Why Are There So Many Churches?

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday October 30th, 2022

Text: II Timothy 4:3-4 Scripture Reading: I Timothy 4:1-6

### Intro

1. There are many misconceptions about the church which Jesus built.
2. The misconceptions are from confusion over the religious world’s many churches all claiming to have been the one Jesus built.
3. A common question is, “Why are there so many churches?”
   1. The next question is oftentimes, “How do I know which one is right?”
4. Because there are so many churches claiming to belong to God, some conclude that “one church is as good as another.”
   1. And when church shopping, many ask, “What do you offer?”
5. The question people should be asking is, “Is it the church Jesus built?”
6. Jesus only promised to build one church (Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28: Bought in His own blood) and to only save those in that one church (Ephesians 4:4-6; 5:23).
7. If Christ built only one church, then why are there so many churches?

#### Why Are There So Many Churches?

* 1. ***Short answer: Men would depart from the truth of God’s word!***
  2. Apostasy was warned – From unity would come factions!
     1. I Corinthians 1:10-13: Denomination mind-set condemned!
     2. Divisions are not from God!
     3. A denomination is part of a whole (IE: A quarter is part of a dollar).
     4. A religious organization smaller than the whole church, but larger than the local church (Factions within fractions of the whole)
  3. A continuing theme in many N.T. epistles is the warning of “other religions”
     1. **Peter** warned “there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies” (II Peter 2:1-3).
     2. **Peter** reminded and warned saints to beware of such false religious teachers “lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked” (II Peter 3:17).
     3. **John** warned that because “many false prophets have gone out into the world” saints are to “test the spirits to see whether they are from God” (I John 4:1).
     4. **Paul** warned that men would leave the church (unity) to hear and teach things that they desired to hear (Selfishness would lead to factions)! (I Timothy 4:1-3; II Timothy 4:3-4)
  4. While factions of other religions happened in the 1st century and happens still today, it isn’t new!
  5. God’s word is likened to a seed in the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:18-23; Mark 4:13-20; Luke 8:11-15).
  6. Man has always mixed some other doctrine in with the word of God to create “mixed seed!”

#### Mixed Seed of the Jews and In the 1st Century

* 1. Apostasy was warned – Serve God and be blessed, serve other gods and be cursed!
     1. Deuteronomy 30:15-20: Moses set before them life and death, blessings and the curse.
     2. Serve God and obey Him and be blessed.
     3. Serve other gods and forsake the Lord and be cursed.
     4. Over and over in their history they mixed idolatry with the Law of Moses.
  2. God said don’t add to or subtract from His word by Moses in Deuteronomy 12:32
     1. Israel had the Law of Moses and yet served idols “on every high hill and under every green tree” and were destroyed by Assyria for it (II Kings 17:7-12)!
     2. Judah saw all that and then did the same by sacrificing to the Queen of Heaven as well as serving God and they were sent into exile to Babylon (Jeremiah 7:17-20) and God would also slay all those who fled to Egypt in the aftermath (Jeremiah 44, esp. vss. 16-19)!
  3. Some notable “other religions”:
     1. **Korah & his Religion of Inclusivity – Numbers 16** 
        1. He and his cohorts challenged Moses and Aaron’s leadership and said they should all be able to burn incense before the Lord and be priests also (16:1-27).
        2. Moses had them all burn incense the next day to see who the Lord accepted, and Moses warned them that what was about to happen wasn’t his doing but God’s choosing (16:28-30)
        3. The ground opened up and swallowed all the rebels and their families (16:31-34)
        4. God burned the 250 men who were still burning incense to Him! God killed them all, and then as a reminder that no one but the Levites who God designated were to burn incense on the altar to God their incense censers were hammered out and added as plating to the altar of God (16:36-40).
        5. Then after all that, the next day the people accused Moses and Aaron, saying, “You are the ones who have caused the death of the LORD'S people.” God sent a plague that killed another 14,700 people (16:41-50).
        6. King Saul did it too and lost his kingdom (I Samuel 13:8-14)
        7. King Jeroboam did it by abolishing the Levitical priesthood so anyone who paid enough could be a priest and he lost his life and his dynasty (II Chronicles 13:8-10, 20; I Kings 14:7-11).
        8. King Uzziah did it and became leprous (II Chronicles 26:16-21).
           1. **Application:** People still today want the Religion of Inclusivity.
           2. They say to look at all the churches of the world and then ask, how can there only be one?
           3. They charge Christians of the Lord’s body that we say we are the only ones going to heaven!
           4. Like Moses, our answer is that it is not our doing or saying, but what the Scriptures teach: There is only one church that Jesus promised to build and to save (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4-6; 5:23)
           5. Make sure you are a part of the right church!
     2. **King Jeroboam & his Idolatrous Religion of Convenience – I Kings 12:25-33** 
        1. It started from his self-preservation worries and so he introduced two golden calves in the north (Dan) and south (Bethel) of his kingdom’s boundaries.
        2. He then created a party for one month that rivaled Jerusalem’s 3 mandatory Feasts: Passover, Atonement and Booths.
        3. Jews living in the Northern Kingdom didn’t have to go to Jerusalem: If they lived in the north, they could go to Dan. If they lived in the south, they could go to Bethel.
        4. He caused all Israel to sin with his sins until God removed them with Assyria (II Kings 17:22-23).
           1. **Application:** People still today want the Religion of Convenience.
           2. Denominations have adopted parts of John Calvin’s false teachings.
           3. The most popular one is “Once Saved, Always Saved.”
           4. This is convenient theology as you can justify any behavior after obeying God once, and in their minds they can’t lose their salvation so then why repent?
           5. This flies in the face of so many warnings for saints to not fall away! (IE: I Timothy 4:1-3; II Timothy 4:3-4; Hebrews 6:4-6; James 5:19-20; II Peter 2:17-22)
           6. Some teach salvation through a prayer as a substitute for baptism even though God has never asked for a prayer to be saved in either the OT or NT (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:27; I Corinthians 12:13; I Peter 3:21).
           7. Today, technology is a great tool to bring us close when we are far away or for health reasons we are unable to come together, but some choose to not assemble as the church (I Corinthians 11:18) and use Livestreaming services as a substitute!
           8. Serve God out of love, not out of convenience!
     3. **King Ahab & his Idolatrous Religion of Immorality – I Kings 16:29-33; 21:25-26; II Kings 9:22** 
        1. King Ahab married a Phoenician princess, Jezebel, and together they introduced Israel to her gods, Baal and Asherah, who were worshipped as a pair in Tyre and Sidon.
        2. We are told Ahab was more evil than any king who came before him because of the influence of his wicked wife (I Kings 21:25-26).
        3. Both Baal and the Asherah were worshiped as fertility gods and as such sex and prostitution were common at their shrines or temples.
        4. Earlier, even King Solomon worshiped Asherah (I Kings 11:5, 33).
        5. In the 1st c. Jesus charges the church at Thyatira with tolerating the teachings of a woman called Jezebel (either lit. or fig. of the queen’s character) who taught saints to “commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols” (Revelation 2:20-23)
           1. **Application:** People still today crave the Religion of Immorality.
           2. Not only does the false teaching of “Once Saved, Always Saved” teach a religion of convenience but to some it is also license to commit acts of immorality and sin!
           3. Many have adopted the Gnostic view of the 2nd c. that taught the body is physical and so can commit anything it wants out of instinct as long as the mind belongs to Christ.
           4. Those who do so ignore such warning as to keep oneself pure and that the marriage bed is undefiled but God will judge fornicators and adulterers, and that those who practice such things will not inherit Heaven! (I John 3:1-4; Hebrews 13:4; Revelation 21:8; I Corinthians 6:9-10, 18-20)
           5. Today, people want to claim to be Christians but still party as if there is no tomorrow!
           6. You cannot be a Christian and commit acts of immorality!
     4. **King Manasseh & his Idolatrous Religion of Violence – II Kings 21:1-16; II Chronicles 33:1-10**
        1. He made Judah to sin with idols and even placed them in the temple that King Solomon had built.
        2. He rebuilt the “high places” and idolatrous altars his father King Hezekiah had torn down.
        3. He sacrificed his own children to false gods and made the streets of Jerusalem run red with innocent blood!
        4. He was punished with the loss of his kingdom and was carried away captive by the Assyrians to Babylon. While there he repented and God restored him to his kingdom! (II Chronicles 33:11-13).
        5. When he returned to God and to Jerusalem he undid what was in his power to undo, demonstrating his true repentance (II Chronicles 33:14-16)
        6. But you can see the heart of the people were unwilling to fully repent with him in 33:17. They still sacrificed to God in the high places. This was forbidden but went on anyway. They added these foreign altars to the worship of God.
        7. Even after Manasseh repented the people followed the wickedness of his son Amon (II Chronicles 33:21-23) and it is for “the sins of Manasseh” that God destroyed Jerusalem and punished Judah with the Babylonians in His wrath (II Kings 24:3-4) because there was “no remedy” (II Chr. 36:16).
           1. **Application:** People still today follow after the Religion of Violence.
           2. Not only is there the religion of Islam that began in AD 610, but some Christians commit acts of violence in the name of God against abortion clinics and doctors.
           3. Many in our country and the world over have made a religion out of killing babies, both unborn and at term, in the name of Women’s Rights, Freedom, The Right to Choose, etc.
           4. They call murder “abortion” to lessen the impact on the ears and instead of referring to the murder victims as children, babies or even a fetus, they refer to them as cells, tissue, or just matter.
           5. God condemns violence among Christians and says He will enact vengeance, He will repay (Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30).
           6. Murder is referred to as unrighteousness (Romans 1:29) and one of the Ten Commandments repeated to Christians to obey (Romans 13:9).
           7. You cannot be a Christian and commit acts of violence!
     5. **The Gospel mixed with anything else is a perversion! – Galatians 1:6-9**
        1. Judaizers were a threat to the simple message of the gospel in the 1st c.
        2. They wanted to mix the gospel with the Old Law.
        3. The Jerusalem council was called together to discuss this when Jewish believers wanted to impose circumcision on Gentile believers – Acts 15
        4. The end result was that not even the Jews could obey the Law of Moses and the apostles gave “no such instruction” in the gospel message so the Gentile saints weren’t to listen to those trying to put them under the yoke of the Law (Acts 15:10, 22-31).
        5. Paul told the Galatian saints the gospel mixed with anything else isn’t a new gospel but is a perversion! (Galatians 1:6-9)
           1. **Application:** People still today follow after a perverted gospel!
           2. Some have made a religion out of keeping the Sabbath Day holy, when that is part of the Old Law and not repeated for Christians under the gospel to obey, but in fact are told they can ignore (Colossians 2:13-17).
           3. Some use the Psalms, which are part of the Old Covenant fulfilled by Jesus (Luke 24:44), to justify using Instrumental Music in the assembly, despite the clear teachings that saints are to sing and make the melody from the heart (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).
           4. To observe (or keep) part of the Old Law makes us guilty of the whole Law! (Galatians 3:10-14; James 2:10).
           5. Some add to the Bible the doctrines (teachings) of men!
           6. You cannot be Christians and mix any other belief with the gospel!
  4. All those who mixed something with the word of God to create “mixed seed” were punished for it – Why do people today think it will be any different for them?

#### Mixed Seed

* 1. The Word of God is like “seed”
     1. Luke 8:11: “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.”
     2. One characteristic of seed is that it ALWAYS produces after its kind!
     3. Like by the mouth of Moses, God said not to add to or subtract from His word by the pen of Paul and John (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).
  2. From Catholics to Islam, from denominations to other cults, they have all added something extra to the inspired word of God or outright replaced it! They have ***mixed seed!***
     1. The Roman Catholic Catechism will always produce a Catholic!
     2. The Koran (Qur’An) will always produce a Muslim (“one who submits”)!
     3. The Augsburg Confession (1530) & Book of Concord (1580) will always produce a Lutheran!
     4. The Presbyterian Book of Common Prayer will always produce a Presbyterian!
     5. The Baptist Church Manual will always produce a Baptist!
     6. The Book of Discipline and Wesley’s Book of Common Prayer will always produce a Methodist!
     7. The Book of Common Prayer, Catholic Creeds & Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion (Revised for USA), Communion Offices (by Samuel Seabury) will always produce Episcopalians!
     8. The Book of Mormon and their other writings will always produce a Mormon!
     9. *The Great Controversy* and Ellen White’s prophecy books will always produce a 7th Day Adventist!
     10. The Watch Tower Society will always produce a Jehovah’s Witness!
     11. The Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths will always produce a Pentecostal!
     12. *Dianetics* by Science-fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard will always produce a Scientologist!
  3. What these and many more all have in common is that they claim to serve God but do so with “mixed seed” or have outright replaced the word of God!

## Conclusion

1. Why are there so many churches?
   1. II Tim. 4:3-4: Men departed the truth of God and devised doctrines in accordance with their likings and began teaching as doctrine their traditions! (The Jews did it too in Matthew 15:8-9; Mark 7:9) – ***Mixed Seed!***
2. Some ask, “Will God hear the prayers of all those in the various churches of the world?”
   1. I Peter 3:12 says “No.” If they have mixed the gospel with other beliefs, it is evil, and so their prayers go unheard. God said that, both in the OT (Psalm 34:12-16) & here!
   2. Men need to turn to the word of God and obey it only – turn from man’s mixed seed!
3. Mixed Seed only causes confusion and produces a perverted message of the gospel!
   1. The only way to get the unity Jesus prayed for in John 17:20-21 is to use the same seed (Luke 8:11)
   2. If the only “seed” sown was the N.T. gospel as taught by the apostles, what would result?
   3. Because seed always produces after its kind, the only thing that could possibly be produced by the N.T. is a Christian — *No other names necessary!*
4. **Are you of the seed that is the word of God, or from “mixed seed?”**
5. If you are not a Christian, you are outside the family of God! Repent and be baptized!
6. If a Christian in error, remember the blessings of being a part of His family! Repent!
7. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!

**Sources:**

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For Additional Material such as Charts, Outline, PowerPoint, Audio and Video, see the sermon, Mixed Seed by Nathan L Morrison, 03/08/2020 here:

<http://www.courthousechurchofchrist.com/sermons/sermons/2020/03/08/mixed-seed>