

12. T F God approves of denominationalism and division. 1 Corinthians 1:10-13
13. T F Whoever transgresses the doctrine of Christ does not have God. 2 John 9
14. Salvation can be found in many names. Acts 4:12
15. T F The body of Christ is the church. Ephesians 1:22-23

Part D: Look up the following verses and match them with their main thoughts:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Acts 11:26 | a. Called by the gospel |
| 2. 2 Thessalonians 2:14 | b. Judged by the word. |
| 3. Hebrews 12:23 | c. Disciples called Christians. |
| 4. John 12:48 | d. Christ is the Savior of the body. |
| 5. Ephesians 5:23 | e. Names registered in heaven. |

This is the final lesson in this series. If you would like to study further, we would be happy to study with you. We have several other Bible Courses available as well as a four lesson Home Bible Study. Please send these answers back to us and we will contact you so that we can study more with you. If you have any specific questions, write them down and send them with this.

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Correspondence Course

Mike Hughes

Lesson #4

Simply Christians

Know The Truth Correspondence Course

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Simply Christians

The Church of The Lord

Before Jesus died on the cross, He promised that He would build His church (Matthew 16:18). This promise was fulfilled in Acts 2. The gospel was preached, the conditions for salvation were given, and those who obeyed were added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:37,38, 41,47).

Just what is the church? The word "church" means "called out." It refers to people who were called out of one thing into another. In the case of Christ's church, people were called out of sin and darkness, and into the kingdom of God (Colossians 1:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:14). Those who are saved have been purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). This is the body of people whom Christ will save (Ephesians 5:23). It is vital, therefore, that we understand some things about this church.

First, the Lord built only one church. Ephesians 4:4 tell us, "There is one body." Earlier, this body is identified as the church: "And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." (Ephesians 1:22,23). Since the body is the church, and there is only one universal body of people who will be saved. Christ did not come to build any denominations. In fact denominations were unheard of until centuries after Christ's church was established. Denominationalism is built upon division, and is sinful (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). The Lord did not build many churches based upon many faiths. Rather, He built one church based upon one faith (Ephesians 4:5). Churches built later and founded upon the doctrines of men are wrong, and must be rejected (see Matthew 15:1-9, 13; Psalm 127:1).

The word "church," as it refers to God's people, is used in a couple of different senses. It is used in the universal sense, meaning all of the called

out people of God without reference to time and space (place). This refers to all of God's people at all times, those whose names are "registered in heaven" (Hebrews 12:23). Thus, whether people live in Europe, the United States, or any other country, if they obey the gospel, then they are added to the Lord's church by the Lord Himself.

The word "church" is also used in a local sense. This refers to God's people who have banded together in a specific location in order to carry out certain commands that God ordained to take place within a local church organization. For instance, Paul wrote a letter to "the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Corinthians 1:2). This was written to a specific group of people who assembled in a specific locality. It is in this sense in which the word "church" can also be used in the plural. Paul wrote, "The churches of Christ salute you" (Romans 16:16). This refers, not to several denominations, but to several local congregations that belonged to God.

The church in a universal sense has no organization. There are no earthly headquarters, no councils, synods, or groups to decide what everyone else is to do. There is no "mother church" to which all other churches are tied. The only organization of the church is found in the local work (see Philipians 1:1). God has ordained that certain things be done as a church, in which Christians come together in order to fulfill a particular command. For example, the disciples met together as a church on the first day of the week in order to break bread, or partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:18-34). Christians are to assemble with each other on the first day of the week to do this. Thus, when several Christians meet and decide to work together, then they become the church of Christ in that specific location. Every person who has obeyed the gospel and been added to the church

(universal) by the Lord needs to find a faithful local group of Christians who are following God's word in order to carry out God's will. Unless this is done, they will be unable to obey certain commands that are to be done "as a church."

Simply Christians

Those who obeyed the gospel came to be known as "Christians" (Acts 11:26). They were not identified by man-made names. They did not call themselves after men or after men's doctrines. In fact, when certain ones tried to call themselves after men, they were rebuked for it (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). All that such can lead to is division, which is strongly condemned by God. We are to be followers of Christ only, simply Christians who are following God's word in every way. Thus, when looking for a group of people with whom to work and worship, make sure that they are not a denomination, that they are not named after a man or a man's doctrine. Make sure they are simply Christians who are following God's word.

Names are very important in God's word. There are several reasons why we are to wear the name of Christ only:

1. It honors Christ who died for us. Why honor man for something that Christ did?
 2. We are baptized in the name of Christ and into Christ (Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27).
 3. The Bible condemns wearing human names (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:4-6, 11).
 4. We are "married" to Christ (Romans 7:4; Ephesians 5:23-30). Would we marry one person while taking another's name?
 5. There is salvation in no other name (Acts 4:12; John 14:6).
 6. We are God's children (Galatians 3:26; 1 Timothy 3:15). Do children take someone else's name?
 7. As shown, this is the name that the disciples in the first century were called (Acts 11:26). If we wish to be Christians just like those in the first century, who lived under the direction of the apostles of Jesus, then why would we take a name to ourselves that was unknown until centuries later?
- Of course, just wearing a name is not enough. In order to be Christians, we must be following God's word. A true Christian is going to find other true

Christians with whom to work.

Back To The Bible

With so many churches existing today, how can we know who is right and who is wrong? The answer is, "Go back to the Bible." It is our duty to "test the spirits, whether they are of God" (1 John 4:1), and to "Test all things; hold fast what is good" (2 Thessalonians 5:21). God's word is the standard, and everyone not living up to that is wrong. Churches that do not follow the pattern for the church as laid down in the Bible are not churches of Christ. Thus, it is our duty to search the Scriptures, making sure that what is taught and practiced is the truth (Acts 17:11). If we are deceived, it is our own fault.

It is the plea of every Christian, especially in today's world of so many denominations and doctrines, to go back to the Bible. This is so for several reasons:

1. God tells us that we cannot go beyond His word. We are not to think beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6). If we transgress the doctrine of Christ, then we lose fellowship with God (2 John 9). We are told, "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1 Peter 4:11).
2. It is the only way we can have proper faith. "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). "Faith" derived from any other source is not true faith. Therefore, in order to be pleasing to God, we must abide within His word (John 8:31,32).
3. It is the only way that we can maintain proper unity among God's people. God desires unity. True unity is not "unity in diversity," but rather unity that is based upon the Bible. Ephesians 4:3-6 tells us "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Unity is based upon the "one faith." We cannot please God while at the same time accepting many "faiths." Therefore, we must go back to the Bible and abide therein.
4. We must go back to the Bible because of judgment. Jesus said, "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the

word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." (John 12:48). The basis upon which we will be judged is God's word. Jesus also said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:21-23). There will be many surprised people on the day of judgment, and the only way we can have confidence and not be ashamed when He comes again is to abide in Him and His word (1 John 4:28).

5. As mentioned, going back to the Bible is the only way that we can truly be Christians. If we do what they did in the first century, then we will be nothing more than simply Christians.

To be just a Christian, one must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, repent of sins, confess Jesus as the Son of God, and buried with Christ in baptism for the remission of sins (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 3:19; Romans 10:9,10; Acts 2:38). Once a Christian, one must find a local group of God's people to work and worship with. This is in order to meet other conditions that God has given in His word (see Hebrews 10:23-25; Acts 20:7; Ephesians 5:19, etc.). Every Christian then must be faithful to God, growing in His grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18). Our goal is to please God and go to heaven. We wish to help as many as we can to do the same. Therefore, we must urge others to go back to the Bible, follow only what is written therein, and be simply Christians. Faithful churches of Christ do exist today, but the only way to know for sure is to test what is believed and practiced by the Bible.

Please answer the following Questions, then cut out this panel and mail it back.

Part A: Fill-in

1. "I will build My _____." Matthew 16:18.
2. The word "church" means _____.
3. "There is _____ body." Ephesians 4:4
What is the body? _____ Ephesians 1:22-23
4. "The disciples were first called _____ in Antioch." Acts 11:26
5. To be true disciples of Christ, we must _____ within the word. John 8:31-32
6. "Not everyone who says to Me, _____, shall _____ the _____ of heaven, but he who _____ the will of My Father who is in heaven." Matthew 7:21

Part B: Multiple Choice (circle one)

7. The word "church" refers to:
a. A building.
b. The called out people of God.
c. A denomination.
8. The disciples met together on the first day of the week: Acts 20:7
a. To break bread
b. To play games.
c. To entertain one another.
9. If anyone speaks, let him speak: 1 Peter 4:11
a. As he wants to speak.
b. As the oracles of God.
c. According to what men have decided.
10. Faith comes by hearing: Romans 10:17
a. The traditions of men.
b. Your own feelings.
c. The word of God.

Part C: True or False (circle one)

11. T F There are many faiths. Ephesians 4:5