

## The Voice of God

### *What Does The Bible Say Concerning The Church?*

**It says that Jesus Christ was the builder and founder:**

“I will build my church...”  
(Matthew 16:18)

**It says that His church would be established first in Jerusalem:**

Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:2

**The beginning of Christ’s church is recorded in Acts 2, in Jerusalem in approximately 30 AD, exactly as promised:**

“And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47)

**It says that Jesus established only one church:**

“I will build my church...”  
(Matthew 16:18)

“He is the head of the body, the church...”  
(Colossians 1:18)

“There is one body...”  
(Ephesians 4:4)

**What does the Bible call members of Christ’s church?**

“And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” (Acts 11:26)

## The Voice of History

**The record of the past 20 centuries reveals these facts concerning prominent religious sects:**

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Founder</u>	<u>Church</u>
606 AD	Rome	Boniface III	Roman Catholic
1520 AD	Germany	Martin Luther	Lutheran
1534 AD	England	Henry VIII	Episcopal
1536 AD	Switzerland	John Calvin	Presbyterian
1550 AD	England	Robert Browne	Congregational
1607 AD	Holland	John Smythe	Baptist
1739 AD	England	John Wesley	Methodist
1830 AD	America	Joseph Smith	Mormon
1860 AD	America	Ellen G. White	Adventists
1866 AD	America	Mary Baker Eddy	Christian Science
1872 AD	America	Charles T. Russell	J. Witnesses

**Examine these “churches” very carefully!**

- ☛ Were they established at the right time?
- ☛ Were they established in the right place?
- ☛ Were they founded by the right person?
- ☛ Are their members called by the right name?

**Whose Voice will we obey?**

**The Voice of History**

**-or-**

**The Voice of God?**

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**“UPON THIS ROCK  
I WILL BUILD MY  
CHURCH”**

*He saith unto them, “But whom say ye that I am?”  
And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”  
(Matthew 16:15-16)*



- ☛ Who is Jesus? Is He “the Christ”? Is He “the Son of the living God”?
- ☛ If Jesus is “the Christ” and if He is “the Son of the living God,” what does this mean and how does it relate to His church?
- ☛ If Jesus built His church, why are there thousands of “Christian” denominations in existence today?
- ☛ Does the church Jesus promised to build exist today? If so, how can we identify it and how can we find it?

## Upon this rock I will build My church.

What comes to mind when you hear the word *church*? A red brick building with a cross-topped spire? A denominational organization or a hierarchy of clergymen? Indeed, if you looked up *church* in a standard dictionary both definitions would be listed.

However, most importantly, how does the Bible define *church*? In the Bible the word *church* never refers to a building or a denominational organization. It always describes *people*. When the Bible uses *church* it is describing people that have rendered obedience to God and are thus *saved*. In Ephesians 1:22-23 the inspired apostle Paul says the *church* and “*body of Christ*” are one and the same; thus synonyms describing the same *people*. In Colossians 1:18-23 Paul tells us the grand purpose of the *church*. The *church* is where sinful man is *reconciled* to God, that is, where man finds *salvation* from sin. The truthfulness of this should come as no surprise especially as we consider a very important statement Jesus made about the *church*:

“*And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*” (Matthew 16:18)

Jesus’ profound statement tells us five critical facts about the *church* found in the New Testament:

- ✓ **It was built by Jesus, and thus belongs to Jesus** (“*I will build My church*”)
- ✓ **It was built upon a rock** (“*on this rock I will build My church*”)
- ✓ **It is singular, that is Jesus built only one** (“*My church*”)
- ✓ **It was not in existence when he lived on earth** (“*I will build*”)
- ✓ **It cannot fail** (“*gates of Hades shall not prevail against it*”)

The *church* built by Jesus, belongs to Jesus because Jesus purchased the *church* with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Is it any wonder then that it wears His name (Romans 16:16; Hebrews 12:23; 1 Corinthians 1:2)? Any *church* not purchased with Jesus’ blood, and/or not wearing His name, is not His *church*.

The *church* Jesus established is built upon what “*rock*”? The *rock* is the foundational truth that Jesus is the Son of God. Paul said that Jesus’ resurrection from the dead “*declared*” that He was the Son of God (Romans 1:4). Also, Peter said the resurrection of Jesus proved He is both “*Lord and Christ* (Savior)” (Acts 2:36). What is the significance? How could Jesus be called the “*savior of the body*” (Ephesians 5:23) and, how else could he add those who “*were being saved*” to His *church* (Acts 2:47) if He had not overcome sin and death? A building is only as sound as its foundation and Jesus, the resurrected Son of God, is the only foundation of His *church* (1 Corinthians 3:11; Acts 4:12). Any *church* built upon any other foundation than Jesus is not His *church*.

We notice also that Jesus promised to build only one *church*, “*My church*” (Matthew 16:18). Paul confirms this by telling us there is but “*one body*” (Ephesians 4:4) and entrance into that one body is through baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13). The writer of Hebrews describes the *church* eloquently as the “*true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.*” (Hebrews 8:2). Those Jesus “*added to the church*” (saved) were simply called Christians (Acts 11:26). Any *church* not built by Jesus is not His *church*.

The *church* built by Jesus came into existence on the first Pentecost following His resurrection (recorded in Acts 2). People in Acts 2 heard the gospel message as Peter preached God’s word (Romans 10:17), upon hearing that word they became convinced of their guilt and lamented, “*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*” (v. 37) Peter told them to “*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*” (v. 38) and when they obeyed by faith (Acts 2:41; James 2:24-26) the Lord added them to His *church* (Acts 2:47; 1 Corinthians 12:13). Any *church* that came into existence

other than on the day recorded in Acts 2 is not Jesus’ *church*.

Finally, the *church* Jesus built cannot fail, the “*gates of Hades* (death) *cannot prevail against it.*” Because, Jesus its founder has proven He could overcome the grave (Acts 2:24; Romans 1:4) and thus, has become “*...the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him*” (Hebrews 5:9).

### Our Claim and Our Aim

Our claim and our aim are neither boastful nor arrogant. We are simply Christians, nothing more and nothing less. We are not associated with, and have no allegiance to, any denomination. Because, denominationalism is condemned in God’s word (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:14). Denominationalism is opposed to the singular nature of the *church* Jesus promised to build (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; Colossians 1:18). We have no earthly head and report to no earthly headquarters. Our head is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:20-23) and He resides at the right hand of God in heaven (Hebrews 1:3; Ephesians 1:20). Our aim and sole desire is to imitate those in the New Testament that were members of Christ’s *church* (Acts 2:42, 47). To meet this goal we use God’s word as our only guide (1 Peter 4:11; Colossians 3:17) for we believe, as Jesus Himself said that “*He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him; the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.*” (John 12:48).



**The churches of Christ greet you.**  
(Romans 16:16)

**JUST CHRISTIANS! (ACTS 11:26)**