



Why are there so many denominations? We are not speaking about different religions but we are referring simply about the denominations that are in the world today that call themselves “Christian.” This may or may not seem to be a valid question depending on where you are in your stand with God. However, initially, Jesus declares that His people should be “one” as He and the Father are “one.” Yet, here we are in today’s world with over 45,000 different denominations found within “Christianity.”

As stated initially, Jesus declares that His people should be “one” as He and the Father are “one.” We see Jesus state this in His prayer as He was with His disciples on His final night upon this earth. They were together at the Last Supper. In John 17, we see Jesus praying openly to the Father. As we know, this is truly a prayer that needed to be recorded for all believers in Jesus to hear, read and understand. Unfortunately, over the past 2000 years many believers have missed this aspect and have missed the emphasis that Jesus is relating in His prayer to the Father concerning the disciples who were present and the disciples who will come.

In His prayer, Jesus firsts asks and prays to the Father that the Father would be glorified through Him. This reveals to us that the events that were going to take place were for the purpose of glorifying the Father. Everything that took place and happened to Jesus from this moment until He presented Himself to the Father on Resurrection Sunday was for the main purpose of glorifying the Father.

We next see Jesus praying to the Father that He would preserve and keep the 11 disciples that were left. He knew that difficult times were about to take place, not just for Him, but for His disciples as well. He prayed that the Father would keep them through it all. We know that the Father honored and answered that prayer because we are all here today because of the work that those disciples (Apostles) did in starting the work of the Body of Christ here upon this earth.

Jesus then prays in John 17:11 that they may be “*one as He and the Father were one.*” He prays that the Father would not only “keep them” but that He would “sanctify them” with and through His truth. Jesus prays to the Father that He would keep these “ones” as they would be sent into the world to deliver His truth to this “lost” world.

Then we read John 17:20-23 which is the crux of this whole prayer of Jesus. He states, “*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; <sup>21</sup> That they all may be **one**; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be **one in us**: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. <sup>22</sup> And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may **be one, even as we are one**: <sup>23</sup> I in them, and thou in me, that **they may be made perfect in one**; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*”

If we read this correctly we see that Jesus asked the Father that the Body would not simply be in unity, but that they should be, and are always to be, as “one.” He states that we are made perfect in that “oneness.” That “oneness” of all the believers will be used by the Father to not only tell the world, but that the world would know that Jesus was sent by the Father because the Father loved this world and everyone in it just as much as He loves Jesus.

Wow, when we read those words it truly expresses the heart of the Father and of Jesus. That was the purpose for sending Jesus to this earth - to die and then be raised from the grips of hell. Then He would go, on “Bikkurim,” the Feast of First Fruits, that Resurrection Sunday, and present Himself as both, the High Priest and the offering, to the Father. He was the “First Fruit” of all the others that would believe in Him and in what the Father would and did accomplish in and through Jesus.

So what does this all have to do with why there are so many different denominations in this world today? As of today, the number of denominations found throughout the world has gone up. Previously, I have mentioned that there were over 33,000 denominations throughout the world. The latest number, as of February 2021, of specific denominations of “Christianity” has risen to over 45,000. They say that within the United States alone we have over 200 different denominations that we know of.

Well, what happened? We know that the early church, which spans from the start of Jesus' ministry, in A.D. 27, to A.D. 100, was divided primarily based on geography. They had early “church fathers” who kept to the true basic foundations of the faith. We know that the last Apostle to die was the Apostle John who died around A.D. 100.

However, even in the beginnings of the church, as we see so many times within Paul's writings along with Peter's writings, that there were many false prophets and false teachers. Paul, Peter and the other writers within the New Testament tried to tell believers to reject these false teachings and false doctrines. Many of the later writings of Paul and Peter deal directly with this. They warn the Body against falling prey to these false teachers.

Unfortunately, after the first generation of true believers had died, there were many false teachers who continued on in their lies and clever deceptions. Yes, there were the true believers who continued speaking the true message of Jesus but there were also many more false prophets and false teachers that kept up their lies and false teachings. This continued on even to this very day. As mentioned previously, it has grown into over 45,000 different denominations.

Whatever happened to Jesus' prayer in which He prayed to the Father concerning all believers to be as “one?” Was He speaking of just the believers at that time? I do not think so. I believe Jesus' prayer was for that day as well as for this day, today. I believe that Jesus is praying the same prayer today as He intercedes for us to the Father. I believe He is praying that we all would be as “one” as He and the Father are “one.”

The “church” became official around 325 A.D. when the Emperor of the Roman Empire, Constantine, had a “dream” concerning the cross. After this dream, he decided to make “Christianity” the state religion in which it became the main religion throughout the entire Roman Empire. In 1054, the Eastern Orthodox Christians split from the Western Roman Catholics in what is known as “the Great Schism.”

There was even a temporary schism, known as the Western Schism, within the Roman Catholic Church itself in 1378, when two men, and eventually a third, claimed to be the true papal heir (the pope). The division lasted almost 40 years, and by the time it was resolved in 1417, the rivaling popes had significantly damaged the reputation of not only the papal office but the church as well.

The Protestant Reformation, in 1517, is when the number of denominations really began to multiply. The “Reformation” emphasized having a “personal faith” in God and that salvation came from personally accepting Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior. Martin Luther and his followers claimed that the Bible, not a church hierarchy such as the Roman Catholic Church, was the ultimate authority over all people, including priests and the pope, and that several ecclesiastical practices, such as granting indulgences (the paying to the church money to be absolved of sins), were corrupt.

From that time forward, there sprang up many “denominations” to where we stand today with over 45,000. The word “denomination” is a word that comes from the mathematical aspect known as “division.” It means to divide and to not be “one.” When you think of it, it is directly the opposite of what Jesus had prayed in John 17. Yet, each and every one of those different “denominations” would tell you that they are the real “one.” Hmmm....

So, why are there so many different denominations? Well, the first thing we must remember is that denominations are made up of churches and churches are made of people; and sometimes people just don't get along. After all, just because people call themselves "Christians" doesn't mean they truly are or that they always agree. Even though we do not want to admit it, we still struggle with pride, selfishness, and stubbornness, and this means we sometimes respond to each other poorly.

This has often led to debates and divisions within churches and denominations, which in turn leads to the creation of new churches and denominations. It's an unfortunate situation, but yet it is a very true reality. Maybe this is why Jesus focused and taught so much to His believers that they were to live and walk in **unconditional love and forgiveness** as an expression of the kind of people He wants His people to be. Hmm...

Many times divisions come because, even though we may have the same core beliefs, we get stuck on the secondary aspects of our faith. Aspects such as: What does baptism mean and who should get baptized? How should local churches be structured? Who should fill leadership roles? How often should communion be practiced? How should certain passages in the Bible be interpreted? These are good questions and the answers aren't always clear in the Bible. In Romans 14 and 15, Paul tells the believer to exercise wisdom and humility when it comes to secondary issues where genuine differences may exist.

We must always remember that people are people and that we are all different in our approach to things. We all have different ideas on how things are to be done or accomplished. However, this is where true servitude and understanding the ways of God are vital. The truth of the matter is that if we are a **true child of God we must yield to Him and His ways**. We must fit into His mold and not the other way around. We must never try to make God fit into our mold of who He is and how He should be.

Too often in today's Body we try to make God fit into our way of thinking. Unfortunately, that has been taking place almost from the beginning. We read in the epistles how each one of the writers tell their listeners to be careful of "those" who come into the Body and speak badly about those whom Jesus had singled out and called to speak the correct ways of God to the people. These were the false teachers and the false prophets that are written about so much in the New Testament – especially in the letters we read that come later on. We see that it had started back in the beginning and it will never stop – until Jesus returns.

Ultimately, it is the devil that is behind it all. Yes, the devil. However, in many of today's denominations we are told that the devil is a non-factor; that we do not need to even mention him or his ways. That is exactly what the devil and his forces of darkness want us to accept and believe. Why – because they are lies and deceptions designed to take the focus off of him and his ways.

We must get back to the basic and true tenets of the faith. We must get back to the true teachings of Jesus and what we read from the writers in not just the New Testament but the entire Bible – Old and New Testaments. It is Jesus who is the way, the truth and the life.

The basic fundamental truth is this – Jesus died on the cross for all people; Jesus took our punishment and went to the pit of hell where He defeated satan and all of the forces of darkness; Jesus then rose again on the third day and went to the Father as our High Priest to offer unto God the gifts as see at "Bikkerum" (Resurrection Sunday) and become the "First Fruit" of all those who had believed and does now believe in the coming of Messiah; and one day, very soon, Jesus will come again.

That is the basic of basics. That is what the early Apostles taught. These are the fundamental truths of the faith - Jesus died, Jesus rose, Jesus will come again. Yes, it may seem simple. Well, it is – very simple. Yet, we have made it so difficult. We have strayed from the basic truth by leaning on our own understandings, our own desires and our own wants. Yes, we have made God out to be exactly what we think and want Him to be. Hmmm...

As mentioned previously, there are over 45,000 different denominations today and the number is growing. We can get alarmed at this number or we can look at it and realize that it is exactly what Jesus and the Word of God teaches would take place in the end times. People would make God out to be exactly what they wanted and desired for Him to be – as long as it measured up to their own understanding. Many of them actually do not even have a basic relationship with Him, yet they call themselves “Christians.”

We must understand that in the New Testament the word “Christian” is used only twice. It was used as a “slang” word that referred to the true believers. We see this in Acts 26:28 and 1Peter 4:16. In Acts 26:28, King Agrippa first used it when he was speaking with Paul. Peter then uses it in his letter. Again, if we understand how Peter is using the term, he was stating that the believers were referred to as “Christians” by the non-believers and not by other believers. The early believers never called themselves “Christians.” They referred to themselves as “the Way.” Now, I am not referring to the denomination or any church today called “The Way.” What I am referring to is the fact that Jesus was “the Way” to the Father.

So which denomination or church is the real one? Which one is the “true” body of Christ? It makes you think or at least it should make you think. Where do you stand? Are we simply another denomination? It really doesn’t matter what you call yourself. What truly matters is if you are truly following the only “Way” to the Father - Jesus. The time is coming for Jesus to truly reveal Himself to all that are in this world. The question will be – Are you looking for the true Messiah; the true Savior and Lord of your life? Or, will you be simply playing the game. Do we really know which one is the absolute, correct “denomination” or church.

The only thing I do know, without a shadow of a doubt, is that Jesus was the One who was sent to this earth by the Father; the only One who died on a cross for all of my sins; the only One who took the punishment by taking my place and going to the pits of hell; the only One who rose from the grave; the only One who went to the Father as our true High Priest to present Himself before the Father as the perfect offering on that day of Bikkurim (Resurrection Sunday); and the only One who will, one day, return to this earth and take His place upon the Temple Mount to rule and reign upon this earth for 1000 years.

And then, after that...even greater things will take place.