

DENOMINATIONALISM



What God Has NOT Joined Together

INTRODUCTION

- Today, we continue our 2026 theme.
- We have begun examining some doctrinal matters that God has NOT joined together.
- We have discussed creation vs. evolution
- Fellowship with unbelievers
- Today, Denominationalism
- This is not a comfortable subject, because of implications with our friends, but far too many

○ — misunderstand

What is denominationalism?

- **Denomination** – 1. A large group of religious congregations united under a common faith and name, usually organized under a single administrative and legal hierarchy.
2. One of a series of kinds, values or sizes, as in a system of currency or weights.
3. A name or designation, especially for a class or group.
8. A class, or society of individuals, called by the same name; a sect; as a religious denomination.
- Religiously, it is a group of congregations that join themselves together under some earthly hierarchy. Member congregations submit to the beliefs and decrees of that organization.

What is denominationalism?

- **Denominationalism** – the tendency to separate into denominations and to advocate for such as acceptable.
- It is the belief that the body of Christ consists of many denominations, that may teach differently concerning doctrine, authority and organization. Yet they profess that they are all still part of the body of Christ.

Why is denominationalism wrong?

- **It is divisive**
- To denominate means to name something, but in practice it means to divide into parts.
E.g., US currency – 4 quarters = \$1. 100 pennies = \$1.
The different denominations of currency.
- Some advocate that the body of Christ can be divided similarly to make up the whole of the body of Christ.
E.g., (NOTE: These numbers are not real).
Take 4 “denominations” – 25% Baptist, 25% Methodist, Catholic – 40%, Lutherans – 10% - together they equal the whole of the body of Christ.

Why is denominationalism wrong?

- **It is divisive**
- But what makes the denominations different?
It is what they teach and practice. How they are organized and how they identify themselves.
- Each denomination is not in agreement with the others in some area, often times contradictory. Yet they still profess to be united as the body of Christ.

Why is denominationalism wrong?

- **It is divisive**
- We do not find this arrangement in scripture.
- The Bible is clear that dividing is wrong.
- **1 Corinthians 1:10-13** – the closest to the illustration of denominations in scripture. It is condemned.
- **Ephesians 2:14-16** – Christ died to break down the “wall of separation” (between Jews & Greeks). He did NOT intend there be separate churches (denominations).

Why is denominationalism wrong?

- **It is unbiblical**
- Why is denominationalism divisive?
- Because it is contrary to the NT pattern for the church.
- We have noted how “church” is used in the universal and local sense.
- In scripture, each congregation acted independently of all others. **Cf. 1 Corinthians 16:3-4, etc.**
- Denominationalism challenges the autonomy & independence of each congregation. There is no earthly headquarters or superchurch organization in scripture
- Yet these organizations, along with their creed books, give direction to all congregations under their oversight.

Why is denominationalism wrong?

- **It is unbiblical**
- **John 17:20-21** – Jesus prayed for true unity.
- **Ephesians 4:1-6** – We are endeavoring for true unity leading to peace.
- **1 Corinthians 4:17** – Paul taught the same thing in every church.

Why is denominationalism wrong?

- **It is unbiblical**
- Do patterns matter to God?
- Consider Noah – **Genesis 6:14-16**
- Consider instructions for the tabernacle/priesthood – we KNOW God had something better in mind.
Exodus 25:9, etc.
- **Matthew 16:18-19** – Jesus said He would build His church (singular, one).
- Within scripture we learn how we are to organize, what to call ourselves, God's ONE plan of salvation, how to worship, doctrinal matters, etc. These matter!

Why is denominationalism wrong?

- **It is the product of man**
- Denominations did not develop until centuries/millennia after the church began.
- They are the product of men. That is why they are divisive.
- **Exodus 32:1-10** – at Mt. Sinai, they built a golden calf
- **1 Kings 12:26-33** – Jeroboam built 2 calves for Israel to worship.
- God was NOT pleased!

Why is denominationalism wrong?

- **It is the product of man**
- **Galatians 1:6-9** – there is NOT another gospel.
- **2 John 9-11** – do not share with one bringing false doctrines.
- **Matthew 15:8-9** – the doctrines of man render worship to God vain.
- Warnings against false teachers – **2 Peter 2:1-3, Jude, Acts 20:28-31**. Why so important? Because what man teaches is not from God.
- EVERY denomination can trace its origin back to some man advancing his theories. Even if well intentioned, they veered away from God's standard.

Why is denominationalism wrong?

- **It implies we cannot understand God's pattern & will**
- Some see denominations and believe that understanding God's will is impossible (without help).
- How many want nothing to do with our faith because of the number of different churches?
- **1 Corinthians 14:33** – God is not the author of confusion.
- **Ephesians 5:17** – understand His will (commanded)..
- **Ephesians 3:3-4** – Paul wrote so that they could understand.

Why is denominationalism wrong?

- **It implies we cannot understand God's pattern & will**
- Why is there so much confusion/division? One reason is man is unwilling to take the time to investigate for themselves – **2 Peter 1:3, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2:15**, etc.
- **Acts 17:30-31** – God does NOT overlook ignorance. A day of judgment is coming.

Why is denominationalism wrong?

- **It makes the church about what we want rather than what God wants!**
- It is man centered. You can decide what you want and look until you find a church that approves of your conduct.
- Man often looks to what makes him feel good or what he THINKS is acceptable. It is a subjective faith (i.e. I will come to God on MY terms).

Why is denominationalism wrong?

- It makes the church about what we want rather than what God wants!
- **Proverbs 14:12**, *There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.*
- **Isaiah 55:8-9** – God's ways are not our ways.
- **Romans 10:1-3** – Paul grieves for his own countrymen because they have established their own religion.

Why is denominationalism wrong?

- **It makes the church about what we want rather than what God wants!**
- Consider where the church is today because of ecumenicalism. It is more divided than ever. And the more popular and growing churches are those that are silent on divisive issues, appeal to materialism and prosperity, and have blurred the lines on important doctrinal matters – e.g., the role of women in leadership, homosexuality, the inspiration of scripture, defending law breakers, etc.
- Churches that take a more “conservative” stand are growing smaller and smaller by the years.

- Denominations are not something God has approved or joined together!
History reveals they did not develop until centuries or millennia late.
God has NOT joined such together.
So, instead of looking for the “church of your choice”, look for the “church of Christ’s choice”.



ARE YOU A PART OF THE CHURCH BELONGING TO CHRIST?



What God Has NOT Joined Together