History of The Lord's Church

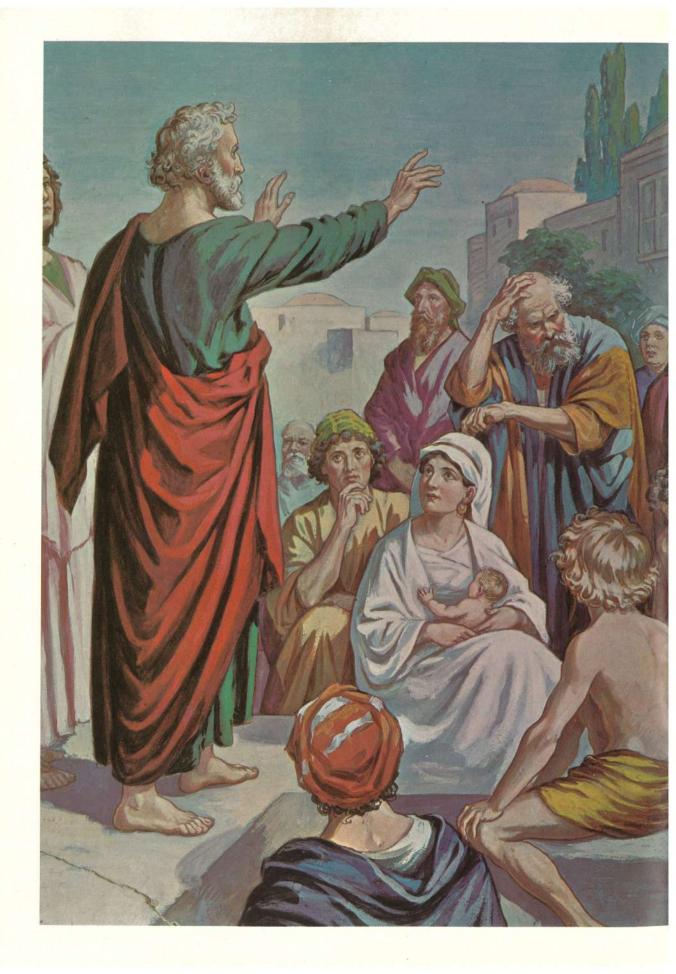
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Vísualized Bíble Study Series

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AN OBJECTIVE SURVEY OF THE BIBLE
AND CHURCH HISTORY

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PURPOSE OF THIS LESSON

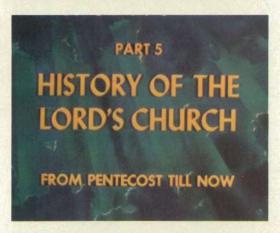
To give a brief summary of mankind from the very creation, showing how men have continually left God and His divine will and in doing so have brought upon themselves misery and heartaches—To show also how men in our Christian Era left God's New Testament truth which has resulted in the doctrines of men and religious strifes and divisions—To assure the believer that religious unity is possible through the Lord's church which is founded upon Christ and His Holy Word.

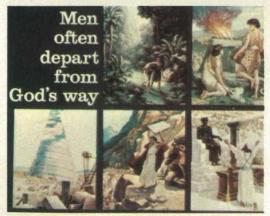
SYNOPSIS

Beginning with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the story of man's departures from God is revealed. When Jesus established His church, we see the same principle involved for some Christians departed from the faith. This resulted in the gradual development of the Roman State Church or catholicism in the Sixth Century and later . . . divided-protestantism in the Sixteenth Century. Our lesson ends with the plea of the membership of the church of Christ throughout the world to return to God's Way as revealed in the New Testament. In this way all may be one in Christ Jesus.









1. MANY WEARY HOURS could be spent in investigating the numerous denominations, sects, philosophies and isms which are offered in the name of Christianity. The more people search, the more confused they become. Haven't you found it totally refreshing just to study the Bible itself, the only divine source of God's truth?

Q. Numerous differing religious systems are offered in the _____ of Christianity.

NAME

2. COMPARING ONE DENOMINATIONAL CHURCH with another will not tell us about CHRIST'S CHURCH but instead will cause only confusion and misunderstanding. Since all of today's denominational churches came into existence centuries after Jesus established HIS CHURCH, when and how did they come into being? This interesting lesson will help answer these questions.

Q. Comparing denominations will not tell us about _____ CHURCH.

CHRIST'S

3. PART FIVE "History of the Lord's Church." THE CHURCH began on the first Jewish Day of Pentecost after the cross. Through succeeding centuries various religious movements have arisen within the context of THE CHURCH and her influence. This lesson presents an overview of these events.

Q. THE CHURCH began on the ______ Jewish Day of Pentecost after the cross.

FIRST

4. CHURCH HISTORIANS MUST take into account the fact that man often departs from God's way. From the very beginning of time, the history of religion has demonstrated over and over that man usually is faithful to God's way only for a brief span of time.

Q. Man often _____ from God's Way. DEPARTS

5. IT WASN'T VERY LONG after Adam and Eve were created until they departed from God's way. The heavenly Father had appointed Adam to rule over the earth and all living creatures. He had placed the first pair in the Garden of Eden where they could enjoy its beauty and provisions forever. But Adam and Eve left God's way by choosing to listen to the Devil and eat the one fruit that God had forbidden.

1 Genesis 2:8 to 3:21.

Q. By listening to the _____ Adam and Eve left God's Way.

DEVIL

6. ADAM AND EVE could not hide their disobedience from God. Since they chose to sin, they forfeited their home in the garden and began to die physically. But worst of all, being separated from God, they died spiritually. It is important to remember that Adam and Eve lost these precious blessing because they departed from God's way.

¹ Genesis 3:8-11; ² Isaiah 59:1, 2.

Q. Adam and Eve could not hide their

God. DISOBEDIENCE

7. IN HIS BOUNDLESS LOVE God soon provided avenues of worship through which man, now separated from God, could draw near to Him again. But Cain, a son of Adam and Eve, again demonstrated that man often departs from God's way. Instead of a blood sacrifice which God required, Cain substituted a bloodless sacrifice and therefore suffered the displeasure of God. As the earth became more populated, most of the people followed the way of Cain. They continued to disregard God and His Word.

1 Genesis 4:3-8.

Q. Man can draw nearer to God through avenues of ______.

WORSHIP

8. BY THE TIME OF NOAH practically all the world had strayed from God's way. Mankind had become so corrupt that God determined to destroy them by bringing a flood of water upon the earth. God revealed His plan to Noah and told him how to construct a huge boat that would deliver the faithful from the flood. In all that generation, only Noah and his family found grace in the eyes of the Lord because they walked in God's way.

¹ Genesis 6:14 to 7:20.

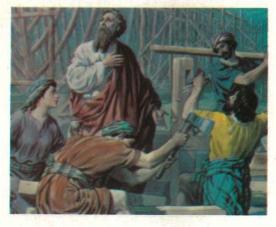
Q. Because man had become so corrupt, God determined to ______ him.

DESTROY

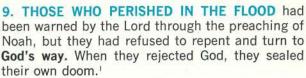












1 Genesis 7:21-23.

O. God had _ ____ the people through Noah's preaching.

WARNED



10. BUT NOAH AND HIS FAMILY OF EIGHT later stepped out of the boat into a fresh world washed clean of wickedness. Faithful to God, they were saved through their trust and obedience. God then provided that Noah and his descendants were to repopulate the earth.1

1 Genesis 8:16-22.

Q. Noah and his family were saved through their trust and _____. **OBEDIENCE**



11. BEFORE LONG, HOWEVER, the descendants of Noah decided that their way was better than God's way. God had told them to multiply and replenish the earth. Instead, they began building the Tower of Babel in token of their resolve to band together in one place and rely on their own strength. To defeat this rebellious purpose, God caused them to begin speaking in different languages. Because they could not understand one another, they could no longer build the tower.1 Mankind was soon scattered across the face of the earth but they still continued to depart from God's way.

1 Genesis 11:1-9.

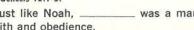
O. The descendants of Noah felt that their way was _____ than God's Way.

BETTER

12. JUST AS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH, once again God chose from among a wicked generation a man of faith and obedience. God selected Abraham to begin a line of descendants through whom Jesus, the Savior, would come to bless the whole earth.1 Note that these promises were given to a man who was willing to walk in God's way. The descendants of Abraham, a few generations later, were delivered from Egyptian slavery by Moses.

1 Genesis 12:1-3.

O. Just like Noah. _ was a man of faith and obedience.



ABRAHAM

13. MOSES IS ANOTHER GOOD EXAMPLE of a man willing to walk in God's way. When Abraham's descendants, the Israelites, were slaves in Egypt, they grew into a mighty nation. God chose Moses who led them to freedom. Then on the top of Mount Sinai faithful Moses received God's Law for His people. Returning from the mountain Moses found that God's people again were forsaking God's way. Ignoring the plain commands of God, they had prepared a golden calf to worship and actually ascribed to the calf the glory of delivering them from Egyptian slavery.

Q. God's people forsook His Way by preparing a golden _____ to worship.

CALF

14. MOSES PLED WITH GOD in behalf of those who repented. The Second Commandment of God's Law condemned the making or use of images in worship. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath . . . thou shalt not bow down thyself to them . . ." (Exodus 20:4, 5).

1 Exodus 32:31-35.

Q. The Second Commandment forbids the making and the ______ down before a graven image.

BOWING

15. WHILE MOSES WAS ON THE MOUNTAIN God also gave him detailed plans for the construction of the Jewish place of worship, the Tabernacle. Following God's way, Moses built the Tabernacle exactly as God had ordered. God also gave His people complete instructions for worship. So detailed were the instructions that God even told them where to get the fire to be used in certain offerings.

1 Exodus 35:1 to 40:38.

Q. God's instructions for ______ given to His people in detail.

WORSHIP

16. BUT DESPITE GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS, two priests, Nadab and Abihu, left God's way by using fire from a different source than the one ordained of God. As an example to the whole nation of Israel, God sent fire from heaven and destroyed these disobedient priests.

1 Leviticus 10:1-4.

Q. Punished for disregarding God's instructions, Nadab and Abihu became an to all Israel.

EXAMPLE

















the Israelites in the wilderness he had seen them ignore God time after time. Before Moses died he solemnly charged the Israelites to keep God's Law that they might be blessed. God's Law is authoritative and must be respected. Moses also warned them of the dire consequences of departing from God's Word. God has always designed laws for the personal happiness of those who will keep them. He knows a man's needs far better than man himself.²

¹ Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 5-9; ² Isaiah 55:8, 9.

Q. Moses warned that dire _____ would result when the people departed from God's Way. CONSEQUENCES

18. AFTER THE DEATH OF MOSES, God gave the Israelites the land of Canaan, the promised land of milk and honey. They possessed cities already surrounded by walls, vineyards they had not planted, and fields they had not cleared. As long as they served God, they enjoyed God's bountiful blessings and protection from their enemies.

1 Joshua 3:1-12; 24:13.

Q. While the Israelites served God, He blessed them with _____ from their enemies.

PROTECTION

19. HOWEVER, IT WASN'T LONG until they turned away from God again by worshiping images. This is another of the numerous examples which show that regardless of God's many blessings, man has never remained faithful to Him for very long. Because God loved His people, He sent His prophets to warn them of their doom, but the people refused to change.

1 Joshua 24:20-23.

Q. The Israelites again turned from God and began worshiping _____.

IMAGES

20. AFTER A LONG HISTORY OF DEPARTURES

from God's way, His people were dragged from their homes in the land of Palestine to serve as slaves of their enemies in foreign lands. Their land was laid waste and their temple destroyed. God had been merciful and patient. The people could blame only themselves for their woeful plight.

1 II Kings 17:7-23.

Q. Since God had been merciful and

————— His people could blame only
themselves for their woeful plight.

PATIENT

21. BUT GOD STILL CARED FOR HIS PEOPLE and sent preachers or prophets, like Ezekiel, to turn them back to His way. While some listened, many still ignored the pleading of God through His prophets. Therefore, they continued to serve in slavery for many years.

1 II Kings 25:8-21.

Q. God pleaded with His people through

PROPHETS



22. WHILE GOD'S PEOPLE WERE IN SLAVERY in a foreign land, Daniel, another prophet, prayed that they might return to God and be restored to their homes in the Promised Land. With the passing of time, the people did repent. Through His providence God brought a nation into power which allowed His people to return to their homes.

¹ Daniel 6:10.

Q. God's people were allowed to return to the Promised Land after they did

REPENT



23. GOD FINALLY SENT HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN Son to lead the whole world back to Him. Christ came first to the Jews who so often before had rejected God. Surely they would listen to God's own Son! John the Baptist pointed the Jews to Jesus, "Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Q. Before Jesus had ever come, the Jews had often _____ God.

REJECTED



24. BUT AGAIN THE JEWS DEPARTED from God. They refused to receive Jesus as the Son of God. Ultimately they caused Him to be crucified by the Roman soldiers, thinking this would silence Him and His followers forever.

Q. Instead of receiving Jesus as God's Son, the Jews hoped that they could ______ Him forever.

SILENCE











25. BUT EVEN DEATH COULD NOT OVERPOWER

the Son of God! God miraculously raised Him from the dead, proving beyond any doubt that He is God's Son. Instead of ending Jesus' life and His teachings as the Jews had hoped, His brutal death was the occasion for His triumphant resurrection and ultimately brought about the beginning of CHRIST'S CHURCH! and the spread of Christianity throughout the world.

1 Matthew 16:18; Acts 2.

Q. The Son of God could not be
______ by death. OVERPOWERED

26. THE NEW TESTAMENT, which Jesus consecrated with His own blood, is God's final and complete revelation to tell man of His way. In the early days of THE CHURCH the risen Christ revealed from heaven the message of the New Testament to selected men such as Paul and Peter. Guided by the Holy Spirit, these men wrote down inspired truths. Copies of these revelations were circulated among the early congregations who accepted them as Holy Scripture with Divine Authority. In the providence of God these inspired writings became the New Testament which we have today. Therefore, to depart from New Testament teaching today is to depart from GOD'S WAY.

¹ 1 Peter 4:16; ² James, Moffatt. The First Five Centuries of the Church. Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1938, p. 34.

Q. The message of the New Testament was _____ from heaven by the risen Christ.

REVEALED

27. EVEN WHILE THE NEW TESTAMENT was being written man was still departing from God's Way. One Christian couple, for example, actually conspired to lie about a contribution that they were giving to THE CHURCH. When Ananias, the husband, told the lie, immediately he fell dead at the feet of the apostles. Three hours later his wife, Sapphira, offered the same lie and suffered the same fate. God's people were again impressed with the necessity of walking in God's Way.

1 Acts 5:1-11.

Q. Ananias and Sapphira left God's Way when they told a ___ about a contribution they made to the church.

LIE

28. REMEMBER, GOD'S WAY WAS MADE KNOWN

to the early Christians through the preaching and writing of inspired men like the apostle Paul who was converted from Judaism. Traveling throughout the Roman world, he preached the **Word of God** with courage and conviction. He did not hesitate to brand as false doctrine anything taught which was contrary to **the truth** which he knew God had revealed to him.

Q. Paul branded as ______ doctrine anything contrary to the inspired truth which he preached.

FALSE

29. PERSECUTED BY THE JEWS and others who rejected Christ, Paul was finally imprisoned where he could not preach publicly. But even in prison Paul continued to contend for and to spread God's truth through every avenue available to him. Through the Holy Spirit, God guided him in writing letters to individuals and congregations. Paul instructed that these writings be read to the churches and be accepted as authority. Paul continually insisted on the Divine Authority of the gospel which God inspired him to preach.

1 Colossians 4:16; II Thessalonians 3:14.

Q. Paul expected the churches to accept his inspired writings as ______. AUTHORITY

30. PAUL WROTE, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8, 9). This gospel, preached not only by Paul but by all other inspired men of that day, is revealed fully only in the New Testament Scriptures. No man has the right to change a single principle, policy or practice found in the New Testament.

Q. The same gospel was preached by Paul and all other _____ men.

INSPIRED

31. GOD HAS GIVEN A COMPLETE PATTERN for HIS CHURCH in the **New Testament.** Jesus built HIS CHURCH exactly as He wanted it, including its worship, creed, rule of faith, unity, organization, names and mission. Those who wish to honor Jesus and walk in **God's way** will see that today's church follows the **New Testament** pattern. No man has the right to change this pattern. Those who have tried to do so have merely produced churches different from CHRIST'S TRUE CHURCH.

Q. The complete pattern for CHRIST'S
_____ is revealed in the New Testament

CHURCH

32. GOD'S PATTERN FOR THE CHURCH is not difficult to understand. The early Christians evidently understood it. For years they were all together in the ONE CHURCH which Jesus built. As they established congregations throughout the Roman Empire these congregations were all organized in the same way and all believed and taught the same doctrine. But today there are many modern denominational churches different from this pattern and divided among themselves. Since God's divine pattern can be seen clearly in the New Testament Scriptures, why have men through the years left God's pattern and established conflicting denominational churches instead?

¹ Ephesians 4:4-6. ² Robert H. Nichols, The Growth of the Christian Church. Philadelphia; The Westminster Press, 1941, p. 25.

Q. Today there are many churches from the Divine Pattern.

DIFFERENT



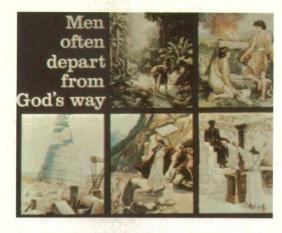
8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

(Galatians 1:8,9)

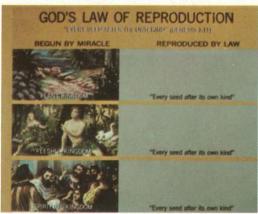












33. I	LET US	S REMI	MBER	that me	n often	depart
from	God's	way.	Just as	always,	many	modern
religi	ous lea	aders a	re not s	satisfied t	to follow	v God's
divin	e patte	rn. Tho	ugh the	y feel sind	cerely th	nat they
are a	ble to	improv	e on th	e pattern	, they a	re mis-
taken	1					

1 II Thessalonians 2:3; II Timothy 4:3, 4.

Q. Man cannot	on God's pattern.	IMPROVE
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34. JESUS IN LUKE 8 compares the Word of God to seed being sown in a field. When only the pure Word of God was planted by the apostles in the hearts of men, it produced only one harvest: united and undenominational Christians. All were members of the same NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH. Since God has ordered that every seed shall bring forth after its own kind, that same pure New Testament Seed will produce the same harvest of Christians today. By the same token, it cannot produce different denominations.

¹ Genesis 1:11.

Q. Different _____ cannot be produced by sowing the pure New Testament seed. DENOMINATIONS

35. BUT MANY PEOPLE ARE ASLEEP to the fact that much seed is being sown in the name of Christianity which is not the pure New Testament Teaching but a mixture containing human creeds, dogmas and philosophies. Jesus referred to those who sow bad seed as the enemy.¹ Indifferent to the Bible and ignorant of its teachings, some people who are even religiously inclined are unaware that preachers, priests and rabbis can and often do teach false doctrines. But Jesus warns, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15).

1 Matthew 13:24-30.

Q. Jesus warns man to beware of _____prophets.

FALSE

36. JESUS KNEW THAT GOD'S LAW OF reproduction demanded that every seed must bring forth after its own kind (Genesis 1:11). In the plant kingdom God created by miracle the first plants containing seed that they might reproduce by law. Also in the fleshly kingdom God made the first animals and the first human pair by miracle. He provided that through their seed they, too, should reproduce by law. THE SPIRITUAL KING-DOM, or CHURCH, also had a miraculous beginning when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles endowing them with the Word of God, the seed of THE KINGDOM. God also provided that through this seed Christians could be reproduced.

1 Acts 2:1-12.

Q. God has ordained that every _ must bring forth after its own kind.

SEED

37. GOD'S LAW OF REPRODUCTION applies in the plant kingdom. Every seed must bring forth after its own kind. When a seed is sown in a field it produces a new plant identical to the plant from which the seed came. We would not expect to plant wheat and reap corn. There are no exceptions to God's Law of reproduction in the plant kingdom.

¹ Genesis 1:11, 12.

Q. A new plant will always be ______
to the plant from which its seed came. IDENTICAL

38. GOD'S LAW OF REPRODUCTION also applies in the fleshly kingdom. Every seed must bring forth after its own kind. God said to Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful and multiply . . ." A human infant can come only from human parents. Nor would we expect eagles to produce canaries. There are no exceptions to God's Law of reproduction in the fleshly kingdom.

¹ Genesis 1:27, 28.

Q. There are no ______ to God's

law of reproduction. EXCEPTIONS

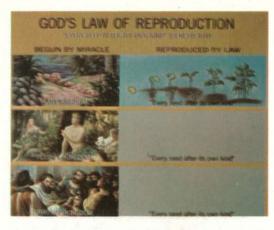
39. IN THE SPIRITUAL KINGDOM God's Law of reproduction also applies. Here again every seed must bring forth after its kind. When the apostles planted the pure Word of God in the hearts of men only Christians were produced. Those who were taught by the apostles believed in Christ, repented of their sins, confessed Christ as God's Son and were baptized for the remission of sins through Jesus' blood. Only in this same way can anyone today become a Christian, a member of Christ's NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH. This pure seed cannot bring forth differing denominations. The sowing of any religious doctrine which would produce differing denominations is a departure from God's way.²

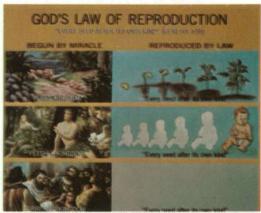
Q. Only ____ were produced when man obeyed the preaching of the apostles. CHRISTIANS

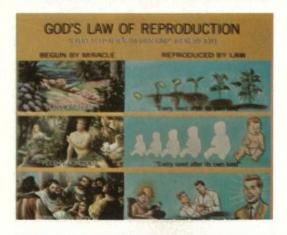
40. FOR SEVERAL YEARS after its beginning THE CHURCH reproduced after its own kind by sowing the pure seed, God's Word. Following God's one Divine Pattern, all Christians were united in faith, doctrine and practice. But even during this time God warned that "some shall depart from the faith . . ." (1 Timothy 4:1), and that they would turn away from the truth (2 Timothy 4:4). Jesus, Himself, had warned, "Beware of false teachers." Even in the days of Paul some were perverting or changing the gospel (Galatians 1:7).

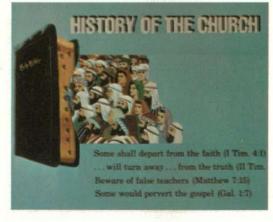
Q. All Christians were _____ when they followed God's one Divine Pattern.

UNITED

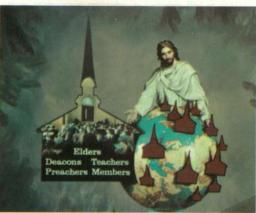


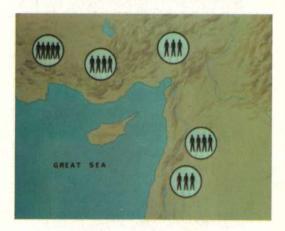














41. SOME DID BEGIN DEPARTING from the faith. The first major change was made in the manner the local churches were governed. The seed for this departure was planted by false teachers even in the days of the apostles. The change was gradual but by 150 A.D. history shows a definite change from God's original pattern of church government. However, a few Christians continued faithful to God and His Word.

¹ Phillip Schaff, History of the Christian Church. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. eerdmans, 1910, Vol. I, p. 493.

Q. The first major change was the manner in which the churches were _______. GOVERNED

42. ACCORDING TO GOD'S PATTERN in the **New Testament** Jesus Christ is the only Head of THE CHURCH both in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). Each congregation under Christ is ruled by elders who are ordained by God to oversee the local church of which they are members (Acts 20:28). Deacons, teachers, preachers and the other members work and worship together under the oversight of their elders (Hebrews 13:17). This is God's arrangement. Could mere man ever improve on God's plan?

¹ Nichols, Ibid., p. 26; ² Clement, The Epistle to the Corinthians. Quoted by Eusebius, The History of the Church, G. A. Williamson Translation. New York University Press, 1966

Q. Christ is the _____ head of THE CHURCH both in heaven and on earth.

ONLY

43. THIS CHART ILLUSTRATES how the early CHURCH was organized under Christ. Numerous local churches, represented by the circles, existed throughout the Roman Empire. Each local church was governed by a group of men appointed from among its members to guide and discipline the members of THE CHURCH. They were known as "elders" or "bishops". Elders were also called "pastors" or "shepherds" for they were to watch over their local church members with the same love and tenderness which characterizes a shepherd caring for his sheep. Still today, as then, the body of elders in a congregation is fully authorized of the Lord to fulfill these functions. According to God's Pattern one elder is never to be exalted above any of the other elders.

Q. According to God's plan each local church is to be governed by _____.

ELDERS

44. BUT SOON AFTER THE DEATH of the apostles, uninspired men began exalting one elder above the others and reserving for that elder alone the title of "bishop". From this seemingly innocent beginning, a dangerous trend developed which ultimately triggered a struggle for power among church leaders. In spite of Christ's Teaching, soon individual "bishops" were presiding over several congregations within a district which came to be known as a diocese.

¹ Schaff, Ibid., pp. 494-495. ² Kenneth S. Latourette, Christianity Through the Ages. New York: Harper & Row, Pub., 1965, p. 67. ³ Nichols, Ibid., pp. 42, 62.

Q. Men began to use the title of ______ to exalt one elder above the others.

BISHOP

45. EVENTUALLY, THESE SO-CALLED "Bishops" within certain regions started meeting together to discuss mutual and current problems. By the third century formal meetings were taking place attended by the bishops within a given Roman Province. These meetings, innocent at first, soon gave rise to the formulation of human rules and doctrinal statements to be used by the churches. These church laws, however, were doctrines and commandments of mere men, not those of Christ and His apostles.

¹ Schaff, Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 176-177. ² Eusebius, Ibid., pp. 233-234.

Q. Bishops began formulating human rules and _____ statements to be used by the churches.

DOCTRINAL

INFLUENTIAL

46. THEN CAME THE FIRST HUMAN CREED designed to govern all Christians. Known today as the Nicene Creed, it was written in 325 A.D. by bishops from the western portion of the Roman Empire when they met together for the first worldwide council at Nicaea, near Constantinople. This council was called together, not by divine authority, but simply by the Roman emperor, Constantine. These men assumed to themselves the authority to make and bind religious laws upon God's people, a power which belongs only to Jesus Christ, the only Head of THE CHURCH.

Q. The Nicene Council was called together
by _____ without Divine Authority. CONSTANTINE

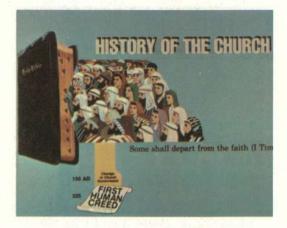
47. THE NICENE CREED was the first human creed to receive general acceptance by church leaders throughout the Roman Empire. Any "Christian" who would not subscribe to this creed was branded as a "heretic". Nevertheless, some remained faithful to God, rejecting creeds of men. Over a period of several generations others had become more or less accustomed to accepting human dogmas in keeping with the decisions of local and regional councils. Ultimately a world-wide council also was accepted as part of the changing organizational structure of the church. This was another departure from God's way which paved the path for the development of papal power some years later.

Q. Those who accepted local and regional councils ultimately approved a _____ WORLDWIDE

48. WHEN CONSTANTINE, THE ROMAN emperor, was arranging the council meeting at Nicaea, he did not at that time claim to be a Christian but a friend of Christianity. However, he was very influential in the church of his day. As emperor he gave orders for **the Bible** to be reproduced which resulted in the production of fifty handwritten copies. But Christianity had not always enjoyed governmental approval.

Q. Even though he was not a Christian Constantine was very _____ in the church of his day.

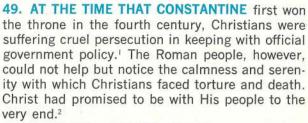
GREAT SEA











¹ Latourette, Ibid., p. 35; ² Matthew 28:19, 20.

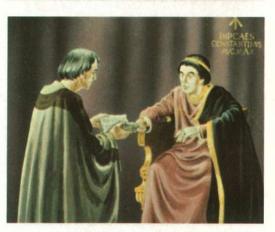
Q. Christians suffered cruel _______ before the reign of Constantine. PERSECUTION



50. CONSTANTINE SOON DECIDED that this powerful force, found only in Christianity, should be nurtured and befriended for the benefit of the Roman Empire. Accordingly, he issued the Edict of Milan in 313 which ended this particular persecution of Christians. Christianity was then tolerated as one of the many religions in the Roman Empire.

¹ Frederick A. Norwood, The Development of Modern Christianity Since 1500. New York: Abingdon Press, 1956, p. 11.

Q. Constantine _____ and nurtured
Christianity for the benefit of the Roman
Empire. BEFRIENDED



51. CONSTANTINE PROCEEDED to make Christianity popular both by subtle influences and inducements involving prestige and wealth. He appointed Christians to high offices, granted bishops of the church judicial power and abolished taxation of the churches and church leaders. Even after Constantine's death this interplay between Christianity and the empire continued. This was one of the great influences toward the ultimate development of a power structure in THE CHURCH years later similar to the power structure of the Roman Empire. This never would have taken place had men been satisfied with God's way.

¹ Rolland H. Bainton, The Church of Our Fathers. New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1944, p. 34; ² Latourette, Ibid., p. 36.

Q. Interplay between Christianity and the _____ continued even after Constantine died.

EMPIRE

52. ALTHOUGH CONSTANTINE WAS NOT baptized until just before he died, as Emperor he exercised tremendous influence over the church leaders. He was able to sway the Christianity of his day to serve his own purposes and policy.

¹ Paul Hutchinson and Winfred E. Garrison, 20 Centuries of Christianity. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1959, p. 146.

Q. Constantine influenced church
even before he was baptized.

LEADERS

53. THE POWER STRUCTURE OF THE ROMAN Empire was in the form of a pyramid with the emperor at the top. Advisors and governors served under the emperor and they, in turn, ruled over lesser authorities. The efficiency of this arrangement in governmental affairs had a great appeal

Q. Roman governmental power was structured in the form of a _____.

for the church authorities.

PYRAMID

54. COMPARING THE ROMAN CHURCH of some years later with the Roman Empire, one can see that the church government became almost identical in form to the old Roman government. Since Rome was the most prominent world center, succeeding Roman bishops enjoyed more and more prestige and power. Over the years the Roman bishop came to be acknowledged generally as the only universal ruler of the Roman Church. Ultimately the title of "pope" was used exclusively in reference to the exalted Roman bishop. This title was never used or worn by Christ or any of His apostles."

1 See Bower's, Lives of the Popes, vol. ii, p. 546 ed Lond, 1750.

Q. The title of ____ was used first by the exalted Roman Bishop.

POPE

55. IN THE CHART THE CATHOLIC CHURCH is dated from 606 A.D. This is the date when Boniface III took the title of universal bishop of the Catholic Church. The people were now looking to a mere man as "head of the church". Even among the apostles 600 years earlier there was not one who dared to claim such power. But where was CHRIST'S CHURCH during these years? Faithful Christians were scattered and usually found in minority groups. They were often referred to as "heretics".

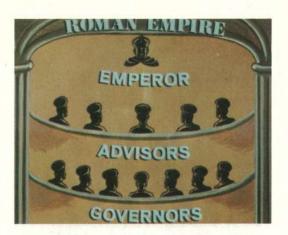
Q. None of the ______ ever claimed to be a universal bishop of THE CHURCH. APOSTLES

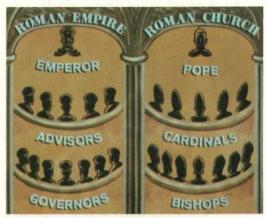
56. IN 1054 A DIVISION OCCURRED in the Catholic Church resulting in the formation of two groups: the Roman Church and the Greek Orthodox Church. Not only did these groups have differences between themselves, but both differed markedly from THE CHURCH which Christ established in the days of the apostles. The trend away from the original doctrine and organization as given by Jesus in the New Testament preceded the division and continued to characterize both groups. As the Roman Church evolved through the centuries, new doctrines, practices, and ordinances of uninspired men continued to appear.

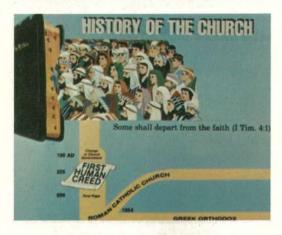
¹ Norwood, Ibid., p. 22.

Q. Both the Roman and the Greek churches differed markedly from THE CHURCH established by Christ in the days of the ______.

APOSTLES



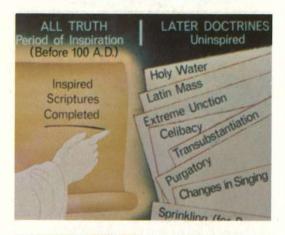












CHAPTER 4

OW the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

(II Timothy 4:1-3)

57. ONE OF THESE NEW ORDINANCES, the doctrine of penance, gave rise to the infamous "Sale of Indulgences" of the 16th century. The Roman priests promised the people that for certain donations to their church they would not have to suffer temporal punishment for their sins. The people were urged to purchase these privileges in advance. St. Peter's Basilica in Rome stands today as a reminder of the huge sums of money collected through these sales which were used in its construction.

1 Hutchinson and Garrison, Ibid., p. 196.

Q. People were urged to _____ an indulgence in advance.

PURCHASE

58. A SEPARATE PRIESTHOOD, which had characterized the Jewish religion, was adopted by Roman theologians. The Catholic priests came to be considered special representatives of God with the power to pronounce forgiveness or retention of sins. A person was required to confess his sins to a Catholic priest in order to receive forgiveness.2 However, the Bible teaches that every Christian is a priest, that Christ is the only Mediator between God and man,3 and that sins are to be confessed, not to a priest, but directly to God or mutually to one another.4

¹ Hebrews 7:5; ² Hutchinson and Garrison, Ibid., pp. 147-148; ³ 1 Timothy 2:5; ⁴ 1 John 1:7-9; James 5:16.

Q. The Bible teaches that sins are to be _ directly to God.

CONFESSED

ERRONEOUS

59. JESUS KEPT HIS PROMISE to deliver "all truth". During the period of inspiration, before 100 A.D., the inspired Scriptures were completed. But later doctrines were uninspired having been introduced by uninspired men.

A few examples are: the use of holy water; mass instead of the Lord's Supper;¹ extreme unction; celibacy,² which forbids marriage to the clergy;³ transubstantiation,⁴ which teaches that the bread and wine become the literal body and blood of Christ; purgatory;⁵ changes in congregational singing;⁶ and sprinkling⁷ instead of Bible baptism which is immersion.

Many Protestant churches later adopted these erroneous practices from the Catholic Church taking for granted that they had originated in the inspired Scriptures.

¹ Hutchinson and Garrison, Ibid., pp. 146-147; ² Nichols, Ibid., p. 41; ³ Norwood, Ibid., p. 20; ⁴ Norwood, Ibid., p. 46; ⁵ Hutchinson and Garrison, pp. 148-149; ⁶ Catholic Encyclopedia, Robert Appleton Co., N.Y. 1907. Vol. X pp. 651, 657; ⁷ Op. Cit. Vol. II pp. 261d-262a.

Q. Many churches have adopted

practices.

60. GOD'S WORD WARNS in 1 Timothy 4:1-3,

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the

Notice that the Holy Spirit himself brands the doctrines of "forbidding to marry" and "commanding to abstain from meats" as "doctrines of devils". The Scriptures, therefore, stand against the introduction of uninspired doctrines even though approved by those who were considered "church authorities"

Q. The Holy Spirit referred to some teachings as "doctrines of _____".

DEVILS

61. DURING THE MIDDLE AGES AND LATER, many incidents occurred in which copies of the Scriptures in the common languages of the people were confiscated and burned upon orders from the medieval Roman Church. History shows that while many Catholic leaders did not go this far, to say the least none of them actually encouraged the reading of the Bible by the people. Since these church authorities felt that they alone had the right to interpret the Scriptures for the people, they were not interested in putting the Bible in the hands of the common man.'

1 Norwood, Ibid., p. 31.

Q. The medieval Roman Church felt that it alone had a right to _____ the Scriptures.

INTERPRET

62. BUT MEN STILL CRAVED spiritual enlightenment through their own study of **the Bible**. This hunger for **God's Word** was almost universal. It shaped the culture and provided the background for the great religious Reformation of the 16th century which gave **the Bible** to the people in their own language.

¹ Latourette, Ibid., p. 158.

Q. The ______ for God's Word was almost universal.

HUNGER

of this rising opposition to its medieval policies. Many of those who pioneered in giving the Scriptures to the people in their own language were seized and imprisoned by order of the church authorities. Some were put to death. John Wycliffe, one of the first to translate the Bible into English, was excommunicated by Rome. In 1384 Wycliffe died a natural death but 44 years later, under Pope Martin V, Wycliffe's bones were dug up, burned and scattered over the River Swift to show the disdain of the Catholic Church for Wycliffe's works.

¹ Latourette, Ibid., p.151.

Q. Many Bible translators were seized and imprisoned by order of the _____ authorities.

CHURCH

64. ONLY A FEW COPIES OF THE SCRIPTURES in the English language were available at that time and the people who were fortunate enough to own a copy of the Bible treasured it highly. At the risk of incurring the anger of church authorities, they continued to study their Bibles in secret and discuss God's Word with others. As they read of God's way in the New Testament Scriptures, they saw clearly that many of the current practices of the Roman church were not ordained of God. Slowly but surely a great spiritual awakening emerged among the populace and the time for religious reform was ripe.

¹ Norwood, Ibid., pp. 134-135.

Q. Even at great risk the people continued

to _____ their Bibles.

STUDY

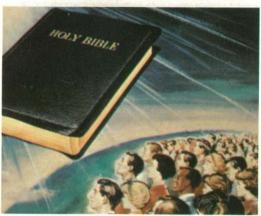




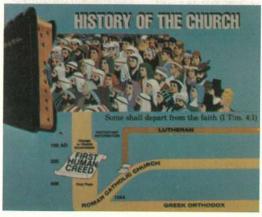












65. EARLY IN THE 16TH CENTURY, Martin Luther, a Catholic priest, led a sweeping movement to reform the Catholic Church. Luther bravely challenged Catholic scholars to a discussion of 95 different propositions in which Catholic doctrine directly conflicted with the Holy Scriptures. Though he was soon excommunicated from the Catholic Church, he continued his work which resulted in the great Protestant Reformation.

1 Norwood, Ibid., p. 43; 2 Latourette, Ibid., pp. 168-169.

Q. Luther believed that many Catholic doctrines directly _____ with the Holy Scriptures. CONFLICTED

66. DEFYING CHURCH AUTHORITIES, Luther translated the Bible into German, the language of his people. He believed that the Bible, not the church, was the source of authority and that every man should have the opportunity to read it for himself. His efforts at reform were a major beginning in a return to the Bible. While we admire Luther's dedication and bravery, we must not forget that his major purpose was not so much to restore the original NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH as it was to reform the existing Catholic Church. Neither did Luther intend to begin a new church.

¹ Latourette, Ibid., p. 172; ² Norwood, Ibid., p. 35; ³ Hutchinson and Garrison, Ibid., p. 199.

Q. Luther believed that the source of authority was the _____, not the church.

BIBLE

67. HOWEVER, LUTHER AND HIS FOLLOWERS soon were called upon to produce a formal statement of Luther's teachings. Adopted in 1530, this statement is known as the "Augsburg Confession". After Luther's death, the followers continued to circulate his teachings. Many people who had become dissatisfied with the tyranny of the priesthood eagerly embraced this new creed.

1 Norwood, Ibid., pp. 52-53.

Q. Luther's followers continued to
his teachings after his death. CIRCULATE

68. A NEW ERA HAD BEGUN known to history as the Protestant Reformation. Because Luther's followers protested against unfair advantages given to the Catholics by the German rulers, they came to be referred to as "Protestants". All Protestant churches are less than 500 years old. Like the Catholic Church itself, they came into being hundreds of years after Jesus had established HIS CHURCH.

¹ Norwood, Ibid., p. 52.

Q. Jesus established HIS CHURCH hundreds of years before Catholic or churches existed.

PROTESTANT

69. AS WOULD BE EXPECTED, Luther's followers soon came to refer to themselves as "Lutherans". The new movement crystalized before the close of the 16th century into a distinct religious organization known as the "Lutheran Church". This development contradicted the teachings of Luther himself. Because of principles he had learned from the New Testament, Luther had pleaded with his people not to call themselves "Lutherans" but only "Christians".

1 Norwood, Ibid., p. 50.

Q. In calling themselves "Lutherans",
Luther's followers ______ the
teachings of Luther himself. CONTRADICTED

70. THE LUTHERANS REJECTED many false teachings of the Roman Church and returned nearer to God's way, the Scriptural pattern for THE CHURCH found in the New Testament. However, they still retained many Catholic traditions and doctrines which Luther was too cautious to reject, even though they were not found in the New Testament. Protestantism, like Catholicism, was a product of human history rather than the teachings of Jesus and His apostles.

1 Norwood, Ibid., p. 50.

Q. Luther was too cautious to reject many of the _____ traditions and doctrines.

CATHOLIC

71. THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH evolved in Scotland from a reformation movement begun earlier in Switzerland by John Calvin. Having fled from France to Switzerland to escape Roman persecution, Calvin, "the fiery reformer," published his famous "Institutes of the Christian Religion" in 1536 as a defense of Protestantism in France.² Calvin's followers in Switzerland were known as the "Reformed Church". But, as the movement developed in Scotland, it came to be known as the Presbyterian Church.

1 Norwood, Ibid., p. 63; 2 Norwood, Ibid., p. 57.

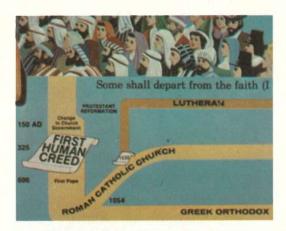
Q. Both the Reformed Church and the

Church developed among
the followers of John Calvin. PRESBYTERIAN

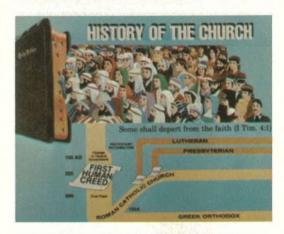
72. BOTH MARTIN LUTHER AND JOHN CALVIN were brave men of deep convictions. Their search for truth has blessed the world. Regrettably, their followers built denominations around their names and doctrines instead of following their search for truth and a complete return to God's way.

Q. The search for _____ by Luther and Calvin has blessed the world.

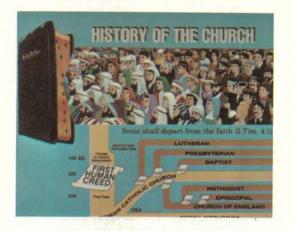
TRUTH



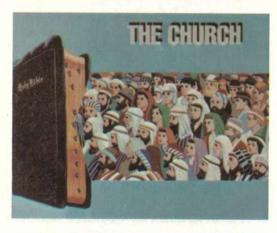


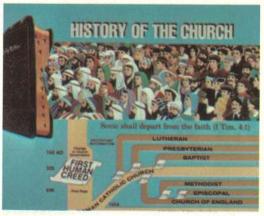












73. PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS began to multiply rapidly. More and more people were being divided religiously as one denomination sprang from another. Instead of going back to God's way in the Bible so that all might be one body, each denomination stressed its own teachings. Each was named either after its founder or a particular doctrine or some religious practice; but none of the denominational names gave glory to Christ who had died for THE CHURCH. It is possible to join one or more denominations of men today without ever accepting God's saving grace and without ever becoming a member of CHRIST'S CHURCH. It does make a difference to which church we belong regardless of how sincere we may be.

Q. It does make a ______ to which church sincere people belong.

DIFFERENCE

74. UNDER HENRY VIII THE CHURCH OF England was declared as a separate body from the Roman Church in 1534. In 1552 this new church issued an official creed known as the "Forty-two Articles" (later the "Thirty-nine Articles"). Many churches today, including the Methodist Church (1739)² and the Protestant Episcopal Church (1789),³ are an outgrowth of the Church of England. One of the prominent groups which began in opposition to the Church of England is the "Baptist Church".⁴ The first recognizable Baptist Church was established in Amsterdam, Holland early in the 17th century. The first permanent Baptist Church on English soil dates from 1611.⁵

¹ Norwood, Ibid., p. 74; ² Op. Cit., pp. 128-129; ³ Op. Cit., pp. 166-167; ⁴ Op. Cit., pp. 103-104; ⁵ Op. Cit., p. 105.

Q. The Church of England was declared as a separate body from the ______Church by Henry VIII.

ROMAN

75. TODAY MEN FIND IT EASY to forget that Jesus built HIS CHURCH over 1900 years ago exactly as He wanted it. We can read in the New Testament of CHRIST'S CHURCH which existed hundreds of years before Catholic and Protestant churches came into existence. When the Word of God, the pure seed, is planted today it will produce only Christians united in the ONE CHURCH established by Christ Himself.

Q. When the pure seed, the Word of God, is planted, it will produce only ______. CHRISTIANS

76. HOWEVER, WE HAVE SEEN that when doctrines of men are mixed with the pure "seed", various denominations have resulted until today they number over 300. We have seen also that it is entirely possible for a person to join one of these denominations by observing its distinctive rules of admission without ever receiving God's saving grace through obedience to Christ Himself. Is it any wonder, then, that sincere religious leaders among the various denominations ultimately became dissatisfied with all this religious confusion; and that they began turning back from denominationalism to the pure doctrine of Christ?

Q. Denominations result when the pure seed is mixed with the _____ of men. DOCTRINES

77. THOUGH THESE MEN LIVED FAR APART and were at first unknown to each other, they shared a common purpose. Their goal was neither to establish another denomination nor to reform one already existing, but to reproduce THE CHURCH of the New Testament exactly as it was in the days of the apostles. Unlike Luther, Calvin and Wesley, whose work resulted in new denominations, these men merely pointed people to the New Testament Scriptures and THE ORIGINAL CHURCH which Jesus built.

Q. By following the New Testament the ORIGINAL CHURCH which _____ built can be reproduced.

JESUS

78. EVEN AMONG RELIGIOUSLY DIVIDED people, there was a common respect for the Bible as the Word of God. Here was the only ground upon which all religious people could be united under Christ. Didn't they all accept the Bible as God's Word? Didn't they all believe in the same God? The sin of religious division, therefore, arose, not from the Bible, but from denominational names, creeds and barriers erected by men. The Bible itself, the only hope for religious unity, was being ignored for the most part.

Q. The sin of religious _____ did not arise from the Bible.

DIVISION

79. DIVISION CONTINUED TO FLOURISH because most people gave allegiance to their church manuals and creed books rather than to the Scriptures as final authority. This caused people to cling to those portions of the Bible which seemed to them to support their own particular denominational creeds. Many showed greater loyalty to their denomination than they showed to God, Himself. But sincere men seeking to follow Christ, began to remember Jesus' words, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." And, "every plant which my heavenly father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matthew 15:9, 13).

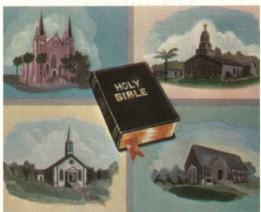
Q. When the Scriptures are not accepted as final _____ division will continue. AUTHORITY

80. SINCERE RELIGIOUS LEADERS in different denominations began to see that if denominational creeds, names and practices were discarded, their religious differences would soon melt away. By once again enthroning God's word as supreme authority, Christians can be united in the LORD'S CHURCH as in the days of the apostles. Not only is this plea reasonable, but more important, it is the plea of Christ our Savior.

Q. It is Christ's plea that all Christians be in one ______.

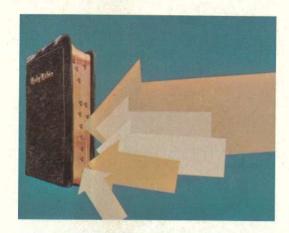
CHURCH

















81. IT IS STILL POSSIBLE for all those who truly love Christ to go back behind all denominationalism to Jesus, to His cross and to THE CHURCH which He established centuries before any of the Catholic or Protestant denominations existed. This Bible plea does not require that any person bow to the whims of any man or religious group. Each individual must willingly lay aside denominational names, creeds, and practices which are foreign to the Bible, and with courage and freedom from men's teaching, return to God's way as revealed in the New Testament.

Q. It is still possible to go back behind all denominationalism to Christ's

CHURCH

82. THROUGH HIS TEACHING THE LORD JESUS today still is pointing all men to God's inspired Writings, the Bible. Have you ever wondered how Jesus would worship if He were on earth today? Would He really feel comfortable in the midst of all the religious division? Would he feel at home in a human denomination where man-made creeds, names and doctrines are being taught and honored? How could Jesus approve of these things now which are so foreign to the life He lived and the teaching He left for man to follow?

Q. Jesus is still pointing all men to the ______, God's inspired writings.

BIBLE

83. REMEMBER, WHEN HIS CRUEL DEATH on the cross was imminent, Jesus poured out His soul in prayer to His Father. "Father . . . neither pray I for these (apostles) alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one . . . that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me" (John 17:20, 21). Jesus' prayer for unity among believers was answered during the days of the apostles when all Christians belonged to the same church. Christ's prayer can be answered again today when men forsake all human elements in religion and return completely to God's way revealed in the New Testament.

Q. Among His last requests on earth, Jesus prayed for _____ among believers.

UNITY

84. OUR BIBLE SURVEY ENDS with this significant thought. All over the world today people in great numbers are feeling the impact of the Savior's prayer for unity and the Bible plea for pure New Testament Christianity. In nation after nation people are studying the New Testament for themselves. Throwing off the shackles of denominationalism and various world religions, men of all nations are becoming members of the ONE BODY OF CHRIST. Joining hands and hearts, they worship and work for the Lord according to God's way. Let God's word about HIS CHURCH take your hand and lead you into it. You, too, will find forgiveness of sin, peace of heart, communion with God and the promise of eternal life.

Q. Men of all nations are becoming members of the one body of ______.

CHRIST