**WHY RELIGIOUS DIVISION IS SINFUL**

**ACTS 20:28 – 31**

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. The issue within this lesson is ***NOT*** one of popularity with some of our brethren.

 A. **BUT**, it is very much in need of studying.

2. The New Testament church began on the **1st** Pentecost following Jesus’ Resurrection (Ac

 A. Since that time, numerous problems have arisen to thwart the Lord's plan for unity.

 B. Even many within the ranks of the churches of Christ some seem bent on noncompliance.

 1. Many will ***NOT*** be happy until the church is turned into another denomination.

3. What is, ultimately, overlooked about religious division?

 1. It is contrary to God’s Will; thus, making it, ***SINFUL***.

 A. Rom 6:14-23; 14:23; 1 Cor 8:12; Gal 3:22; Jas 4:17; Heb 3:13; 1 Jn 3:4)

**BODY:**

**1. PROMOTES DIVISION INSTEAD OF UNITY (Jn 17:20 – 23)**

 A. This can correctly be called the “Lord's Prayer” as He prayed for unity of all believers.

 1. As long as religious division exists, Jesus' Prayer will remain unanswered.

**2. SETS ASIDE GOD’S WORD FOR SECTARIAN WORDS OF MEN (Mt 15:9)**

 A. This division has made the Word of God of non-effect.

 B. To add to or subtract from the Scriptures is sinful (Deu 4:2; Gal 1:6 – 9; Rev 22:18, 19).

**3. PROMOTES MANY CONTRADICTORY “PLANS OF SALVATION”**

 A. Notice what false doctrine promotes: Doctrines of salvation by faith alone, direct

 operation of the Holy Spirit, the mourner's bench system, limited atonement and even

 universal salvation are said to be consistent with the Scriptures.

 1. According to God’s Word, they are, of course, ***NOT***.

 B. These kinds of doctrines hinder world evangelism (Mt 28:18 – 20).

**4. THE TREMENDOUS WASTE OF MONEY, TIME AND TALENT NEEDED**

 A. Think what could be done, if the religious world would put into practice the unity Jesus

 Prayed for (Jn 17:1 – 26)?

**5. JESUS IS *NOT* THE HEAD OF HUNDREDS OF RELIGIOUS BODIES**

 A. The Scriptures are clear relative to He is the HEAD of **BUT** ***ONE***.

 1. Mt 16:18; Rom 7:4; 1 Cor 11:3; Eph 1:22, 23; 3:21; 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:10, 19

**6. A POWERFUL SOURCE OF DECEPTION AND DELUSION TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN LED TO BELIEVE ALL IS WELL WITH THEIR SOULS**

 A. Without a doubt, millions of people are lead to believe they are saved while following

 after the doctrines of men. What a tragedy!

 B. Jesus seeks workers for His vineyard to clearly prove His point (Mt 20:1 – 16).

**CONCLUSION:**

1. The New Testament teaches there is a right and a wrong way to approach God (Jn 14:6).

 A. Coming to the Father through Jesus is to do so through ***BAPTISM*** (Gal 3:26, 27).

 1. To seek to do so through some other means will result in ***SIN***!

 B. It places one in the position of being unable to stand firm in judgment (Psa 127:1).

 C. Are you a part of the house the Lord Built (1 Tim 3:15)?