

IS CHRIST DIVIDED?

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The above question was directed to the church at Corinth. It was a timely question because the church there was being divided by parties (I Cor. 1:12). Three or four groups were manifesting a sectarian spirit by following after men. This was before denominations came into being, but it was this very spirit manifest by the Corinthian brethren that caused denominationalism to be born. As we look at the church today and see the division that is among God's people, I think this is a timely question for us to consider. It is this same spirit that will bring into existence another denomination today. We must ever heed the statement of Paul in I Cor. 4:6, "*And these things brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.*" Let us all learn this lesson well, that no man, matters not what his name may be, how long he may have preached, nor how many papers he may have edited, has any authority in the kingdom of God. When men begin to go beyond that which is written we must part company with them, if we do not, we become a partaker of their evil deeds (2 John 9 - 11).

Jesus Christ is not divided in will. It is not the will of Christ that His disciples be divided. In John 17 we have His prayer to the Father, before His death on the cross, that all might be one. Neither is he divided in message. There is but one gospel (Gal. 1: 6 - 9). Christ is not divided in body, he has but one body and it is the church (Eph. 1: 22 -23). He is not divided in name or in authority (Acts 4:12; Matt. 28:18). Seeing Christ is not divided, someone may ask, "Why do we have divisions then?" Let us take a brief look at some of the reasons.

Sin brings division among God's people. When sin is found among us, it must be dealt with (I Cor. 5: 1 - 6). It is not always a sin of immorality that brings division. Many times it is the sin of self-willed spirit on the part of some brother who wants to have the preeminence. Diotrephes was one of such a nature (3 John 9 - 10). People who did not measure up to his opinions and ideas he "*casteth them out of the church.*"

Human innovations bring division among God's people. A hundred years ago when brethren brought instrumental music into the worship and set up a human organization to preach the gospel, division came because these things were without the authority of Christ. They were rejected by brethren who wanted to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. Our present problems are the same as those of a hundred years ago -- human innovations!

Human doctrine brings division among God's people. About twenty-five years ago, when the human doctrine known as pre-millennialism was introduced in this city and other places, it brought division. Paul says in Rom. 16:17 to "*mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*" This is what faithful brethren did to R. H. Boll and those who stood with him.

Brethren today are not willing to do God's work in God's way. They are not satisfied with the simple organization He gave -- the local congregation. They have created organizations to do the work God gave the local church to do.

These innovations are working havoc among God's people today the same as they did then, and for the same reasons, they are without the authority of Christ. No, Christ is not divided.

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