justification by faith “alone” *in a sense* - but, in *what* sense? And, where does baptism fit into God’s plan?

- Faith *apart from* “works” **Rom 1:16-17; 4:4-8** (acknowledges his ungodliness; needs forgiveness)
- “Works” *apart from faith* **Rom 9:30-10:5** (no need for faith in the gospel of Christ)

These are the **ONLY** two choices. Cannot choose both. Must be faith “only,” not faith + “works.”

Reasoning: “Man justified by faith only, therefore baptism excluded.” But, *missing premise*.

- Man justified by faith only
- *Baptism not included in justification by faith*
- Therefore, baptism not a requirement for justification.

Q: Is baptism a “work” *apart from faith*, or a something one does *because of faith in the gospel*?

Mt 28:19; Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; Ac 2:41; Ac 8:12,13; Ac 8:36,37; Ac 10:48; Ac 16:33,34; Ac 18:8; Ac 19:5; Ac 22:16; Rom 6:3-4; NOTE: Rom 1:5; 16:26 - “obedience of faith”

Common illustration showing fallacy of *wrong contrast* (“faith” vs. “baptism”): Table with all kinds of meats and vegetables. “Please pass the salt.” “Would you like the pepper also?” “No, the salt only.” Q. Want no meat, vegetables?? *Must understand contrast in writer’s mind*.

Questions on back

Lesson 13: Faith, Works, Grace (II)

“FAITH” (PART) FOR FAITH AND THE OBEDIENCE IT REQUIRES (THE WHOLE)

“Synecdoche”

- Examples - “ABC’s”; “hired hand”; **Mt 6:11**, “bread” for food; **Ac 11:18** “repentance” for faith and whole plan of salvation
- “Faith”/“believe” so used - **Jn 3:16 (14-15)...****Ac 2:36-38; Ac 16:31...34; Ac 18:8a...18:8b; Rom 5:1...1:5; 16:26; Heb 11:6** ...whole chapter

THE VARIOUS “WORKS” OF THE SCRIPTURES

- Works of the flesh - **Gal 5:19ff**
- Works of law that would make one righteous without faith **Rom 9:30-10:5; 4:2,4,5; Eph 2:9**
- Works of obedience that grow out of faith **Lk 6:46; Ac 2:37; Rom 1:5; Gal 5:6; 1Th 1:3**

Rom 4:4-5

- Man saved without “works”
- Baptism is a “work”
- Therefore, man saved without baptism

BUT, play on “works.” E.g. ...

- “Kids” have short tails.
- My child is a “kid.”
- Therefore my child has a short tail.
- Anyone who “works,” God “owes” (“due”) reward (not “as a favor” - not of grace)
- Baptism is a “work”
- Therefore, anyone who baptized God “owes” reward, not of grace! Paul, **Ac 9:18? Gal 3:27?**
- Man is saved without “works”
- Faith is a “work” **Jn 6:28,29**
- Therefore, man is saved without faith!

When explaining article IX of the Methodist Discipline, Mr. Wheeler refers to **Rom 3:24-28**, and says, “‘Works’ here refers not merely to the requirements of the Mosaic ritual, but to every kind of work of body or mind, of penitence or piety, by which we assume to merit salvation or compensate God for any favor He bestows.” Wheeler, p. 200. Exactly! But, one must recognize there are other “works” that are *not* “meritorious” and do *not* “compensate” God for anything and that these works ARE requisite to salvation.

GRACE, FAITH, AND WORKS IN SALVATION

- Noah: *Grace* - **Gen 6:8; Faith** - **Heb 11:7; Works** - **Heb 11:7**
- Abraham: *Grace* - **Rom 4:1-5; Faith** - **Rom 4:1-5; Works** - **Rom 4:12; Heb 11:8,17**
- Ours (Parallel in three letters): *Grace* - **Rom 3:24 - Eph 2:8-9 - Gal 1:6; Faith** - **Rom 3:26 - Eph 2:8 - Gal 3:26; Works** - **Rom 1:5; 6:4,17 - Eph 5:26; Ac 19:5 - Gal 3:27**

Christians, even after baptism, are saved by *grace*, through *faith* that *works*. **Jam 2:14f; Gal 5:6; 1Th 1:3**

Questions on back

1. Show from the context that “believe” in Heb 11:6 is used according to the figure of synecdoche.

2. Ac 5:14 says that “believers” were “added to their number” (NASB) or “added to the Lord” (NKJV). Were they saved? If they were, were they saved without being baptized, since baptism is not mentioned? Use scripture in your answer.

3. When you get your paycheck, is it a matter of *grace* or *merit*? If you were to become destitute and were told you have to go to the courthouse downtown to receive food supplies, would receiving these be a matter of *grace* or *merit*? Explain.

4. What is wrong with the following?
 - Tops are made to spin on the floor.
 - The glass lid to this pot is a top.
 - Therefore, this glass lid was made to spin on the floor.(Yes, this has a point! See the lesson.)

5. Are we saved by grace, and if so, what does God’s grace provide relative to our salvation? Use scriptures in your answer. (You may find a concordance useful.)

6. Are people who have already been saved, still being saved by faith? Explain.

7. Suggestion: Somewhere in your Bible (e.g. front or back pages) write a few key scriptures and notes that will assist you when discussing this vital topic with others.

Questions on back

Lesson 14: Baptism and Salvation

BAPTIST: “**Baptism is not essential to salvation, for our churches utterly repudiate the dogma of ‘baptismal regeneration’**; but it is essential to obedience, since Christ has commanded it. It is also essential to a public confession of Christ before the world, and to membership in the church which is his body.” Hiscox, *Standard Manual*. Baptists do not believe in infant baptism and believe baptism must be by immersion.

LUTHERAN: “We **reject** as unscriptural the following teachings:...3. **That immersion is the only proper mode of performing Baptism...**5. **That Baptism does not work forgiveness of sins**, but is simply a sign and picture of the cleansing from sin...6. **That Baptism works forgiveness of sins as an act of obedience and faith..**” Mueller, *My Church*.

PRESBYTERIAN: “Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but **baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water** upon the person ... grace and salvation are **not** so inseparably annexed unto it as **that no person can be regenerated or saved without it...**” *The Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in the United States*.

METHODIST: “ARTICLE XVII. Of Baptism. ...The **baptism of young children** is to be retained in the Church.” *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church South*. “Then shall the minister take each person to be baptized...and then shall **sprinkle or pour water upon him** (or, if he shall desire it, shall immerse him in water)...” Ibid., p. 350. ARTICLE IX teaches men are saved by “faith only.”

NAZARENE: “Baptism being the symbol of the New Testament, **young children may be baptized**, upon request of parents or guardians who shall give assurance for them of necessary Christian training. ... Baptism **may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion**, according to the choice of the applicant.” *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene*.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM: “The chief effects of this sacrament [baptism, srf] are: ... (b) regeneration and **remission of original sin** (and actual if necessary), as well as punishment due to sin, and infusion of sanctifying grace (with its gifts)...**Infusion (pouring), immersion, and aspersion (sprinkling) are equally valid.**” Francis T. Burns, *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*.

WATCHTOWER (JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES): “**Baptism does not wash away one’s sins.**” *Make Sure of All Things*. Do not believe in infant baptism and believe baptism must be by immersion.

[bold mine in all above quotes, srf]

One can readily see there several divergent and contradicting views held by denominations relative to baptism. The best defense a Christian can have is to know the TRUTH. **Eph 6:10f**

- ▶ Not all baptism accepted by God - **Ac 19:1-5**
- ▶ Must be “in the name of Jesus” - **Ac 19:1-5; Ac 2:38**

At least FOUR characteristics of baptism in the name of Jesus:

- Right *Subject* - **Mt 28:19; Ac 8:36,37; 19:1-5**
- Right *Element* - **Ac 8:36 (10:47,48)**
- Right *Act* - **Jn 3:23; Ac 8:38**
- Right *Design* - **Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; 22:16**

Questions on back

1. You may differ with denominations on a number of biblical issues. Why is baptism such a critical one?

2. Someone has come forward at the singing of the invitation hymn. You are the preacher or elder who receives them and must talk to them. They say they have already been baptized in the Baptist church and now want to join the church here. What will you do? Explain why you decided on this course of action.

3. Does baptism in the name of Jesus require that one is baptized by a Christian? Must “I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” be stated at the time of baptism? If not, what must be stated? Explain.

4. Is one baptized into the “Church of Christ”? Explain.

5. Acts 16:15 and 16:33 states that “households” were baptized. Since “household” included any children, does this not prove that infant baptism is scriptural? If not, why not?

Lesson 15: Baptism and Salvation (II)

Denominational Objections To Baptism Being Essential To Salvation

Faith Mentioned in Many Verses Baptism Isn't (e.g., Jn 3:16; Rom 5:1; Ac 16:31)

- True - but same with baptism: **Ac 2:38; 10:48; 22:16; 1Pe 3:21**. Mean faith not required?
- What about repentance, confession—if not mentioned along with faith, not required?
- “Faith” in comprehensive sense (synecdoche) - **Ac 16:31...34; Ac 18:8a...8b**.
Like “bread” for “food,” **Mt 6:11**; “man” for “mankind,” **Jam 1:12**; “repentance” for whole plan of salvation, **Ac 11:18**
- Tied together: **Mk 16:16**

Christ Sent Me Not to Baptize, But to Preach - 1Co 1:17

- Baptizing with his own hands is what Paul had in mind, vv14-16. Administrator unimportant, **Jn 4:1,2**.
- He did preach its necessity! **Ac 16:14,15; 16:33; 18:8; 19:5; Rom 6:4**

Thief on the Cross - Lk 23:39-43

- He lived and died before the covenant requiring baptism in the name of Christ for the remission of sins became effective: **Heb 9:16-17; 1Co 11:25**
- Was he a pattern of salvation for all under the O.T.?? **Lev 6:1-7**
- Universal law: **Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15...16**; etc. To rest on other grounds is to do so without promise!

Christ Was Not Baptized for the Remission of Sins - Mt 3:13

- Christ' baptism unique. It is true he was not baptized for the remission of sins, yet John's baptism, i.e. the baptism he preached, WAS for that purpose, **Mk 1:4**. Christ' baptism by John was connected with his being “made manifest to Israel,” **Jn 1:31**. All other people baptized by John the Baptist were baptized for a *different reason* than Christ was.
- None before or after have been baptized for the same reason Christ was, and it cannot therefore serve as a precedent for anyone else's baptism.

Literal Water Can't Touch the Soul (Accusation: “Water salvation.”)

- Neither does literal blood touch the soul, **Rev 7:14**. Does this mean Christ' blood is not essential to salvation??
- “Blood” (i.e. shedding of blood) stand for “death.” See **Rom 5:8-10**, where the terms used interchangeably. We are baptized in water “into his death,” **Rom 6:3,4**. Without water baptism we are left short of the blood, or death, of Christ!
- As to “water salvation,” see **1Pe 3:20,21**.

Makes Salvation Dependent on Works, Not Grace - Rom 4:4,5 (See lessons 12,13.)

Questions on back

1. Defending the baptism of children, Henry Wheeler writes, “The silence of Scripture can be construed to indicate the practice in New Testament times... ‘If it were not so I would have told you,’ may be applied to this subject without any violent wresting of the Scriptures.” *History and Exposition*, p305. How would you answer this?

2. Still arguing for the baptism of children, Mr. Wheeler quotes Mk 10:14,16 and writes, “This incident...is a designation of the place of children in the kingdom of God ... We cannot consistently deny an entrance into the Church of Christ on earth to those of whom the Saviour said, ‘Of such is the kingdom of God.’” p307. How would you answer this?

3. Can a person be baptized for the remission of sins, yet their baptism not be scriptural? If yes, why?

4. What is “Church of Christ baptism”?

5. Since you believe baptism in the name of Jesus is for the remission on sins, how would you answer the person who asks you if you then believe that those in denominations who do not believe that are lost?

6. Look in books or bibles you have to see if they have instructions about how to be saved. They may be in the helps in the front or back of your bible, or in footnotes on key passages like Acts 16:31. In religious books, you may find such in an appendix or simply on the last few pages of the book.

Lesson 16: Baptism - Sprinkling, Pouring, or Immersion?

Importance of baptism: Ac 2:38; 22:16; Gal 3:26,27 etc. - *essential to salvation*

What, then, does it mean to be “baptized”?

- Untranslated - “Baptism” anglicized form of Grk *baptisma* (noun) - baptism; *baptizō* (verb) - baptize. Transliterated, not translated.
- Dictionaries/Denominations - Immerse, pour, or sprinkle water on
- How ascertain truth? *Standard = Bible. Mk 7:7-9*

Approach: Our approach will be to settle the matter by an appeal to the evidence that is readily available to all. Six simple and easily verified points.

1. Etymology In English Dictionary

- While definitions for “baptize” may say *sprinkle, pour, or immerse*, etymology will show it comes from Greek word meaning to “dip” or “immerse.” *Check yours.*
- Function of a dictionary - word usage *today*. Compare to a map.

2. Requires Much Water - Jn 3:23

- “because” - not, “and”
- True, John’s baptism and baptism under the New Covenant is not same so far as *subjects* (believe gospel of resurrected Christ), but the *act* is the same, and the *word* is the same.

3. Subject Always Came To Water, Never Water To Subject

- Four gospels: Mt 3:5,6,13; Mk 1:5,9; Lk 3:7,12; Jn 3:23
- Acts: 8:36; 9:18...22:16; 16:33 (left prison and returned to)

4. People “went Down Into” & “came Up Out Of” Water When Baptized

Mk 1:10; Ac 8:38-39. Note: No need to get into water for sprinkling or pouring.

5. “Sprinkle”/“Pour” Not Interchangeable With “Baptize”

If “baptize” means “sprinkle” or “pour” then should be able to interchange words.

Try this on Mt 28:19...

“Sprinkle” - to scatter in drops; “Pour” - to flow in a stream

Rebuttal: Heb 9:19? “sprinkled...all the people”! Q.: Did he “*scatter them in drops*”??

Ans.: Ellipsis: “sprinkled (blood on, v19a) all the people”

Can’t be both Sprinkling, Pouring AND immersion:

<u>Subj.</u>	<u>Verb</u>	<u>Dir. Obj.</u>	<u>Indirect Obj.</u>	
(you)	baptizing	them		(text)
(you)	sprinkling, pouring	(water)	upon them	(suggested ellipsis?)
(you)	immerse	(water)	upon them	???

- Which do all the *other* indicators point to??
- The ellipsis is *clearly suggested* in Heb 9:19. Where so in Mt 28:19? *Assumed* due to need to justify theology.

6. One “Baptism” - Eph 4:5

- Several characteristics: *Subject; Design; Element; Action* (see Lesson 14)
- “One baptism” common to all saved as a ground of unity (context).
Change any of these characteristics and have another baptism ... and division. *Immersion* unquestionably practiced in NT - would we be responsible for advocating another?

Questions on back

1. Why is the mode of baptism such a critical issue? See Acts 19:1-5; 2:38.
2. How is “baptism” defined in a current dictionary? Does this show what was meant by the word in the first century? Explain. (Note: Compare the definition of “church” in a current dictionary with the meaning it had in the first century.)
3. What is the etymology of the word “baptism”? (Use a dictionary to ascertain this.)
4. Why did John baptize in Aenon near Salim? Jn 3:23
5. Write the phrase in Jn 3:23 that answers this question: Did the candidates for baptism *come to the water*, or, *was the water brought to the candidate*?

Are there any exceptions to the above in the following verses? Mt 3:5,6,13; Mk 1:5,9; Lk 3:7,12; Acts 8:36; 9:18...22:16; 16:33.

6. *Who* “went down into the water” and “came up out of the water” in Ac 8:38,39? Is this necessary in the act of sprinkling or pouring?
7. If “baptize” means to “sprinkle” or “pour,” then these words ought to be able to be exchanged for “baptize” when it occurs, and their definitions should be able to be inserted in place of “baptize.”
 - a. Try inserting “sprinkling” or “pouring” in place of “baptizing” in Mt 28:19. Does either make sense?
 - b. Look up the definitions of “sprinkling” and “pouring” and insert those definitions in the place of “baptizing” in Mt 28:19. Does either make sense?
8. How many baptisms are common to all Christians? Eph 4:5
9. If a person had water sprinkled on them for remission of sins, were they baptized in the name of Jesus Christ? Explain.
10. Questions we may hear when discussing this with our religious friends. How would you answer?
 - a. If a person was sprinkled with water as baptism, was he/she baptized by the in the name of Christ?
 - b. The dictionary defines “baptism” to include sprinkling and pouring. Someone asks, “Does your church have special meanings for words not found in the dictionary?”
 - c. If baptism means one must be immersed, and if baptism is essential to salvation, what about infants and the bedfast? Can they not be saved?
 - d. The Roman Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, the Presbyterian Church, and other large denominations with scholars and years of Bible teaching behind them say baptism can be practiced by sprinkling. Do you think your church is the only right church and all others are wrong?
 - e. Will a person go to hell if they were not immersed in water?

Lesson 17: Spiritual Gifts

A movement, sometimes called the charismatic movement, has pervaded most denominations and some churches of Christ, teaching that Christians today are promised the baptism with the Holy Spirit, the ability to speak in tongues, and the power to work miracles.

I. Holy Spirit Baptism

A. Not equivalent of being “filled with the Spirit”

1. People were “filled with the Spirit” *before* the baptism with the Holy Spirit was promised or received. This shows that “filled with the Spirit” does *not* mean “baptized with the Spirit.” **Lk 1:15,41,67**
2. “Filled with “ used in Scripture to connote being influenced, or controlled, in mind or body, by something, e.g., **Lk 4:28**, rage; **Ac 5:3** - Satan; **Rom 15:14**, knowledge
3. Not necessarily miraculous - see examples under previous point; **Eph 5:18,19** compared with **Col 3:16**

B. A promise to the apostles to equip them for their work

1. **Acts 1:1-8** - note *What, Who, Where, When, and Why*
2. “Baptized with” - *measure* of power imparted by the Holy Spirit.
 - a) Compare **Isa 21: 4**, “horror **overwhelms** me”
 - b) Power to know all the truth, work many and varied miracles, pass on the power - **Jn 16:13; Mk 16:17-20; Ac 8:14-19; 2Co 12:12**

C. Pentecost

1. “Pentecostalism” - Belief that the events of Pentecost in Acts 2 are being reproduced today, specifically, that Christians ought to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the evidence of it, speaking in tongues. This is not limited to the old-line Pentecostal denominations any longer, but is claimed among Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists, Catholics, and even among those who claim to be members of the “church of Christ.”
2. The *apostles* were promised the baptism with the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:1-8**), and it is the *apostles* who *evidenced* by they had received power (**Ac 2:43**).
3. No one except the *apostles* received power from the Holy Spirit to speak in tongues on Pentecost (**Ac 2:4-7,12-15**). To urge all believers to seek the “Pentecost experience” as occurred at Pentecost is based on the false assumption that all (or many) believers spoke in tongues that day. Moreover, it not only misunderstands *what* happened, but *why* it happened - i.e., to *reveal* and *confirm* the gospel of the risen King

Questions on back

1. In Mt 3:11, John the Baptist said, “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” This was not to the apostles alone. If you do not believe this statement John made is a promise to all Christians, explain why. If you believe only the apostles were to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit, give evidence from Scripture.

2. Christians are told to be “filled with the Spirit,” Eph 5:18. Aren’t churches that teach Christians today should not expect baptism in the Holy Spirit and the miraculous gifts of the Spirit like speaking in tongues robbing people of this Spirit-filled experience, so that Christians who want the “full gospel” should seek a “Spirit-filled” church? If not, explain why, and what this verse means.

3. 1Co 12:13 says, “By one Spirit we were all baptized.” Doesn’t this mean the Corinthian Christians experienced Holy Spirit baptism? If not, how do you know, and what does this verse mean?

4. Should Christians today seek the “Pentecostal experience” of being filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues like in Acts 2? If not, explain why not.

5. Someone argues that the gift of tongues is to speak in an unknown language, not a native language like German, English, or French, and therefore there must be one who has the gift of interpreting tongues in order to know what they are saying. They may cite 1Co 14:2 as it is written in the KJV, “For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.” How would you respond?

Lesson 18: Spiritual Gifts (II)

I. Speaking in Tongues

A. Native languages

1. Ac 2:1-13

- a) Interchangeable with “language”
 - b) Native language - “to which we were born” - dialects of the specific regions listed
2. **1Co 14:21-23** - quote from **Isa 28:11** where it is referring to the language of a foreign nation who would conquer them

B. Not promised to all Christians

1. **1Co 12:4-11, 28-30; 14:4-5,26** - Clearly, not all the Christians in Corinth had the gift of tongues. There were a variety of gifts, some having one and some having another, and which gift a person received was decided by the Holy Spirit. The answer to *all* the questions in **1Co 12:29-30** is, “No.”
2. **Ac 8:14-20** - when last apostle died and last person on whom they laid their hands on died, no more miracles.

C. To be used in orderly fashion for edification

1. Edification - “Let all things be done for edification,” **1Co 14:26**. “Edification” as used in this chapter *requires understanding of what is being said*, **vv5-17**.
2. Order - “All things must be done properly and in an orderly manner,” **1Co 14:40**. Instructions are given to facilitate this, i.e., one speaker at a time and women not allowed to interrupt their prophet husbands while he is addressing the assembly, **vv27-35**. If someone today says they cannot control whatever it is that makes them act in a disorderly manner (many speaking at once; shouting; jumping up and down; rolling on the floor; etc.), then they do *not* have the gift the people in Corinth had, for they could, and were commanded to control their gift!

II. Miracles

A. Defined

In this lesson we mean “miracles” in the sense of the nine spiritual gifts listed in **1Co 12**. The word can be used to refer to all of them as works of divine power through the hands of men, or more specifically, to one of them, **v10**. There are no such miracles today.

B. Purpose of miracles

1. Apostles - Equip them to do their work of witnessing to the king—reveal and confirm the gospel. **Mk 16:20; Ac 1:8; Heb 2:4**
2. First Gentiles to receive the gospel - provide Divine witness that the Gentiles were included in the gospel. **Ac 11:18; 15:7-9**
3. Christians on whom apostles laid hands - edification of the saints through revelation and confirmation of the gospel. **1Co 12:7; 14:5,12,26**.

Questions on back

1. Tongue speaking is viewed as evidence of one's close fellowship with God and designed thereby to enrich their personal spiritual life. Do you agree? If not, explain why using Scripture.

2. Jesus said miraculous signs would accompany those who believed the gospel, Mk 16:17-18. Why do you say believers today should not expect to receive that promise and work miracles?

3. Paul wrote that in the exercise of spiritual gifts, all things were to be done for edification, 1Co 14:26. If someone says they are edified simply knowing the Spirit is moving in their assembly even though they do not understand what the tongue speaker is saying, how would you respond?

4. Those who believe in speaking in tongues and working miracles today will say the reason you cannot perform these signs or experience miracles is that you do not have enough faith. Is this true? If you say no, explain why.

5. What are some of the differences in the miracles in the New Testament and the "miracles" of today?

Lesson 19: Instrumental Music

To ascertain the will of God we must gather all the facts. There are eight (8) passages that say anything about the kind of music God has authorized under the New Covenant.

1. **Ac 16:25** “singing hymns”
2. **Rom 15:9** “sing to Your name.”
3. **1Co 14:15** (twice) “sing with the spirit”, “sing with the understanding”
4. **Eph 5:19** “singing and making melody”
5. **Col 3:16** “singing with grace in your hearts”
6. **Heb 2:12** “I will sing”
7. **Heb 13:15** “the fruit of our lips
8. **Jam 5:13** “Let him sing psalms.”

According to these “witnesses” or “facts”, God has chosen vocal music—singing—for His worship today. The authority for us to praise Him in music is “specific,” limited. No other kind of music is included in these facts. Any other kind is simply without authority.

Arguments To Justify Mechanical Instrumental Music In Worship

A. “PsallO” includes playing on an instrument.

“*PsallO*” is the transliteration of a Greek verb occurring five times in the New Testament: **Rom 15:9**; **1Co 14:15** (twice); **Eph 5:19**; **Jam 5:13**. The argument is that the use of mechanical instruments is inherent in the word.

1. “**In the N.T. to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song...**” Thayer’s Lexicon [bold mine, srf]. While *psallO* at one time in its history included the use of instruments, at the time the N.T. was written, it meant to *sing*.

Note: If an instrument is inherent in *psallO*, *everyone* should be playing an instrument!

2. Testimony of leading translations

We have the united testimony of 202 scholars (KJV, 47; ASV, 101; RSV, 54), from different time periods, different countries, many of which were members of denominations using instrumental music, declaring “*psallO*” in the New Testament means “to sing”. This is not to mention the concurrence of “well over one hundred” involved in the translation of the NKJV, plus the NASB, NIV, ESV and others.

B. Natural talent - ought to use your talent

The argument is that some have remarkable talent to play an instrument and that their talent ought to be used to glorify God.

1. Some have the talent to run...box...dance—shall we make these a part of worship?
2. One’s talent is not the criteria of what is acceptable to God in His worship. True worship must be according to the pattern of the NT. **2Tim 1:13**; **1Co 14:37**. Jesus said worship based on the doctrines of men was “vain.” **Mt 15:9**

C. Bible does not say, “Thou shalt not have instrumental music.”

The argument is that since God did not specifically forbid it, it is acceptable to practice it.

1. Must serve God according to the PATTERN of His Word, **2Tim 1:13**. All else is unauthorized.
2. Compare **Ex 25:9**, “according to...the pattern.” Because God NOT say, “Thou shalt not construct on additional lampstand,” was it OK to add one? Compare a blueprint for a house.

Questions on back

1. Learn by heart the location (book, chapter verse) of the “eight witnesses.” Suggestion: Also write them somewhere in your Bible for ready reference.
2. Mt 26:30 and Mk 14:26 also mention singing. Why should they not be included among the “witnesses”?
3. Ask your children if they know WHY we do not use instrumental music in worship? Do they understand the concept of a “pattern”? If you do not have children, ask a friend why they DO use instrumental music.
4. If we must follow the pattern of the New Testament, and it does not mention song books, how can you say these are authorized by the pattern while instruments of music are not because they are not mentioned?
5. Greek lexicons can be useful tools in study of the Bible. However, using the information in the lesson, illustrate how a Greek lexicon can be misused.

Lesson 20: Instrumental Music (II)

Arguments To Justify Mechanical Instrumental Music In Worship

A. An aid, as blackboard, songbooks

The argument is that aids, or expediencies, to the carrying out of a command are authorized in the command, and, as a songbook expedites singing, so a piano expedites singing.

1. Not treated merely as aids
 - a. In the O.T. - "Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet" - **Psa 150:3**. The trumpet player was worshipping ("praise"), not merely "aiding" worship.
 - b. Today - Entire songs are played on the instruments without any singing taking place. Suggestion: ask the pianist or organist if they view their work as praising God...?
 - c. Inconsistent to justify mechanical music as an "aid" but to practice it as "worship."
2. All "aids" not authorized - **1Ch 13:1-14...15:1-15**.
 "Aids" are not authorized when:
 - a. They *substitute* for God's PATTERN - "new cart"
 - b. They *add* to God's PATTERN - even if the sons of Kohath of Levi carried the ark, someone else could not have gotten under the poles with them to "aid" them.

B. Mechanical music in heaven

The argument is that since there will be mechanical music in heaven, it must be authorized for use in worship now. **Rev 5:8; 14:2; 15:2**.

1. Note: If these authorize the use of instruments today, they authorize them as "worship" not merely as "aids" (See argument above.)
2. Question is: God appointed music for his worship TODAY. If these verses teach we should have harps, what about golden bowls of incense, **5:8**? waterfall, thunder, **14:2**? sea of glass with fire, **15:2**? If reject one, reject all. If have one, have all. If not, why not?
3. Figurative language. Is there anything corruptible in heaven? (Mechanical instruments are.) See **1Co 15:50; 2Co 4:16**. Revelation is a highly symbolic book.

C. Had mechanical instrumental music in the Old Testament - e.g. Ps 150.

The argument is that since God approved its use in His worship in the O.T., He also approves of its use today.

1. The O.T. is not the Law that governs the Christian. The "first" covenant was replaced by a "second," **Heb 8:7; 10:9-10**. Note: "ordinances of divine service" were part of the first, **Heb 9:1**. See also **Col 2:13-17; Gal 6:15,16**.
2. Rebuttal: instrumental music approved in the Psalms, and Psalms are not a part of the "Law."
 - a. **Jn 10:34** - "Is it not written in your law..." **Ps 82:6**. **Rom 3:19** - "Whatever the law says" refers back to vv10-18. Verses 10-14 and 18 quote from six different chapters: **Psalm 14; Psalm 53; Psalm 5; Psalm 140; Psalm 10; Psalm 36**.
 - b. If the Psalms authorize mechanical instruments in worship, they would also authorize dancing, **Psa 149:3**; sacrifices, **Psa 66:15** (note again the connection with the Law).
3. Rebuttal: David and Nathan, who were prophets, instituted instrumental music, **2Ch 29:25**. The "Law" and the "prophets" are distinguished in the New Testament, thus while the "Law" was done away, this does not affect the "prophets."
 - a. **Rom 3:19** - "whatever the law says" refers back to **vv10-18**, which is taken from **Isa 59:7,8**. **1Co 14:21** - "In the law it is written..." **Isa 28:11,12**.
 - b. The Law and the prophets are inseparably related. The Law anticipated the prophets, **Dt 18:20-22**. The prophets urged devotion to the Law, **Mal 4:4**.

Questions on back

1. If you do not believe instrumental music is an authorized aid, what about using the pitch pipe? Is it an authorized aid? Explain why they are different if you believe they are.

2. When you point out to someone you do not believe we should look to the Old Testament to find the kind of worship authorized today, they may respond that you do not believe in the Old Testament or do not believe it is useful. What would be your response?

3. Do you believe it is alright to use instrumental music in worship to God at home? Explain.

4. Someone says, "We use instrumental music because we like it." How would you respond?

5. If you have the resource material (encyclopedias, reference books, tracts), see if you can discover when instruments of music were first used in worship in churches.