

Learning From the Denominations

Moses wrote, “Yahweh your God will cut off before you the nations you are about to invade and dispossess. But when you have driven them out and settled in their land, and after they have been destroyed before you, be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, ‘How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same.’ You must not worship Yahweh your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things Yahweh hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods. See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.” (Deut. 12:29-32). Those words constitute a powerful principle that emerges through both Old and New Testaments!

Do not do as the false religions do; obey God. “You must not worship Yahweh your God in their way.”

Yet, many of God’s people become so enamored with denominations and their gimmicks that they feel compelled to “learn from the sects!”

A multitude of erroneous practices have been picked from the denominational world. Things that seem to be good, practical, and beneficial, but they have no authorization from God’s word. Things such as choirs to sing for the assembly, seeking to draw large crowds with gimmicks, appealing to the physical man by the social gospel and carnal appeals, mixing politics and religion by providing a forum for politicians, mechanical instruments of music in worship, mid-week congregational collections to finance the work of the congregation, building expensive facilities for worship while neglecting opportunities to support men to preach the saving gospel of Christ, and snatching the power of the pure word by preaching a pleasant, soft message that does not honor God have all been learned from the denominations. It’s time to “unlearn” those things and get back to the book!

Ironically, there are some things that we can learn from the denominations.

We learn that we cannot follow God’s word and human tradition! The Jews could not do it, and neither can we. Jesus said, “You nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition.” (Matt. 15:6). Whenever God’s word is set aside, in order to satisfy the human will and man-made practice, the result is disaster. Substituting sprinkling and pouring for immersion is a human tradition. (Col. 2:12). Giving and receiving religious titles of distinction is a human tradition. (Matt. 23:7-11).

We learn from denominations that you cannot save souls by preaching a social gospel. For generations, they have used carnal enticements such as bar-b-que dinners, fish fries, ball teams,

and the like to draw large crowds. The crowds became thin when the bar-b-que ran out, the fish got cold, and the ball teams lost!

The one thing that never runs out, never becomes cold, and never loses is the gospel. Draw souls by the preaching of the gospel and let it do its work. (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:17-18, 21; 2 Tim. 4:1-2).