

DENOMINATIONS

WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW TO REACH THEIR
ADHERENTS

WHAT IS A DENOMINATION?

- If you were to look up the word denomination in the dictionary, it says that it is a “recognized autonomous branch of the Christian Church”. However, we must realize that it is really a split of the church that Jesus created.
- What the Bible says about unity: Eph. 4:4-5, Eph. 2:18-22.
- Any church that does not have Jesus as the cornerstone and the teachings of the apostles and prophets as its foundation, then it is **not** the first century Church, even if it claims to be (1 Cor 3:10-11).

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DENOMINATIONS?

- It is believed that there are over 200 Christian denominations within the United States alone.
- These are some of the biggest denominations: Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Episcopalians, Mormons, and Presbyterians.

SO WHY DO WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT THEIR BELIEFS

- In order to preach the gospel to all creation (Matt. 28:18-20), we need to know and understand what people believe and why they believe it.
- When individuals from denominations confront us and state their doctrines, we need to be able to correct them (1 Tim. 4:2-5).

CATHOLICS

- What do they believe?
 - A. They believe that Peter was the founder and the head of the Church (*Faith of our Fathers* p.78). However, even Peter states that Jesus is the cornerstone of the Church (1 Peter 2:10).
 - B. Priests have the power to forgive sins (Council of Trent, and Lateran Council of 1215). However, Jesus is the only one who has power to forgive sins (Mark 2:6-10, 1 John 1:9)
 - C. Infants are to be baptized. However, only believers to have repented of their sins and confessed their faith can be baptized (Romans 10:8-10, Acts 2:38)
 - D. Cannot be saved without praying to Mary (*Glories of Mary* 254,255,189). However, the Bible tells us that we are to pray to Jesus.

BAPTISTS

- It is important to understand that there are many kinds of 'Baptists'. In the US alone, there are some 28 different splits within the Baptist denomination. So there different varying beliefs within the Baptist denomination, but there are still many traditional beliefs that are common within their faith.
- What do they believe (traditionally)?
 - A. Most baptists are calvinist and they believe that God chose who to save 'before the foundation of the world. However, God declared that all who are to be saved shall be saved in Christ. Not that he cherry picked individuals before the world began (Eph. 1:3-7). All who obey him are saved (Heb. 5:9).
 - B. Baptism is immersion, but it is NOT essential to salvation. However, baptism washes away sins (Acts 22:16). If sin isn't washed away, then it still keeps us separate from God (cf. Is. 59:2).
 - C. The name 'Baptist'. However, we should wear the name Christian because we belong to Him (Rom. 7:1-4).

METHODISTS

- My grandparents are devout Methodists.
- What do they believe?
 - A. It is not necessary to partake of the Lord's Supper weekly, it is often practiced quarterly. However, the early Church partook in it every week (Acts 20:7).
 - B. The Church is composed of many branches, and the Methodist 'church' is just one branch (Preamble to Methodist Constitution). However, the Church does not have divisions (1 Cor. 1:10). Man is the branch, but Jesus is the Vine (John 15:1-7).
 - C. The *Methodist Discipline* gives rules, doctrines, and regulations governing all procedures and affairs of the Church. However, scriptures are the only authorized guide given by the inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). No other doctrine or commandment is to be taught other than the words said by Jesus and written down by the Apostles and Prophets (Gal. 1:8-9).

LUTHERANS

- The Lutheran Church is the oldest of existing Protestant churches.
- What do they believe?
 - A. Man-made creeds such as the Nicene Creed, Apostles Creed, and the Augsburg confession. However, the Bible states that Jesus' and the Apostle's words are sufficient (John 6:63, 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
 - B. Justification by faith alone. However, both faith AND works are essential; demons also believe but they do not have the works to accompany their belief (Jam. 2:19-24).
 - C. Baptism by sprinkling or pouring is acceptable. However, we see that immersion (or burial) is the only true way to wash away ALL of our sins (Acts 8:38-39, Rom. 6:4).

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS

- Seventh Day Adventists was begun in 1843 by a man named William Miller who made all sorts of predictions regarding when Christ was going to come again.
- What do they believe?
 - A. The “ceremonial law”, not the Ten Commandments, were nailed to the cross. However, there was only one law in the Old Testament (2 Chron. 31:3). Therefore, the entire law with its obligations was nailed to the cross (Acts 15:1-11).
 - B. The Sabbath still exists because it is part of the Ten Commandments. However, the law was nailed to the cross, and specifically laws regarding the Sabbath day (Col. 2:14-17; Rom. 14:5).

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

- Started by man named Charles T. Russell in 1872. He claimed that God revealed to him personally His plan regarding the “end-times”. He claimed that Christ would return in 1874, but changed the date to 1914. Christ still hasn’t come back.
- What do they believe?
 - A. The name Jehovah’s Witnesses. However, this name is never used in the New Testament. We are called Christians, because we are of Christ (1 Pet. 4:16).
 - B. Jesus is not God, but rather the first created being or an angel. However, he is described as being the creator of all things (Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:3). He also couldn't have been an Angel because Christ is superior to Angels (Heb. 1:4).
 - C. Baptism does not put one into Christ. However, the Bible says otherwise (Gal. 1:27-29; Rom. 6:3-4).
 - D. Earthly headquarters with president. However, Christ is the head of the Church (Col. 1:18).

PRESBYTERIANS

- Even though the Presbyterian church is a denomination, it is probably the most conservative of the denominations we have covered thus far. They have elders, they believe in baptism for the remission of sins. And they believe that the Lord's Supper must be taken every week as the Bible commands. However, there are some things that distinguish them from the Church we see in the Bible.
- What do they believe?
 - A. God pre-destined certain individuals to inherit salvation (Calvinism) and his grace is irresistible to the ones who are elect. However, Salvation is for ALL who believe and obey the gospel (John 3:16). Although God's grace exists, man chooses who he is to serve (Josh. 24:15).

MORMONS

- Also known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- DO NOT USE NOTES FOR THIS SECTION!