

A Study on “The Church” that Jesus Built

Here are some of the questions that we will discuss in this study:

1. Was the church that Jesus built a denomination?
2. How many churches did Jesus build?
3. Is this a true statement? Join the church of your choice.
4. It does not make any difference which church we belong to, just as long as we are sincere. Is this true?
5. Some say it does not make any difference what name we put on the temple of God, because we are just traveling on different roads, but they all lead to the same place, which is called heaven. Is this statement true?

First, we need to define the word denomination. These definitions are taken from The New World Dictionary. Denomination means “different units in a system.” Now what is the meaning of the word system? It means a set, or an arrangement of things so related or connected as to form a unity or an organic whole; a set of facts, principles or rules in a regular, orderly form, so as to show a logical plan.

Now let’s look at the word denominationalism. It means “a division into denominations.” After reading these definitions, would the Church that Jesus built be called a “system” or would it be called a denomination? In answering this question we must remember what the meaning of the word system is. It means a “united whole.” The word denomination means “different units which make up a whole.”

There are some very important guidelines we must go by if we are going to answer this question truthfully:

1. We must have an open mind. Question: what does that mean? It means we are willing to let Rom. 3:4 be our number one guide in all of our religious conclusions. This verse says, “Let God be true and every man a liar” (K.J.V).
2. We must have a burning desire in our hearts for truth.
3. We must note the context in which each verse is written.
4. All scriptures must harmonize or we do not have the truth. In Titus 1:2 we read, “God cannot lie.” In Heb. 6:18 we read, “It is impossible for God to lie.” This means that God’s word will never change. We read in Heb. 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.”
5. “We must search the scriptures daily so we can know what is truth.” (Acts 17:11)

Now, back to our question: According to the New World Dictionary, the church that Jesus built would be a system, because it is a united whole. Denomination is not a united whole; it is a divided system. Now let’s go to the most important source of information, which is God’s word, and see if we can find the answer to our question. Let’s go to 1Cor. 1:10 and read, “Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined

together in the same mind and in the same judgment. **Question:** did we hear how God answered our question for us? He said let there be no divisions among you and to be perfectly joined together.

We now know how the dictionary answered our question and we also know how God answered our question. Do we still have an open mind? If we do, we will have no problem in understanding that God does not approve of His Church being divided into different groups, wearing different names and refusing to be joined together.

Why is man so gullible in life, that he will choose to put more importance on what man says than on what the word of God says. We read in John 12:48 where Jesus said “The words that I have spoken will judge us on the last day.” In what is called Christianity today, it seems that there are very few who take the word of God seriously. How do we know this? Because today, there are over two thousand different churches in the world, and we have just read where God said, “Let there be no division among you.”

In Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, the first fault that he discusses with the church is denominationalism. We need to see in the first nine verses of Chapter One how many times Paul uses the name of Christ. He uses it nine times. **Question:** why do we suppose that he did this? He wants the members of the Church to see beyond any shadow of doubt that they need to wear the name of Christ above all other names. Note in verse one – Paul is an apostle of Christ; verse two – we are sanctified in Christ; verse three – Peace came by Christ; verse four – Grace came by Christ; verses five and six – we are enriched in all knowledge by Christ; verse 7 – All gifts come by Christ; verse eight – we are confirmed until the end by Christ; and verse nine – we are called to fellowship by Christ. We must not miss what Paul’s purpose was in pointing out the importance of Christ to the members of the Corinthian Church. They needed to be able to see for themselves who it was that had done all of these very important things. For them it was Christ, it was not done by man. Now they should have no problem in understanding what Paul was going to teach them on how to correct the fault that had developed in their church. And that problem was in the wearing of men’s names instead of wearing Christ’s name. It seems that they did not have any problem thereafter in understanding, which name the church should wear, and that was Christ.

Question: if the church at Corinth had no problem in understanding this after Paul explained it to them, then why should we have a problem with it? Could it be that we do not believe that God really meant it when He said, “My words will judge us on the last day.” And what were His words on the subject that we are studying? “Let there be no division among you.” We all know that the religious world of today has not kept this command from God. In verse 10, which we have just read, it says’ “Let there be no dividing up in groups among you.” In verses 11-12 He says, “You have already started having contentions among you.” (which means quarrelling and arguing had already begun).

Also in verse 12, Paul names the four different groups that had formed. They were:

1. Paul’s group
2. Apollo’s group

3. Cephas's group
4. Christ's group

In verse 13 Paul gives them a guide to follow in determining which one of the four groups they should follow. The first guideline that he gives is, "Is Christ divided?"

The second guideline is, "Who was crucified for you?" The third guideline is, "whose name were you baptized in?" Notice the wisdom that Paul uses in these guidelines. The first question he asked them, and then he is going to let them decide for themselves what they are really doing by dividing up into groups. They were actually showing by their own actions that Christ was divided, and they were, by their conduct, cutting Christ up into parts. So Paul let them condemn their own actions without him having to do it. Notice – isn't this a wonderful way to teach? This is the way that every teacher will teach if they truly love the ones they are teaching.

Question: Do we believe that if these Christians chose not to do what Paul had asked of them to do and just kept on wearing men's names, would they have been pleasing unto God? Another question: how do we get ourselves to understand the seriousness of God's word when it is written in such a way that no one who can read will misunderstand what God is teaching here? WE can read in 1John 2:3-4 just how plainly God can speak, "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that sayeth I know Him and keepeth not His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him." We can read this and still have the choice to say I just do not believe it, and refuse to change our way of thinking on this subject. Our prayer must be, every time that we open up our bibles to read or study, that we say dear God, give me an open mind as I read and study your word, that I may understand what is truth and a desire to practice it.

I would like to give an example of a church that uses a man's name to identify their church. The man's name is Martin Luther. I want to quickly say that Martin Luther was the greatest church reformer who ever lived. Please note his dying words. He told his followers, "do not call yourselves Lutherans; call yourselves Christians. Now I want to use the second and third guidelines that Paul gave in 1Cor. 1:13 to show the church at Corinth how to tell what name the church was to follow. Number two guideline was who was crucified for you? Number three was, "In whose name were you baptized in?" Now let's use these two guidelines on the *Lutheran Church* and then we would know without a shadow of a doubt whether it would be all right to wear the name "Lutheran Church". We need to listen with an open mind to what the Apostle has to say on this serious matter. Was Martin Luther crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Martin Luther? The correct answer to these questions would be "no". Then Paul leaves it up to his readers to make the correct decision, on what name they should wear. Using Martin's Luther's name here in no way belittles his name, because he had absolutely nothing to do with his followers wearing his name. This example should cause every one of us to give some serious consideration to the teachings of the Apostle Paul on this subject. Of what name we should wear in the group where we are worshipping. **Question:** After studying these verses in first Corinthians, how can we still say there is nothing in the name we wear? Dear God, help us in our understanding of your word.

Division in the church is such a serious matter that the Holy Spirit has Paul use the first four chapters on this subject. In 1Cor. 3:21-23 Paul says, “Therefore let no man glory in man. For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life or death or things present, or things to come; all are yours and you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” Let’s remember what we learned in 1Cor. 1:12 – they were following godly men and wearing their names. Now we know why Paul would say in these verses to not glory in men’s names, but you should glory in the name of Christ, because He was the one who was crucified for you and He was the one in whose name you were baptized in, and God is His Father.

We have a movement beginning in some Church’s of Christ today where some have decided to remove the name of Christ from their church buildings. They say the reason for this is that the name “Church of Christ” is offensive to so many people that it is really a hindrance in getting the attendance up. **Question:** Does this make any sense to you? How are we going to bring people to Christ when we are ashamed of His name? The Apostle Paul said in Rom. 1:16. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the Power of God unto salvation to everyone who believeth.” We also read in Acts 4:12 where it says, “Neither is there salvation in any other name.” **Question:** how could God ever make two verses any plainer than He has made these two? Another question: what are these people saying about these two verses, who have taken the name of Christ from their buildings? The answer rings out loud and clear. They do not believe what God says in these verses. Please think seriously about this statement. If we really loved the souls of lost people, would we remove the name of the only one who can save the lost from our church buildings? Now let’s all think about this. What motive could there be in anyone’s heart who would do this? The verses that we have just read show very plainly that soul saving is not the motive. How do we know that? Because they have chosen to remove the name of the only source of salvation from their church building, and that source is Jesus Christ.

Question: what other motives does that leave? We all know what the answer is, don’t we? All we have to do is just to use a little of our common sense and we will know what their true motive is. What about the two words “attendance” and “popularity”? This movement must be stopped before Christ Church becomes just another denomination. Now let’s remember what the meaning of the word denomination is. It is different units in a system. We have already studied where Paul teaches the Christians at Corinth that Christ’s Church is not a unit in a system. It is the system and there is no other system.

Now, let’s read some verses of scripture that back up what Paul teaches. We read in Eph. 1:22-23, “And He hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His Body.” Col. 1:18 says, “He is the head of the body, the church.” Col. 1:24 says, “Now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His body’s sake, which is the Church.” **Question:** would you agree, from these three verses, that the body and the church are the same thing?

Now, if we can find just one verse of scripture that says there is just one body or there is just one church, wouldn’t that help to prove that what Paul was teaching in the church at Corinth was the truth? Let’s see what Eph. 4:4 says; “There is one body.” Some will say we

need more than one verse to prove there is only one church. We read in Col. 3:15, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body and be ye thankful.” In 1Cor. 12:12 we read three times where it says there is one body in one verse. Let’s read it, “For as the body is one and hath many members, and all are members of that one body, being many are one body, so also is Christ.” Now, does that leave any doubt that Christ only built one church? Let’s see what He says in Matt. 16:18, “And I say unto you that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Question: how many churches did Jesus say that He was going to build? He said “My Church”, which is singular. Notice that He did not say Churches.

Question: is it scriptural to say join the church of your choice? If this is a true saying, then the Bible must say it also. This saying cannot be found in the Bible. Then who started this saying? There is only one source left and that is man. Acts 2:47 tells us exactly how we get into the Church. Notice that this is what God says. We read, “Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved.”

Now what should we have learned from this verse? We should have learned that we cannot join the church of our choice, that God adds us to the church. Something else that we should learn from this verse is that there was only one church for God to add people to. How do we know that? Because this verse says “the church”, which is very singular in meaning. We have over fifty times in the New Testament where Christ’s church is called “the church”. Question: How can we be sure that “the church” means Christ’s church? Because it is the only church that we can read about in the Bible. Also, church history tells us that it was 606 AD before there was another church, and it was started by the Roman Empire.

It is amazing how many people there are who absolutely refuse to follow the instructions of God. Although God warns us in the last few verses of the Bible that if we add to or take away from its words, our name will be taken out of the book of life. It seems that these kinds of verses have lost all meaning for many of us. Even Paul says to the Church in Galatia in Gal. 1:6, “I marvel that you are so soon removed from the teachings of Christ to another teaching. There is no other teaching but the one that I taught you.” Paul goes on to say, “If an angel from Heaven comes and teaches you anything that I have not taught you, do not believe a word of it.”(Gal. 1:8-9)

All of us who have read the Bible know that from the time God created man, that man on a regular basis departs from God’s word. It is still true today. Man has built over 2,000 different churches, all teaching different doctrines and wearing different names, all worshiping in separate buildings, doing exactly what Paul has condemned in many verses in the New Testament. There is not a stronger message in the New Testament then to those who refuse to have a love for the truth than what we read in 2Thess. 2:11-12. Before we read these verses let’s remember who these verses were written to. They were written to the church in Thessalonica. Paul writes, “For this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth.” These verses are so strong in words of condemnation to the Christian who refused to obey

the truth after he had read it, or who has had the truth taught to him. Why is it that we can live a lifetime in the church and never hear these scriptures read to us? If one thing is for sure, it is that there is a reason. If we will spend some of our time in thinking about this question, we will find the answer. It's hard to believe what the attendance and our popularity will cause us to do. Let all of us, always, be aware of what pride will do to us.

Paul gives all of us some great advice in 2Cor. 13:5. He says for us to examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith, and for us to prove our own selves. "Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be a reprobate." What Paul wants us to be aware of is this: Don't become lovers of our selves and forget about who it was that made us to be successful. If we do this it will really help us to stay strong in our faith, and in our walk with God, and it will also keep our pride in check.

In chapter three of First Corinthians, Paul deals exclusively with the dangers that division can cause in the body of Christ. Wearing men's names is a major cause of division in Christ's church. Paul first brought up this subject in 1Cor. 1:10-13, and he gets more vocal on this subject as he continues to write. His writings become so plain that we would need help to keep us from understanding it. It seems this would be a good time to say that Paul was guided by the Holy Spirit as he writes these verses. Let's just read it now, 2Tim. 3:16.

All scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (verse 17), that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Jesus said in John 17:17, "Sanctify them through the truth, thy word is truth." Jesus also said in John 8:31-32, "If you continue in my word then you are my disciple indeed, and you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." These verses are used here to show us that God's word is the absolute truth—there is no other truth. In Rom. 3:4 we read, "Let God be true and every man a liar. If all men would let these verses be our only guide for instruction in righteousness, there would be no such thing as denominations, because God's inspired word says, "Let there be no division among you."

The Holy Spirit knows how important this subject is, that every verse in this third chapter of Corinthian is on wearing the name of Christ, and not wearing the names of men or any other name but Christ. Now let's pay close attention to what the Holy Spirit of God says in 1Cor. 3:16-17, "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Holy Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is Holy, which temple you are." To know exactly what Paul is teaching here we must put them in the context in which they were written. **Question:** what is the subject that Paul has been discussing in this whole chapter? If we don't know then we need to stop reading this lesson right now and read the third chapter.

Now after we have read it, what is the subject that Paul is teaching on? He is teaching that Christians should never call their group by some man's name, but they must call their group by the name of the one who was crucified for you, the one in whose name you were baptized in; we all know that would be the name of Christ.

There are not any two verses in the Bible that are more important concerning the church than these two. The majority of Christians today have no idea what they say, nor the meaning of them. **Question:** what is the first important thing that Paul wants to teach us? Answer: When anyone obeys the gospel of Christ they become at that moment a temple of God. Who does Paul say dwells in that temple? It is the Holy Spirit. Now what we must learn from this 16th verse is, we do not own this temple. We once owned it, but not any more. Why? Let's read 1Cor. 6:19-20, "Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which you have of God." And you are not your own. "For you are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." **Question:** when did we lose ownership of our bodies? When we obeyed the gospel of Christ. **Question:** what did it cost Christ to buy us? It cost Him His blood. Another question: What condition were we in before Christ bought us? Eph. 2:12, "At that time we were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

We could not do enough good works to save ourselves. So we sold ourselves to Christ. Just look at us now; we are no longer in the bondage of sin. We are the temple of God. We have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. We are glad to wear the name of our new owner, which is Christ. We are now ready to discuss verse 17. This verse says, "If any man defiles the temple of God, him will God destroy." The most serious question that we can ask right now is, in the context of what we have been studying, how could man defile His temple, which now belongs to Christ? In view of the three chapters that we have been studying, the only possible way that I can see for man to defile his temple of God is by wearing the names of man instead of wearing the name of Christ.

Question: Why would anyone want to wear a man's name on his bodily temple, when it was Christ who bought and paid for him with his own blood? That would definitely be an abomination unto God's temple. Why can't we all see that? It is not difficult to understand. We need to put ourselves in God's place, and we would have no problem understanding why God would say, "If any man defiles my temple, I will destroy him." In 2Cor. 6:16, "For you are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people."

Notice how elated God is when He says, We are His Temple, "So I am dwelling in you and walking with you, and I am your God and you are my children." And then we go and join ourselves to some group and wear the name of some man. Can we just imagine how God must feel when we do this? Now let's read in Acts 17:24, "God made the world and all things therein, saying that He is the Lord of heaven and earth, and dwelleth not in the temple made with men's hands." What can we learn from this verse that will help us to understand the teaching of Paul on this subject of wearing men's names on the temple of God. In this verse God makes it just as plain as words can make it. He says I will not dwell in temples made with men's hands.

Question: Who is it that has built all of these other temples that men worship in? The answer is very simple; it was man who built them and we just read where God said, I would not dwell in them. So, the next time someone tells us that it does not make any difference which group we worship with, just so we are sincere, let's not remain silent, let's take a

stand for truth. How are others going to know what is truth if we refuse to share the truth with them. I would like to share with us how this movement of accepting everyone's religion is spreading so fast.

1. Religious people, for the most part, do not spend enough of their time studying the Bible. We need to say something here about reading and studying our Bibles. If we do not read and study with an open mind, and also realize the importance of harmonizing the scriptures, we will never understand what is truth. God is pleased with us when we do this. We read in Acts 17:11, "these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so."

Now let's read the verses of scripture that have caused this false doctrine to spread so fast. It is found in Rom. 10:9-13, "that thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart men believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Now can we see what these verses teach if we do not study the rest of the verses in the New Testament on God's full plan of salvation. These verses are all that we will hear from those who believe that all people who call upon the name of Jesus shall be saved. Can we see what the final results of this kind of teaching will produce? It will produce the doctrine that it does not matter which church you belong to, just as long as you have called upon the name of the Lord. You are saved, and then you join the church of your choice. Isn't this a simple doctrine to believe? It has a good, comfortable feeling about it. So what is wrong with it? It does not harmonize with all the other scriptures on the salvation of the soul. Now let's prove what I have just said is true. Rom. 10:13 says, "All who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Now let's read Matt. 7:21, "Jesus said not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." Now what do we have here? We have Paul saying one thing and Jesus saying something completely different. **Question:** who are we going to believe? There is one thing that we should all know – there are no contradictions in the Bible. So what is the sensible thing to do? Answer: We should open up our New Testament and start reading in the first chapter of Matthew and read through the book of Revelation. As we read we need to have a pencil and paper and write down every verse that pertains to the salvation of man.

When we do this we will find out what it means in Rom. 10:13 where it says, "Whosoever calleth upon the name of Jesus shall be saved." Now, let's read all of verse twenty-one in Matt. 7:21. Jesus says, "Not everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father." Now we know for sure what it means to call upon the name of the Lord. Jesus says it means those who doeth the will of the Father, which is in Heaven. Now we know beyond any shadow of doubt what it means to call upon the name of the Lord, and that is we must do the will of the Father. So the next question should be, what is the will of the Father pertaining to salvation? Let's start in Matt. 28:19, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of

the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” We then read in Mark 16:16 where Jesus says, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Then we can read in Luke 13:3 where Jesus says, “Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.” We also read in Matt. 10:32-33 where Jesus says, “whosoever confesses me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before man, him will I also deny before My Father which is in Heaven.”

Two very important verses to read are found in Matt. 16:18-19. Jesus said, “Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.”

I hope we have all understood what Jesus was really saying to Peter. He is saying Peter, I am giving unto you the keys to the entrance into the church, and what ever you say will be bound on earth and also bound in Heaven. This means that whatever Peter says will last as long as there is time on this earth, and there will never be a man on this earth, and there will never be anyone in heaven who will have the power to change it. We have this assurance from God. Heb. 6:18 says it is impossible for God to lie. In Tit. 1:2, Paul says God cannot lie.

It is very important for us to read Acts, chapter two, and see what Peter told the multitude of people who heard him preach the first gospel sermon after Jesus went back to Heaven and revealed unto them the key that Jesus gave to him to open the door of the church. We can read what it was in Acts 2:37-38. They *believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God*. Peter told them that they must repent of their sins and be baptized for the remission of their sins, and then Peter told them that when they had done this, they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Now let’s remember what Jesus said to Peter, “I have given unto you the keys to the church, and whatever you say the key is will be forever bound on earth and in heaven. Please look at what man has attempted to do. He has made all kinds of keys. We have God’s word that man-made keys will never open the door to Christ’ Church. The Apostle Paul says in Gal. 1:8, “If an angel brings you another key it will not open the door to Christ’s Church.” Jesus says, “the blind will lead the blind and they both will fall into the ditch together.” (Matt. 15:14) We also read in Matt. 15:13 where Jesus says, “Every plant that my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.” **Question:** what does the word plant mean? It comes from a Greek word that means doctrine. There are over 2,000 different religious doctrines in the world today. God planted only one Gal. 1:8-9. So it is everyone’s responsibility to study their Bibles and find out which doctrine did God plant. The purpose of this lesson is to be a help to us while we are searching the scriptures for the truth. We can read the entire New Testament in less than twenty-four hours. If we will read and study with an open mind, we will have no problem in determining what is truth concerning the subject we have been studying.

In conclusion, before you become too angry with me, remember now who wrote the three

chapters that we have been studying. It was the Apostle Paul. **Question:** where did he get these words from? Let's read in Gal. 1:11-12, "But I certify to you brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but it came by the Revelation of Jesus Christ."

Now let's notice what most people's reactions were when they heard the words of Jesus Christ as they were revealed to them through the mouth of the Apostle Paul. Their reactions led Paul to write in Gal. 4:16, "Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"

It is a proven fact by the word of God that His words will cause people either to repent and obey or it will offend people and cause all kinds of reactions, even to bodily harm. Let's read in Gal. 6:17, where Paul said, "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Also, Paul writes in 2Cor. 11:23-28, "In strife above measure, in prison more frequent, in death often, five times received I forty stripes save one; three times I have been beaten with rods and many other things."

Paul had a very strong feeling about preaching the exact words that Jesus Christ had told him face to face. He expressed his feelings in 1Cor. 9:16 when he said, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." Every preacher and teacher of God's word must have this same feeling that Paul had, and that is woe unto me if I preach not the gospel. We should stop preaching and teaching immediately if we don't have this same attitude that Paul had.

I would like to share a verse that will really help us in making up our minds on the seriousness that goes along with preaching and teaching God's word. It is found in James 3:1. James says, "My brethren, be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." I don't know what this means to you. I only know what it means to me. Here is what it means to me. If I don't preach and teach the truth, then I could be responsible for many souls being lost. If this be true, then no wonder James would say that we who are teachers and preachers will receive the greater condemnation. I think we all know what that word condemnation means. It means we are lost.

If we really believe what James is saying here, then we will never be guilty of taking verses out of context, in which they are written to prove our points without ever making any effort to harmonize other verses on the same subject. Do you know why we are sometimes guilty of doing this? One reason could be we have forgotten the value that God has placed upon each soul. Another reason could be we have forgotten the importance that God places on the truth (John 8:32). Another reason could be that we are placing more importance on our popularity than we are on teaching the truth. Sometimes we can become guilty in promoting our own agendas, rather than promoting God's agenda.

I read in the Readers Digest (Jan. 6-06) where there are over ten thousand different religious groups in the world today. There are some Churches of Christ who have started teaching and preaching that we should start unifying with the different denominational churches. Please notice just how broad this statement is. This would include the Buddhists, the Muslims, the Jehovah Witnesses, the Mormons and on and on. **Question:** How can we do this in keeping with scripture when Gal. 1:6-9 says there is but one gospel and if anyone,

or if an angel from Heaven, preaches any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you –let him be accursed. Now God leaves it up to us to read these verses and to make up our own minds what is the truth that is being brought here by the Holy Spirit in these verses.

I am going to close this discussion by encouraging us to read 2John 10-11, “If there come any unto you and bring not the doctrine of Christ, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God’s speed. For he that biddeth them God’s speed is a partaker of his evil deeds.” God expects all of us who are His children to be smart enough to understand these verses. If we don’t believe this statement is true, then turn to Isaiah 35:8 and read it.

Thank you for reading this discussion.
In Christian Love,
Herb Trout