

God Has Spoken
Tract Series

Why
Should I be a Member of
the Church of Christ?

That is a good question. Religion is confusing. One says, "This religion is best." Another says, "That religion is best." Yet another says that it doesn't matter which religion we choose. Still there are some who say that all religion is bad.

Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, believers in Confucius, Zoroaster, and Jesus all argue that their religion is the one every person should follow. What is even more confusing is that in each religion people don't agree which version of their religion is right. If you want to follow Jesus, should you follow Him by the way of the Catholics, the Baptists, the Methodists, or some other? Or would you be more religious if you chose all religions for your faith and practice?

Yes, religion is confusing, but truth is simple.

Everyone in the world knows that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. We all see the phases of the moon, and we see stars that have formed patterns in the sky and remain in those positions year after year. The precise time of those sunrises and sunsets – the phases of the moon and changes of season - are predictable and unchanging.

Among animals and man we all have observed that like invariably produces like. Cows do not produce horses; pigs do not produce chickens.

After years of observation we have learned to predict the weather. We know when and where the rain will appear, and how much will fall.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.
(Hebrews 1:1-2).

This order and predictability in nature tell us that wisdom and power are responsible for the creation of all things. That orderliness doesn't happen by accident. In searching for that creative power we may open the Bible and read its first words: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." If that statement is true, then we need to know more about God.

We can determine the truth of the Bible by many tests. One of those is to compare the Bible with our own observations of the world.

People of the past believed that the earth is flat and riding on the back of a giant elephant, but we have learned that the Bible was true from the beginning in saying that it is a sphere (Isaiah 40:22) hanging on nothing (Job 26:7).

The Bible contained descriptions of cities, lakes, rivers, seas, and mountains long before man discovered them – exactly where the Bible says they are. In every geographic and scientific statement it makes, the Bible has been found true. We can therefore trust it to be true in all other statements also. Psalm 19 tells us in its first six verses that all the predictability in nature is evidence of God. The remainder of the psalm tells us that we can therefore trust His word, the Bible.

Many hundreds of times the writers of the Bible said that they were writing what God told them to write. Isaiah made that declaration 172 times, Jeremiah 470 times, Ezekiel 449 times. Some examples among the apostles and evangelists of Jesus are in I Corinthians 2:9-13, II Timothy 3:14-17, and II Peter 1:19-21. God spoke it and men wrote it.

The Bible describes the creation of the universe, including man (Genesis chapters 1 and 2). God created everything perfect, but man yielded to temptation and refused to obey God's command (Genesis 3:1-13). As a result man lost His fellowship with God (Genesis 3:16-24). At the same time God made a promise to destroy the power of the tempter so that man's fellowship with God could be restored (Genesis 3:14-15).

God selected Abraham and built his family into a nation through which He could bring that promised Blessing to man (Genesis 12:1-3). The first 39 books of the Bible (the Old Testament) describe the preparation God made for fulfilling the promise. Over 600 times in those books He tells specific details of the Savior who would come to reconcile man to God. Isaiah chapters 9 and 53 are examples of those details. The first four books of the New Testament tell of the birth, teaching, miracles, and sacrifice of Jesus. He fulfilled every

prophecy, proving that He is the Son of God (John 20:30-31). He built His church as the kingdom of God on earth (Matthew 16:18-19; Mark 9:1).

We would not know how or why the world came into existence if we had not read it in the Bible, and found the Bible to be true. It is likewise true that we would not know the term “church of Christ” if we had not learned it from the Bible (Romans 16:16). The Bible alone can tell us the truth about the church of Christ.

Jesus promised to build the church (Matthew 16:18), and He called it also the kingdom of God (verse 19). He promised that it would begin in the lifetime of those to whom He spoke (Mark 9:1). He told His apostles that it would begin in Jerusalem when the power of God came upon them (Luke 24:49). That power came upon them with sound and sight as recorded in Acts 2:1-4. Multitudes came to see what was happening (verses 5-13), and the apostles preached to them the good news of salvation from sin by faith in Jesus as the Son of God (verses 14-40). About 3,000 people believed that message and obeyed the instructions of God. Having thus been saved from sin and restored to fellowship with God they were added by Him to the church (verses 41-47).

There was only one church built by Jesus. All the saved were added to it by God Himself. As there is only one Creator God, one Son Jesus the Christ, one Holy Spirit, and one Heaven, so there is only one faith that saves, and one body of saved souls (Ephesians 4:4-6). That body is the church of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). It is that body - and only that body - that will be saved by Jesus (Ephesians 5:23-27).

If you ask why should you be a member of the church of Christ, I ask in response, “Why should anyone belong to any church other than the church of Christ?”

But you cannot join the church of Christ. Remember that “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). People ask, “What should I do to be a member of the church?” A better question is, “What must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30).

When a man asked that question in Philippi Paul and Silas answered him, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 16:31). Then they taught Him about Jesus so he would know what to believe (verse 32). The same answer was true for everybody else, so they taught the entire household.

Jesus had told His apostles to preach the gospel in all the world (Mark 16:15). The apostle Paul defined the principles of the gospel as the facts that

Jesus died, was buried, and rose again to life (I Corinthians 15:1-4). His resurrection is proof of His deity (Acts 13:33). It is also proof that we all will be judged by Him whether we shall live in eternal joy with God or eternal suffering with Satan (Acts 17:30-31).

God calls upon all of us to obey the gospel (II Thessalonians 1:7-10). We begin by believing that Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24; 20:30-31). If we respect His authority that belief will move us to repent from sin (Acts 2:23-24; 36-38). The natural next step is that we will gladly tell others of our new faith (I John 4:15; Acts 8:35-38), and we will be baptized into Christ at the earliest possible time (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; Acts 16:33; Mark 16:16).

When we have obeyed the gospel we are saved from sin, we are in fellowship with God, and we are added to the church of Christ.

THANK YOU for allowing us to introduce the church of Christ. We are not a cult or human religion. There are many thousands of us around the world following only the Bible, which God has given as our only rule book (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3).

The church which Jesus built has Jesus as its only head (Ephesians 1:22-23). Local congregations are organized under elders (Titus 1:5), and have deacons (Philippians 1:1), teachers (Ephesians 4:11), and preachers (II Timothy 4:1-5).

Following the rules in the Bible, the church meets on the first day of every week to worship God in the specific way He requires (John 4:23-24). We eat the Lord's supper (I Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 20:7), pray (Acts 12:12), sing praises to Him (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), give gifts to support the cause of Christ (I Corinthians 16:1-2), and receive further instruction from the Bible (Acts 20:7; Titus 2:15).



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