

Denominationalism in the New Testament

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When Jesus said, “I will build my church,” the farthest thing from His mind was the prevailing denominational structure by those who would profess belief in Him. This structure includes Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant institutions with their profusion of names, doctrines, and practices and their resultant sectarianism.

This being so, how can it be said that the concept is “in the New Testament”? It addresses denominationalism by description, by prophecy, and by warning—all of which place modern “churchianity” under Divine censure.

Note these descriptions...

- By Jesus: “And ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition” (Mat. 15:6). When the “fathers” and councils do not agree with the Bible, Catholicism honors tradition. Protestant churches follow the same path by exalting their creeds and the traditions of Luther and Calvin above the teaching of Jesus and the apostles.
- By Jesus again: “But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men” (v. 9). As human precepts rendered vain the worship of those who followed them in Jesus’ day, so they do today.
- Paul depicted those who “perverted” the true Gospel into a “different gospel” (Gal. 1:6-7). The “gospel” of denominationalism is a perversion of the Truth—a “different gospel.”

Note these prophecies...

- By Paul: “...Some shall fall away from the faith,” demanding celibacy and abstaining from meat (1 Tim. 4:1-3). Both of these are errors of Roman Catholic dogma.
- By Peter: “But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers...” (2 Pet. 2:1). As then, so now—with this difference: Those false teachers, when exposed, did not start their own churches.
- By Paul again: “For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth...” (2 Tim. 4:3-4a). That time came, producing today’s glut of human religious orders.

Note these warnings...

- By Jesus: “Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up” (Mat. 15:13) – too plain to misunderstand.
- By Paul: “As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema” (Gal. 1:9).
- By Jesus again: “And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit” (Mat. 15:14). Jesus’ words will not fail.

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