

The Voice of History

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

Church	Time	Place	Founder
Roman Catholic	606 AD	Rome	Boniface III
Lutheran	1520 AD	Germany	Martin Luther
Episcopal	1534 AD	England	Henry VIII
Presbyterian	1536 AD	Switzerland	John Calvin
Congregational	1550 AD	England	Robert Browne
Baptist	1607 AD	Holland	John Smythe
Methodist	1739 AD	England	John Wesley
Mormon	1830 AD	America	Joseph Smith
7th Day Adventist	1860 AD	America	Ellen G. White
Christian Science	1866 AD	America	Mary Baker Eddy
Jehovah's Witness	1872 AD	America	Charles T. Russell

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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Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



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The Church Jesus Built (Part 3)
Importance of Identifying Christ's Church

Craig Thomas

In previous articles we've been emphasizing our need to study the New Testament (NT) concerning Christ's church. Today, let's continue laying the foundation for several future articles by addressing the importance of identifying Christ's church. The importance of identifying Christ's church can be seen by considering:

¹⁸ 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**

1) **The NT Teaches There Is Only One True Church:** To deny that there is only one true church is to deny what the NT plainly affirms (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:21-23; 4:4). Certainly if there is only one true church, identifying it is of great

importance!

2) **The Church Is Planned By God.** The NT teaches the church is no accident or afterthought on God's part. The church was "According to the eternal purpose which he [God] purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11; 1:4). If Christ's church was planned and purposed by God it is essential for us to correctly identify it!

3) **The Church Is Built By Christ.** God, the divine architect of the church, gave Christ the blueprint for the church and He founded it according to the divine pattern given. Jesus said, "I will build my church..." (Matt. 16:18). We find this coming to fruition as Acts 2:47 affirms, "the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved". If Christ's one true church was built by Him it is essential for us to correctly identify it!

4) **The Church Was Purchased With Christ's Blood.** The one true church identified in the NT was bought with the costliest of all prices, for it

was “*purchased with His [Christ’s] own blood*” (Acts 20:28). If the one true church of the NT is so important that Christ “*gave himself for it*” (Eph. 5:25), shedding His own blood in doing so; then we must expend every effort and pay any price needed to identify it and become part of it!

5) **The Church Contains The Saved.** The NT teaches that Christ “*is the saviour of the body*” (Eph. 5:23), “*which is the church*” (Col. 1:24). The Lord “*adds*” the saved to His church (Acts 2:47). Thus, the Lord “*saves*” or “*adds*” people to His church by one and the same process. If salvation is of any importance to us then it is utterly urgent and immensely vital that we identify Christ’s one true church and become part of it!

But, how can we identify Christ’s one true church? God told Moses concerning the tabernacle, “*that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount*” (Heb. 8:5). The NT reveals God’s mind concerning the pattern for His one true church (1 Cor. 2:4-13). To identify Christ’s church we must explicitly follow the divinely revealed NT pattern. By following that pattern we can be assured of being in His “*one body*” (Eph. 4:4). We urge you to read the next few articles as we examine the NT pattern for Christ’s one true church.

The Church Jesus Built (Part 4) **Establishment of Christ’s Church**

Craig Thomas

In previous articles we’ve been emphasizing our need to study the Bible concerning Christ’s church. Examining God’s word is the only way to identify Christ’s one true church. Today, let’s consider the establishment of Christ’s church. Christ’s church began...

1) **In God’s Mind.** History shows that denominational churches are of relative recent origin and began on the whims and desires of men. But, the Lord’s church originated in God’s mind “*according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Eph. 3:10-11).

2) **In the Last Days.** Most denominations can be traced to the late 16th century. Divine prophecy says the “*Lord’s house*,” “*the church of the living God*” (1 Tim. 3:15), would be “*established*” “*in the latter days*” (Isa 2:2). Acts 2 records what happened “*in the last days*” (Acts 2:16-17). As Acts 2 closes we see for the first time in the Bible that Christ’s church is in existence (Acts 2:47). Notice who was in His

“¹⁶ The churches of Christ salute you.”
—Romans 16:16

church, “*...the Lord added to the church...those being saved.*”

3) **In the City of Jerusalem.** All denominations can trace their origins to places like Rome, London, New York, etc. But the Bible foretold that the Lord’s church would begin in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3; Zech. 1:16; 8:3). The events of Acts 2, when the Lord’s church began, transpire in the city of Jerusalem (Acts 2:5) exactly as predicted by divine prophecy.

4) **In the Lifetime of Some Disciples.** The Lord’s church and the kingdom are one and the same (Matt. 16:16-19). Jesus promised “*That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.*” (Mk. 9:1) When the kingdom, or church, was established in Acts 2 many of those disciples were still alive and witnessed its establishment.

5) **In the Days of the Roman Kings.** The great image Daniel interpreted from Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Dan. 2) represented four world empires: Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman. Daniel revealed that “*in the days of these kings (i.e., Roman) shall the God of heaven set up a*

“² Now it shall come to pass in the latter days
That the mountain of the LORD’s house
Shall be established on the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And all nations shall flow to it.
³ Many people shall come and say,
‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths.’
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

—Isaiah 2:2-3

kingdom, which shall never be destroyed” (Dan. 2:44). Establishment of the church in Acts 2 occurs under Roman rule (Lk. 2:1; Acts 25:21) fulfilling this 580-year old prophecy.

6) **When the Word Was First Preached Among the Nations.** Contrary

to the teachings of many, the Lord’s church does not produce the Word, but the preaching of the Word produces the Lord’s church. Prophecy tells us “*the law, and the word of the Lord*” would “*go forth*” “*from Jerusalem*” (Isa. 2:2-3). Jesus sent His apostles to preach “*remission of sins*” “*among all nations beginning at Jerusalem*” (Lk. 24:47). Acts 2 records the results of this preaching, “*they that gladly received his word were baptized*” (Acts 2:41) and as a result, “*...the Lord added to the church daily those being saved*” (Acts 2:47).

What about the “church” to which you belong? Does its origin agree with what the Bible says? If not, give us a call.