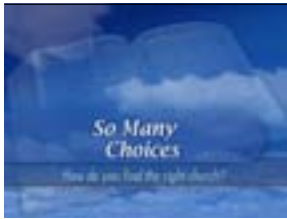


22 - SO MANY CHOICES



1

How Do You Find the Right Church?



2

**Have you ever wondered why there are so many different churches?
The average person is confused.**

Most churches teach that they are the only ones who have the truth.

Have you ever wondered which church really does teach and believe the truth about God?



3

**Friend, the Bible has the answer for us.
In a world of confusion, God's Word can always be trusted to distinguish between what is true and what is false!**



4

So our topic of study this time is "Why so many different churches?"



5

**(Text: Amos 3:7)
"Surely the Lord God does nothing," the Bible says, "Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets."
Amos 3:7.**



6

**(Video: 4 sec) Let's go to God's Word.
Remember that it doesn't matter what I think.
What matters is if it's in the Bible.
If it is, I believe it.
If it's not in the Bible, it's not for me!**



7

**To start our study, let's begin in the last book of the Bible—
Revelation.
Revelation, chapter six, talks about four horsemen.**

22 - So MANY CHOICES



8

Those four horsemen represent different periods of time in the history of the Christian church.
Out of those periods of time, we see the development of the different churches we have today.



9

(Text: Revelation 6:1)

“Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals;



10

and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, ‘Come and see.’” Revelation 6:1.
The history of Christianity now is revealed here in chapter six.



11

(Text: Revelation 6:2)

“And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him,



12

and he went out conquering and to conquer.”
Revelation 6:2.



13

So, the first church is a church of conquering faith.
It is a white horse.
White represents a pure faith.



14

It would have been a thrilling time to live in that first century right after the ascension of Jesus.



15

The disciples were filled with so much courage and so much faith, because they had walked and talked with Jesus.
They had seen Him resurrected.

22 - SO MANY CHOICES

**They had seen Him ascend into the heavens.
They knew that He was coming back.
They believed in His promises with all their hearts.**



16

They shared the good news, the gospel, with great encouragement and with great enthusiasm, to the entire world.



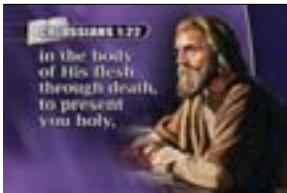
17

**(Text: Colossians 1:21-23)
(Video: 5 sec) Actually, the good news of salvation was preached to every part of the then-known world. Paul says, "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works,**



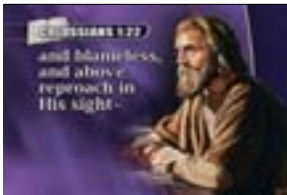
18

yet now He has reconciled



19

in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy,



20

and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—



21

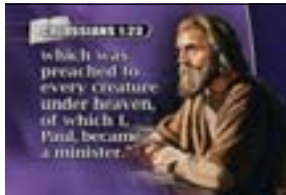
if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast,



22

and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard,

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.”
Colossians 1:21-23.

23



(Text: Acts 5:14)
“And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.” Acts 5:14.
The book of Acts tells us that thousands were baptized daily.

24



(Text: Acts 2:47)
“...The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” Acts 2:47
The church was the body of Christ.

25



People were baptized into Jesus.
They were baptized into His body, which was the church.
It was very important for the early disciples to be faithful to Jesus.
When the disciples were warned not to teach in Jesus’ name,

26



(Text: Acts 5:29)
“But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men’.” Acts 5:29.
It was more important to do what God said, you see, rather than to follow after man’s traditions.

27



So they had pure faith, because they had been with Jesus.
They believed what Jesus believed.
They taught what Jesus taught.

28



That is the same kind of faith we need to have today-a simple, pure faith that looks forward to the second coming of Christ.

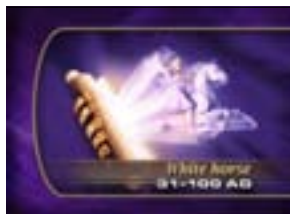
29

A faith that looks forward to spreading the good news of salvation to all of our friends and neighbors-to the entire world-fulfilling the great gospel commission that Jesus gave us.

22 - SO MANY CHOICES

That is pure faith.

That is the faith of the believers of the church of the first century.



30

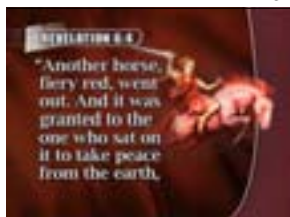
The first church of conquering faith was represented by a white horse.

This time period ended in A.D. 100.



31

What did John see when Jesus opened the second seal?



32

(Text: Revelation 6:4)

“Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth,



33

and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.”

Revelation 6:4.

So here we have represented a blood-stained faith.



34

We know that after A.D. 100, Christians began to be carted off to Rome, where they were slain, and many of them were fed to the lions in the great coliseums around the Roman Empire.



35

What a terrible time for the Christian church!

But still, the church grew.

One church historian of the time said it seemed that the blood of Christians was like seed.

As people died and gave their lives for Jesus, it seemed like a seed that was planted, and more were raised up to take their place.

22 - So MANY CHOICES

The good news of salvation spread all across the Roman Empire and all across the known world of that time.



36

So the red horse represents a blood-stained faith.
The second seal is the Christian church from A.D. 100 to A.D. 323.



37

(Text: Revelation 6:5)
Now Jesus opened the third seal—the third period of the Christian church.
“When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, ‘Come and see.’”



38

So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.”
Revelation 6:5.



39

This black horse represents a compromised faith.



40

(Text: Acts 20:29, 30)
“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.”



41

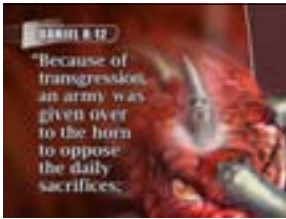
Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”
Acts 20:29, 30.
This is a very sad time in the Christian church.



42

It is a time of compromised faith-when paganism is united with Christianity.
Daniel had predicted this.

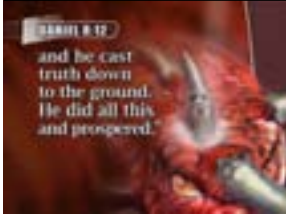
22 - SO MANY CHOICES



43

(Text: Daniel 8:12)

"Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices;



44

and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered."

Daniel 8:12.



45

The first major truth lost during this time period was salvation by faith alone in Jesus.

Salvation through Christ was replaced by the requirements of the church.



46

If you will remember as we studied before, salvation, according to the Bible, is a free gift.

It is a gift, because we have all sinned, and we don't deserve it.

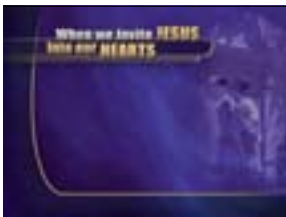
We deserve to die, because the wages of sin is death.

But the gift of God is eternal life.



47

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. That's the simple gospel.



48

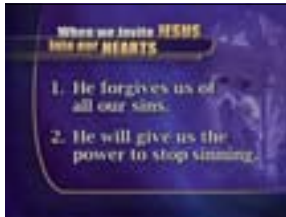
To receive that free gift, all we need to do is to invite Jesus into our hearts.



49

Then He forgives us of all our sins.

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



50

And secondly, He will give us the power to stop sinning. He will give us the power to walk in His footsteps.



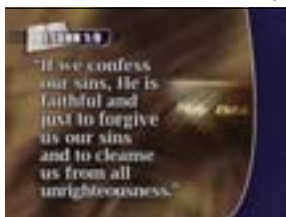
51

But this simple truth of salvation, this simple gospel as it is in Jesus, during this time period of the Christian church when faith was compromised, was replaced by the requirements of the church.



52

Instead of going boldly to the throne of God, receiving His grace and forgiveness, instead of confessing their sins as it says to do in the Bible, Christians were told they needed to pay to have their sins forgiven.



53

(Text: 1 John 1:9)

But the Bible says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1 John 1:9.



54

The Christians were told they had to go to a priest. They had to go to a man. They couldn't go boldly to the throne of God anymore.

Salvation became very complicated.

And people accepted this compromise, because they did not have the Words of God.



55

It was against the law, actually, during this time to have the Word of God.

Printing presses had not been invented yet, so it was difficult to find even small portions of Scriptures.

Many people accepted what the church told them, and the Christian faith became very corrupt.

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



56

The second Bible truth that was compromised had to do with worshipping things made of wood or stone rather than worshipping God our Creator. God says in the Ten Commandments:



57

(Text: Exodus 20:4, 5)

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above,



58

or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;



59

you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God,



60

visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me.”
Exodus 20:4, 5.



61

This was the time when images crept into the church. The Ten Commandments made it very clear that it was wrong to worship anything but God Himself.



62

The third Bible truth compromised during this time had to do with the fourth commandment and the day of worship. Notice what the Bible says of Daniel as he saw this:



63

(Text: Daniel 7:15)

“I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.”
Daniel 7:15.

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



64

You've seen how Constantine put into force the first Sunday law: changing the day of worship from the seventh-day Sabbath to the first day of the week, Sunday.



65

(Text: John 14:15)

But remember, Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

John 14:15.

Yet during this time of compromised faith, love for Jesus grew cold, and many people followed after tradition rather than after God.



66

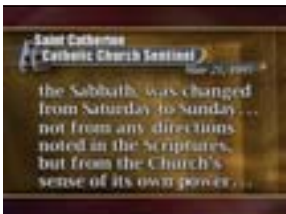
The church accepted the compromise concerning the Sabbath and attempted to change the day of worship.

On May 21, 1995, St. Catherine's Catholic Church Sentinel said,



67

"Perhaps the boldest thing, the most revolutionary change the church ever did, happened in the first century. The Holy Day-



68

the Sabbath was changed from Saturday to Sunday, not from any directions noted in the Scriptures but from the Church's sense of its own power.



69

People who think that the Scriptures should be the sole authority, should logically become Seventh-day Adventists and keep Saturday holy."



70

Worship on Sunday, the first day of the week, is not in the Bible. Scholars around the world admit it!

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



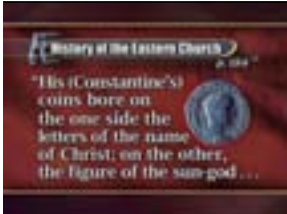
71

The change was brought about, as we have noted, by the emperor of the Roman Empire, Constantine, in A.D. 320, and the church accepted this change.



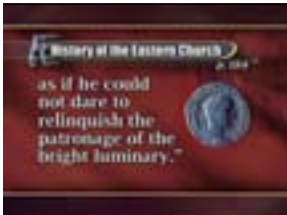
72

My friends, if we want to do what the Bible says, we should be Seventh-day Adventists! During this age of compromise, the pagan's day of the sun replaced the Bible's Holy Sabbath.



73

The History of the Eastern Church, p. 184, says, "Constantine's coins, bore on one side the letters of the name of Christ and on the other side, the figure of the sun god...,



74

as if he could not dare to relinquish the patronage of the bright luminary." Isn't that interesting?



75

God makes it very plain in His commandments:



76

(Text: Exodus 20:11)

"For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them,



77

and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."
Exodus 20:11.



78

God makes it clear that He wants His people to keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy.
Back at the very beginning, the Bible says,

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



79

(Text: Genesis 2:3)

"Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it,



80

because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."
Genesis 2:3.



81

If God the Creator



82

blessed a day,



83

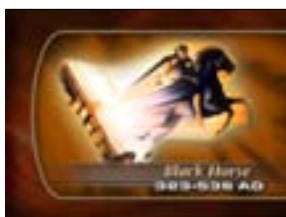
if He set one day apart,



84

if He made one day holy above all other days, then my friends, man has no right, no power to change it!

It becomes an issue of worship, an issue of obedience as to whether we are to follow man's traditions or do what God has said.



85

This then is the period of compromised faith. The compromised faith of the church is A.D. 323 through A.D. 536.

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



86

Now we move to the fourth period of the Christian Church, which is the pale horse.



87

(Text: Revelation 6:7, 8)

“When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, ‘Come and see.’



88

So I looked, and behold, a pale horse.

And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him.



89

And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword,



90

with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.”
Revelation 6:7, 8.



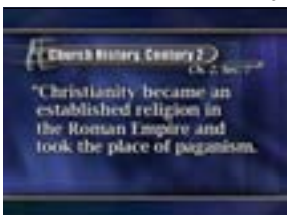
91

(Video: 3 sec) A dead faith-the fourth seal.

It was a time of union of the church and state.

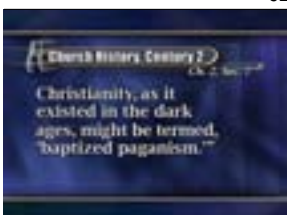
The Holy Roman Empire was fully developed now, and it not only became a religious state but also a political state.

We have a union, then, of the church with politics.



92

Notice briefly this statement: “Christianity became an established religion in the Roman Empire and took the place of paganism.



93

Christianity, as it existed in the Dark Ages, might be termed ‘baptized paganism’.”

– Church History, Century 2, chap. 2, sec. 7.

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



94

Remember, at this time people did not have access to God's Word.

It was actually against the law and, as we've said, the printing press wasn't invented yet.



95

People followed after traditions.

They followed after paganism and ceremonies that had crept into the church.

This is a historical fact that I'm sharing.



96

(Video: 7 sec) The only church that existed was the Roman Church.

Again, this is not critical of any individuals-it is the system!

We have many wonderful Catholic nuns and priests and Catholic believers around the world that love Jesus very much and are searching for truth.

It is important to understand why we are where we are today.



97

This was a terrible time of compromise, a terrible time of persecution of God's people.



98

This is why it is called "The Dark Ages."

Fifty million Christians were put to death because of their faith.



99

Notice here the steps of compromise:



100

traditions,

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



101

penitence,



102

and indulgences entered the church.

You could take money and pay for indulgences so that presumably, your relatives could get out of purgatory,

or you could pay for yourself, so that you wouldn't have to go to purgatory upon death.

This is an example again of paganism in the Christian church.



103

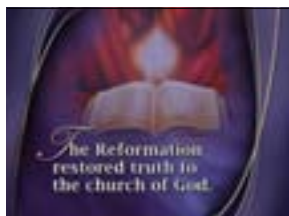
There is no such thing in God's Word as purgatory.

Images crept into the church-as well as church hierarchy and church dogmas.

Would God's truth be trodden down forever, we ask?

Of course not, because the light of truth would penetrate the darkness.

And steps would be taken on a bridge back to rediscover truths that were lost in the Dark Ages.



104

During the time of Reformation, the pure faith of Jesus began to be rediscovered.



105

The first ones to take a step out of the Dark Ages of the 1400s were the Waldensians.



106

They rediscovered God's Word, the Bible.

The Bible is so important.

If we didn't have God's Word, if we didn't have His love letters to us that we find in the Bible, we would have no direction in life.

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



107

In northern Italy, we find the history of the Bible-believing Waldensians.

The Waldensians would write out the Scriptures by hand and give portions of them to their children.

With these verses sewn into their garments, the children would make their way down to the great cities of Europe. They would share the Bible verses with friends they made in the market places and universities.



108

However, the consequences, if caught, were heavy-they were burned at the stake.

Though many lost their lives, the Waldensians considered it a privilege so that the work of God could be kept alive.



109

After the Waldensians, there came a reformer, a Bible student over in Prague by the name of John Huss.

Huss, along with his friend Jerome, discovered that it was more important to obey God than it was to obey the church or to obey man.



110

Because of their stand of obedience, of believing that we should do what God asks us to do rather than follow after the traditions of the church, they were burned to death.

Their ashes were cast into the river which flowed out into the Mediterranean Sea.

Much in the same way, the Reformation flowed out from its source around the world.



111

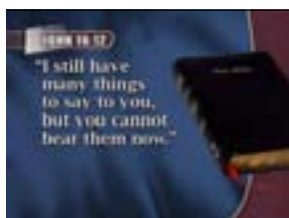
After Huss and Jerome were burned at the stake, a man in Germany by the name of Martin Luther discovered the Bible truth of salvation by grace alone.



112

Some people asked the question, "Why is it that Luther didn't rediscover all the truths that had been lost in the Dark Ages?" And the Bible says,

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



113

(Text: John 16:12)

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."

John 16:12.



114

Recovering lost Bible truths took time-it was a process.

It took hundreds of years for us to lose the faith of Jesus during the Dark Ages.

And it would take years again to rediscover these truths.



115

When Luther died, his believers took what he said and formed the Lutheran Church.

For them, the Reformation stopped at Luther's death.



116

From Germany, we travel down to Geneva, Switzerland, and find a Bible student named John Calvin who,



117

in his studies, discovered that Christians not only receive grace and forgiveness and should come boldly to the throne of grace, but that also, it is important for them to grow in Christ.



118

So Calvin taught the doctrine of growth, which some call sanctification.

As we accept Jesus, He gives us the power to overcome sin.



119

When John Calvin died, his followers took what he said and formed the Presbyterian Church.

So truth, you see, once lost in the Dark Ages, was steadily being rediscovered.



120

After Calvin's time, there was a group of Christians in different parts of northern Europe who studied their Bibles and reached the conclusion that instead of being sprinkled as babies,

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



121

baptism should follow Jesus' example, by its being the individual's decision and being performed by immersion. They were called Anabaptists.



122

Baptism by immersion-to be put all the way underneath the water as Jesus was-is a very important truth that had been lost in the Dark Ages, as it symbolizes being dead to sin and alive with God.



123

(Text: Romans 6:3, 4)

"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?



124

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death,



125

that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
Romans 6:3, 4.



126

And in order to be baptized as Jesus was,



127

we must learn of Him,



128

confess our sins,

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



129

and accept Jesus as our Saviour.

Many of these Anabaptists lost their lives, because they believed they should walk in the footsteps of Jesus and be baptized as He was.



130

From this humble beginning, the Baptist Church was formed.



131

(Text: Matthew 28:18, 19)

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.



132

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations,



133

baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’.”

Matthew 28:18, 19.



134

Jesus gave the commission to His church to go and teach and baptize and make disciples.

The Reformation Baptists were following and fulfilling that commission, as we do today!



135

You see, each of these reformers were rediscovering truths which had been lost during the Dark Ages.

As they rediscovered these truths, their followers banded together into what later became major Protestant denominations such as Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Baptists.

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



136

Finally, over in England, a man by the name of John Wesley began to study his Bible.



137

His brother, Charles, wrote beautiful hymns about Jesus, and they felt it was proper to sing these in church.

They also discovered that it was not only important to accept the free gift of salvation, to be obedient to God, and to be baptized and grow in grace, but based on God's Word, to be holy.

John Wesley was a great reformer, and when he died, his followers took what he and other reformers taught and formed the Methodist church.



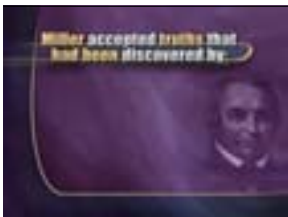
138

Then in different parts of the world such as South America, Europe, and North America, people began to study about the second coming of Jesus.



139

A man by the name of William Miller, of North America, studied Jesus' promises of John 14. He also studied the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, and he understood that Jesus was coming very soon.



140

So, based on what the

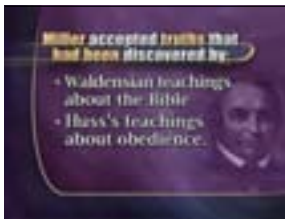


141

Waldensians taught about the Bible,

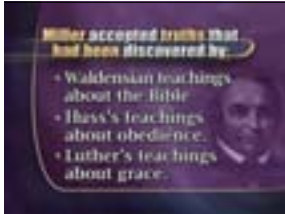
22 - SO MANY CHOICES

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



142

what Huss taught about obedience,



143

what Luther taught about grace,



144

what Calvin taught about sanctification or growth,



145

what the Anabaptists taught about baptism,



146

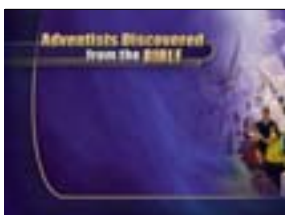
and what Wesley taught about holiness, Miller added to these another very important doctrine:
the nearness of the second coming of Christ.



147

After Miller's time, the advent movement continued.
His friends also discovered that when people die, they fall asleep in Jesus, awaiting the resurrection.

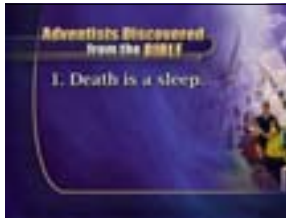
As the Bible teaches very clearly, we sleep until that moment of the resurrection when we are called forth from the grave.
What a glorious morning that will be to be reunited with loved ones!



148

The early Adventists discovered from the Bible:

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



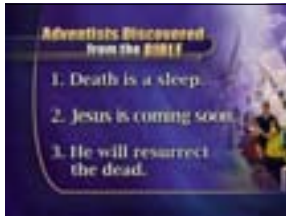
149

1. Death is a sleep.



150

2. Jesus is coming soon.



151

3. He will resurrect the dead at the resurrection:

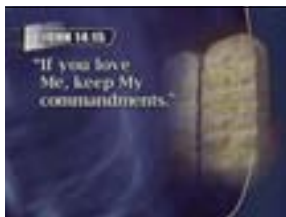


152

(Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:16)

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first."

1 Thessalonians 4:16.



153

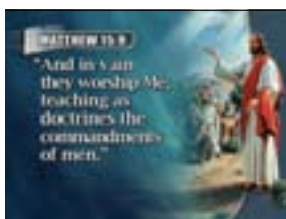
(Text: John 14:15)

After William Miller's time, the believers in the second coming of Christ also discovered Jesus' words found in John 14:15: "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

You see, we all should want to have a loving relationship with Jesus.

Because we love Him, we want to keep all of His commandments.

Not just some of them, but every one of them.



154

(Text: Matthew 15:9)

Notice what Jesus said in Matthew 15:9:

"And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

How true that is today.

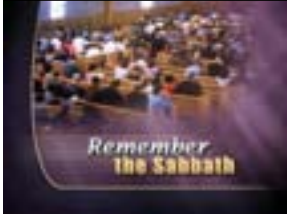
People teach the doctrines and commandments of men.

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



155

(Video: 3 sec) But it doesn't matter what man says.
What matters is what God says.



156

When it comes to worship, we must worship God on the Sabbath day that He has set apart for us.
It is a special day that He has given us.
As these special truths were rediscovered in the Bible, the people studying these truths

eventually banded together and formed the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Isaiah 58:13 and 14 predicted that there would be a movement to repair the breach that has been made in the law of God.
This scripture talks about that special day:



157

(Text: Isaiah 58:13, 14)
“If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day,



158

and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him,



159

not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words,



160

then you shall delight yourself in the Lord;



161

and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth,

22 - SO MANY CHOICES



162

and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken.”



163

**The Lord tells us very clearly that we shouldn't work on that day.
We shouldn't do business on that day.
We shouldn't seek out our own pleasures on that day.**



164

**It is a holy day.
When we put God first on the Sabbath, then the experience will be delightful.**

**The Sabbath is so exciting.
God is not taking away from us-He is giving us a special blessing.
It's like a paid holiday.**

**He says He'll cause us to ride on the high places of the earth.
What a blessing He will give us if we put Him first and best in our lives-if we follow Him and keep the Sabbath holy as He asked us.**



165

So for every truth God has taught us in the Bible, Satan has come up with a counterfeit—a false imitation.



166

God says when we die, we sleep in the grave. Satan's counterfeit is that we go to heaven or hell or purgatory at death.



167

**God says baptism is by immersion.
Satan says it can be by sprinkling.
God gave us His truth about health.
Satan says the health laws were abolished.**

22 - SO MANY CHOICES

**For every truth, there is a counterfeit.
And that creates confusion.**



168

(Text: Revelation 18:2)

The Book of Revelation talks about that: “And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, ‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen,

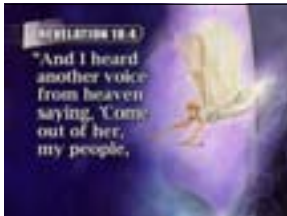


169

and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!”

Revelation 18:2.

**Babylon, in prophecy, means “religious confusion.”
And notice the appeal here.**



170

(Text: Revelation 18:4)

“And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people,



171

lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.”

Revelation 18:4.



172

**God is calling for His people to come out of confusion, so that they may not be partakers of her sins.
Friends, Jesus is calling for you now.
Now is the time to stand for Jesus!**



173

(Text: Acts 2:47)

Notice God’s Word:

**“Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”
Acts 2:47.**

22 - So MANY CHOICES



174

(Text: 1 Corinthians 12:13)

**“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—
whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—**



175

**and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”
1 Corinthians 12:13.**



176

(Text: 1 Corinthians 1:18)

**“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are
perishing,**



177

**but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”
1 Corinthians 1:18.**



178

**We’re called out of Babylon to do what’s right. Don’t you love
your Jesus?**

**He’s coming back very soon to take us to the heavenly home
that He’s preparing for us now.**

Don’t you want to follow Him all the way?

**As we have studied tonight, it is plain to see that Jesus
through His life and teachings revealed the truth that He
intended His followers to know and follow.**

**We have discovered made war with the truth and Christ’s
church, persecuting, corrupting, and counterfeiting the truth
that Christ had given His church.**

**We have seen in our study of the Bible and history that Christ
is leading his people back to the truth that He originally had
given to His church.**

**He is calling a people out of the religious confusion into the
truth reviled in His holy work.**

22 - SO MANY CHOICES

Wouldn't you like to right now, respond to the angels call to ". . . come out of her My people"! Don't you right now want to become a part of God's church, ". . . Who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" ?