

Why Not



Just the Bible

Front Cover

WHY NOT JUST THE BIBLE?

What the Bible Teaches

This is a movement that recently started in this country [Nigeria] to go back and do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names so that we may not be different for the first century Christians in the matter of faith and practice (I Peter 4:11). This unity should be a way of life. Division is a sin and is so indicated by the prayer of Jesus Christ, and the plea and plan of Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Prayed for Unity

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:20-21).

Here we must not overlook the necessary effect of the Christian being one—so that the world may be convinced that Jesus Christ is sent by God (verse 21). Therefore, since denominationalism implies division, it is safe to say that denominational Christianity encourages infidelity toward, and disobedience of, Christ (John 10:16).

Paul Pled for Unity

"Now I plead with you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10).

The terrible sin of division among Christians is stated in verse 12: "Now I say this, that each of you says, 'I am of Paul,' or 'I am of Apollos,' or 'I am of Cephas,' or 'I am of Christ.' "

Please, brethren, let us compare this with what is going on among believers today with what was going on in the first century. Today we have this party cry directly or indirectly: "I am of Christ Apostolic Church," "I am of Deeper Life," and so forth. Is this not what Paul condemned in the first century? Think on these things.

To Paul, in verse 13, it was a division of **Christ**; that is, there is more than one Christ.

Christ is the head of the church. In Paul's analogy of the church and Christ, the church is the body of Christ and Christ is the head of the church. Therefore, every human body is controlled by one head; that is; there is one head for each body.

As it is impossible for many bodies to be controlled by one head, so it is with Christ and His body, the church. There is only one body (the church), so there is only one head (Christ) (Ephesians 4:4-6; Colossians 1:18).

Let us pause here and consider what people did in the New Testament to be blessed with salvation. Consider this chart of Bible conversions, who they were, and what they did to be saved. This is a safe guide for you.

1. Jews Pentecost	Heard Acts 2:37	Believed Acts 15:7	Repented Acts 2:38	Baptized Acts 2:41
2. Cornelius	Heard Acts 10:44	Believed Acts 15:7	Repented Acts 11:18	Baptized Acts 10:48
3. The Ethiopian Eunuch		Believed Acts 8:37	Repented Acts 8:37	Baptized Acts 8:38
4. Saul of Tarsus		Believed Galatians 1:15-24		Baptized Acts 9:18
5. Samaritans	Heard Acts 8:6	Believed Acts 8:12		Baptized Acts 8:12

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6. Philippian Jailer		Believed Acts 16:31	Implied Acts 16:33	Baptized Acts 16:33
7. Crispus Chief ruler of the synagogue and many Corinthians	Heard Acts 18:8	Believed Acts 18:8		Baptized Acts 18:8
8. Simon the sorcerer		Believed Acts 8:13		Baptized Acts 8:13

**They Heard Believed Repented Confessed
Baptized**

Dear Reader, contrary to the teachings and opinions of men that one should pray the sinner's prayer that faith alone saves. Alien sinners in New Testament times heard the gospel, believed it, repented of sins, confessed Christ as the son of God, and were baptized into Christ for salvation of his/her soul.

Note that those who were baptized had hearts purified by faith in Christ and His word (Acts 15:9; Hebrews 11:6). It was a soul searching repentance (Luke 13:5), proceeded by godly sorrow (II Corinthians 7:10), and their lives were transformed upon being baptized for the remission of sins (Romans 6:4-7; 8:6-10).

What Baptism Does

1. By Baptism we receive the remission [forgiveness] of sins (Acts 2:38).
2. Baptism washes away sins (Acts 22:16).
3. During baptism we share in the death of Christ, thereby contacting the blood of Christ through the operation of God (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12).
4. We put on Christ by baptism (Galatians 3:27).
5. Baptism saves (I Peter 3:21).
6. By baptism we are placed in, enter the body of Christ, the church (I Corinthians 12:13).

Simplifying the statement of Jesus in Mark 16:16 further, it simply means: **Belief + Baptism = Salvation**. This is the evidence in all cases of New Testament conversion (Acts 19). Paul asked the question, "Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" When one is baptized **into Christ** he does not come up from the watery grave as a member of any denomination that man has started. Someone has said, "The name does not matter; for there is nothing in a name." But do not neglect this point of truth: that names divide people all over the world.

For instance, in any society, name is one of the factors that differentiates one person, town, institution of learning, monetary system, etc., from another. Since appropriate names are used to carry out the transactions of business and the day to day activities of our government, so it is in the Christian religion.

The word **Christ** means something! The name **church** means something. The word **sinner** means something. We again pause to see some names the church was called in the New Testament, for there is something in a name.

1. **The church of God:** (Acts 20:28; I Corinthians 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; Galatians 1:13; I Timothy 3:5).

2. **The churches of Christ:** plural (Romans 16:16). Singular: the church of Christ.
3. **The church of God:** plural (I Corinthians 11:16; I Thessalonians 2:14). Singular: the church of God.

There is no hint whatsoever that the apostles ever tagged the church with a "non-divine name," such as is used everywhere today. There are 20,000 denominations in the world, and each wears a different name. God accepts only a divine name.

Paul Planned for Unity

In order for unity to be achieved, a divine plan has been offered in this passage: Ephesians 4:3-6. It urges Christians to "earnestly strive" to maintain the bond of peace and the unity given by the Holy Spirit. The plan is, once and for all, released so men can know what the will of God is.

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There is one body: that is one church (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23).

there is one spirit: one revelation, way of life (Ephesians 4:4; John 16:13; Romans 8:14).

There is one hope: that is, one aim: everlasting life (I Thessalonians 5:8).

There is one Lord: one authority. That is Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 8:5-6).

There is one faith: that is, one doctrine or teaching (Jude 3).

There is one baptism: water baptism; for salvation (I Peter 3:20-21).

There is one God: one father of all creation (II Corinthians 5:5; Matthew 23:9).

Paul was convinced that if this plan would be followed, unity and love which are the ultimate aims of Christianity, would be achieved. But, if believers reject this standard, this pattern, given us in the New Testament, division will continue and result in more and more denominations coming into existence all over the world.

Do not forget that Jesus established His church on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 33 (Acts 2:1-47), exactly as He wanted it to be. That is, He converted men and women and gave them a model which they were to follow. He instructed them to be the light of the world. Such people are called the church—the called out people—called out of the darkness of the world into the light of the glorious

gospel of Jesus. They became the saved ones. They did not form themselves into **conflicting denominations**.

We can read in the New Testament of Christ's church which existed hundreds of years before Roman Catholicism and Protestantism came into existence. When the word of God, the pure seed, is planted today, it will produce only Christians, united in the one church established by Christ Himself (Luke 8:11).

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But, when the doctrines of men are mixed with the "pure seed," it will result in various denominational churches. This is so today. Denominations are very different in many aspects from the primitive Christianity of the first century.

Do not forget that God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the apostles were and are against such evil workers and their works. "And in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, ... Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted" (Matthew 15:9-13).

"Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you. Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:16-18).

Is it not worthy of note to observe the havoc and the devastation men have caused to the organization of the church by their own commandments and precepts?

During New Testament times, congregational organization was such that a local congregation or church was independent of every other local church. Every local church was self governing under:

Christ: the heavenly bishop (I Peter 2:25; 5:4) with:

Bishops: also called elders, pastors, presbyters, overseers, who feed, tend, oversee, and lead the flock among them (Acts 13:23; 20:28; Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-7; Hebrews 13:7). They stood before the congregation to provide for their spiritual needs, to protect them from error, and to serve as examples to the flock along with:

Deacons: to serve (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8-12) and:

Evangelist(s): also called preacher(s), minister(s) (Acts 21:8; II Timothy 4:5; Colossians 1:7; Ephesians 6:21); together with:

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Members who minister in word and deed (I Corinthians 12:24-27).

Worthy of note also is the different mode of worship which abounds in churches today. Let us again go through the New Testament and crosscheck what the church did in worship on the first day of the week; that is, Sunday.

1. **Teaching:** (Acts 20:7; 11:26; 2:42).
2. **Prayers:** (I Timothy 2:8; I Thessalonians 5:17; I Corinthians 14:15).
3. **Singing:** (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 14:15. See also Matthew 26:30). Their songs were vocal only, without being accompanied by mechanical instruments of music. There is no reference or hint of a command or example of songs accompanied with instruments of music by churches in the New Testament.
4. **Giving:** contribution (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:6-9). This was done cheerfully, willingly without necessity or compulsion.
5. **Lord's Supper:** (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-24; I Corinthians 10:16-17; Acts 2:42). The feast consisted of:
 - a. Unleavened bread.
 - b. Fruit of the vine.

Today men have replaced the Lord's Supper by other feasts such as Christmas and Easter. This ought not to be. Note that the very purpose of the Lord's Supper is to remember Christ: "... do this in remembrance of Me" (I Corinthians 11:24-25).

Critical observation and diligent study of the Bible shows that the idea of denominationalism is completely foreign to the Scriptures and is condemned outright. Why not throw off denominational doctrines and names and wear Christ's name only and only practice His teachings (Colossians 3:17; I Corinthians 4:6)? Why not call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways? The Bible is God's only recognized standard in religion (II Timothy 3:16; II Timothy 2:15; II Peter 1:3; John 11:13).

Let us speak only as the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11).

Let us take the Bible as our only authority, adding and subtracting nothing (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19).

Let us speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent.

Let us go back to the Bible!

Dear Friend: do these truths appeal to you?

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