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2018

The **LORD'S CHURCH**
Through The **AGES**

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Lesson 1- The Lord's Church: Prophecy, Identity And Establishment

1. Why is it important to understand the departures from God's plan in the OT? (Genesis 11:1-9, Numbers 13:1-3, Judges 2:7-10, 2 Samuel 6:1-15, 2 Chronicles 26)
2. When were early prophecies of the Lord's Church/Kingdom made? (Gen. 12:1-7; 22:15-18 Eph. 3:8-11; Acts 3:24; Galatians 3)
3. What do Isaiah, Micah, and Daniel teach us about the Lord's Church? Isa. 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-5; Daniel 2:31-45.
4. What did both John and Jesus say about the Kingdom? (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Mk. 1:14-15, 9:1) When did the Church begin? (Acts 2)
5. Why did early Christians form local churches? Did they all follow the same teaching? What were they warned of? (Acts 9; 1 Corinthians 4:17, 7:17 Acts 20:7,17-38;)

Exercise

Read and underline what Jesus says about His Church.

Matthew 16 NKJV

13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" 14 So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Lesson 2- The History Of The Lord's Church In Acts (AD33-AD62)

1. From the very beginning of the Church in Acts 2, how did it continue the work Jesus began? (Acts 2:40-42)
2. What made the early church grow? (Acts 4:4, 5:14, 6:7, 8:1) What was special attention given to?
3. What made the local church at Antioch a blueprint for us at Danville Rd? (Acts 11:20, 9:26-28, 11:26, 15:35-39)
4. Why is the event in Acts 15 a good example of how to deal with doctrinal issues? Did this create a new "church"?
5. Discuss one local church that began in Acts and that Paul or another Apostle wrote to later. How did it begin? What issues did it have? What corrections needed to be made? What was it doing well?

Memorization

There is great confusion and division in the world today about how a person is saved. Memorize each time a person was saved in Acts.

- The 3000 On Pentecost (2:1-41)
- The 2000 At Solomon's Porch (3:1-4:4)
- The Samaritans (8:4-25)
- The Ethiopian Eunuch (8:26-40)
- Saul Of Tarsus (9:1-19; 22:6-16; 26:12-18) 20
- Cornelius And His Household (10:1-48; 11:1-18)
- Two Households At Philippi (16:6-34)
- The Athenians (17:16-34)
- The Corinthians (18:1-11)
- The Twelve Disciples Of John (19:1-10)

Lesson 3- The Ante-Nicene Period (AD63-AD311)

1. How were Christians treated under the emperors of Rome: Nero (AD 65-68) till Diocletian? (AD 303) See 1 Peter 4:12-14, 2 Timothy 3:12, and Mt 10:28.

2. What did Paul warn of in Acts 20:28-31, 2 Timothy 4:1-6, and 2 Timothy 2:1-12?

3. Apostasy as early as the second century led to a practice known as the presiding elder. He was called a bishop to distinguish him from other elders. How does that differ with the NT pattern? Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-2 (See Below)

4. Was there ever a distinction made in the New Testament church between "clergy and laity"? What are some of the dangers of this system of thought? 1 Peter 2:5-9

5. Why is it so important that God's word was preserved? Why did many begin to want it to be accessible only to a few?

For Further Study

Ante-Nicene

- The period of time between close of the NT and adoption of the Nicene Creed in 325 AD

The NT Pattern for Church Organization/Government

Three Greek words are translated into six English words. Different words are used to describe aspects of the work of an elder. *None of the offices differed from the other.* This is evident from the fact that the words are used interchangeably. (See Acts 20:17, 28 and 1 Peter 5:1-4)

- (Gk. *presbuteros*) Elders or Presbyters – Acts 20:17
- (Gk. *episkopos*) Bishops or Overseers – Acts 20:28
- (Gk. *poimen*) Shepherd or Pastor – 1 Pet 5:2; Eph. 4:11

Clergy-Laity Distinction

In the NT, the Greek word *kleros* can mean "lot" (as in "casting lots") or "that which is assigned by lot, portion, share." Paul wrote that God has enabled Christians "to share in the inheritance (*klerou*) of the saints in the light" (Col. 1:12). Christians are heirs (*kleronomoi*) according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). In this sense, all Christians constitute "the clergy." The Greek word *laos* means "people." All Christians collectively make up the *laos* or people of God; it is a title of honor. In this sense, all Christians constitute "the laity." Thus, in earliest Christianity we do not find a distinction between "clergy" and "laity." {1}

Lesson 4- The Church-State Union (311AD-590AD)

1. What relationship do we see in God's word between the government and the local church? (1 Tim 2:1-9, Acts 5:29, Rom 13:11 Tim 3:15)

2. The emperor of Rome, Constantine ended the persecution of most "Christians" (313) and a form of Christianity was the official state religion in 380AD. Many false doctrines had their roots in this period such as the Veneration of Mary (431) and Saints (787) along with Purgatory (593). Use God's word to compare these with the truth. (See Luke 16 and Col 2:18)

- Veneration Of Mary

- Veneration Of Saints

- Purgatory

3. Why was a council or synod a natural man-made way to settle doctrinal questions? What is wrong with this? Is there any effort among religious people today to solve issues this way?

4. Creeds began in 325 AD with the Nicene Creed. (Research and read it for perspective.) Why are creeds unnecessary and why are they dangerous? 2 Tim 3:16-17, Acts 17:11

5. Mass began being practiced around 394 AD. "The sacrifice of the New Law in which Christ through the ministry of the priest offers himself to God in an unbloody manner under the appearances of bread and wine." {2} How would you respond to the defense of "Mass"?

For Further Study

Early Dissenters

422AD- "The Catholic Bishop Germanus complained of the British church that it practiced believers' baptism and rejected the authority of the pope and other Catholic doctrines."

Late 500s- Paulicians

"called Paulicians, because of their ability to defend their doctrine from the New Testament, particularly from the letters of the apostle Paul came to the notice of the authorities. They said that they were 'Christians who were chosen of God' and called each other "brother or sister". They had rejected the infant baptism of the Catholic church teaching that faith is required before baptism."

Veneration- *Veneration* can be defined as "respect or awe directed toward someone." The Catholic Church has different degrees of worship: *dulia*, *hyper dulia*, and *latria*. *Dulia* is the honor given to the saints. *Hyper dulia* is the honor given to Mary alone, as the greatest of the saints. *Latria* is the honor given to God alone. However the Bible always ascribes honor, in the context of worship, to God alone, not people. (1 Chron. 29:11; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 4:11; 5:13).

Lesson 5- Medieval Christianity (590AD-1054 AD)

1. How do we know in periods of very little recorded history, that Christ's Church continued?

2. During the "Dark Ages" and at its close the authority of the pope in religious matters was complete and gained in political affairs. What was it like to be religious in that period?

3. Pope Eugenius II, who died in 827, made it a law to kiss the papal foot. Later, Pope Paul VI who died in 1978 discontinued the kissing of the papal foot. Can God's laws be made and repealed by men?

4. In many instances, the Catholic Church resorted to carnal warfare to increase its power. What was the purpose of the crusades? How is this different from the methods Jesus used? The Great Schism in 1054 divided the western and eastern Catholic church. Is Christ divided? Is His Church? (1 Cor. 1, Ephesians 4:1-6)

5. Transubstantiation began being argued as doctrine at this time and later became an official teaching of the Catholic church in 1080. (formerly in 1215) What is this doctrine, and is it scriptural?

For Further Study

Historical Information And Quotes

"From about 600 AD in England, Christians called by their enemies derogatory terms such as 'Evil Spirits', 'Demons', 'Waldensian', 'Lollard', 'Pelagian' and 'Anabaptist', who baptised believers for the remission of sins by immersion upon confession, have been active in Great Britain and even earlier in Europe." {3}

"We can establish with some certainty that New Testament Christianity was being propagated throughout Europe and the east by the end of the eighth century." {3}

Dark Age Dissenters

Gundulphus- 1025AD

He taught against infant baptism "Because to an infant, that neither wills nor runs, that knows nothing of faith, is ignorant of its own salvation and welfare". {4}

Arnold of Brescia- 1100AD

"Opposed to many Catholic teachings including infant baptism, the Mass, church buildings and altars (because any place is suitable for prayer and meeting), prayers for the dead, veneration of the cross, celibacy, good works and transubstantiation." {5}

Lesson 6- Dissenters & Catholic Dominance (1055-1520AD)

1. There are recorded for us, those who tried to follow NT doctrines that were met with great oppression. Is this a qualification of kingdom citizens? (Acts 14:21-22; Mk. 10:30; Jn 15:18-20)

2. One of these groups was called the Waldensians. In 1146, they rejected infant baptism and had formed a 'church of Christ' separate and apart from the Catholic church. They were burnt at the stake, and the congregation was destroyed. Is infant baptism scriptural? Give verses. (Acts 2:35-28)

3. Another group was called the Albigensians. Around 1208, Pope Innocent III, after teaching and debates failed, declared war on them. They were opposed to traditions as authority in religion and to many false doctrines. One they opposed is image-worship. Would it be scriptural to worship physical representations of God or have them in our building? Give verses to support your claim.

4. John Wycliffe (1324-1384) played a huge part in translating Bibles into English. How privileged are we to have our own copy of God's word in our own language? What should be our reaction? (Psa. 119)

5. By 1166, congregations arose in Oxford, England. They denied many false doctrines including prayer for the dead and to "saints" of the catholic church. Is there authority to pray either way?

For Further Study

More Dark Age Dissenters

Pierre de Bruis

Lived and preached in Southern France. His followers were known as Petrobusians, although they referred to themselves as Christians. They appealed for a return to the authority of the Scriptures and believers baptism quoting "Go out into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." A Papal Bull was made against preachers who were teaching doctrines contrary to the RC Church by Pope Urban II in 1096 and the 'second Lateran Council of 1139'. As a result, Bruis was burnt alive at St. Giles...in 1140. {3}

Gregory Grimm

In 1118, he died after being tortured because he had been baptized by his grandfather who in turn had been baptized (by immersion for the remission of sins) by a travelling merchant from Venetia who was from the "only church of the saints". In 1143, a congregation of over 100 Christians was seized on the lower Rhein. Under torture they confessed that such congregations were everywhere but in concealment. Because there was no organized hierarchy (following the Biblical pattern), it was extremely difficult for the authorities to find congregations as each had its own Bishops and Deacons. {6}

Lesson 7- The Protestant Reformation (1521-1610 AD)

1. Is it enough to "reform" false teaching? What must we do? (Jn 4:23-24; Acts 17:11; 20:20,26-27)

2. Describe the results of the actions of these three people and name which doctrines and religious groups exist as a result of their efforts.

- John Wesley- with his brother Charles and fellow cleric George Whitefield, founded Methodism.
- King Henry VIII- founded the Church Of England.
- John Knox-- A leader of the reformation and founder of the Presbyterian church of Scotland.

3. Anabaptists were a group that chose to be **rebaptized as believing adults which** had been baptized in their infancy, so their enemies called them *anabaptists* -- "re-baptizers." {7} {8} Is this scriptural? (Acts 19)

4. John Calvin formulated a systematic theology known since as "Calvinism." Calvinism is a broad term and reflects the doctrine of many churches. Discuss its five points and prove from scripture if they are true.

- Total Depravity (also known as Total Inability and Original Sin)
- Unconditional Election
- Limited Atonement (also known as Particular Atonement)
- Irresistible Grace
- Perseverance of the Saints (also known as Once Saved Always Saved)

5. Finding evidences of congregations meeting separate from the Catholic and later Anglican churches in this time period is difficult. "To meet outside the Catholic Church was illegal and... would mean... death by burning, usually.. alive. Both the government and state church opposed strongly such congregations, and we know from these condemnations that there were those who rejected infant baptism, choosing to baptize upon confession for the remission of sins into autonomous congregations, who used the identity - church of Christ. John Ryle wrote concerning this time period "It is no exaggeration to say that for three centuries before the Reformation, Christianity in England seems to have been buried under a mass of ignorance, superstition, priestcraft and immorality." {9} Yet we still find record of several. What does this say of God's plan, will and purpose?

For Further Study

The Protestant Reformation

Corruption and apathy within the Vatican led to growing discontentment among many Catholics within Europe. In 1517, Martin Luther issued a challenge to Roman Catholic leadership to debate the doctrine of "indulgences." He posted Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Out of the Reformation came Protestantism, which originated in the mid 16th century: from Latin protestari meaning to protest a matter. Even in the face of growing division, there remained Christians who served and worshiped God in simplicity, refusing to be either Protestants or Catholics. {10}

The Mennonite Denomination

Among the Anabaptist movement is a group that followed the teaching of Menno Simons, a Catholic priest who aligned himself with Anabaptists. Simons was a pacifist and avoided these conflicts as much as he could, though he was pursued the rest of his life. Mennonites today follow the pacifist character of Simons. There are many different forms of Mennonites as well as Amish and Church of the Brethren. {11}

Denominations come to the Americas- Denominations came to North America by Europeans in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Spanish, French and British brought Roman Catholicism to the colonies. Europeans brought Protestantism – Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Quakers, Congregational, Presbyterian, Mennonite and Moravian churches. However, there were still others trying to simply follow the Bible and be a Christian.

Lesson 8- Spreading "Christianity" In Europe And America (1625AD-1800AD)

1. In 1645, John Tombes learned of problems that the churches in New England were having with infant baptism. A letter was sent to assist. We learn from that letter that churches were established, used biblical identities, had elders and baptized believers. Should this surprise us? Historically?

2. One issue early settlers had was using unscriptural titles. "Reverend" was used by those who had shortly left the Church of England and were still learning and studying the scriptures. Is this a scriptural title? (Mt 23:5-12, 1 Cor 1:12, 2 Pet 3:15)

3. In 1749, John Erskine emphasized celebrating the Lord's Supper every Sunday. Is this the scriptural pattern? Why? (Acts 20:7)

4. In North Carolina, around 1790, Presbyterian James McGready began preaching that congregations should be independent and should have only the Bible as their creed. In 1793 in North Carolina and Virginia, Methodist James O'Kelly tried in vain to convince his episcopate that congregations should be independent and the New Testament their only creed, so his congregation became independent. {12} Why is it so important that every local church be independent? Is autonomy a safeguard against apostasy? (Acts 20:28-32; 1 Peter 5:2)

5. In Vermont, Baptist Abner Jones pleaded that sectarian names and creeds be abolished. His congregation became independent in 1800. About the same time, not knowing about the others, Baptist Elias Smith of New Hampshire influenced his congregation to become independent. The church spread all over New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Canada. They too went only by the name Christian. Is it scriptural to wear the name of a man or a denomination? Why or why not?

For Further Study

The Puritan Movement

"This was in part due to a desire to purify the Church of England and Roman Catholic Church from within. Non-separatists believed the Church of England could be saved by reformation and stayed in the church. Separatists believed the Church of England was so corrupt that it must be separated from. The Mayflower Pilgrims came in 1620 and were referred to only as Separatists. When the Mayflower arrived in America in 1620, from England, members of the Bell Alley and Southwark churches of Christ (London) were on board. The church in Southwark from which some of the Pilgrim Fathers, whilst in England had attended, was a church of Christ. The captain of the Mayflower, Christopher Jones was from Southward. Whilst the majority of the Pilgrim Fathers were not converted, they did know the truth of believers baptism and within a few years of arriving a church of Christ separate from other churches had been established in New England." {13}

The Great Awakening

Religious revivals in Britain and its American Colonies- 1730-1740

Denominations of note that began during this time period

- The Episcopal Church
- African Methodist Episcopal Church

Lesson 9- The American Restoration And Revivalism (1800AD-1845AD)

1. Throughout the centuries, people have tried to only follow the Bible. Why is this need to do things the way the early church did or only by the word of God so vital?

2. A Scottish Presbyterian father & son named Thomas and Alexander Campbell began to question the soundness of Protestant doctrine and organization. Alexander Campbell began preaching that men should work to...follow the "Ancient Order" set out in the New Testament. Separate from the Campbells, another Presbyterian preacher named Barton W. Stone also began to preach the idea of restoration. Is restoration a biblical concept? (II Kings 22:13; 23:25).

3. In 1832, Campbell and Stone joined together, calling on people to be simply Christians. What does it mean to simply be a Christian? (I Corinthians 1:11,12) What would you say to someone who said the "church of Christ" was founded by Alexander Campbell?

4. One preacher named Joseph Smith claimed he received a visit from an angel on September 21, 1823, while praying in his room. This angel, named Moroni, allegedly told him about a book written upon gold plates that had been buried. Smith translated it and published it in 1830 as *The Book of Mormon* and founded the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. What do we read in God's word that proves we will not receive any more modern-day revelations by God? (2 Peter 1:2, Jude 3, 2 Tim 3:16-17, 2 John 9, Revelation 22:17-19)

5. While denominations were growing, some were leaving them and continue to do so today. Larry Rouse shares three reasons why he left the Baptist church: {14}

- "Love for my Lord demanded that I surrender things that divide. (Jn 17:20-23)
- One of my first challenges came as I examined the Lord's Supper. (Mt 26:26-28 Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:1-2)
- While attending the University of Alabama I heard a basic presentation on how Jesus directed men to be saved. (Mk 16:15-16) After studying and asking further questions I decided to be baptized into Christ and take a stand to be just a Christian. (Acts 19:1-4)"

If we find that something being taught is different from what we read in God's word what should we do? (1 John 2:3-6; 3:19; John 3:19-21; Titus 1:14-16)

For Further Study

The Restoration In Alabama

"Elisha Randolph preached and established churches of Christ in Morgan County as early as 1825. Some of his converts, including the Robert Logan and Hugh White McCaleb families, moved to the Berea community in about 1830-1831." {15}

Movements Independent of Stone and Campbell

John Taylor, Of North West Alabama
Christian Herman Dasher, Of South Georgia
James O'Kelley, Of North Carolina
Wade Barrett, Of Central Tennessee
Old Philadelphia, Of Central Tennessee
John Mulkey, Tompkinsville, Kentucky {16}

Denominations of note that began during this time period

Cumberland Presbyterian Church- 1810
Southern Baptist Convention- 1845

Lesson 10- Divisions Among Christians And New Denominations In America (1840AD-1910AD)

1. As many were trying to simply follow God's Word there came questions about how to best do that. Alexander Campbell suggested churches in his home county have a yearly general meeting to make plans for evangelizing the area, selecting an evangelist and providing for an evangelist's support. Does the New Testament give the right to do this? (Acts 11:27-30, Rom 15:25-28, Phil 1:3-5)

2. The American Christian Missionary Society was formed in 1849. It has its own president, secretary, treasurer and board. Is there a need for a missionary society? Is the local church sufficient to do the work of evangelism? (Col 1:6,23; 1 Cor. 9:1-18, 2 Cor. 11:8-9)

3. The Civil War divided many brothers and sisters in Christ. Some spoke out for pacifism; some supported war. Some supported the north while some supported the south. Even through difficult and terrible times, how are Christians supposed to treat each other? (Ephesians 4:1-3, Rom 12:17-21)

4. Instrumental music was a great cause of division among Christians. By 1860, congregations in Kentucky used them. Is instrumental music authorized by God for use under the new covenant? Old covenant? What is the difference?

5. By 1906, two distinct groups were identified. The basic difference on which most of the other differences were based in was the approach to interpreting the scriptures. For the Disciples of Christ, it was generally held that any practice not expressly forbidden could be favorably considered. For the churches of Christ, any practices not present in accounts of New Testament worship were not permissible. {20} Why is understanding the principle of God's silence so important?

For Further Study

Tolbert Fanning (1810-1874)

In founding the Gospel Advocate in 1855, he stated his chief purpose was to examine the subjects of church organization and Christian cooperation. In relation to the ACMS, he wrote in the Advocate, "The Church of God is the only divinely authorized Missionary, Bible, Sunday School and Temperance Society; the only institution in which the Heavenly Father will be honored...and through no other agency can man glorify his Maker." He continued by saying that it was wrong for Christians to "do the work of the church through merely human agencies." {17}

Missionary Societies

One congregation in Connelsville, PA said of the missionary society " that the church was "not a missionary society, but emphatically and pre-eminently the missionary society—the only one authorized by Jesus Christ. And if the church was the divine missionary society, "all other societies for this purpose are not only unscriptural" {18}

Instrumental Music In Worship

"In the earlier years of the present Reformation, there was entire unanimity in the rejection of instrumental music from our public worship. It was declared unscriptural, inharmonious with the Christian institution, and a source of corruption." {19}

Denominations of note that began during this time period

- 7th Day Adventists- 1863
- Jehovah's Witnesses- 1870
- Church of Christ scientist- 1879
- Church Of The Nazarene- 1908

Lesson 11- World Wars, Institutionalism, & New Denominations (1910AD-1970AD)

1. Churches of Christ struggled with various questions early in the 20th century. One was over premillennialism. This is the belief that Jesus will physically return to the earth (the Second Coming) before the Millennium and reign on the throne of David for 1000 years. Is this scriptural? (1 Cor. 15:23-27, Mt 13:40-49; 2 Thes. 1:7-9)

2. Other divisions occurred over whether bible classes, located preachers and multiple cups at the Lord's table were scriptural. After studying, are these scripturally authorized?

3. After World War Two, the question of who or what a local church can support from the treasury became a hotly debated issue, especially as concerned benevolence. What does God give us permission to do with His money as a local church in regard to benevolence? (Acts 2:44-47, Acts 4:32-35, Acts 6:1-4, Acts 11:29, 1 Cor. 16:1 2 Cor. 8:4, 2 Cor. 9:1, 2 Cor. 9:12, 1 Tim. 5:5, 9-11,16)

4. A few years later, the question arose about building and maintaining places for eating, playing and entertainment out of the Lord's treasury. Is this a work of the local church biblically? (Rom 14:17, 1 Tim 3:15, 2 Thes. 2:14, 1 Cor. 11:22-34, 1 Peter 2:5, Eph 5:25, Acts 20:28)

5. In 1906, the Azusa street revival was conducted in Los Angeles, CA. From it came most all modern forms of Pentecostal churches known also as Assemblies of God or the Church of God. The holiness movement and apostolic churches also came from this event. Today, there are more than 500 million Pentecostal and charismatic believers across the globe, and it is the fastest-growing form of Christianity today. Is it scriptural to say that we can experience what the apostles did on the day of Pentecost? Can we speak in tongues today? Are there modern-day apostles?

For Further Study

Recreation and entertainment as part of the work of a local church- "It is not the duty of the church to provide entertainment for young or old. It is not a part of the program of the church to provide playgrounds, programs of entertainment, or supervisors of such programs....It is definitely no more the duty of the church to provide recreation for the young people than it is to provide a business for every member of the church to conduct....Building recreation rooms and providing and supervising recreational activities at the expense of the church is a departure from the simple gospel plan as revealed in the New Testament. The church might as well relieve the parents of feeding and disciplining all the young people at church expense as to take over the job of entertaining and supervising their recreation at church expense. "{21}"

An Exert from The Story of the churches of Christ in central Europe- "In 1933 the Nazis imprisoned all elders and deacons of the Lord's church on German soil in concentration camps. The Nazis interred Brother Hans Grimm in Hammerstein and Lichtenburg concentration camps, for illegally preaching in Anhalt, Germany. There he suffered hunger, thirst, constant thrashings about the arms, shinbones and head along with many political, religious and non-Aryan prisoners. He sustained deafness in one ear and crushed kidneys...He continued preaching like his ancestors, in woods, hills, swamps and city hiding places. In East Prussia adult members of the church followed their shepherds into prisons and hard labour convoys. Not one survived beyond 1944. In 1942 a remaining eleven Alsatian church of Christ families were deported to Poland. There, in January 1945 Hans' father perished when advancing Russian tank regiments massacred and almost exterminated them. In Christmas 1945, in Leipzig, Hans learned from a few survivors, of his father's death and of the extremities suffered by the churches in eastern Europe." {23}

Denominations of note that began during this time period

- Unitarian Universalist- 1961
- Scientology- 1954

Lesson 12- Progressivism Among "Churches Of Christ", Non-Denominational Churches And The Rise Of The Mega-Church (1970AD-Today)

1. Calls for open fellowship among "believers" is a mark of progressive movements within churches of Christ. Before we extend fellowship to others as Christians, what judgments must we make?(1 John 1:5-7 Acts 9:26, 1 John 3:4-10; Eph 4:4-6; 5:11)

2. Recent false movements also seek to permit women to be evangelists, elders and deacons in local churches. What is God's design for leadership in local churches? (1 Timothy 2:11-12; 1 Timothy 3:1-13) How vital are the God-given roles women play in the local church? (Luke 8:1-3, Romans 16)

3. One recent development among mega-churches is the concept of multi-site churches. This is when a church has a main location and multiple campuses in other places. Does the New Testament give authority for such an arrangement? (Acts 2:42-47; 14:23, Philippians 1:1). Do we see any example in the New Testament where elders have oversight of more than one local congregation at a time?

4. In most communities, "non-denominational" churches are present. Each is unique but most hold to denominational doctrines. Is being non-denominational a good concept? When visiting a church, what must we do to be acceptable to God? (Acts 17:11-12, John 5:39-47, Matthew 15:6)

5. One matter of great religious division in the 21st century is over whether homosexuality is a sin. What does God's word say? (Romans 1:20-28, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 1 Tim 1:10, Jude 7) What makes this such a unique and dangerous issue? Why is understanding and compassion when we teach on these issues always important? (2 Tim 2:24-26, Psa. 25:12-14)

For Further Study

Megachurch Definition

By definition, megachurches have always existed; the church in Jerusalem represents the first "megachurch" (Acts 2:42-47). Nevertheless, a few particular brands of megachurches began to develop in the middle of the twentieth century as modern Americans became used to large structures and large crowds in other venues; such a trend is now recognized as the megachurch movement. Megachurches are defined by their oversized organizational structures that developed to meet the needs of their vast numbers of members, focus on small groups, use of contemporary imagery and technology, and the innovative individuals who begin and promote such organizations....Confusion often exists in understanding precisely what a megachurch is. Strictly speaking, a megachurch is any single Protestant congregation averaging over 2,000 people attending weekly services. By necessity, such groups exhibit a high level of structure, with nothing being left to chance; indeed, they are probably over-structured. {24}

Lesson 13- The Plea For New Testament Christianity Continues

1. Men and women from the beginning of time have sought to understand what God's will is for them. It first begins with an open and pure heart. Why is this essential? (Mt 5:8, John 7:17, Mt 6:22-24; 2 Cor 4:2; Jas 1:7-8, 4:8)
2. What are some human loyalties that can be put ahead of God instead of seeking His will? (John 5:38-46; Mt 15:8-9; John 7:48-49; 1 Peter 1:18, Mt 10:21-22)
3. Satan has many tools to use to prevent us from reasoning from God's word and seeing the truth. Describe how the following can come between us and God's word guiding us:
 - Anger and Bitterness (Heb 12:14-15)
 - Fear of consequences (1 Peter 3:12-15)
 - Prejudice towards a doctrine or a man who teaches the doctrine. (Lk 7:31-33; 2 Cor 4:1; Acts 25:16-17)
4. Can the unity that Christ expects of us be possible if we are unwilling to learn how to discuss a difference and then know how to study the Bible about that question? (Jn 17:20-23)
5. We can find and live God's truth no matter how the world lives or how difficult it is. King Josiah is a great example of this. What type of heart did he have and what are the difficult things he had to endure to do what was right? (2 Kings 22-23; 2 Chronicles 34-35)

For Further Study

Quote By Paul Earnhart- "The true vision of God will not be granted to the shrewd and calculating who play dishonest games; or to the double-minded who can never quite put both feet in the kingdom but to those who are absolutely honest and single of heart toward God." {25}

Open Hearts And Open Bibles

- Make time in your day.
- Read with someone else too.
- Read it out loud.
- Participate in church learning activities.
- Teach/Share what you read.

Scriptures

For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God- 1 Peter 1:23, NASB

So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 2 Peter 1:19, NASB

Therefore, take up the full armor of God ... the sword of the Spirit, the word of God- Ephesians 6:13, 17, NASB

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."- John 8:31-32

Sources- Efforts have been made to cite all direct quotations.

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Credits- Many ideas for this workbook came from the writing of these men of faith.

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