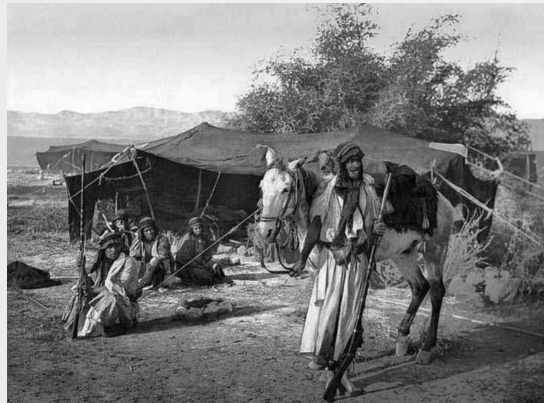


# The Tribes And The Churches



**“He...made the tribes of Israel to  
dwell in their tents.”** (Psalm 78:55)



**“Ordain elders in every city, as I had  
appointed thee.”** (Titus 1:5)

**B Kirkland**

## **God's Tribes:**

The word tribe and tribes is in the Bible over 350 times. It was God's plan for Israel.

**Numbers 24:5-6,**

*“How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters.”*

**Psalm 78:55,**

*“He...made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.”*

They did not like His plan and refused to stay with it. As a result they paid a serious price.

## **God's Churches:**

The word church and churches is in the Bible over 100 times. That is God's plan for our present age.

**Numbers 24:5-6,**

*“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”*

Like Israel, we have refused to stay with God's plan. As a result we are paying a serious price.

## **The Priests And The Parents:**

God's plan for Israel was very plain and it was very simple.

Israel was divided into twelve tribes. God had ordained *priests* to teach, and in turn *parents* were to lead their families in the way of the Lord.

### **Deuteronomy 6:4-8,**

*“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.”*

### **Before Israel Entered The Promised Land They Followed God’s Plan:**

In the wilderness it was God’s plan for *priests* to teach and the *parents* were to be sure their families understood the things that were being taught. It was in this context we read, *“How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!”* (Numbers 24:5).

When Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land we read that the plan remained the same. Psalm 78:55 says God, *“...cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents”* (Psalm 78:55).

**The Philistines were a threat to Israel** and the elders of Israel regarded God’s plan as insufficient to handle the problem. Samuel gave them a simple solution. He said, *“...prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines”* (First Samuel 7:3).

### **The Elders Decided They Would Rather Trust Their Own Plan:**

#### **First Samuel 18:4,**

*“Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel and said unto him...make us a king to judge us like all the nations...”*

## **It Was God's Purpose To Show Himself Powerful Through His Tribes:**

### **First Corinthians 1:27-29,**

*“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen...That no flesh should glory in his presence.”*

## **They Wanted To Be Like The Nations:**

Much like today, God's people wanted to do thing the way the word does thing.

### **First Samuel 8:20,**

*“That we also may be like all the nations...”*

God did not need His people to take things into their own hands and fight their battles like, *“all the nations.”* When God's people trust God, He takes care of His people. Israel should have trusted God in Samuel's day and then claimed the promise, *“I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem”* (Zechariah 12:9).

## **Samuel Pleaded But The People Ignored:**

Much like today, faithful preachers pleaded with the people to keep doing things God's way.

### **First Samuel 8:19,**

*“Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us.”*

Samuel continued to warn them, but they refused to listen. Finally Samuel said...

### **First Samuel 10:19,**

*“And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us.”*

### **The Plan Looked Good At The Beginning:**

Israel’s first King was King Saul. His principle focus was to conduct a confrontation against the Philistines. Israel’s new organization appeared to be a much better plan than a group of seemingly insignificant tribes without a central leader.

### **First Samuel 14:52,**

*“And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.”*

### **First Samuel 13:4,**

*“And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines...”*

### **Saul Crossed God’s Boundary Line:**

Then, Saul overstepped his God-given boundaries in offering a burnt offering.

### **First Samuel 13:11-14,**

*“And Samuel said, What hast thou done?...Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue...”*

## **David Reigned Over Israel:**

For The Next Forty Years. His reign was regarded as Israel's "golden age;" however, he began to go the way of the kings of "*all the nations*." David like, Saul, and like us, learned to ignore God's command.

## **David Crossed God's Boundary Line:**

**Deuteronomy 17:14-17,**

*"Neither shall he (the king) multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold."*

A king in Israel was not to "...multiply wives to himself."

## **David's Wives:**

**Second Samuel 3:2-5,**

*2 And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess;*

*3 And his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;*

*4 And the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;*

*5 And the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.*

## **David's Harem:**

**Second Samuel 5:13,**

*"And David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem..."*

## **The Shepherd And The Sovereign:**

When David was a shepherd with his “*few sheep*” (First Samuel 17:28) he was the man “*after God’s own heart*” (First Samuel 13:14). As a sovereign, he chose to follow the example of the kings of “*all the nations.*”

### **First Samuel 27:3,**

*“And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, even **David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal’s wife.**”*

### **Second Samuel 12:15,**

*“And the LORD struck the child that **Uriah’s wife bare unto David**, and it was very sick.”*

God is not mocked by sinners or by saints. David paid dearly for his sin.

## **Price Tag On Sin:**

Israel also paid dearly for her disobedience in rejecting God and choosing a king.

### **First Samuel 8:7,**

*“And the LORD said unto Samuel...they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.”*

## **They Did Evil In The Sight of The Lord:**

Following King Saul, King David, and King Solomon, God’s Word declares that about eighty percent of Israel’s kings did “*evil in the sight of the LORD.*”

## **Their Plan Failed:**

How did their plan to battle the Philistines turn out? God is not mocked.

**Judges 13:1,**

*“The LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.”*

## **The Weakness of The Leadership:**

One of the earlier problems that led to Israel’s downfall was Moses shirking his God- given responsibilities. At the burning bush, Moses complained that he could not handle Pharaoh by himself.

**Exodus 4:14,**

*“And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses.”*

God allowed Moses to get help from his brother, and although it appeared to work well at the beginning; before long, Moses realized it would have been better to listen to God.

**Exodus 32:1,**

*“The people gathered themselves together unto Aaron.”*

## **Aaron Led The People Astray:**

**Exodus 32:1-5,**

1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.



3 And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.

4 And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

5 And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, **To morrow is a feast to the LORD.** (???)

### **Bad Advice From Jethro:**

Again, we find Moses not wanting to carry his God-given responsibilities alone. He gladly received the advice of Jethro when he asked, “...*why sittest thou thyself alone?*” (Exodus 18:14). Jethro said, “...*this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone*” (Exodus 18:18). Jethro advised Moses to share his responsibilities with other men.

Again, when we reject God’s simple plan for one of our own it never turns out well. Moses soon regretted what he did. He found his authority was challenged.

In verse twenty-one Moses said, “*Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged.*”

They refused to follow his command saying, “*We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land...*” We read, they “...*rebelled*” and they “*murmured*” in their tents” (Verses 22-27).

**In Numbers 11:1** we read,

*“And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.”*

## **Moses Prayed To Die:**

The plan was so ineffective, Moses finally cried out to God...

**Numbers 11:15,**

*“Kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.”*

There is always a price tag on rejecting God’s will and God’s way. Moses said to the people...

**Deuteronomy 4:21,**

*“Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.”*

## **Forty Days With God:**

If Moses had waited on God for only a few months, he would have met with God on the mountain. God spent forty days and nights giving detailed instructions concerning how He wanted things done. Moses chose to listen to Jethro’s counsel of possibly only forty minutes. Like David, Moses paid dearly for his mistake.

## **Moses Shirked His God-Given Responsibility:**

**First**, Moses shirked his responsibility as God’s spokesman. The result was Aaron leading the people into idolatry.

**Second**, Moses shirked his responsibility concerning judging for God and we read, *“...the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp”* (Numbers 11:1).

The rest wandered in the wilderness for forty years.

**Third**, Moses also shirked his responsibility as God's chosen leader.

**Numbers 11:11-17,**

*“And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me.”*

**God Allowed Moses To Have Seventy Helpers:**

**Numbers 11:16-17,**

16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.

17 And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.

The third time Moses rejected his God-given responsibility we find, Moses lost some of his power with God. (*“I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them” V.17*). He also lost some power with men. His leadership was challenged even by his own brother and sister. Ten spies challenged his authority and there was anarchy among the leaders. That group of seventy turned out to be the organization that voted to crucify the Son of God.

## **God's Plan For Our Age Is Also Plain And Simple**

For Israel it was priests teaching the people and parents training their families to do what God commands. God's plan for our day is local churches. **Act 15:5** says, "*And so were the churches established...*"

## **God Gave Pastors:**

God gave pastors who are to teach "*faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also*" (Second Timothy 2:2). Ephesians 4:11,12 says, "*And he gave some...pastors and teachers...For the perfecting of the saints...*"

The plan was plain and it was simple. God wanted *pastors* teaching the Word of God and *parents* teaching their children to follow God's Word. Ephesians 6:4 says, "*And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*"

## **We, Like Israel, Decided We Had A Better Plan:**

### **First Samuel 8:4,**

"*The elders gathered themselves together*" and decided they wanted to do it like the world did it.

## **Our Leaders Also Gathered Together:**

**In the late 1800s and early 1900s**, pastors "*gathered themselves together*" because they were concerned about the advancement of *modernism* and *liberalism*. They decided something needed to be done to combat our Philistines. They decided we needed an "*ism*" to stand against *modernism* and *liberalism*. We called it "*fundamentalism.*"

## **Like Israel, We Forsook God's Way:**

### **The World Has Colleges**

*We organized colleges*

The influence of *pastors* faded and the influence of *presidents* took control. Soon the phrase, “*As goes the colleges, so goes the churches*” became an unscriptural fact.

### **The World Gives Doctors Degrees**

*We give Doctors Degrees*

### **The World Has Newspapers**

*We started newspapers*

### **The World Has Magazines**

*We published magazines*

### **The World Has Seminars**

*We organized seminars*

### **The World Has Associations**

*Baptists alone have over 300 different Associations*

### **The World Has a Board of Directors**

*Our para-church ministries have their Board of Directors*

## **Pastors In Every City:**

God's plan for our ages is “*elders* (pastors) *in every city*.” (Titus 1:5). Now, *editors* have more influence than most pastors. Scores of ministries, with no Scriptural foundation are still springing up around the world. There are now thousands of “*fundamental*” para-church ministries on the internet doing that which is right in their own eyes.

**To add to our fundamental confusion**, in the last fifty years, new issues have come to the forefront with many “*fundamentalists*” taking a different stand concerning these issues, or taking no stand at all.

**A partial list includes such important issues as, *Bible Translations, Music Standards, Dress Standards, Calvinism, Lordship Salvation, Repentance and Separation.*** While many fundamentalists continue taking many different positions on these issues, it becomes obvious that the word fundamental means many different things to many people. The term now raises more questions than it answers.

**Fundamentalism is an *ism*.** An “ism” is “*a tag hooked on the end of a name that promotes a belief accepted as authoritative by a group.*” For example, Communism, Marxism, Socialism, Modernism, Mohammedanism, Unitarianism, Catholicism, Nazism, Zionism, Fundamentalism...and the list goes on!

### **The World Has Its’ Socialism:**

Socialism is a mixture of *Communism, Marxism, Anarchism* and anything contrary to *Capitalism*. Like socialism, we fundamentalist have our own mixture of *fundamentalism, neo-fundamentalism, pseudo-fundamentalism, militant fundamentalism* and *moderate fundamentalism*.

### **The World Has Its’ Modernism:**

Modernism represents those who “*modify traditional beliefs according to modern ideas.*” Since modernism represents “*the present,*” as opposed to “*the past,*” modernism changes every few years. Like modernism, fundamentalism modifies its traditional beliefs according to our modern ideas.

### **The World Has Its’ Liberalism:**

Liberalism represents those who “are open to new behaviour or opinions and are willing to discard traditional values.” Like Liberalism, many who travel under the banner of fundamentalism are open to any new behaviour or opinions while discarding traditional values.

**I have been a Christian for sixty-three years.** I have seen fundamental groups come and I have seen them go. I have watched



different groups of fundamentalists form their own “*core of beliefs concerning what they thought was important.*”

I have watched fundamentalists change their position on such issues as the King James Bible, music standards, dress standards, separation, repentance and other issues. These things were, and are, being set aside for “new modern ideas” of fundamentalism.

**I remember when The World Congress of Fundamentalists met in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1976.** In the resolutions under, “*We Believe*” they said - “*A fundamentalist maintains an immovable allegiance to the inerrant, infallible, and verbally inspired Bible. A fundamentalist believes that whatever the Bible says is so. A fundamentalist judges all things by the Bible and is judged by the Bible and is judged only by the Bible.*”

Would not Pentecostal churches, Brethren churches, Calvinists, Jack VanImpe, and most TV evangelists say that is what they believe?

They said, “*A fundamentalist maintains an immovable allegiance to the inerrant, infallible, and verbally inspired Bible.*” What Bible? Today, there are many people running under the banner of fundamentalism using different translations of the Word of God.

They said, “*A fundamentalist believes that whatever the Bible says is so.*” Wouldn’t every Christian denomination say they believe that?

They said, “*A fundamentalist judges all things by the Bible and is judged by the Bible and is judged only by the Bible.*” If all fundamentalists “*judge all things by the Bible*” how is it we have fundamental leaders leading in so many different directions?

## **Motives And Methods:**

It is wrong to judge the motives of the founders of fundamentalism; however, the Bible is very plain about methods. The fact remains that we never needed to join the worlds’ list of “isms.”

All we had to do was stay with God's program like we did for nearly 2000 years. *"...the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"* (First Timothy 3:15).

**Fundamentalism is not, and never will be the answer.** God's local church is the only plan we have been given. The local church as pictured in the Word of God is a company of believers meeting in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ standing in a bold moral contradiction to the modernism and liberalism of the world.

If pastors taught their people as commanded, and parents made sure their families lined up with the Scriptures, the job would be done.

### **God's Plan Has Always Been A Simple Plan:**

For Israel it was *"the tribes of Israel."* For our age God's plan is local *"churches."* The word churches is found thirty-seven times in the New Testament. Seven times in God's final Book in the New Testament we read, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The word church is found another eighty times in the Word of God.

### **How It Should Work:**

Let's take as an example the subject of separation. It is the pastors responsibility to preach and teach on that subject. It then becomes the father's responsibility to lead the family to do what is correct.

Let's say for example, a family moves in across the street from a church members home. They have some children that are the same age as your church members' children. Should they be allowed to play with the children across the street?

Would it not be a good idea for the father to gather his family around the table and discuss their situation? After a time of prayer together the father would make a decision about the children across the street.



This is what the Bible means when it says, “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” (Second Timothy 2:2) We have changed this plan for one that says, “Dad you just sit home and watch television and we fundamental leaders will make these decisions for you.”

## **God’s Perfect Will And God’s Permissive Will:**

God continued to bless Israel even though they did not choose His perfect will. He also blessed Moses when he choose to reject God’s perfect will for Him. In both cases they paid a price; however, God did not forsake His people.

## **Samuel Continued To Minister To Israel:**

In **First Samuel 12:20-25** we read,

*“And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart; And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain. For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.”*

It was in the context of Israel’s rejection of God’s perfect will that Samuel said,

*“Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way: Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.”*

## **God's Mercy Was Greater Than Their Mistrust:**

### **Verse 13,**

*“Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you. If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God.”*

We are not suggesting that God has not blessed para-church ministries. Ministries that have *“obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD”* and are, *“following the LORD”* have been and are being, blessed of the Lord.

## **Example, Gipsy Smith And Jack VanImpe:**

Gipsy Smith was not based out of a local church and neither did he preach false doctrine or fellowship with those who did. Jack VanImpe does both.

## **When To Separate:**

The Psalmist said, *“I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts”* (Psalm 119:63). The word precepts here refers to *“things that are authorized by God.”* Gipsy Smith preached the things authorized by God. Jack VanImpe does not.

## **The Separation Issue Has To Do With False Doctrine:**

Romans 16:17 commands us to *“...mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”*

- **First Timothy 1:3**, *“...charge some that they teach no other doctrine.”*
- **First Timothy 4:16**, *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine;*

*continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, (from the apostasy) and them that hear thee.”*

- **Second Timothy 4:3**, *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine...”*

## **The Christian Heretic:**

Titus 3:10 plainly says, *“A man that is an heretick (a promoter of false doctrine) after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted...”* This verse is written about Christians who are followers or teachers of false doctrine.

**Second Thessalonians 3:15** says, *“Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”*

## **Admonishing Is A Christian Term:**

The Greek word, (nouthete) has been translated “*admonish*” four times and “*warn*” four times and are always used referring to Christians.

- **Acts 20:31**,
  - *“I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”*
- **Romans 15:14**,
  - *“...able also to admonish one another.”*
- **First Corinthians 4:14**,
  - *“I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.”*
- **Colossians 1:28**,
  - *“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”*
- **Colossians 3:16**,
  - *“...admonishing one another...”*

• **First Thessalonians 5:12,**

- “...*know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.*”

• **First Thessalonians 5:14,**

- “...*warn them that are unruly.*”

• **Second Thessalonians 3:15,**

- “*Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*”

In this age of apostasy we need to be admonishing one another and we need to be “...*exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching*” (Hebrews 10:25).

If a para-church ministry remains true to the doctrines as taught in the Word of God we have no commandment to mark and avoid him; however we must not suggest by our silence that we are approving their choosing God’s permissive will over His perfect will. The Bible says, “Open rebuke is better than secret love” (Proverbs 27:5).

## **In Conclusion:**

“**Fundamentalism**” began in the early 1900s. That means, **Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, John Westly, Charles Finney, C. H. Spurgeon, Peter, James, John and Jesus** could not have been “*fundamentalists*” because the term did not exist then. The word “*fundamentalism*” had no entry in the Oxford Dictionary until 1950. The word “*fundamentalist*” was not added until 1989. (Second Edition).

## **God’s Word And God’s Way:**

We need to teach the next generation to follow God’s simple plan. Ephesians 4:11,12 says God gave pastors, “For the perfecting of the saints...” We made a mistake when we said, Nay, but we will have our kings. Like Israel of old, we have rejected God’s way for our way. We have rejected His perfect will for His permissive will and we are paying dearly for it.

# God's Plan Is A Simple Plan



“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

(Second Timothy 2:2)



# **The Tribes And The Churches**