

The New Testament Church

Part 13: Patterns for the Church: A Summary

Hebrews 8:4-6

I. INTRODUCTION: I

- I. **2** The Scriptures plainly teach we are not follow the “*commandments and doctrines on men*” (Matt. 15:9; **I Cor. 2:4-5**: “*And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*”; Rom. 1:16).
 - A. However, that does not mean that what a man might say or teach is not of value (I Pet. 4:11).
 - B. Such is the case with Thomas Campbell.
 - (1) Thomas Campbell (1763-1854) was a Scotsman and a Presbyterian minister; he was also one of the early leaders of what is called the “Restoration Movement” (1790-1840).
 - (2) The purpose of the Restoration Movement was to restore the “ancient order of things” (Thomas Campbell, *Declaration and Address*, 1809).
 - (3) Thomas Campbell and others in this movement sought to remove all of the “rubbish” of the human traditions of denominationalism and promote unity among believers by returning to the pattern of the New Testament.
 - (4) Thomas Campbell coined a phrase that became famous and is still used today by those seeking to restore the New Testament order:
 “Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.” (Stauffer, p. 98).
 - C. Campbell thus believed that everything one practices religiously must have a “*thus saith the Lord*” in order for it to be acceptable and in the process promote unity among believers (common standard; **I Cor. 1:10**: “*...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.*”).
 - D. “The first part of Campbell’s slogan met with little resistance. Bible students, at least in principle, generally agree that man should speak as the Bible speaks. This, in fact, is precisely what the apostle Peter said: ‘If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God’ (I Pet. 4:11). But silence? That is another story. Sharp contention prevailed almost from the beginning over the meaning and application of this half of the slogan.” (Stauffer, p. 98)
2. **3** This battle over how the Scriptures were to be viewed began very early.
 - (a) ****** Tertullian (A.D. 150-222), one of the early “church fathers” spoke of those who contended that “the thing which is not forbidden is freely permitted” (God’s silence permits). Tertullian rejected that view and replied, “I should rather say that what has not been freely allowed is forbidden.” (God’s silence forbids)
 - (b) ****** This battle continued in the days of the Reformation (16th century).
 - (i) Martin Luther’s view is summed up by this statement: “What is not against Scripture is for Scripture, and Scripture for it.” (God’s silence permits).
 - (ii) Ulrich Zwingli, the Swiss Reformer, believed the opposite and said that practices “not enjoined or taught in the New Testament should be unconditionally rejected.” (God’s silence forbids)

3. **4** Most people claiming to be Christians view the “silence of the Scriptures” as granting permission to exercise human wisdom in religious matters.
 - A. According to the dominant view “silence permits,” silence grants liberty to apply human wisdom.
 - B. Others, albeit a very small minority, believe that “silence forbids,” If God’s word says nothing, then nothing is authorized; Bible authority is lacking when there is not a “*thus saith the Scriptures.*”
4. This issue (how we deal with the “silence of the Scriptures”) is something every generation must decide how it will handle.
5. **5** In this, our thirteenth lesson on the New Testament Church, we will summarize some of the patterns for Christ’s church and in the process consider the issue of the “silence of the Scriptures.”

II. DISCUSSION:

I. **6** The Bible’s View of Silence:

- A. We’ve established there are two prevailing views concerning the “silence of the Scriptures.”
 - (1) The predominant view is that “silence permits”; if God’s word does not specifically forbid, man is free to exercise human judgment to determine what is taught and/or practiced religiously.
 - (2) The minority view is “silence forbids”; if God’s word does not specifically forbid then man is NOT free to exercise human judgment to determine what is taught and/or practiced religiously.
- B. How do we go about deciding which view is correct? We simply need to look at the Bible and see how it handles matters of “silence.” (i.e., 1 Pet. 4:11; Rom. 4:3)
- C. Let’s look at some Biblical examples:
 - (1) **7** Baptism:
 - (a) God clearly commands repentant believers to be “*baptized*” (i.e., immersed) “*for the remission of sins*” (Acts 2:38; Mk. 16:16).
 - (i) The word “*baptism*” is a transliterated Greek word whose meaning is “immersion, submersion” (Thayer).
 - (ii) Passages like Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12 make that very clear when they describe baptism as a burial.
 - (b) The Bible says nothing about “sprinkling” as a mode of baptism. Does the Scriptures silence on sprinkling permit or forbid sprinkling?
 - (i) Many would object at this point and say we are nitpicking and making up special rules of biblical interpretation.
 - (ii) ****** Untrue! The principles we will apply to biblical interpretation apply to human communication in general.
 - (iii) For example, when you go out to eat at a restaurant you look over the menu and give the waiter/waitress your “order.”
 - ☛ What is the effect of your “order”; your “words”? For example, you order fried chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, a biscuit and a cup of coffee.
 - ☛ Your specific order (words) automatically eliminate ham, roast beef, hashbrowns, toast and iced tea; in fact, it eliminates every other item on the menu!

- ☛ If the waiter/waitress brings you ham, eggs, hashbrowns and iced tea instead what has he/she done?
 - ☛ He/she has substituted your will for his/her will!
- (iv) **8** This is true when it comes to the Bible.
- ☛ God's will is only expressed by what He says in the Scriptures (**1 Cor. 2:9-11**; **Heb. 1:1-2**; **Jn. 12:48**; **14:26**; **Eph. 3:1-5**; **1 Cor. 14:37**).
 - ☛ God does not express His will by what He DOES NOT SAY, but by what He DOES SAY!
 - ☛ God's "silence" does not permit anything! Just as my silence in the restaurant permits nothing!
 - ☛ "God says 'baptism,' not 'sprinkling.' To teach and practice sprinkling is speculative, presumptuous, and an injection of the human will into the divine scheme of redemption." (Stauffer, p. 99)
- (c) Do you still think I'm arbitrarily making up rules of interpretation? Let's look deeper in the Bible to see the principle that "silence forbids" is clearly taught in Scripture.
- (2) Biblical examples of "silence forbids":
- (a) **9** Noah (Gen. 6):
- (i) When God told Noah to make the ark He said: *"Make yourself an ark of gopherwood..."* (Gen. 6:14).
 - (ii) God said nothing about oak, maple, or pine.
 - (iii) Isn't this perfectly analogous to our example of ordering in a restaurant? This is the very nature of communication!
 - (iv) Does not God's uttering of *"gopherwood,"* by the very nature of communication, automatically eliminate every other kind of wood?! Yes!
 - (v) "Terms that mean anything a man wants them to mean may mean everything and speech becomes meaningless." (Stauffer, p. 99)
 - (vi) If "silence permits" Noah could have substituted any kind of wood in place of *"gopherwood"*; but in doing so he would have been exercising his own will and not following God's will.
 - (vii) The implication is obvious: "silence forbids" is correct, not "silence permits."
- (b) **10** Priesthood of Jesus (Heb. 7): "The writer of Hebrews confirms the validity of this reasoning in an argument about the priesthood of Jesus (Heb. 7)." (Stauffer, p. 99)
- (i) At the end of Hebrews chapter six, the writer identifies Jesus as *"having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."* (Heb. 6:20)
 - (ii) Obviously the priesthood changed: *"Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?"* (Heb. 7:11-12)
 - (iii) To be a priest under the old covenant one had to be of the tribe of Levi *"And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood"* (Heb. 7:5).

- (iv) But Jesus was not of the tribe of Levi: *“For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah”* (Heb. 7:14).
- (v) Now notice the key point: *“For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.”* (Heb. 7:13-14)
- (vi) **11** God was “silent” about old covenant priests coming from the tribe of Judah, because *“of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning the priesthood”!*
- (vii) *“Even Jesus could not presume on God’s silence and include himself in the Mosaic priesthood.”* (Stauffer, p. 99)
- (viii) If Jesus had to adhere to the principle that “silence forbids” who are we to assert that “silence permits”?!
- (c) **12** Uzziah (2 Chron. 26):
 - (i) Uzziah was a king of Judah (792-740 B.C.) and was, therefore, of the tribe of Judah.
 - (ii) Recall that God said only men from the tribe of Levi were allowed to officiate as priests under the Law of Moses (Ex. 28:1; 40:15; Num. 3:10-12; Heb. 7:5).
 - (iii) However, in 2 Chronicles 26:16 we learn that king Uzziah entered *“the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.”*
 - (iv) No big deal, right? After all isn’t it good and proper to burn incense to the LORD?
 - (v) **13** Well, God thought it was a big deal and struck Uzziah with leprosy (2 Chron. 26:19).
 - (vi) Why? 2 Chron. 26:18: *“It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You shall have no honor from the LORD God.”*
 - (vii) *“God had said nothing about the descendants of Judah being priests. God’s answer to the proud ruler’s intrusion upon his silence was a plague of leprosy that broke out on Uzziah’s forehead (2 Chron. 26:19-21).”*
 - (viii) Recall why the Old Testament was given? Rom. 15:4
 - (ix) Did silence grant Uzziah permission? Are we learning?!
- (d) **14** Nadab & Abihu (Lev. 10):
 - (i) *“Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, also found out that God’s silence forbids.”* (Stauffer, p. 99)
 - (ii) Both of these men were legitimate priests because they were the sons of Aaron and therefore of the tribe of Levi.
 - (iii) Furthermore, they were engaging in legitimate activities for priests as God’s book tells us they entered the tabernacle to burn incense, a job done by priests.
 - (iv) The Law of Moses instructed the priests to get *“burning coals”* from *“the altar”* take those burning coals into the tabernacle and *“put the incense of the fire before the LORD”* (Lev. 16:12-13).
 - (v) However, Nadab and Abihu used fire to burn the incense from another source; Leviticus 10:1 (KJV) calls it *“strange fire”*; the NIV calls it *“unauthorized fire.”*

- (vi) The origin of this “strange fire” is not told; but one thing we do know is this: **It was fire God said nothing about!**
 - (vii) God destroyed these two priests with fire from heaven because they thought “silence permits.”
 - (viii) Silence did not permit! To use fire which God said nothing about was to use “unauthorized fire” (NIV).
- (3) Are you skeptical of these examples? Would you prefer more direct statements?
- (a) **15** Moses on the Plains of Moab (Deut. 4):
 - (i) Notice what Moses tells the children of Israel on the Plains of Moab: **Deut. 4:2:** “*You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*”
 - (ii) “To speak where God had not spoken was to add human precepts to what had been divinely revealed, according to Moses. Jehovah plainly forbade Israel from adding to what he had said. ...prohibitive silence is fundamental in God’s revelation.” (Stauffer, p. 100)
 - (b) **16** More on Moses (Deut. 29:29):
 - (i) Notice what Moses tells Israel in Deuteronomy 29:29: “*The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*” Two things:
 - ✓ “One, what God has not said is not for man to know. Wise and obedient men leave it at that.” (Stauffer, p. 100)
 - ✓ “Two, what God said belonged to man and enabled him to ‘do all’ that God expected of him.” (Stauffer, p. 100)
 - (ii) God’s words “thoroughly furnished” “the man of God” “unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:17).
 - (iii) We only need what God says and must limit ourselves to that: “Thomas Campbell was right—where the Scriptures are silent, man must be silent.” (Stauffer, p. 100)
- D. **17** Here’s the main point I’m trying to make: We can only establish the design, nature, character, organization, work, worship, etc. of the New Testament church by what God has said.
- (1) “‘Presumption’ is the key word to describe the modern practice of speaking where God is silent and adding to the gospel. It arrogantly seeks to intrude into the sacred portals of the unfathomable mind of God.” (Stauffer, p. 100)
 - (2) When we speak where God has not spoken we are injecting human will and wisdom and elevating human traditions to the level (or above!) what God has said.
 - (3) Speaking when God has not spoken brings condemnation (**Rev. 22:18-19:** “*For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*”).
 - (4) Furthermore, unity is impossible to achieve when this is done (1 Pet. 4:11; 1 Cor. 1:10).

(5) Speaking where the Bible speaks and remaining silent where the Bible is silent identifies a body of people in the twenty-first century with the church Jesus build and distinguishes it from Roman Catholicism and Protestant denominationalism.

(6) "The church of Christ is identified by what God has spoken." (Stauffer, p. 100)

2. **18** *Patterns and the New Testament Church*: By way of review, let us look at some of the major points we've covered and apply the concept of the "silence of the Scriptures forbids and does not permit":

A. **** Membership:**

- (1) In the "Great Commission" Jesus reveals God's mind, God's pattern for salvation (**Matt. 28:19-20**: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you"; **Mk. 16:16**: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.").
- (2) The Lord taught that in order for men to be saved they must:
 - (a) Believe (Jn. 8:24; Heb. 11:6),
 - (b) Repent (Acts 17:30),
 - (c) Confess (Rom. 10:9),
 - (d) Baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mk. 16:16).
- (3) When men comply with the conditions of grace (Acts 2:41), the Lord remits their sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16), adds them to His church (Acts 2:47; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23), enrolls them in His book of life (Heb. 12:22-23).
- (4) This message was first preached on Pentecost in Acts 2 and after that the same message was preached in every place the gospel reached (Acts 1:8; 2:38; 8:12-13; 18:8; etc.).
- (5) God's plan of salvation in the New Covenant is that which is spoken by Him through the inspired apostles (Jn. 16:13); the revelation is complete and is not to be changed or added to (Jude 3; **Gal. 1:6-9**).
- (6) **19** It is important to note that when men in the first century began to speak concerning salvation when God had not spoken (i.e., when He was silent) they were condemned as being in error, in sin!
 - (a) Paul preached the gospel in Galatia, the same gospel preached since Pentecost.
 - (b) The gospel he preached was silent concerning circumcision, but "...certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'" (Acts 15:1); "Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, 'You must be circumcised and keep the law' (Acts 15:24a);
 - (c) These men were speaking where God was silent; God had said nothing about circumcision and salvation in the New Covenant; He "gave no such commandment" (Acts 15:24); the gospel Paul and the other apostles preached was silent concerning circumcision!
 - (d) However, the brethren in Galatia accepted this practice as a necessity for salvation.
 - (e) **20** Paul reacted firmly and unequivocally to this violation of God's silence:
 - (i) He plainly told them bringing the Law of Moses into the New Covenant was not part of the original gospel; rather it was a "different gospel" (Gal. 1:6).

- (ii) He further describes it as a perverted gospel (Gal. 1:7), which even if he or “an angel from heaven” preached “let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8; NIV: “eternally condemned”).
- (iii) He went even further to state that violating God’s silence would result in one being “severed from Christ” (Gal. 5:4; ASV); and result in one being “fallen away from grace” (Gal. 5:4; ASV); LOST!
- (f) “Men, according to Paul, must speak where God speaks and be silent where he is silent. The gospel as God revealed it and the church as Jesus built it are sufficient. ‘Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God’ (2 John 9).” (Stauffer, p. 101)

B. **21** Foundation/Head:

- (1) The foundation of the church is Christ:

1 Pet. 2:6-7: “Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.’ 7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,’”

Eph. 2:19-22: “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit”

1 Cor. 3:11: “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

- (2) This foundation was laid by the apostles and prophets as they were guided “by the Spirit of truth...into all truth” (Jn. 16:13).
- (3) Jesus is the builder (Matt. 16:18) and purchaser (Acts 20:28) of the church, thus God said Jesus is “the head over all things to the church” (Eph. 1:22).
- (4) God is silent as it concerns other heads of the church: Peter, the pope, Martin Luther, John Wesley, John Calvin, Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, etc.
- (5) For man to appoint anyone as head of the church or its foundation is to violate the silence of the Scriptures; it is not according to God’s pattern (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Jn. 9).

C. **22** Name:

- (1) The church belongs to Christ; He built it (Matt. 16:18), He purchased it (Acts 20:28), and He is its Savior (Eph. 5:23-27).
- (2) “He was crucified for it and each member was baptized into his name (1 Cor. 1:10-13).” (Stauffer, p. 101)
- (3) God mentions several names for the church in the New Testament (1 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 16:16).
- (4) Each of the names for the church in the New Testament give honor and glory to God and Christ (Acts 11:26; 1 Pet. 4:16).
- (5) Yet men use names like Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal, etc. (i.e., hyphenated Christians).
- (6) These names do not honor the one who shed His blood for the church nor are they mentioned in God’s word.

- (7) God's word is silent concerning these names; God "gave no such commandment" concerning these man-made names.
- (8) Surely we can see that the silence of the scriptures concerning these man-made names render them invalid, wrong, sinful. Such names are not part of God's revealed pattern (e.g., priests from Judah).

D. **23** Organization:

- (1) "The churches of the first century knew nothing larger than local congregations." (Stauffer, p. 101)
- (2) God said every local church, when men met the qualifications given in the New Testament, were to have elders (aka bishops or pastors; Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
- (3) God said the work of the elders was to serve as "overseers, to shepherd the church of God"; "the flock of God which is among you" (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3).
- (4) In the New Testament each congregation was independent, autonomous, and self-ruling with its own elders and deacons (Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3).
- (5) **24** God's word is silent concerning:
 - (a) A bureaucratic hierarchy of priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals and a "universal bishop" (i.e., pope).
 - (b) A national assembly of presbyters, synod of bishops, or convention of representatives to meet and determine church policy, doctrine, or procedures.
- (6) The New Testament is silent concerning elders overseeing the works of evangelism, edification or benevolence of congregations that did not appoint them as overseers.
- (7) To follow any other pattern of church organization is to violate the silence of the Scriptures; a failure to follow the NT pattern; it is preaching "another gospel" and is thus condemned! (NIV: "eternally condemned")

E. **25** Mission:

- (1) The New Testament speaks of a very simple mission for the church.
 - (a) "As the 'pillar and ground of the truth,' the church received a twofold mission: evangelism and edification (1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 4:11-16)." (Stauffer, p. 102)
 - (b) "Churches proclaimed the gospel in their own communities and sent men to take the good news to other cities, supporting them directly without any intervening sponsoring churches (Acts 8:1-4; 13:1-3; **2 Cor. 11:8**: "I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you."; **Phil. 4:15-16**: "Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities.".)" (Stauffer, p. 102)
 *** See powerpoint slide #25 for diagrams for NT pattern of supporting preachers.
 - (c) The church worked to edify, or build up, its members in the faith (**Eph. 4:11-14**: "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,")

- (d) ****** Furthermore, in the NT when members of the church were destitute in regards to their physical needs, the church took care of those needs (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37; 11:27-30; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; Rom. 15:25-26).
- (e) **26** God is silent concerning the country club atmosphere seen in denominational churches and liberal churches of Christ today:
 - (i) Silent concerning church sponsored social meals, church kitchens, fellowship halls, game rooms, athletic fields, etc.
 - (ii) Silent concerning the use of these carnal attractions as a tool of “evangelism” (Jn. 6:26-27, 66).
 - (iii) God said His calling card to salvation is “the gospel” (Rom. 1:16-17; 2 Thess. 2:13-14) not “food, fun and frolic.”
 - (iv) “To attract men by ‘loaves and fishes’ is a secular appeal that is foreign to apostolic doctrine and practice...The church Jesus built is identified by its confidence in and dependence on the gospel alone.” (Stauffer, p. 102)
 - (v) A church that uses fried chicken, iced tea and ice cream to attract people to the gospel is as weak as the tea, as cold as the ice cream and as dead as the chicken.
- (f) **27** God is silent in regards to:
 - (i) Involving the church in anything but evangelism, edification and benevolence to needy saints.
 - (ii) Creating organizations separate and apart from the church to carry out any part of its mission (e.g., Missionary Society, Benevolent Society, church supported colleges).
 - (iii) Creating a “sponsoring church” to oversee any part of the work of several congregations.
 - (iv) To engage in any such practices is to violate the silence of the Scriptures; it is preaching “another gospel” and is thus condemned! (“accursed”; NIV: “eternally condemned”)

F. **28** Worship:

- (1) God told the first century church to assemble together for worship is clearly identifiable (Jn. 4:24; 1 Cor. 11, 14, 16; Heb. 10:25).
- (2) God told the first century church to gather together on the first day of the week to:
 - (a) Remember the Lord’s death by observing the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).
 - (b) Sing songs to exhort and edify one another as they praised God (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
 - (c) To pray (Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; 1 Thess. 5:17).
 - (d) To study God’s word and hear it proclaimed in preaching (Acts 2:42; 20:7).
 - (e) To give of their means to support the work of the church (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
- (3) Unlike modern forms of worship, the acts of worship spoken of in the New Testament were simple and performed to praise God, not to entertain and appeal to sensual pleasures.
- (4) **29** With this in mind, it is very important to note that God did not tell the New Testament church to engage in the forms of worship that characterizes modern denominations (entertains and appeals to sensual pleasures). God is silent when it comes to:
 - (a) Professional music (i.e., trained choirs and musicians).

- (b) Instrumental music.
 - (c) Dramatic productions.
 - (d) Reciting of ritualistic prayers and counting of beads (i.e., the rosary).
 - (e) Clapping of hands, shouting, emotional outbursts.
- (5) When man departs from the simple New Testament pattern for worship he must compromise the silence of the Scriptures; it substitutes man's will for God's will (Matt. 15:9; 2 Jn. 9); it is preaching "*another gospel*" and is thus condemned! ("*accursed*"; NIV: "*eternally condemned*").

III. CONCLUSION: 30

- I. These studies should make three things crystal clear:
 - A. There is a huge difference between the church Jesus built which is recorded on the pages of the New Testament and the modern practices of Roman Catholicism and Protestant denominationalism.
 - B. The New Testament presents a pattern for Christ's church which is profound, yet sublime in its simplicity of organization, work, worship, terms of membership, etc.
 - C. The New Testament church is singular, unique and designed by God to meet man's every spiritual need.
2. Our claim and our aim are neither boastful nor arrogant.
 - A. We are just Christians, nothing more and nothing less.
 - B. We are not associated with and have no allegiance to any denomination, because the concept of denominationalism is condemned in God's word (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:1-4).
 - C. Denominationalism is antithetical to the singular nature of the church Jesus promised to build (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; Col. 1:18).
 - D. Christ's church has no earthly head and reports to no earthly headquarters.
 - (1) Its head is Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:18).
 - (2) He resides at the right hand of God in heaven (Heb. 1:3; Eph. 1:20).
 - E. Thus, our aim and sole desire is to imitate those in the New Testament who were members of Christ's church (Acts 2:42, 47).
 - F. To meet this goal we use God's word as our only guide (1 Pet. 4:11; Col. 3:17) for we believe, as Jesus Himself said, that "*He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him; the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.*" (Jn. 12:48)
3. We do not claim to have something no one else can have:
 - A. We do not have a knowledge of the truth of God's word others cannot attain (Rom. 10:17).
 - B. We do not claim to have an exclusive franchise to the New Testament church built by Jesus.
 - C. Anyone, regardless of nationality or race can be what we are by just simply following the New Testament pattern.
4. Won't you follow that pattern this morning and become just a Christian (not a hyphenated Christian)?
 - A. All you have to do is to do the same thing people did in the first century to become a Christian.
 - B. If you do that, God will wash away your sins and add you to His one true church.

References:

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