

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?

Words of Life is published by the **Westside Church of Christ** meeting at 1301 N. Enterprise, Bloomington, IN 47404

Times of Service: Bible Study, Sunday 9:30 AM and Wednesday 7:00 PM; Worship, Sunday 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

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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



June 14,
2020

Vol. 12,
No. 16

The Church Jesus Built (Part 7)
Name 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 true church. Today, let's consider the name of Christ's church.

1) **What's in a name?** When discussing the name of the church the usual response is, "What's in a name?" If there's nothing in a name, how could we ever distinguish one thing from another? If

"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

I go into your bank and try to withdraw money from your account by signing my name will the teller say, "Sure, take all you want, after all...what's in a name." When you pay off your house or car, who's name is put on the title or deed? Just any old name? After all, "what's in a name?" In the Bible the names of people, places and events had great meaning: "Abraham" (*father of a great multitude*), "Jerusalem" (*foundation of peace*), "Jesus" (*Jehovah is salvation*), "Immanuel" (*God with us*). Do you still say, "What's in a name?" A name says a lot!

2) **The Church.** By understanding the nature of the church in the New Testament (NT), we can better understand the names given it. The church was built by Christ, "I will build My church" (Matt. 16:18). If Christ is the builder doesn't it make sense it should bear His name? The church was purchased by Christ with "His own blood" (Acts 20:28). When you spend dearly for something do you place just anyone's name on the purchased possession? The word "church" is used to describe the people God has "called out" of the world through the gospel into "His own kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12). Those obeying the gospel message are "added to the church" by the Lord (Acts 2:47). They are not "added" to a sect or denomination wearing a human name; teaching and practicing human doctrines (Matt. 15:9).

3) **What names are used in the New Testament?** In the NT the Lord's church does not have one official name, but several designations are used: "My church" (Matt. 16:18), "the churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16), "the church of the Lord" (Acts 20:28), "the church of the firstborn" (Heb. 12:23), "the church of God" (Gal. 1:13; 1 Cor. 1:2), etc. In 1 Peter 4:11 God's word admonishes us that "If any man speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God." Most denominational names are not found in "the oracles of God." Many denominational names give honor to a person (e.g., Luther, Wesley), a doctrine (e.g., Seventh Day Adventist), or church government (e.g., Presbyterian). The one who built the church, who purchased it with His blood is stripped of the honor due Him by such designations. Let us reject human devised names and give glory to God through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

"¹⁶ The churches of Christ salute you."
—**Romans 16:16**

The Church Jesus Built (Part 8) **Doctrine of Christ's Church**

Craig Thomas

We've been emphasizing our need to study the Bible concerning Christ's church for only in the Bible does God reveal His mind (1 Cor. 29:13; Eph. 3:1-5; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Today let's examine God's word concerning the doctrine Christ's church is to teach and practice.

1) **Doctrine of Christ.** Many ask, "What is the doctrine of your church?" First, we don't have a "church," it is Christ's church. The Father planned Christ's church from eternity (Eph. 3:10-11); Jesus built it (Matt. 16:18) and purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). The church consists of the people who have obeyed God's call through the gospel (2 Thess. 2:13-14) and as a result of their obedience to the gospel the Lord has "added" them to His church (Acts 2:47). The New Testament teaches that the doctrine belongs to Christ and the church itself does not have doctrine, but rather obeys and follows "the doctrine of Christ" (2 Jn. 9:11). Christ's doctrine is revealed in His will, or testament (Heb. 9:16-17); the New Testament for which He shed His blood (Matt. 26:28) and by which "will" we are "sanctified" (Heb. 10:10) if we are an obedient believer (Heb. 5:8-9).

2) **Apostle's Doctrine.** In Acts 2:42 we find the first converts to Christ continuing "steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine." Is the "apostle's doctrine" different from "the doctrine of Christ"? No, for Jesus promised the apostles that He would send them "the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." (Jn. 14:26) Furthermore, the purpose of the Holy Spirit was to "guide" the apostles into "all truth" (Jn. 16:13). Acts 2 records the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles. In 1 Corinthians 2 Paul even said that the very words the apostles spoke and wrote were chosen by the Holy Spirit (v. 13). Thus, the "apostle's doc-

trine" is also "the doctrine of Christ" and so we can rest assured that the things the apostles wrote "are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37). Thus, when we read that which they wrote we can have the same understanding of God's will they possessed (Eph. 3:1-5).

3) **Doctrines of men.** Unfortunately many who claim to be Christians are ignorant of, or not satisfied with, the "doctrine of Christ" and teach as doctrine "the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). Although sad, departures from the truth of Christ's doctrine were foretold from the very beginning of His church (Acts 20:30; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Thess. 2:3ff). When we listen to religious teaching we

must do as the Bereans and search the Scriptures to make sure the things taught are in agreement with God's inspired word (Acts 17:11). In our teaching and practice we must only speak as God's word speaks (1 Pet. 4:11). Sincerity alone is not enough; we must do God's revealed will (Matt. 7:21-23). What about you my friend? Do you abide in the "doctrine of Christ"?

His Name Is Mudd

Larry Hafley

Samuel Mudd, that is. Dr. Mudd treated John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of Abraham Lincoln. Booth's leg was broken as he leaped to the stage of Ford's theater after shooting the president. A few scholars and descendants of the doctor want his conviction as part of the assassination conspiracy to be overturned. Now, 133 years later, a District Court Judge has ordered the government to reconsider Dr. Mudd's case (*USA Today*, October 30, 1998).

No matter how it turns out, one thing is certain; it will not matter to Dr. Mudd. It will not affect his eternal destiny. It is still true that it is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment (Heb. 9:27)! God will judge rightly. Whether men or their governments ever get the correct verdict, God will do so. There will be no re-writing or re-working his judgments, for they are righteous and true altogether.

President Lincoln once said that if his course during the war was right, it would prove itself, but that if it were wrong, "ten thousand angels" approving it would not make it so. And so it is of Dr. Mudd and of all of us. Indeed, "Prepare to meet thy God" (Amos 4:12).

(I could not help but wonder that since they are going to reopen Dr. Mudd's case, with the hope of having it reversed, does that mean that 133 years from now some judge will order that the O.J. Simpson trial be reviewed and reversed?)

"¹ A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches."
—**Proverbs 22:1**