

## 24 Doctrines That Are Not In The Bible

The denominationalism of Christianity is so deeply ingrained that it is impossible for most people to imagine a faith without it.

Indeed, that is true of all religions — they suffer from interpretational disparities, factionalism, and consequent inefficiency. Just before his arrest, Jesus prayed for his apostles and the people who would eventually believe their preaching, “that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:20-21).

Does the widespread division throughout “Christendom” detract from the evangelistic efforts of the body of Christ? Can there really be any doubt? Imagine if the walls of denominationalism suddenly fell — not because of universal ecumenism, but doctrinal concurrence (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 1:10). Suddenly, a sharply divided fighting force would march as one, the way it was designed. Such a thing is not quite impossible, but its likelihood fades with each passing year, even as the sects weaken and diminish.

Unity among believers in Christ, who currently claim membership in dozens of denominations, is impossible only so long as unbiblical doctrines and unsupportable theologies are defended with more ferocity than the virtues of Scripture. There is simplicity in Christ (Acts 2:46; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 11:3), perspicacity in the gospel (Ephesians 3:4). Division among those who believe in Christ is rooted more frequently in what the Bible does not say, than what it does say.

Today, it is popular to worship with a group that claims to be non-denominational, even if it really is a clandestine Baptist fellowship or an interdenominational experiment. Churches of Christ, however, have always striven to be thoroughly non-denominational. We invite no one to leave the sect of their upbringing, simply to come join ours. The invitation is to abandon the post-apostolic denominational pattern altogether, by going back to the Bible. It is not modern technology, hair styles, or apparel that we wish to avoid, but doctrines, creeds, and fractures that have caused believers to lose sight of what the Bible teaches, and to suffer division because it seems to be inevitable.

Jesus upbraided the denominational leaders of his day, before there ever was a church and the sects were of Judaism. The Sadducees, for instance, believed falsehood about the human spirit (Mark 12:18). The Pharisees went even further in their error, rendering their worship entirely vain by “teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9). As entrenched as some sectarian and creedal doctrines have become, every believer has the authority to question them, to reject them, and to cling to the Bible instead, being simply a Christian.

1. The required observance of the Sabbath by Gentile Christians (Colossians 2:16).
2. Baptism by any method other than immersion (Acts 8:26-40).
3. The clergy, including titles like Reverend and Father (Matthew 23:1-12).
4. The papacy (Galatians 2:11-14; Ephesians 1:22).

5. Any mention of the date of Christ's birth, as well as Christmas (Luke 2:1-20).
6. Any mention of Lent or Easter (Acts 12:1-4; Colossians 2:20-23).
7. Denominationalism (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).
8. Any earthly headquarters for the church belonging to Christ (Philippians 3:20).
9. The use of drums and guitars in the church's worship of God (Ephesians 5:17-19).
10. The use of pianos or organs in the church's worship of God (Hebrews 13:15).
11. The use of choirs as a substitute for all singing to God (Colossians 3:16-17).
12. Observing the Lord's Supper on any day other than Sunday (Acts 20:7).
13. Funding the church by any means other than offering (1 Corinthians 16:1-4).
14. Any creed other than the words of the New Covenant in the Bible (John 12:48).
15. Excommunication (1 Corinthians 5:1-13).
16. Transubstantiation (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
17. Church-sponsored and funded recreation and gymnasiums (1 Timothy 4:8).
18. Church-sponsored and funded soup kitchens (2 Corinthians 8:1-6).
19. Church oversight by deacons instead of elders (1 Peter 5:1-4).
20. Women pastors (1 Timothy 3:1-7).
21. Youth ministers (1 Timothy 4:6-16).
22. Salvation by faith alone (James 2:19-24).
23. Baptist Church, Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church, etc. (Romans 16:16).
24. Roman Catholics, Southern Baptists, Mormons, etc. (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16).

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