



Does It Really Make a Difference - Part 2

In this week's edition, we wish to notice some characteristics that separate the New Testament church with the denominations of the day.

First, we wish to take a look at the founder. The church of the New Testament was established by our Savior, Jesus Christ the Son of God. In Matt. 16:18 Jesus said, *"I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."* Jesus promised to build His church and we see the fulfillment of that in Acts 2. He did not, however, promise to build many churches or one "parent" church with many "sibling" churches. He only said He was going to build His church (singular). When we look, though, at the present day denominations we notice they all have human founders. Notice a few of these with me: Roman Catholic (606 AD; Rome), Lutheran (1520 AD; Germany), Baptist (1607 AD; Holland), and Mormons (1830 AD; America). We could name more but this should suffice. It is plain to see that these "churches" are not the churches for which Jesus died (Acts 20:28).

Second, we want to notice the singleness of the New Testament church. In Eph. 1:22-23 Paul said, *"And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."* However, that's not all Paul said concerning this topic. In chapter 4:4-6 Paul said, *"There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all."* Paul said there is only one faith and one body, words that are indicative of the singleness of the church. Jesus only died for one church, His church. We are the ones that has to find that church and abide by the law He has given to us.

Third, let's notice the name that's been given to God's people. In the minds of many people names don't mean a whole lot. Most people feel it doesn't matter what you call the church or how you identify it. However, I'm convinced people are concerned about names. For example, how many people do you know would name their children Hitler or Satan? The fact is, it does make a difference as to how we are known. Isaiah prophesied God would give His people a new name (Isa. 62:2). We, again, see the fulfillment of the prophecy in Acts 11:26 where the disciples *"were first called Christians."* Notice these people weren't identified as Baptist Christians, Catholic Christians, etc. They were simply embracing the name given to them by their Creator. We must be willing to do the same today. God has only given us one name to wear and when we use other names we break down the bond of unity He has prescribed for His church (I Cor. 1:10-13).

It seems there is a vast difference between the New Testament church and the churches of the present day world. We will continue our thoughts along this line next week. Allow me to encourage you to examine these differences carefully. It is our responsibility to be a part of the blood bought church, regardless of what we might think or feel.

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