

## The One True Church of Christ

3-10-13

How many times have we been confronted when speaking the truth to our friends or family with this question: “Do you believe that only the church of Christ is going to heaven”? Let us take a moment to consider and answer this truthfully: Absolutely. But what may be missed is that most likely, those who question us do too.

You see, most people would agree with this truth if they realized that most denominations hold they are the church of Christ. Consider that the Catholic Church, the Methodist Church, the Baptist Church, the Presbyterian Church, and most denominations either directly or indirectly call themselves the church of Christ. So the real question is not “Do you believe that only the church of Christ is going to heaven”, but more accurately “Is there only ONE church of Christ”.

Scripture answers this for us quite clearly. We are told by Jesus Himself that He was building ONE church (Matthew 16:16). Later, His apostles spoke of the ONE church that Jesus had built (Ephesians 4:4-5, Romans 12:5, I Corinthians 12:12). If it is clear that there is only ONE church of Christ, is this it?

There are some simple ways that we can identify the true church of Christ. Let’s consider a secular example of this: when Columbus arrived in America, He wanted to know if he was in India (which is where he intended to go). He likely asked some simple questions to determine if he was in India. Who is in charge here? How does your nation work? Who is in your nation? What is your name? Let us ask similar questions about the church that Jesus built, and whether we have arrived at that country (Hebrews 11:16)

Who is in charge here? This is a question of where we get authority. The aforementioned churches have a number of answers; the catechism, the Methodist discipline, or the Baptist convention, for example. The church that Jesus built exclusively has ONE answer: Jesus and His word. (Matthew 28:18, I Timothy 1:3). When asked what our structure is, or how we function, we turn to that singular authority (Ephesians 4:11, 5:23). When asked who is in the church, we turn to the Bible for this answer as well (Acts 2:47). Finally, when asked the name of our “country”, we once more find the answer in the Word of God. (I Corinthians 1:12)

Would Columbus have said “perhaps there is more than one India”? No, obviously not. Nor is there more than one church built by Jesus. But truly, we can even use common sense to see that most who

claim to be the church of Christ are false. Let us ask a very simple question: Did God Change? "For I am the LORD, I do not change" Mal.3:6

Such a question might seem silly, but let us again consider the aforementioned denominations. In 50 years time the Catholic church: Decided limbo wasn't real; Muslims get to heaven now. If God does not change, how could this church be the church of God?

In 50 years the Methodist church: Discovered God did not create all things; Discovered women could be bishops; Discovered homosexuality was not a sin. If God does not change, how could this church be the church of God?

In 50 years time the Christian Church: became a denomination; Elected a woman as president. Can this church be the church of God?

In 50 years time the Mormon church: changed the identity of God; changed the priesthood of believers; discovered they couldn't speak in tongues. If God does not change, how could this church be the church of God?

In 50 years time the Presbyterian church: Discovered abortion was not a sin; Discovered homosexuality was not a sin. If God does not change, how could this church be the church of God?

In 50 years time the Baptist church: Made pastors "ruler of the church" (1988); Made confessions a source of doctrine (2000). If God does not change, how could this church be the church of God?

Can we continue? Absolutely. In the last 50 years we have seen dramatic, doctrinal changes in almost every single denomination, including Lutheran churches, Jehovah's Witnesses, Episcopalian, Assembly of God, Seventh Day Adventists.

Consider that even among many who identify themselves as "church of Christ", we have seen in the last 50 years: the invention of numerous agencies to do the work of the church; Changes in the structure of the church; Permitted church works to be controlled and dominated by institutions. If God does not change, how could this church be the church of God?

To find the Lord's Church, we must look for that which does not change. We must seek those who practice the absolutes taught of Judgment and Salvation. Absolute 1: Jesus only built ONE Church. Absolute 2: Only saved in Jesus Christ (John 14:6, Acts 4:12). Absolute 3: Only saved by Faith and Obedience in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:9, Hebrews 5:9). Absolute 4: Condemned for believing the doctrines of men (Colossians 2:22-23)

