



Can You Tell The Difference-2

And Abraham planted a grove in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God. (Gen 21.33). Last week we discussed the fact that Abraham was called by God to leave his home and go to a place that the Lord would show him (**Gen 12**). We find that the obedience that Abraham displayed toward the commands of God identify him as faithful to the Lord (**Heb 11.8**). Abraham recognized a difference between the idols that were worshipped by those about him realizing that Jehovah was the “everlasting God” as cited above. In our day and time there are many who claim to be true servants of God and followers of Jesus Christ. Sorting through the claims that are made poses a serious dilemma to some to the extent that there are many who reject the notion that there is a single “right” way or that there is “truth” in the world. Turning to the pages of the inspired word we find that there are characteristics of the church that Christ built and if we take the attitude that we are going to follow the Bible we will be able to tell the difference just as Abraham did. First is the fact that Christ is the builder of the church, founded on the fact that he is son of God. When asked who his disciples thought he was, Peter answered, “...*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” (**Matt 16.16**). Christ then told Peter that it was God who had revealed this to him (**Matt 16.17**) and upon that fact, or rock (**Matt 16.18**) Christ would build his church (**Matt 16.18**). Our search for truth will be successful when we find people who accept Christ, and only him, as the founder of the church. God’s people are also known by the name that they wear. In the first century, the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah when he stated, “*And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.*” (**Isa 62.2**). The Lord’s church will accept no other name than this. Christians meet regularly on the first day of the week (**Acts 20.7**, **Heb 10.25**) and engage in certain items of worship including the taking of

the Lord’s supper, or communion (**Acts 20.7**), laying by in store (**1 Cor 16.1-2**), singing songs (**Col 3.16**) and edifying one another through preaching and teaching. Historical references bear out that these practices were carried out in the early church and it was later that man began to impose his will on the doctrine and practice of Christians and began to change these by introducing ideas that are not found in the New Testament. Modern teachings in many religious organizations focus on worldly ideas and mechanisms to enhance and encourage others to believe in God. The end result of these changes has been to cause so much turmoil in the religious world and divisions that it is difficult for some to make sense of what things mean and where they originated. While it is possible to find truth, and groups faithful, to the Lord, it has to begin with a desire to please God and not oneself. Today there are those who evaluate their desire to be attached to a group by what they might gain socially and otherwise, and, while this may lead to a better moral climate for society, the pure doctrine of God is abandoned in the pursuit of personal satisfaction. Abraham could have argued that the directive he received from God was too disruptive to his life but we would undoubtedly not read of him had this been his attitude. Another attitude that will aid in clarifying who Christians are and whether a church is right or not is how closely they follow the teachings of the New Testament. If there is any other doctrine, creed or teaching not fully supported by the scriptures our search is not complete. Accepting what the Bible has to say, and only that, as the source of authority demands that we view the scriptures as the inspired word of God (**2 Tim 3.16**). We must reject those who would detract from this perspective as the result of such ideas is confusion and religious apathy. God has provided us with what we need but we must accept and follow it.