

DENOMINATIONAL ORIGINS

A LESSON IN HOW THEY CAME TO BE

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”

- 2 Thess 3:6

1. First Century Denominations

- a. There are hundreds of Christian denominations
- b. It is used as an attack against the veracity of the Bible; but...
- c. There were doctrinal separations in the Bible – Romans 16:17
- d. There were mutual separations in the Bible – Rom 15:20, Gal 2:7-9
- e. There were some teaching another Jesus, and gospel – Gal 1:9, 2 Cor 11:4
- f. Paul instructed to reject, avoid, and withdraw from some men – Titus 3:10

2. Men Who Sought Power

- a. There were men who sought money, power, position – Titus 1:11, Phil 3:18-19
- b. The apostles argued over who would be greatest – Matt 18:1-4
- c. Paul was not one of them – 2 Cor 10:7-8, 12:14-15; 1 Cor 15:9
- d. Paul was battling apostolic authority – 2 Cor 11:5, 13
- e. Men who seek power use religion to do it; but not Paul – Gal 4:9-11
- f. *Roman Catholicism, Orthodox* were part of the ruling powers; Pentarchy, etc.
- g. They trace their lineage back to Peter and the twelve.

3. Reading Paul Creates Division

- a. 16th century - Martin Luther stood with Paul and was wanted for arrest
- b. Bible in the hands of people began causing “religious unrest” (aka Bible study)
- c. The Bible was printed in English, people started reading Paul.
- d. Those in power saw an opportunity to seize control = *church of England*
- e. The *Reformers* sought the same earthly “kingdom”

4. New Opportunities and a New World

- a. The seed of separation had been planted with the printed Bible
- b. Not all who crossed the Atlantic were Puritans: *Baptist, Lutheran, Secularists*
- c. Denominations separated into states: Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Maryland
- d. Churches split over who had the power: congregations, bishop, presbytery
- e. Manifest destiny indicated they were still concerned with the earthly
- f. The civil war split churches based on racial lines: north/south; black/white
- g. John Wesley’s Holiness Club created a methodical, itinerant, Spirit led ministry
- h. Methodists turn to Wesleyans turn to Nazarenes turn to Pentecostals

5. Dissatisfied Church Goers

- a. The tale of the 19-20th centuries: return to the first century!
- b. Church of God, Brethren, Millerites, Non-Denominationalists, Independents
- c. The closer people get to Paul, the more decentralized the power becomes.