

The Church Part One

The words the church, like the word Christian, are used a great deal to reference many different religious bodies and organizations. Often the words the church, as used by the world at large, can be referring to any religious organization that states that it believes in Jesus. While it is true there are many different religious organizations in the world, in this series of lessons we will focus on the church as it is seen in the Bible. By exploring what the Bible teaches we can hopefully gain a better understanding of what the church actually is and what it really stands for. Please also understand that the church is not an actual building of brick or stone, but the people that make up the membership of the body. Because there is so much information to cover on this topic it will be broken down into two parts.

The Church Belongs to Christ

John 3:5 “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” The church is God’s Kingdom and He requires baptism to enter it. Because God owns His own kingdom, He gets to decide what mankind must do to enter it.

1 Corinthians 1:2 “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:” The church belongs to Jesus not anyone else.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” People make up God’s temple not bricks or stone.

Ephesians 2:19-22 “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Jesus is the very corner stone of the church. The apostles built up the church with Christ’s Word. It was built with a plan made to follow a specific doctrine. Christians, (a faithful Christian is a saint), are the church. It sure sounds like being in the church is very important.

Ephesians 3:14-21 “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” The church should wear the Lord’s name. By having the Lord’s name, one is saying they belong to Christ. If a religious body does not wear His name it is not

His and is not following the Bible. Ask yourself, does my religious body have a name other than God's or Christ's? If so that name is not authorized by the Bible. The church of Brian Zumalt is not a scriptural name for the church. I did not die for the church and I did not buy it with my blood, so it should not wear my name. A scriptural congregation will wear a scriptural name.

Colossians 1:18 "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." and **Colossians 1:24** "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:" The church is Christ's body and He is its head. No man or woman is the head of the church, Christ is the sole head of His church.

Hebrews 8:1-5 "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." and **Hebrews 9:11** "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building" The church must follow the direction of its head or high priest which is Christ. He gives us His teachings to follow in the Bible so we can know what He expects of His followers, which are in His church.

Christ is the Head, Savior and Builder of the Church

Matthew 16:15-18 "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. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Christ said he would build His church, not Peter's or anyone else's. Christ is the head of His church not Peter or anyone else. Peter made a statement that is truly very important, that Jesus is the son of God, and Peter went on to be a very important early teacher of Christ's Word as did the other Apostles. At no point however, did Christ elevate any one Apostle over the others. At no time did Christ make anyone other than Himself the head of the church.

Matthew 28:18-20 "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Christ has all authority and sent out His followers to teach the gospel to others. To be obedient to Christ one must not only become baptized but also be willing to spread the gospel to others. Jesus wants to spread His Word and has the authority to command it be done.

Acts 4:10-12 “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” In Christ and only in Christ is salvation. In order to be saved I must be in His church and not any other. If I am not in Christ’s church, I can not have salvation.

Ephesians 1:20-23 “Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” and **Colossians 1:18** “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.” Christ is the head of the Church which is His body. Because Jesus is the head of the church than I must follow Him and no one else if I want salvation. I must follow Christ and be in His body which is His church. He is in charge so if we are not obedient to His Word we will miss out on Heaven. We can choose to be in His one body, the one church, or miss Heaven.

Ephesians 5:22-32 “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” Jesus is the head of the church and died on the cross so that everyone in His church can be saved. He loves mankind so very much He suffered and died for us on the cross so that all who are obedient to Him can be saved. If I truly love Jesus, I will obey Him and follow the guidelines left for me in the Bible. If I am obedient to Jesus, I will be in His church which is the body of the saved. Outside of the church there is no salvation. (As a side note we also see, while the Lord did make Man the head of the house for his role in the family, the husband is to love His wife so much he would die for her, as Christ did for the church. This does not mean a man should rule his home as a dictator but rather with love.)

The Church was Prophesied

Isaiah 2:2-3 “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the

mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” As foretold in the days of Isaiah the church was established first in Jerusalem. This means Isaiah through God’s inspiration prophesied about the church being established in Jerusalem approximately 700 years before it began. Only God can do something like that.

Daniel 2:44 “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” and **Daniel 7:13-14** “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” Daniel through God’s inspiration foretold the church would come during the time of the Roman empire. This prophecy, about the coming of the church, was approximately 550 years before the church was established in the time of the Roman empire.

Matthew 3:1-2 “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” In the New Testament John, the Baptist tells us the church is coming soon. While sadly John did not live to see the church established, it indeed was not many years after he made this statement.

Mark 9:1 “And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, 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.” Jesus tells the crowd He is talking to that the church will come in the lifetime of some of them standing before Him. Indeed, the church was established not very long after this gathering.

The Church Began on the Day of Pentecost

Acts 1:8-11 and Acts 2:1-4 “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” **Acts 2:1-4** “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” On Pentecost the Church was established about 2000 years ago and as Mark 9:1 said it came with power. The Apostles was given gifts from the Holy Spirit to help start the church, so that their listeners world know that they represented God and were not charlatans.

Acts 2 14-40 “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” On Pentecost the first Gospel sermon was preached and some of the people that were present were moved and wanted to know what they need to do to please God. These people clearly believed what they heard or they would not have asked what they needed to do. They were commanded to repent and be baptized. You can not please God if you are not willing to follow His instructions.

Acts 2 41-47 “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every

soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” The people that were baptized were added to Christ’s Church which was now established and will remain until Jesus comes again. Salvation is only in Jesus’s church nowhere else. Christ established one church that day not many.

Due to the length of information on this topic the lesson The Church Part One will conclude at this point. The next lesson The Church Part Two will continue and conclude this lesson topic.