

# Where Did They All Come From? A History of the Churches

Adam Willingham



## INTRODUCTION

- ▶ Countless denominations and doctrines exist today
  - ◆ How did this come about?
  - ◆ Is that what God desires?
  - ◆ Does it matter?

## NECESSITY OF UNITY

- ▶ Jesus said He would build His church -**Matt. 16:18**
- ▶ Jesus prayed for unity among believers -**John 17:17-21**
  - ◆ The Word of God: unity based on truth
- ▶ Division is a sin -**1 Cor. 1:10**
- ▶ Scripture is from God and is all-sufficient -**2 Tim. 3:16-17**
- ▶ God's word is not to be altered -**Rev. 22:18-19**

## HISTORY OF THE CHURCHES

- ▶ A.D. 33—Pentecost: establishment of the church Jesus declared He would build
- ▶ By 2nd century—City Bishops
  - ◆ In N.T., plurality of elders and deacons over a single church -**Php. 1:1**
- ▶ 313—Constantine legalized Christianity, resulting in its blending with paganism
- ▶ 325—First Council of Nicaea formed Nicene Creed
- ▶ 380—Theodosius I declared Nicene Christianity the official religion of Roman Empire and the only religion authorized as “Catholic”
- ▶ 445—Pope Leo I obtained a decree recognizing primacy of the bishop of Rome
- ▶ 606—Boniface III obtained a decree ensuring that the title “Universal Bishop” belonged only to the Bishop of Rome
  - ◆ Christ is the only head of the church -**Eph. 1:22**
- ▶ 1054—Greek Orthodox Church and Roman Catholic Church divide
- ▶ 1517—Beginning of the Protestant Reformation with Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses
- ▶ 1530—By this year Martin Luther had established his own following; followers called “Lutherans”
  - ◆ Luther taught salvation by faith only
    - ▶ Bible teaches salvation is not by faith only -**Jas. 2:24**
  - ◆ Luther correctly told his followers not to call themselves after his name
    - ▶ Claiming men's names is wrong -**1 Cor. 1:12-13**
- ▶ 1534—Henry VIII takes control of the Church of England, separating it from the Catholic Church
  - ◆ Also called Episcopal or Anglican
- ▶ 1536—John Calvin writes *Institutes of the Christian Religion*
  - ◆ Presbyterian churches follow Calvin's theology (Calvinism)
  - ◆ Calvin taught that God makes ALL choices, even who will be saved
    - ▶ Wrong because man has free will, and God is impartial -**Josh. 24:15; Acts 10:34-35**
- ▶ 1609—John Smyth taught a “believer's baptism” and formed one of the earliest Baptist churches

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- ▶ 1739—John Wesley established the first Methodist Society, a movement within the Church of England
  - ◆ After his death, the Methodist Church split from the Church of England
- ▶ 1830—Joseph Smith publishes the Book of Mormon and establishes a church
  - ◆ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
  - ◆ Joseph Smith claimed an angel revealed to him this addition to the Bible
    - ▶ Wrong because there is only one gospel, which is unchanging -**Gal. 1:8**
- ▶ 1830s—William Miller starts the Adventist movement, teaching the imminent return of Jesus
- ▶ 1840—The Holiness Movement arises out of Methodism
- ▶ 1879—Charles Taze Russell begins *Watch Tower* magazine and establishes a church
  - ◆ Jehovah's Witnesses
- ▶ 1900—Pentecostal churches arise out of the Holiness movement
- ▶ "Non-Denominational" churches common today
  - ◆ An effort to overcome the religious confusion of denominationalism
  - ◆ "Non-denominational" = "ANY-denominational"
  - ◆ Reduces the gospel to a set of very few essentials that any believer can agree upon
- ▶ Churches of Christ (a history book explanation):
  - ◆ Stone movement and Campbell movement joined in 1832
  - ◆ Divided in 1906 into the Christian Churches and churches of Christ
  - ◆ This is a history book explanation. The real origin of the churches of Christ was on the day of Pentecost

#### **MORE ON CHURCH OF CHRIST**

- ▶ The term "Church of Christ"
  - ◆ Found in Bible -**Rom. 16:16**
  - ◆ One of many Scriptural terms for the church
  - ◆ Not a TITLE but a DESCRIPTION
- ▶ Our effort in this church:
  - ◆ To practice simple N.T. Christianity
  - ◆ To use the Bible only as our source of authority
  - ◆ To follow the N.T. without manmade additions or subtractions

#### **THE BODY OF CHRIST**

- ▶ Not a group of churches bearing the same name
- ▶ Composed of INDIVIDUALS who are in Christ Jesus -**Acts 2:47**

#### **A SCRIPTURAL N.T. CHURCH**

- ▶ Scriptural (1) NAME, (2) "CREED" (Bible), (3) ORGANIZATION, (4) WORSHIP, (5) MISSION, (6) CONDITIONS OF SALVATION

#### **GOING BACK TO THE BIBLE**

- ▶ Plant the seed of God's word today, and it will produce exactly what God wants
- ▶ Go by the Bible only, and you'll be a Christian only

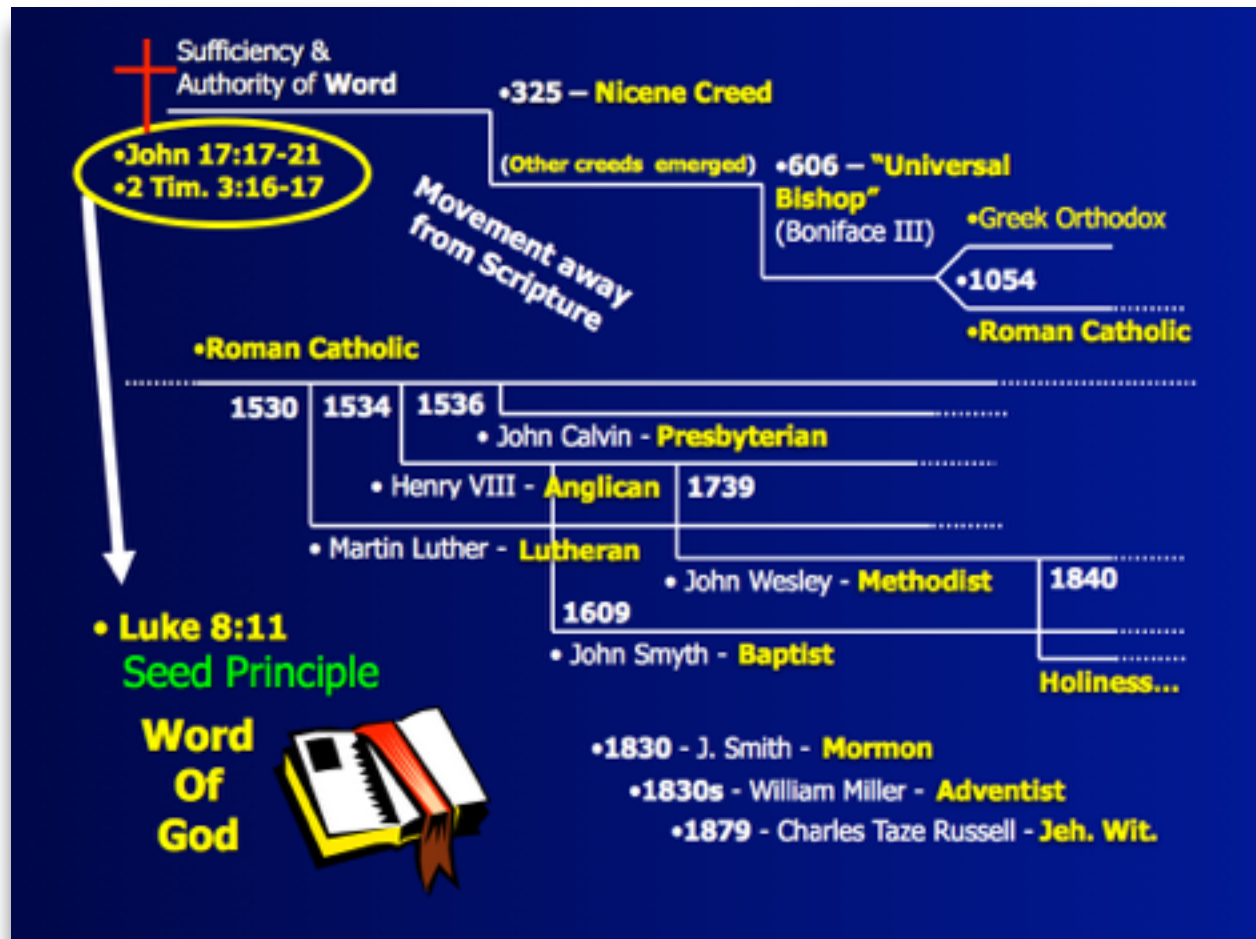


Chart adapted from a Powerpoint by David Tant