
Jesus Is Lord Bible Study Course

Instructions:

Please take all courses in order as listed on our home page (the computer will ask!). If you have not done all the lessons of previous courses, please [click here to go to the beginning](#).

If you have not already done so, save this lesson to your computer using the "save" feature of your browser or PDF reader. Then print out the lesson (or at least open it in your browser or PDF reader **offline** – not on the Internet). Read the lesson and **study in your Bible the passages indicated >>> Scripture <<<**. Following each passage, study each question that has a number enclosed in asterisks (*1*, *2*, etc.), and **write down your answers on paper**. Some questions include more than one number because they have more than one blank to fill in. ("Think" questions should be carefully considered for your own benefit, but your answers will not be submitted to us.) Please take your time, study each passage carefully, answer the questions honestly, and consider the applications to your own life (John 12:48; 2 Tim. 2:15).

When you have studied the whole lesson and written down answers to all the indicated questions, return to the menu for this course on our web site at www.BibleStudyLessons.com and click on the link for the **answer quiz** for this lesson (or simply click on the link at the end of this lesson). Follow the directions to submit your answers and receive your grade. You will then be given an opportunity to see the correct answers to the questions. Please save this lesson and the correct answers for future reference.

Then move on to the next lesson or the next course in order. **Please study all lessons in all courses in order as listed in the menus on our web site.**

Thank you for your interest, and God bless your study of His word.

Where Can You Find the Church that Belongs to Jesus? Part 2

Jesus Is Lord – Lesson #8

Introduction:

In this lesson we continue studying the characteristics of Jesus' church. Please review the previous lesson carefully before continuing.

G. The Organization of the Church

Universal Church Government

>>> Read EPHESIANS 1:22,23. <<<

1 Jesus is head over how many things to the church? Answer: Jesus is Head over _____ things to the church.

2 What is left for men to be head over in the church? (a) church laws, (b) things on earth, (c) nothing. Answer: _____.

3 Where is Jesus now (Hebrews 8:1; 1 Peter 3:22; Eph. 1:20)? Answer: Jesus is in _____.

4 Then where is the headquarters of Jesus church? (a) heaven, (b) Rome, (c) Salt Lake City. Answer: _____.

Jesus' church has no earthly headquarters or governing body. No man or group of men may make laws for the church.

Local Church Organization

>>> Read ACTS 20:17,28 and 1 PETER 5:1-3. <<<

5 What is the work of elders? (a) feed (shepherd) the flock, (b) oversee the church, (c) set a good example, (d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

6 An eldership should have oversight of the work of how many churches? (a) two, (b) every one in the diocese, (c) the one among them. Answer: _____.

Note: Reading the above verses closely will show that "elder" is just another name for an overseer or "bishop" and a shepherd or "pastor."

Each local church must work to appoint a **plurality** of elders (Acts 14:23). To be appointed, these men must possess certain qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). When they have been appointed, they guide the local church in obeying God's word. The oversight of each eldership is limited to the **one** local church where they have been appointed.

Jesus' church has no earthly headquarters or centralized institutions. Each congregation functions independently under its own officers.

7 If a church changes this pattern, would it be honoring Jesus? Answer (yes or no): _____.

We have now studied the "fruits" or characteristics of Jesus' church. Since God is no respecter of persons, He still requires His church to possess these same characteristics today. Any church that does not have these characteristics, cannot be the church Jesus built.

(Note: For more information about church organization and work, please see the links at the end of this study.)

II. How Did Modern Denominations Begin?

Jesus built one church, and the Bible tells us what it should be like. Today there are many different denominations. Is God pleased by their existence? Where did they come from?

A. Warnings of Departure from the Gospel

>>> Read ACTS 20:28-30. <<<

8 What danger does Paul warn about? Answer: Elders might draw away _____ after themselves.

9 Can religious leaders lead people into error? Answer (yes or no): _____.

>>> Read 2 TIMOTHY 4:2-4. <<<

10 What error will people be guilty of? Answer: They may turn from the _____ and follow fables.

>>> Read 1 TIMOTHY 4:1-3. <<<

11 What does the Spirit predict will happen? Answer: Some will _____ from the faith.

12 What particular doctrines will be taught? (a) some food (meat) should not be eaten, (b) some people should not marry, (c) both of these. Answer: _____.

Many false teachers have come among God's people. In particular, Jesus warned that error would enter among the elders, and some would forbid marriage and command to abstain from meats. God's true people must reject these false teachings. (See also Matthew 7:15-23; 15:14; Galatians 1:6-10; 1 John 4:1,6; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 John 9-11; Eph. 5:11.)

B. The Beginning of the Catholic Church

(Note that we do not seek to hurt people in any particular religious group. We present these facts so people can know the truth and honor Jesus as their Lord – Luke 6:46; Rev. 3:19.)

Jesus is the only head of His church. It has no man-made laws or earthly headquarters. No officers oversee more than one local church.

However, after the church began, departure occurred just as the Scriptures predicted. Certain congregations began to exalt one elder above the others. This exalted "bishop" would assume the oversight of several churches in a region called a "diocese."

Soon, bishops met in councils to issue "church laws." The first universal council, to which all churches were invited to send representatives, was in Nicea in 325 AD. Later, discussion arose regarding who would be the earthly head of the whole church. Finally, in the sixth or seventh century AD, the Bishop of Rome was generally recognized as "Pope." Clearly, this is a departure from Jesus' plan for church organization.

Meanwhile, the church was adopting other new practices. Listed below are the approximate dates when many of the practices came to be generally accepted. (Note: This historical information can be documented by checking encyclopedias or church history books.)

PRACTICE	DATE
Use of images in worship	4th century
Infant baptism	4th century
Celibacy of priests	4th century
Purgatory	6th century
Instrumental music (first used)	7th century
Confession to priest	9th century
Indulgences	12th century
Sprinkling for baptism	1311

Cup withheld from laity	1416
Infallibility of the Pope	1870

Note especially **celibacy**, which forbids priests to marry. The Catholic Church has also commanded members to abstain from meats on Fridays during Lent. This expressly fulfills 1 Timothy 4:1–3.

The changes we have described resulted in the Roman Catholic Church. Does the Catholic Church show the fruits of being Jesus' church? Contrary to its claims, the Catholic Church is not truly "the first church," but is rather the first major **apostasy** from the true church. If we wish to find Jesus' church, we must look elsewhere.

For more information about Catholicism, see the links at the end of this study.

C. The Beginning of Protestant Denominations

As Rome moved further from God's word, many Catholics began to object. In the 1400's and 1500's the church allowed only Latin translations of the Bible, which the common people could not understand. Then, men like John Wycliffe and William Tyndale translated the Bible into English. For this, the church burned Wycliffe's bones and made a martyr of Tyndale!

In 1517, a Catholic monk named Martin Luther nailed his "95 Theses" (or points of disagreement) to the door of a church building in Wittenburg, Germany. Other men like Zwingli and Calvin joined the movement of "protest," not to start a new church, but to "reform" the Catholic Church. Instead, however, the followers of these men eventually began new churches separate from Rome and from one another.

Here are some examples:

NAME	DATE	PLACE	FOUNDER
Lutheran	1530	Germany	Martin Luther
Church of England	1534	England	Henry VIII
Presbyterian	1536	Switzerland	John Calvin
Baptist	1609	Holland	John Smyth
Methodist	1739	England	John Wesley
Mormon	1830	America	Joseph Smith
7th Day Adventist	1846	America	Miller/White
Jehovah's Witnesses	1872	America	C. Russell

(Again, this information can be verified in a good encyclopedia or church history. Note that some dates are approximate.)

Now let us compare the fruits of these denominations to the characteristics of Jesus' church.

AUTHORITY – Most denominations follow man-made creeds as law in addition to the Bible.

ORIGIN – No Protestant denomination existed as an organized, functioning body, separate from the Catholic Church, prior to 1500 AD. They were all begun by men in times and places other the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2).

NAME – Nearly all have names invented by men and not found in the gospel. Many names honor men and doctrines, not God and Christ.

SALVATION – Most have infant baptism, sprinkling and pouring. Most teach "faith only" (baptism is not necessary to salvation).

WORSHIP – Most have annual or monthly communion, instrumental music, holy days, tithing, and man-made fund-raising methods.

WORK – Most denominations practice the "Social Gospel" – church-sponsored recreation, entertainment, etc.

ORGANIZATION – Nearly all denominations have earthly headquarters, central governing bodies, boards and institutions of all kinds that centralize the work and government of the church.

Protestant leaders had some admirable goals, but all of them (or their followers) clung to basic errors of Catholicism and even added some new ones. Every Protestant denomination differs from the church of Christ on many or all of the above points. Again, if we wish to find the church belonging to Jesus, we must look elsewhere.

D. God's Attitude Toward Religious Division

Denominations contradict and disagree with one another. Yet people often say, "All the churches are following Jesus. It doesn't matter where you attend, or what you believe, as long as you worship the true God. Just join the church of your choice." What does Jesus say?

>>> Read JOHN 17:20–22. <<<

13 In what way should we be like the Father and the Son? Answer: We should be _____ as the Father and Son are.

14 In what ways do the Father and Son contradict one another? (a) about how to worship, (b) about how to be saved, (c) about what church to attend, (d) none of the preceding. (See also John 12:49,50.) Answer: _____.

The existence of denominations contradicts Jesus' prayer for unity.

>>> Read 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10,13. <<<

15 What does God say about division? Answer: There should be no _____ among us.

16 Is Christ divided? Does He contradict Himself? Answer (yes or no): _____.

17 Jesus does not contradict Himself, but churches do contradict one another. So are "all the churches following Jesus"? Answer (yes or no): _____.

When a preacher knowingly contradicts himself, we call him a *hypocrite*. But denominations contradict one another, yet they all say they get their teaching from Jesus. What would that make Jesus? Denominationalism violates God's law against division (Galatians 5:19–21).

>>> Read 1 CORINTHIANS 14:33. <<<

18 What is God's relationship to confusion? Answer: God is not the author (cause) of _____.

19 Is the existence of many churches confusing? Answer (yes or no): _____.

20 Is God the source of all the denominations? Answer (yes or no) _____.

God did not create the modern denominations, so they must have been begun by **men**. They are not in the Bible, therefore they exist contrary to God's authority. When churches disagree, one may be right and the others wrong, or they may all be wrong, but they cannot all be right!

>>> Read EPHESIANS 4:3–6. <<<

We must strive to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

21 How many true "God and Fathers" are there? Answer (give a number): There is _____ God and Father.

22 Can we please God if we think there are many acceptable gods, and we may just worship the god of our choice? Answer (yes or no): _____.

23&24 How many "bodies" and "faiths" are there? Answer (give a number): There is _____ body and _____ faith.

25 Can we please God if we think there are hundreds of acceptable bodies and faiths, so we can just take our choice? Answer (yes or no): _____.

There may be many **false** gods, but there is only **one true** God. In the same way, there is only one true **body** (church) and only one true **faith**. All others are **false**. [Cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12–20]

>>> Read 2 CORINTHIANS 6:17–7:1. <<<

26 To be God's true children, what must we do about practices and churches that God has not authorized? Answer: We must come out from among them and be _____.

The Lord established **one** church, not many denominations. He condemned division. He requires us to follow His true gospel pattern, but Catholic and Protestant churches are departures from His pattern. Therefore, we must not be members of any of these groups. Are you a member of a man-made church? [Cf. 2 John 9–11; Eph. 5:11; Matt. 15:14]

For more information about denominationalism and modern religious confusion and division, see the links at the end of this study.

E. The Existence of Jesus' True Church Today

If neither the Catholic nor the Protestant churches are Jesus' church, where can we find it? Does it exist? Since we must be members of His church to be saved, how can people today be saved?

>>> Read 1 PETER 1:22–25. <<<

27 How do we purify our souls? Answer: We purify our souls in obeying the _____.

28 What is the seed by which we are born again? Answer: We are born again by God's _____.

29 How long will this seed endure? Answer: _____.

"The seed is the word of God" – Luke 8:11. God's creations, including the church, reproduce by means of seed. When men hear the gospel with receptive hearts, they will believe and obey. As a result, they are "born again" into God's family, the church. (See James 1:18; Luke 8:15; Romans 1:16; 10:17; Mark 16:15,16; John 3:3–5.)

>>> Read **GALATIANS 6:7**. <<<

30 How does the seed relate to the harvest? Answer: Whatever a man sows, that is what he will _____.

At any time or place, the same seed always produces the same kind of living thing. Like seed, doctrines reproduce after their own kind. To get the right "fruit," we must plant the right "seed." Denominations do not produce the right **fruit**, because they plant the wrong **seed**.

31 Suppose you believed and obeyed Buddhist doctrine. What would that make you? (a) a Christian, (b) a Hindu, (c) a Buddhist. Answer: _____.

Man-made doctrines reproduce after their own kind and make people members of man-made religious groups.

32 In the first century, when people obeyed Jesus' gospel, what kind of Christians did they become and what church did they become members of? (a) Lutherans, (b) Catholics, (c) just Christians, members of Jesus' church. Answer: _____.

33 If you were to obey simply the gospel today, without any man-made changes, what kind of Christian would you become and what church would that make you a member of? (a) the same as in the first century, (b) a modern denomination, (c) no one knows. Answer: _____.

Anytime and anyplace, when a person obeys only the gospel, he becomes a **Christian**, exactly like people were in the first century. They were not members of any of the modern denominations and neither should people today be. The Lord will add people today to **His** church, just as He did in the first century (Acts 2:47). These saved people must then work and worship with a faithful local church.

Conclusion

People who wish to be saved must be members of the Lord's one true church. Since salvation is free to all, **you too** can obey the gospel and enter Jesus' true church (Matthew 28:18–20; Romans 1:16; Acts 2:39; Titus 2:11,12; 2 Peter 3:9). Have you obeyed Jesus? Are you part of His one true church? If not, why not obey Him today?

Personal application questions:

(These questions are for you to ponder. Your answers will help us understand your thinking, however they will not affect your "score.")

34 What conclusions do you reach regarding what the Bible teaches about the existence of Catholic and Protestant denominations? _____

35 How can a person be faithful to the Lord today in an age with so much religious error and confusion? _____

36 If you have been part of a church, is that church following Jesus' true pattern for His church, or is it a group that has departed from His way? _____

37 While you have been studying this course, have you made any significant changes in your faith, spiritual conduct, church membership, or relationship with God? If so, please explain.

Note: We would be glad to help in your attempt to learn the truth of God's word about salvation or about Jesus' church. If you would like to find a faithful church in your area or someone to personally discuss the Scriptures with you, please let us know when you complete your answer form.

When you have carefully studied this lesson and written down answers to all the questions, [click on this link to submit your answers.](#)

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