

## JESUS STRAIGHTENS OUT RELIGIOUS CONFUSION

1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 14:33

(Not entirely original with me)

**Introduction:** No doubt there are many, many different kinds and names of churches today. So, which one is the right one? If a person becomes interested in the Lord, just which church does he want to attend? There is so much confusion today among all the religions and churches. There is disagreement on doctrines and on practices taught by those who say that they are "Christians." Religious confusion does not come from God! The answer to religious confusion is Jesus. Find what Jesus says and did, He is the example to be following, not some preacher or some church.

### I. JESUS IS THE EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW

1. There was religious confusion in Jesus' day among the Jews:
  - Israel was living under the Law of God given by Moses.
  - Within the Law God gave there were NO provisions for religious sects or parties or divisions.
  - When Jesus came, the Jews had formed several distinct religious parties:
    - The Pharisees - conservative
    - Sadducees - very liberal
    - Essenes - radical isolationists
    - Herodians - zealots, political religionists
  - Any Jew serious about religion would be associated with one of these groups.
2. Jesus maintained a personal, no religious party, relationship with God:
  - Jesus belonged to NONE of those groups.
  - It was Jesus and God, the Father only with no religious party affiliation.
    - Jesus was simply an "Israelite" living under the genuine Law of Moses.
    - Jesus encouraged everyone to live by the Law - Matthew 5:17-20
    - Jesus taught and encouraged everyone to simply be what the Law of Moses intended them to be.
3. What religion might Jesus be affiliated with today?
  - Would He be a Baptist, Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, Church of God, Assembly?
  - If He taught to simply be an "Israelite" wouldn't Jesus simply be a "Christian?"
  - The first members of Jesus' "church" were called "Christians."
  - Believers in Jesus today should be content with being called "Christians," nothing more, nothing less.

### II. THE CHURCH THAT JESUS STARTED

1. The Church was promised by Jesus:
  - Jesus said that He was going to build HIS Church - Matthew 16:18
  - "Church" comes from the Greek "ekklesia" which refers to a "called out-group, an assembly, a congregation."
  - Jesus was going to create HIS own group of people who have been "called" out.
2. Jesus' Church has been established through the preaching of the Gospel:
  - How is a person "called"?
  - Paul said that people are "called" by the Gospel - 2 Thessalonians 2:14

- Peter preached the gospel and those who were willing to express their faith in Jesus were "called" out.
  - Acts 2:38-41
- Those responding to Peter's message in faith and repentance were "added."
  - Added to what, by whom?
  - *"...And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved..."* - Acts 2:47
- The day of Pentecost was the beginning of the Lord's church, His "ekklesia" - called out ones.
- When the Gospel was proclaimed and people responded positively to it, the "called-out" assembly or group was created.

3. Jesus' Church was/is expanded through the preaching of the Gospel:

- The Church started in Jerusalem at one location.
- As the Gospel spread, people responded to it, groups of these saved people in various cities met together.
- Each group became known as a "local church" in contrast to the "universal" church which is made up of all those saved throughout the world and ages.
- During Paul's first missionary journey, many churches were established - Acts 14:21-23
- The preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is what forms the "local" church when people obey the gospel and join together "locally" in their work and worship.

4. Jesus' Church was edified through the doctrinal preaching of the apostles:

- Though united in belief in Jesus Christ, the local churches were independent of any organization or federation (union) with other churches.
- Jesus directed the local churches through the Apostles as they taught them how to worship and work together - Acts 2:42
- Teaching was done by the Apostles themselves or someone appointed by them or by letters written to one or more of the local churches - 1 Corinthians 4:17; 14:37; 1 Timothy 3:14-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:14-15; 3:14
- By responding to the gospel and paying close attention to what the Apostles preached and taught, the people of the early church age were able to be CHRISTIANS only, not some denomination as existing today.

### III. HOW TO AVOID RELIGIOUS CONFUSION

1. Accept ONLY the Gospel:

- Jesus calls people into HIS church only through the Gospel.
- One begins by obeying the very same instructions that Peter gave in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost - Acts 2:38
- Believing in Jesus, repenting of one's sins one receives the very same blessings as did the 3,000 on that day of Pentecost - Salvation!
- This is the only manner one can be saved and added to Jesus' Church. - Acts 2:47

2. Follow the example of the early Christians:

- The early Christians continued steadfastly in the doctrine/teachings of the Apostles.
  - They joined no other religious organization.
  - In Jesus, one is automatically united with all others who are also in Him.
- Christians today should study carefully the pattern of the early churches.
  - The Book of Acts outlines, describes the early church.
    - How to worship the Lord acceptably
    - How to be scripturally organized as a local congregation.

- How to live and work together as Christians, spreading the gospel of Jesus.
- Since the Apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit, the early local churches received the exact instructions that Jesus wanted them to have.
- By duplicating the early churches and following the doctrines of the Apostles, one can simply be a Christian and be certain that the Lord is pleased.
- *"...He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me..."* Luke `10:16

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. By following the example and teachings of Jesus, as the Apostles preached and taught, one can avoid all the religious confusion that exists today.
2. No doubt many of today's "denominations" have parts of their doctrine that are scripturally accurate but also there have been added other "things" that are not a part of the original church's teachings.
3. Do not want to be a Baptist, a Church of Christ, a Catholic, a Methodist, a Lutheran, an Assembly of God, or Church of God, just want to be a CHRISTIAN, then the Holy Spirit will lead you to the local congregation (church) God wants you to be a part of.
4. IF Jesus started the "Church" then go back to how Jesus started His Church.