

## **“WE THE PEOPLE” OF GOD, #2**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Our constitution begins with the words, “We the people.” Our government is supposed to be “For the people, by the people.” More and more we are finding that the government is BY the leaders and FOR the leaders who are already in power, and the “people” are being ignored. When we have an election for those seeking public office, many of those already IN power (and a few vying for power), will attempt to overthrow the will of the “people” to **stay** in power.

Now, in the church, the **only** authority is Christ, the Son of God. Matt. 28:18. He delegates “responsibility” to elders in local congregations, and to the leadership of men when there are no qualified elders to lead. **WE THE PEOPLE** are to be concerned about 3 major things that we need to consider: (1) The ONE church of the New Testament; (2) The WORSHIP of those in the church, and (3) The PLAN OF SALVATION to **get** INTO the church. Today, we shall begin with what the New Testament says about THE ONE CHURCH of the New Testament.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **I. 1<sup>st</sup>, in the first century, Christ BUILT only ONE church, and only ONE church existed then, and Christ wanted only ONE to always exist till the end of the world.**

**Eph. 3:21, “Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”**

A. First, Jesus built only **one** religious institution, the church. Isa. 2:2-3; Zech. 6:12-13; Matt. 16:18

1. Only **one** church existed in that first century, and absolutely **no** denominations with human names and different doctrines existed.
2. The apostles warned that Satan, through HIS ministers, would cause apostate bodies to exist. Acts 20:30-31; 1 Tim. 4:1
3. The **one** church was simply known as the church, the church of God, the church of the Lord, or the church of Christ.
4. The **one** universal church was made up of many local congregations, such as the church in Corinth and the church in Ephesus. Rom. 16:16

B. Second, Christ only wanted one church TO exist.

1. He prayed that it would always be “one.” John 10:16; Eph. 2:16; John 17:17-23
  - a. Note that Jesus gives the **basis** for oneness—His **word**. v. 17, 19
  - b. Note also that He gives the **purpose** of the word—**oneness**, in using the word “one” four times in the context of John 17.
2. Christ inspired the apostles to **teach** the “oneness” of the church. 1 Cor. 1:10; 4:15; 12:13
3. The one church is the “one body”, and with the analogy of the church to a physical body, to have more than “one body” would make Jesus guilty of spiritual polygamy. Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4

## **II. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, WHY are there so “many churches?”**

**1 Tim. 4:1. “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.”**

- A. The apostasy Paul foretold resulted in the Roman Catholic Church with its first head (the Pope in Rome) who assumed the role as it's head. 2 Thes. 2:3-4
- B. The “church” elsewhere rejected the Pope and established their own earthly head, a “patriarch” who headed up the Greek Orthodox church about 1000 A.D.
- C. These 2 “churches” controlled the religious world until they became so corrupt and far from the New Testament that some “protested” and formed “protesting” or “Protestant” movements that resulted in “denominations.”
  - 1. The first was the **Lutheran** Church led by Martin Luther about 1527 A.D.
  - 2. The second was the **Episcopal** Church led by king Charles V of England in 1609 to justify his divorce and remarriage which the Pope would not allow.
  - 3. Next was the **Baptist** movement, beginning about 1611.
  - 4. Then came the **Presbyterian** movement led by John Calvin around 1736, and the **Methodist** movement by John Wesley around 1739.
  - 5. The door was open, and since that time some **35,000** different distinct denominations have been formed, with different names and doctrines, ALL contrary to the teaching of the New Testament. 2 John 9
  - 6. Some 300 years ago, discontented leaders **in** some of these bodies, tired of human practices, determined to **restore** the original church of Christ to the world. Luke 8:10,11

### **CONCLUSION**

- I. The way “people” identified with the church in the first century was to obey the gospel of Jesus Christ in baptism. Acts 2:38, 41, 47
- II. You can become a member of the church the same way today.

Don Tarbet

(This sermon arranged in the style of bro. Dub Mowery, who is gravely ill at this time.)