



## **DOES IT MATTER WHAT THE CHURCH BELIEVES?**

**What Does It Mean To Be Part  
Of A Church?, Part 5**



# Movements Within The Church



- Health & Wealth
- Liberalism
- Liberation Theology – churches that advocate political freedom as the gospel
- Social Welfare – churches that feed the hungry and house the homeless but don't teach the Bible
- Social Justice



# Doctrinal Debates



- Salvation – Works or Grace?
- Jesus Christ – Mere Man of God/Man?
- Christianity – Man-Made or Christ-Based?
- Resurrection – Concocted or Real?
- Bible – Historical/Fable or God's Authoritative Word?
- God – Limited or All-Powerful?
- God – Unitarian or Triune?

# + Redefining Righteousness

- Homosexuality
- Abortion





**+ I. We Are A Protestant  
Church**



# Protestant

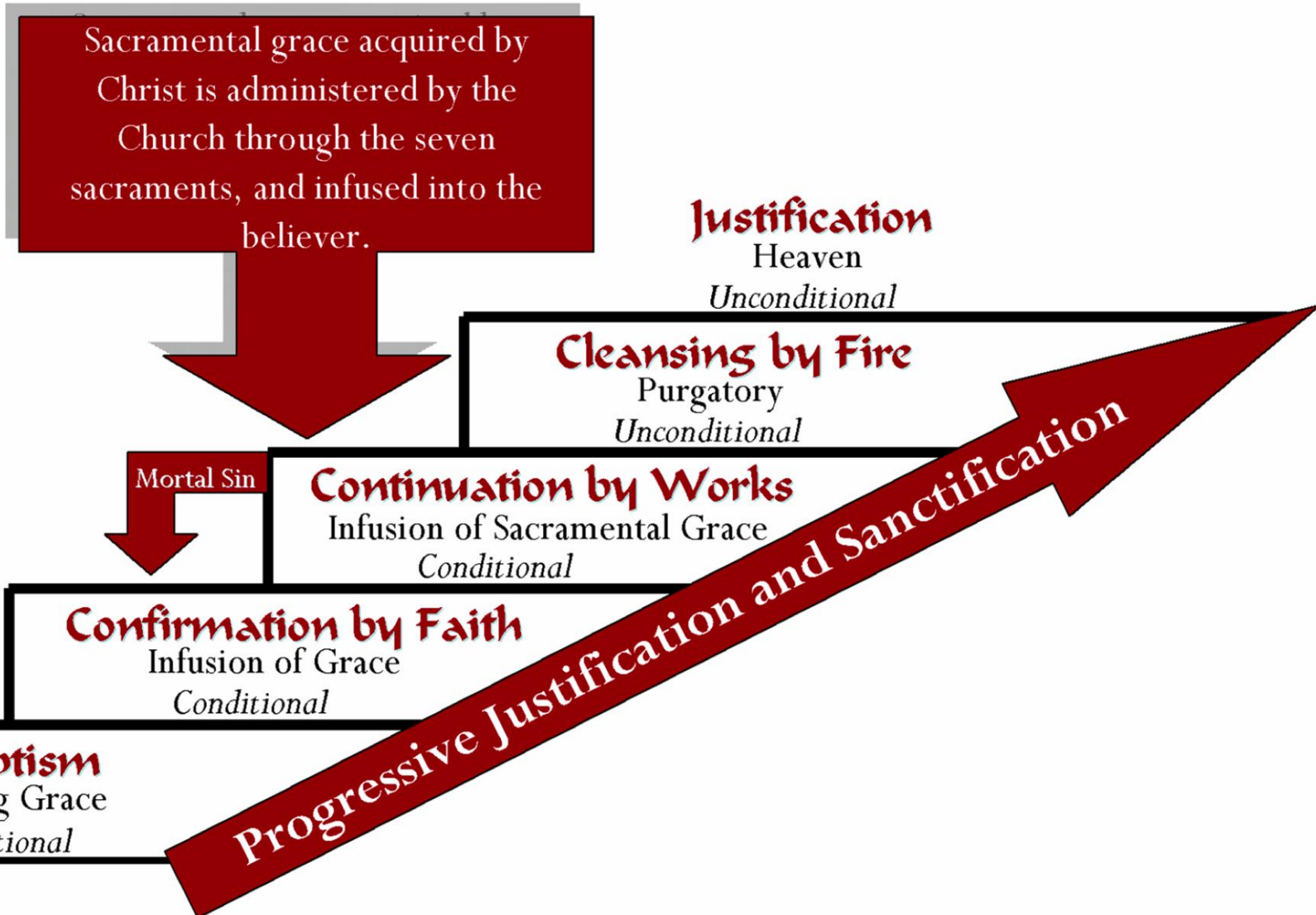


- “protest” = Latin *pro-testari* = to testify on behalf of something, to affirm (*Webster’s Dictionary*), to protest against error
- Rhodes: “*Protestantism* refers to a broad system of the Christian faith and practices that emerged in the sixteenth century. It began as a movement seeking to bring reform to the Western Church.
- “The term *Protestant* was coined in 1529 at the Diet of Speyer, an imperial assembly.” (p. 14)



<b>The Issue</b>	<b>The Roman Catholic View</b>	<b>The Protestant View</b>
<b>Authority</b>	The Pope, Tradition and Scriptures are the authorities for the church	<b>Sola Scriptura</b> – The authority of the Church is <i>Scripture</i> alone
<b>Salvation</b>	Christ's sacrifice in addition to meritorious deeds (7 sacraments).	<b>Sola Fide</b> – Justification is by <i>faith</i> alone. <b>Sola Gratia</b> – Salvation is by <i>grace</i> alone

# +Catholic Salvation: Work In Progress







*"Unless I am convinced  
by proofs from Scriptures  
or by plain and clear  
reasons and arguments,  
I can and will not retract,  
for it is neither safe nor  
wise to do anything against  
conscience. Here I stand.  
I can do no other. God  
help me. Amen!"*

*Martin Luther*  
*(1483-1547)*



## II. We Are A Bible Church



- FBC Constitution: *We believe the 66 books which comprise the Old and New Testaments to be the only verbal, plenary inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God-breathed. II Tim. 3:16,17; II Pet. 1:20-21; Matt. 5:18; John 16:12,13.*

# + In Our Divine Relationship With God, The Bible Is God's Communication To Us



- **John 5:39** <sup>39</sup>You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.
- **2 Timothy 3:15** <sup>15</sup>and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
- **Romans 16:26** <sup>26</sup>but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith



# The Bible Is Our Authority As The Rule Of Our Life



- Wayne Grudem: “The authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God’s words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.”  
(*Systematic Theology*, p. 73)



# The Bible Is Our Authority As The Rule Of Our Life



- **Psalm 119:160** <sup>160</sup>The entirety of **Your word is truth**, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.
- **Acts 1:1** In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach,



# The Bible Is Our Authority As The Rule Of Our Life



- **1 Thessalonians 2:13** <sup>13</sup>For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the **word of men**, but as it is in truth, the **word of God**, which also effectively works in you who believe.
- **1 Corinthians 14:37** the things which I write to you are the **commandments of the Lord**.

# + **Logical Conclusion**

- Since the Bible is the Word of God
- And the words of God are authoritative
- Thus, the Bible is authoritative.





# The Bible Instructs Us How To Live For Him



- **2 Timothy 3:16-17** 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.



# + **The Bible Contains The Contents And Sets The Parameters For Our Faith**



- **1 Corinthians 4:6** <sup>6</sup>Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us **not to think beyond what is written**, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

# + **The Geneva Confession, Section 1 (1536)**



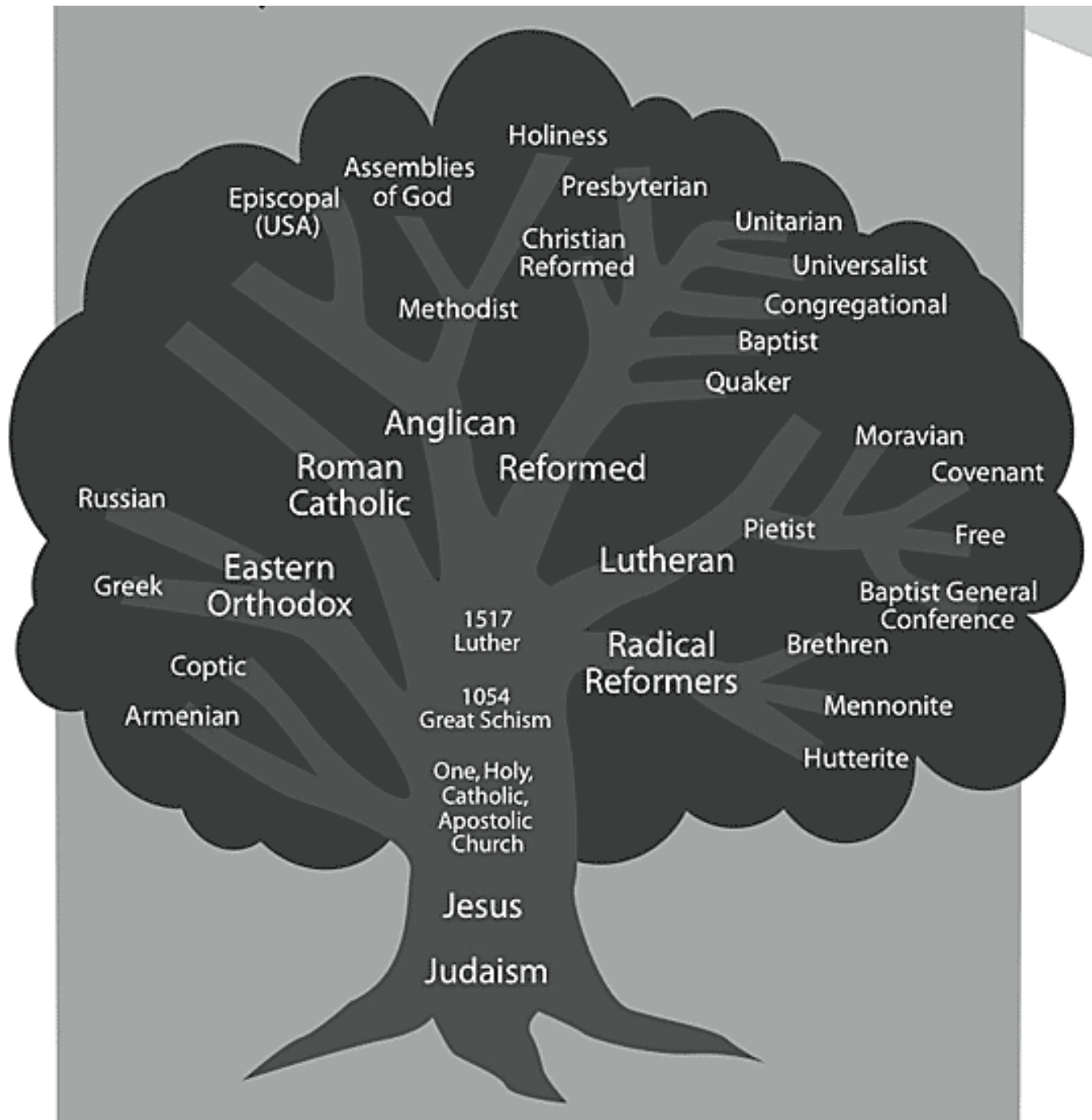
- **The Geneva Confession (1536):** First we affirm that we desire to follow Scripture alone as a rule of faith and religion, without mixing with it any other things which might be devised by the opinion of men apart from the Word of God, and without wishing to accept for our spiritual government any other doctrine than what is conveyed to us by the same Word without addition or diminution, according to the command of our Lord (Sec. I).



# III. We Are A Non-Denominational Church



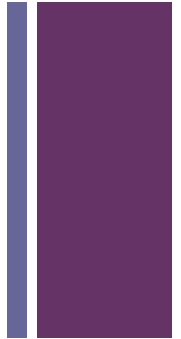
- Latin *denominare* = “to name”
- Ron Rhodes: “A denomination can be defined as ‘an association or fellowship of congregations within a religion that have the same beliefs or creed, engage in similar practices, and cooperate with each other to develop and maintain shared enterprises.’” (*The Complete Guide to Christian Denominations: Understanding the History, Beliefs, and Differences*, pp. 12-13)



<http://billcraig.files.wordpress.com/2008/06/family-tree1.gif>



# Why Are There Denominations?



- **Distinctiveness** – *We like to identify with how we're different*
- **Self-Interest** – *We prefer to follow our opinions, preferences or people groups*
- **Doctrinal Disagreement** – *God only has 1 Truth, but we're too proud to admit we're not understanding Him correctly*
- **Historic Religious States** – *State Churches in the past uniquely conformed their government to religion and religion to government*
- **Immigration** – *Bringing the religious beliefs of the old country to the new was comforting and familiar*



# **What Are The Benefits Of A Denomination?**



- Cumulative Leadership
- Organizational Accountability
- Shared Finances



# What Are The Problems With Denominations?



- Denominations Are Not Biblical And Could Be Indicative Of Divisiveness
- Some Denominational Leadership Dissuades Biblical Leadership From Within The Local Church
- The Biblical Churches Were Autonomous
- Apostolic Leadership Among The Churches Was Not Perpetuated Beyond The Early Church



# How Should A Denomination Be Evaluated?



- Denominations, as a concept, are not inherently good or bad
- Each denomination must be measured by its doctrine and practices
- Are the doctrines biblical? (**Romans 16:17**)
- Are the practices biblical? (**1 Timothy 5:3-5**)





**+ IV. We Are A  
Theologically  
Conservative  
Church**



# **We Are A Trinitarian: God Is One In Three Persons**



- *About God: We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. Deut. 6:4; II Cor. 13:14; Matt. 28:19; 1 Pet. 1:2; Heb. 9:14; Gen. 1:26.*



# **We Are A Trinitarian: God Is One In Three Persons**



- *About Christ: We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. John 1:1,2,14; Luke 1:35.*

# + We Are Saved By Grace: God Gifts Salvation To Believers Through Faith, Not Works

- *We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of sins. Eph. 2:8-10; John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18,19.*

# + We Are Eternally Secure: A Christian Is Eternally Saved And Secured By God

- *We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power thus secure in Christ forever. John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1,38,39; I Cor. 1:4-8; I Pet. 1:5.*

# + We Are Dispensational: God Has A Unique Plan For Both Israel And The Church

- *We believe the dispensational view of Bible interpretation is the natural, literal understanding of God's dealing with man. We believe that dispensations are stewardships or "rules of life" in which God deals with mankind in successive periods of time. We believe that dispensations are not different ways of salvation, but different responsibilities God gives to man according to His purposes. We believe that God's promises to Israel will be literally fulfilled before Israel, not spiritually fulfilled in the Church (Rom. 11:11,25). We believe that the dispensations of Law, the Church, and the Millennial Kingdom are distinct in Scripture. Eph. 1:10, 3:2-10; John 1:17; 1 Cor. 9:17; 2 Cor. 3:9-18; Gal. 3:13-25; Col. 1:24-25; Heb. 7:19; Rev. 20:2-6.*

# + We Are A Pre-Tribulational, Pre-Millennial Church: God Will Rapture The Church Before The Tribulation And Millennium

- *We believe in that "Blessed Hope," the personal, imminent, pre-tribulational and premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to earth, with His saints, to establish His millennial kingdom. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Zech. 14:4-11; Rev. 19:11-16; 20:1-6; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Rev. 3:10.*

# + We Are Cessationist: God's Complete Revelation Is Found In The Bible And Revelatory Gifts Have Ceased

- *We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts; and, that the gifts of evangelists, pastors, and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today; that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established. 1 Cor. 12:4-11; 2 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:7-12.*





## V. We Are An Evangelical Church



- *We believe that it is the obligation of the saved to witness by life and by word to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the gospel to all mankind. Mk. 16:15; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:19,20.*
- **Mark 16:15** And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”