

What Does the Bible Teach About Denominationalism?

**Part One:
Answering Denominationalism**



Why Are There So Many Different Denominations?

- The religious world says:
 - The differences are not very big.
 - The differences are unimportant.
 - The differences are good.



Defining Denomination

- A Denomination is a group of congregations that are joined together under some governing body. By their ties to a governing body larger than the local church, they are “denominated” (identified separately) from all other congregations that do not submit to the same authoritative body.



For Example

- Roman Catholic Church
- Eastern Orthodox Church
- Anglican Church of England
- Lutheran Church
- International Church of Christ
- Pope in Rome
- Patriarch of Constantinople
- Archbishop of Canterbury
- Missouri Synod
- Elders' Board Boston Church of Christ



Defining Denominationalism

- The tendency to separate into religious denominations; advocacy of separation into religious denominations; strict adherence to a denomination; sectarianism; devotion to denominational principles or interests; narrow emphasizing of denominational differences.
- For the purpose of this study, any approval of the denominational division that exists today.



What Is Wrong With Denominationalism?

- It is not authorized by God.
 - Acts 20:17, 28 - “From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. 28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”



What Is Wrong With Denominationalism?

- It is not authorized by God.
 - 1Peter 5:1-2 - “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:
2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly.”



What Is Wrong With Denominationalism?

- It is a violation of scripture.
 - It is contrary to the prayer of Jesus for unity.
 - John 17:20-23 - “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 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. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”



What Is Wrong With Denominationalism?

- It is a violation of scripture.
 - There are to be no divisions among believers.
 - 1Cor. 1:10-13 - “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 divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 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." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”



What Is Wrong With Denominationalism?

- It is a violation of scripture.
 - Sectarianism is a sign of carnality.
 - 1Cor. 3:3-4 - “For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 4 For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not carnal?”



What Is Wrong With Denominationalism?

- It is a violation of scripture.
 - It opposes the efforts of Christ on the cross.
 - Eph. 2:14-16 - “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.”



What Is Wrong With Denominationalism?

- It is harmful to the cause of Christ.
 - Jesus knew that unity among His disciples would be the best defense of the Gospel.
 - "That the world may believe..." - John 17:21.




What Is Wrong With Denominationalism?


- Denominationalism exists because men love to choose up sides that suit their own desires, and not just because false teachers ply their trade.
 - 2Tim. 4:3 - “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

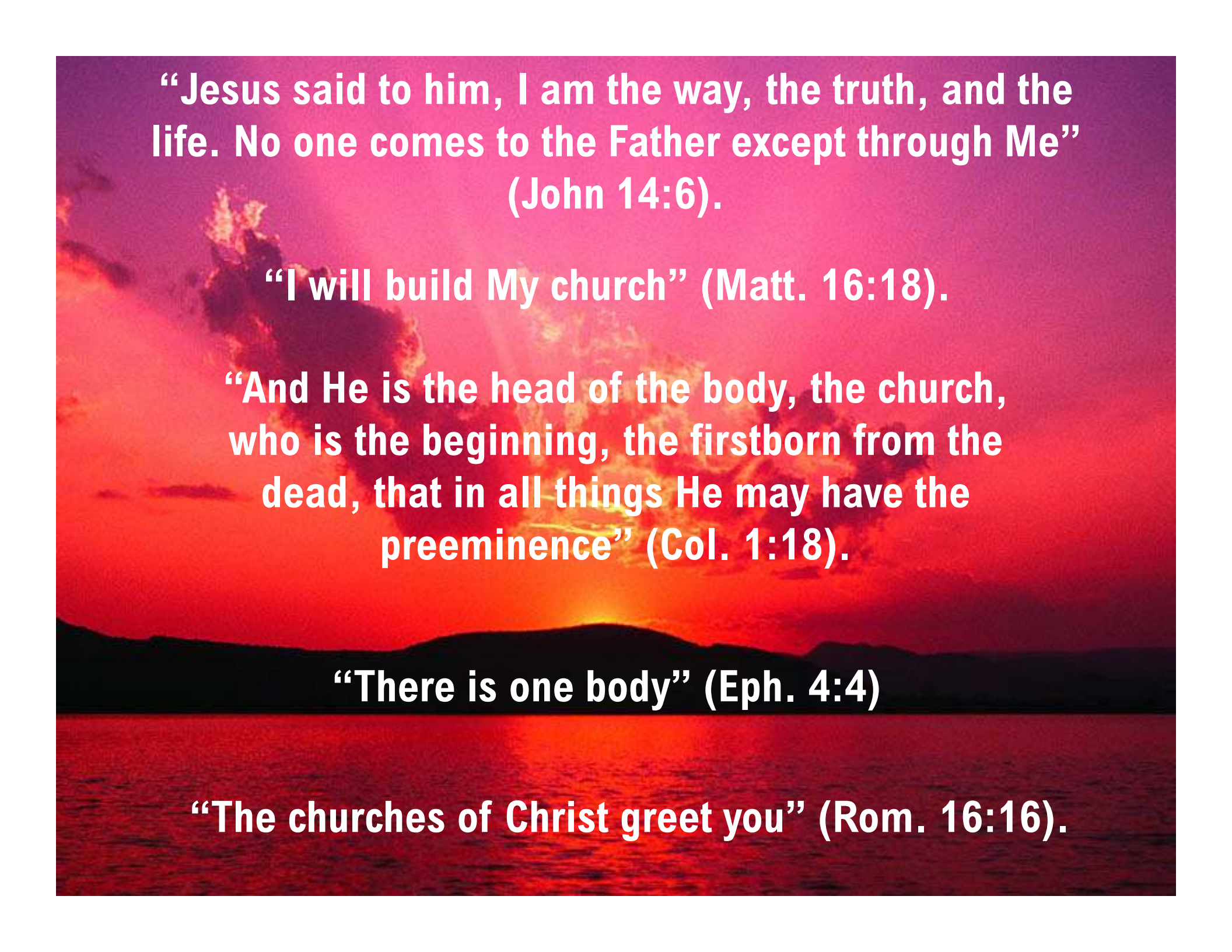


What Is Wrong With Denominationalism?

- Carnal people choose up sides.
 - 1Cor. 1:12 - “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.”
 - 1Cor. 3:4 - “For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not carnal?”

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- Martin Luther: “I ask that men make no reference to my name, and call themselves not Lutherans, but Christians.”
 - John Wesley: “Would to God that all party names, and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world, were forgotten...”
 - Charles Spurgeon: “I hope that the Baptist name will soon perish, but let Christ's name last forever.”

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- The solution is reject all denominational creeds, concepts, names and rituals, and open the word of God and do just what it says, no more and no less.
 - A strong desire to follow Jesus Christ's superior authority in order to fulfill His prayer for unity - John 17:20-23.
 - A strong dislike of the carnal nature of the divisiveness of denominationalism - 1Cor. 3:3-4.



**“Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”
(John 14:6).**

“I will build My church” (Matt. 16:18).

“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18).

“There is one body” (Eph. 4:4)

“The churches of Christ greet you” (Rom. 16:16).