

**12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE
THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

By: Ronny F. Wade

Dear Neighbor, Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines "Faith" as '*something believed with strong conviction.*' The Bible reads in Ephesians 4: 4-6 "**There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**" We invite you to consider "12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST."

These sermons were originally preached by the author on the television program "LET THE BIBLE SPEAK," and they have been arranged for this publication by Don Snow, McDonough, GA. While there are many translations of the Bible, the Scriptural Verses presented in these articles are from the King James Version, unless stated from another Translation.

We send this work forth with love and prayers that thousands will be led to the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior - (John 1:32-34).

The English word "church" derives from the Greek '*kuriakos*' (belonging to the Lord), but it stands for another Greek word '*ekklesia*,' which means: 'the called out,' or 'the separated from' - "*a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly,*" - Greek Ref. # 1577. It is evident that the word "church" does not convey the same idea to every person. And so our best approach in communicating what the Bible teaches about the church is by being the church that is set forth in the written word of God.

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"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." - Jesus Christ, John 4:24.

GOD BLESS IN YOUR STUDY OF THE WORD OF GOD.

Greek Reference - Thayer's GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON of the NEW TESTAMENT
Hebrew Reference - Gesenius HEBREW-CHALDEE LEXICON of the OLD TESTAMENT
THESE REFERENCES ARE NUMERICALLY CODED TO STRONG'S EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE

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"INTRODUCTION TO THE CHURCH."

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell (*Realm of the dead, Hades*' - Ref. # 86) shall not prevail against it." Here the Lord promises to build His church, the greatest institution on the earth.

The church of Christ was not limited to one nation of people, but for all people of every nation who rightfully call upon the name of the Lord. Many years before the Lord came and established His church, Isaiah the prophet records these words in chapter 2, verses 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."

Another prophecy about the Lord's church being for all nations of people is in *Daniel 2:34-35*, **"Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."**

From these two prophecies we see that the Lord's church was to become a great body of people from all nations of the earth. These people would be those who would love and respect God, and obey His word of truth.

The Lord's church was to be a divine church, not a human or man-made church. This church was to follow the truths and commands of God's word, not human doctrines and philosophies. In *Ephesians 3:10-11* it reads, **"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."** The plans for the church of Christ were of eternal origin -- planned by God and executed by Christ, His Son (Ref. # 5207, *"coming from God & expressing His honor, office & work"*) - **Matt. 17:1-5**.

These human denominations, that exist in abundance today, are the product of man and not of God. In fact, they often call themselves by the very name of their founder or by the method by which they operate. This becomes a mockery of divine authority - **"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,"** - Ephesians 5:23-26. Also 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."**

The church of Christ is governed by Christ and His Word of truth called the gospel or New Testament. Christ is the universal head. He does not have a representative on earth as some would suggest. In Eph. 5:27 it reads, **"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."** The Lord had such a concern for His church's welfare that He requested that we walk in newness of life and lead sober, godly and righteous lives in order to safeguard the church's influence in the world. The church's mission is one of evangelism, ministry, and kindness. To add to, or change this, is to bring divine disapproval.

Our salvation is the reason that Christ came to this world. If mankind had not been hopelessly lost in sin, Jesus would not have come. But **"He came to seek and save that which was lost** (see Matthew 1:21; **Luke 19:10**; - I Timothy 1:15-17). Jesus was put to death on the cross. He arose from the dead for our justification - **Romans 4:25** and returned to God the Father - (**Acts 1:9-11; Luke 24:50-53**). But Christ prepared the apostles for the great work of converting the world, and this work was to be done in His church **"which He hath purchased with His own blood"** (Acts 20: 28). Paul writes in I Tim. 3:15 - **"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."** It is the duty of the church to uphold the Lord's truth to the lost. And those who obey the truth according to **Acts 2:47** are added to the

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church. While the church does not save by itself, (**it is Christ who saves**), yet our salvation is in the Lord's body or church. In Ephesians 5:23 it reads, "... **Christ is the saviour of the body.**" And in Eph. 1:22-23 it reads - ("**that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ' - v. 17**) **"...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."** If any of us are saved, we must be in the Lord's church.

God loves everyone (John 3:16), and God wants no one to perish, but come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). The Lord Jesus Christ said in John 14:15 - **"If ye love me, keep my commandments."** Also, Christ said in (John 4:24) - **"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."** Also, the apostle Paul records in Romans 16:16, **"The churches of Christ salute you."**

12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1 - "BECAUSE JESUS IS ITS BUILDER & FOUNDATION."

With so many different churches existing in the world today, with conflicting doctrines, you may be wondering why it is important that Jesus Christ should be the builder, head and foundation of the church.

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, **"I will build my church."** The church belongs to Christ. If the church belongs to Christ, then why do we have so many different religious bodies in the world? The answer is simple: "Somebody has been building churches when they had no right to do so!" Many religious organizations owe their existence to common men and women, not to the Son of God. Many religious organizations teach doctrines that are often foreign and contradictory to the gospel of Christ. If Christ is not the builder of the church, then the church is not the one you find in the Bible.

Some people have mistakenly taught that John the Baptist built the church. But this cannot be true for several reasons. First of all, John the Baptist referred to Jesus Christ as **"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."** - John 1:29. In Matt. 14:10, John the Baptist (Ref. # 910, "one who administers baptism") was beheaded. Later in Matt. 16:18 Jesus declared to build His church. If John the Baptist was dead when Jesus made this statement, then John the Baptist could not have built the church. Also, John the Baptizer said this of Jesus Christ in John 3:29-30, **"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."** Jesus, the bridegroom, is married to the church, and He must increase. John, the friend of the bridegroom, was to decrease. John the Baptist did not build the church, and so it should not wear his name. Please note that the name "the Baptist" given to John is an added surname because he immersed people in water. The angel said to Zacharias, his father, **"thou shalt call his name John."** - (Luke 1:13).

No less important than the building is the foundation of the church. No building is stronger than its foundation. What then is the foundation of the church? In I Corinthians 3:11 we are given the answer, **"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."** However, let us read Matthew 16:18 where Jesus says, **"upon this rock I will build my church."** What is this **"rock"** to which Jesus refers? Whatever it is, upon it the church was built by Christ. In order to get the complete picture of the text, notice verse 16, **"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."** Then in verse 17 the Lord blesses Peter for the confession which he had made, and in verse 18 the Lord promises to build His church. It is clear from the text that Christ planned to build His church upon the truth of Peter's confession: **"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."**

Some have mistakenly interpreted this passage to mean that Christ built His church upon Peter. However, a closer look at the wording will show that this is not, and cannot be true. When Jesus said, **"I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter,"** Jesus used the Greek word for Peter which is (**'petros'**) meaning a stone, a rock, a piece of rock (*'a soul hard and unyielding'* - Ref. # 4074). But when Jesus said, **"upon this rock"** He used the Greek word (**'petra'**) meaning a huge mass, cliff or ledge of rock (# 4073). The two words are as different as their meanings. The church is therefore founded upon the fact that Jesus is the Christ, God's promised, infallible Son - not upon Peter, a fallible, erring creature.

In Isaiah's prophecy, chapter 28 and verse 16 it reads, **"Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."** In Matt. 21:42 Jesus applies this prophecy

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to Himself: **"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes."** Later in Acts 4:11 the apostle Peter by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit applies this same prophecy to Jesus: **"This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner."** Jesus, and not Peter, is the head of the church, as well as its foundation. The apostle Paul also writes in Ephesians 2:20 - **"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone:"** The **"chief corner stone"** is the basic, essential, & most important part of a building, **IT'S THE FOUNDATION**.

It is important to note that the Church is built upon a divine rather than a human foundation. Christ is **Deity, Eternal and Immortal**. In John chapter 1 and verse 1, the apostle tells us of Christ - **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God."** The apostle Paul also records of Christ in Philippians 2:6 - **"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."**

Therefore, as the foundation of the Church, Christ will endure forever. Death, decay and depreciation cannot harm the church, for Christ who is its builder, head, and foundation is **Eternal** - **"The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made"** - (John 1:2-3). [Also observe Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, in chapter 1].

12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

2- "THE CHURCH'S SCRIPTURAL BEGINNING."

The beginning of any organization involves both TIME and PLACE. Thus we are interested in the time WHEN and the place WHERE the New Testament Church began. Let us go back to Isaiah 2:2-3 and notice what is said, "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."

From the above passage, the following points are evident:

- A. WHEN WILL EVENT HAPPEN?..... come to pass in the last days.
- B. WHAT WILL EVENT BE?.....the Lord's house will be established.
- C. WHO WILL BE INVOLVED?..... all nations will be present.
- D. WHERE WILL EVENT TAKE PLACE?..... city of Jerusalem.

In order to understand WHAT the Lord's House is, let us notice First Timothy 3:15, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." From this it can be seen that the church is the house of God. After Jesus was raised from the dead, but prior to His ascension back to heaven, He said these words in Luke 24:46-49 - "...Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." The outstanding points are:

1. WAIT FOR PROMISE OF THE FATHER.
2. IN JERUSALEM.
3. REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS TO BE PREACHED.
4. AMONG ALL NATIONS.
5. BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM.

In this scripture the Lord promises the apostles with power from on high. But the question is "How soon will this take place?" In Mark 9:1 Jesus helps give the answer, "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." So before the death of some of those people in that day the kingdom was to come. Added to this, we find the statement of John the Baptist in Matt. 3:1-2 - "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The kingdom of heaven or church was at hand in the days of John the Baptist. But now let us see if we can find the fulfillment of all these scriptures and establishment of Christ's New Testament Church.

A. Let us look for THE COMING OF THE PROMISED HOLY SPIRIT.

In Acts 2:1-4, we find that requirement met: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they ('apostles') 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 ('parted, divided,' Ref. # 1266) 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 ('languages,' Ref. # 1100), as the Spirit gave them utterance."

B. WAS IT IN JERUSALEM and ALL NATIONS PRESENT?

In Acts 2:5 this condition is fulfilled: "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout

men, out of every nation under heaven."

C. WHAT ABOUT THE TIME?

In Acts 2:16-17 we find that it was the last days: **"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:"** Here it might be well to emphasize the fact that when the Bible says, "**this is that**," the question of whether or not a prophecy has been fulfilled should forever be settled. Sometimes people make the mistake of looking for the fulfillment of a prophecy in different generations even though the Bible plainly states that it has already come to pass.

D. WHAT ABOUT REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS?

Note Acts 2:37-38, **"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and 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."** These believers in Christ were commanded to repent of their sins, and be baptized to receive the remission of sins, & obtain gift of the Holy Spirit.

E. WHAT ABOUT THE LORD'S CHURCH? WAS IT MENTIONED?

In V. 47, **"Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."** On the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and His return back to heaven, the church of Christ had its beginning in the city of Jerusalem. The above statement is important. Namely, any church established before this time is too early, and any church established after this time is too late. Have you checked to see when and where the church of which you are a member began? But you ask, **"How shall I decide on a church?"** One way is to compare every church with the Bible. If they don't agree, reject them. Find the church with the right beginning, then proceed in your study. **We believe the church of Christ is worth investigating.**

12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

3 - "BECAUSE OF ITS SCRIPTURAL NAME."

We now come to a study of a subject that many people consider unimportant. In fact, there is a phrase very common in religious circles that says: **"Don't you know that there is nothing in a name?"** Falsely led by this belief many people fail to understand what the Bible teaches on this most important subject.

God has always placed significance on names. In Genesis 5 we learn of the family of Adam and Eve. God gave Adam the authority to name all of the animals - (Genesis 2:19-25). Words and names have always been important. Because people have a common understanding about words and names, they are able to communicate and understand each other. This would be impossible if there were nothing in words and names.

In studying about the church, just what designations are given by the Bible? Let us notice some of them. First, in Matthew 16:18 when Jesus promised to build the church, He referred to it as **"My church."** This shows ownership. The church belongs to Christ. It is His. In Acts 8:1 we're told that a persecution arose against **"the church."** In this verse we have the expression used most frequently regarding this institution. It is merely referred to as **"the church."** Then, of course, there was just one church. Today, man has started so many different churches that if you tell people you are a member of **"the church,"** they think you are trying to be evasive or comical. In I Cor. 1:2 we read, **"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth."** Here Paul was addressing himself to the disciples who constituted the church in Corinth & calls them the **"church of God."** Next in Acts 20: v. 28, Paul says. **"...the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood"** and Romans 16:16 **"the churches of Christ salute you."** Again, Paul is referring to the various local congregations of the church in that vicinity. The church is also referred to as **"the body of Christ"** (Eph. 4:12), and as the **"church of the living God"** (I Tim. 3:15). Any or all of these names are divine, scriptural & found in the Word of God. Can this be said of the church to which you belong? When you go to church next Sunday look at the sign. Is there a human or **divine name**? IF NOT, give serious thought to the situation.

Again, we find God recognizing the value of a name when He changed Abram's name to Abraham, and Sarai's name to Sarah - Genesis 17:5-17. Also in Genesis 32:27-28 God changed Jacob's name to Israel. This is critical because the descendants of this man were known as **Israelites**, instead of Jacobites. In Daniel 9:19 it reads, **"Thy people are called by thy name."** Is it any wonder that today God insists that we wear the names of His choosing? In Isaiah 56:5, **"Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off."**

Let us now go to the New Testament and see if we can locate the fulfillment of these prophecies. First of all we read in Acts 9:15, **"But the Lord said unto him ('Ananias'), 'Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.'" From this we see that God selected Paul to be the name bearer. Thus if we can find the apostle Paul bearing a name in the house of God, or church, to Gentiles and Jews alike, we will have located the name given by God.**

In Acts 10, we learn of the conversion of Cornelius and his family who were the first Gentile converts. Thus, after Acts 10 we have both Jew and Gentile in the church. In Acts

11:25-26 we read: "Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: (or Paul, Acts 13:9). And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." The divine God-given name is "**Christian.**"

But let us notice further and see if Paul continued to preach this name. In Acts 26:28 Paul, when before king Agrippa, tried to convert him to the truth of Christ. The king being aware of the intentions, said to Paul: "...Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." For further proof that this is the name approved by God, let us go to 1 Peter 4:16 - "Yet if any man suffer as a **Christian**, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." This is the name in which we are to glorify God. It is the new name chosen by God for His people. Other labels must be rejected.

Please note the following quote from Charles Spurgeon, in the Spurgeon Memorial Library, Vol. 1, page 168, "*I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope the Baptist name will soon perish, but let Christ's name last forever.*" Also, consider the quote from the Life of Martin Luther by Stork, page 289, "*I pray you to leave my name alone, and call not yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine. I have not been crucified for anyone. St. Paul would not that any should call themselves of Paul, nor of Peter, but of Christ? - (I Cor. 1). Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names, and distinctions: away with them all, and let us call ourselves only Christians, after Him from whom our doctrine comes.*" Wouldn't you agree that it is better to call ourselves just Christians?

Let's notice some designations given to individual members of the Lord's church. In Romans 1:1-7; I Cor. 1:2, they are called '**saints.**' In Colossians 1:2, '**brethren.**' In Acts 20:7, '**disciples.**' And as noticed in Acts 11:26, they are called '**Christians.**' In 1 Peter 2:5-10; Rev. 1:5-6, they are called '**priests.**' Every Christian is a priest & a saint.

12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

4 - "THE CHURCH ACCEPTS THE BIBLE ONLY."

Is the Bible a safe guide in matters of religion? Most people will answer this question in the affirmative. And yet, the vast majority of people don't believe that it is necessary that we follow the Bible only.

Many claim that one's conscience is a safe guide. As long as they "**feel good**" and do not violate their conscience they think everything is all right, even though the Bible may not teach certain things. Still, others believe in following their feelings. Their reason for believing they are saved is that they "**feel it.**" They, too, will agree that we should follow the Bible, but in certain instances if you "**feel you are saved,**" nothing else matters. Then others will uphold the necessity of church creeds, disciplines, confessions of faith, etc. They argue that these are necessary for a proper understanding of the Bible. They also claim that they help define certain Bible doctrines that are rather obscure. Of course, they don't completely object to nor reject the Bible, but they definitely feel that these added helps are necessary. At the extreme end of this position are those who claim that other books, such as the Book of Mormon, the Koran, and the writings of Ellen G. White, are inspired just like the Bible and are to be taken with equal consideration.

However, in view of all the bible teachings, we are forced to stand opposed to all the foregoing reasoning. We believe that the Bible only should be accepted and followed by mankind. Anything else constitutes an addition or a change in that which has been given and approved by God. We believe that: THE BIBLE COMPLETELY EQUIPS US TO EVERY GOOD WORK.

In 2 Peter 1:3 it reads, "**According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.**" If in the Bible we have been given all things, then there is no need for additional creeds or books. Notice 2 Tim. 3:16-17 - "**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect ('fitted or complete' - Greek Ref. # 739), thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**" If the Bible furnishes us with all good works, what need is there for further revelation? What can a church creed or discipline do for us that the Bible cannot? *A human creed is objectionable if it contains more or less than the Bible.* Upon what grounds can we defend the use of human creeds? The answer is **none**.

HUMAN CREEDS CAUSE DIVISION. Human creeds are responsible for much of the division in the religious world today. They have erected barriers that include all who agree with their teachings and exclude all who disagree. If all these human drafts and creeds could be removed, a great step for unity would be made for the truth of God's Word.

WHY THE BIBLE ONLY? Perhaps you are wondering just why we insist upon the Bible only. There are several good reasons which we shall give:

A. IT IS THE SEED OF THE KINGDOM. In Luke 8:11 it reads, "**Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.**" A seed is an amazing thing. It contains the germ of life, and the power of reproduction. God decreed in the beginning that every seed would bring forth after its own kind - (Gen. 1:11-12). Since every seed produces after its own kind and the word of God is the seed, then it follows that the Bible produces Christians only. And, another thing about a seed is it brings forth only one thing. Never have you seen a seed that produces two things. So it is with the Bible. It produces but one thing. But someone says, "*What about all the different churches in existence today?*" The answer is simple. They exist because another

seed was planted.

B. IT IS A LIGHT. One of the most powerful forces known to man is light. It will banish darkness immediately. Wherever there is light, there is no darkness. David said, **“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path”** - (*Psalm. 119:105*). Again in verse 130, **“The entrance of thy words giveth light.”** It is the Bible that lights the dark corners of the pages of history. Such questions as, *“Whence came man?”* - *“Where is he going?”* - *“Is there life after death?”* - are all answered in the Bible, but nowhere else.

C. IT IS THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT - EPHESIANS 6:17. In Hebrews 4:12, **“For the word of God is quick (‘living, alive’), and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”** A sword is a weapon of warfare. It may be used to defend one's self, or to defeat the enemy. But, one unskilled in its use might do great harm to himself. The Word of God is much like this. It is the Christian's defense, and destroys the false and untrue. Yet, many, who do not properly handle it, use it to their own destruction. In the language of Peter they **“wrest (‘twist’) the scriptures, unto their own destruction.”** - 2 Peter 3:14-18. Yes, Many enemies of Christ have felt the sharp edge of the Spirit's sword.

D. FINALLY, THE BIBLE IS THE MIRROR OF THE SOUL. In James 1:25 it reads, **“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”** By looking into the Bible we see ourselves as we really are. Why then should I get upset when the Bible shows me things in my life that shouldn't be? Why try to change the Bible instead of changing self? This should not be.

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5 - "THE CHURCH IS UNDENOMINATIONAL."

The church that Jesus built is not a denomination (*See a good Dictionary*). It is not associated with any one or group of denominations. It does not single out any particular denomination and oppose or fight it. But opposes the entire system as an unscriptural set-up. There are some groups that claim to be undenominational, yet in reality are all-denominational. They embrace people from all denominations.

You may be wondering why we oppose the religious system known as denominationalism. There are many reasons, but basically it can be traced to the teachings of the system which conflicts with the Bible.

| DENOMINATIONALISM TEACHES | THE BIBLE TEACHES |
|--|---|
| 1. Many different churches or bodies | 1. One body or church. <u>Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4</u> |
| 2. Founded by men. | 2. Built and founded by Christ. <u>Matt. 16:18</u> |
| 3. Human heads. | 3. Christ is the head. <u>Eph. 1:22-23</u> |
| 4. Human man-made creeds. | 4. Bible as only creed. <u>2 Tim. 3:16-17</u> |
| 5. Wear human names. | 5. Christian, the Bible name. <u>Acts 11:26</u> |
| 6. Follow different men. | 6. Following men is condemned <u>1 Cor 1:10-13</u> |
| 7. Membership in the many churches not necessary | 7. Membership in the church of Christ is essential to salvation. <u>Eph. 5:23</u> |
| 8. Preach many gospels. | 8. Forbidden to preach contrary to the one true gospel. <u>Gal. 1:6-9</u> |
| 9. Many faiths. | 9. One faith. <u>Eph. 4:5</u> |
| 10. Many baptisms. | 10. One baptism. <u>Eph. 4:5</u> |
| 11. Sprinkling or pouring for baptism. | 11. Immersion or burial only scriptural mode. <u>Rom. 6:3-4</u> |
| 12. Join churches and get voted in. | 12. Lord adds to the church. <u>Acts 2:47</u> |
| 13. Walk by different rules. | 13. Walk by the same rule. <u>Philippians 3:16</u> |
| 14. Creeds subject to change. | 14. Bible remains the same. <u>Matt. 24:35</u> |
| 15. Thanks God for all churches. | 15. Jesus prayed for unity. <u>John 17:20-21</u> |

From the above outline, we see that the Bible and denominationalism conflict as to the number of churches. The apostle Paul says in Ephesians 4:4, "**there is one body.**" If there is only one body, then the hundreds or more in existence today cannot all claim to be right. The promise of our Lord in Matthew 16:18 concerned only one church with its faithful congregations. Someone else has been building churches, and they have no Bible right to do so. Since this is the case, they must be man-made organizations. Not so with the one built by Jesus Christ. It is divine.

The human organizations of denominationalism have human heads. But, in the Bible, Christ is head of the church. We read in Ephesians 1:22-23, "**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.**" Christ is head of His church.

Next, we notice that these human churches, which are directed by men, also use and follow human man-made creeds. Whereas the Lord's church uses the Bible only. In 2 Tim. 3:16-17 - "**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect ('complete' # 739), thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**" The acceptance of human creeds leads also to the wearing of human names. This is forbidden in the Bible. We are admonished to wear only those names given by God - (Acts 4:12). Because of its make-up, denominationalism causes people to follow different men & creeds. This also is condemned by the Bible. We are to follow Christ and not man. Paul teaches the dangers of such a practice in I Cor. 1:10-31.

One of the amazing things about denominations is that they tell you that you can be saved and never be in any church. We deny this. While we recognize the fact that the church does not save by itself, yet we are aware that Christ saves the church. "**...Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.**" - Ephesians 5:23,

Denominationalism preaches many different gospels. The Bible forbids such in Galatians 1:8-9, "**But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.**" The unscriptural system also teaches that there are many faiths & baptisms. But in Ephesians 4:5 it emphatically reads: "**there is one faith, one baptism.**"

Another error is that many teach sprinkling or pouring water to be baptism. But the Bible teaches only a burial is baptism. In Rom. 6:4, "**Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**" Also read Col. 2:12. Sprinkling or pouring some water does not meet the demands of "**a burial.**"

Lastly, man will often thank God for all the varied denominations. But the Bible teaches unity, not division - John 17:20-21. With all that the Bible says about being united as one in Christ, how can I thank God for so many warring creeds and doctrines of men?

12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

6 - "IT WORSHIPS GOD ON THE RIGHT DAY."

There is much disagreement in the world today as to which day Christians are to assemble to worship God. Some hold to the old Jewish Sabbath, while others contend that it should be upon the first day of the week. The only way to settle this matter is to go to the Bible and let it supply the answers.

WHEN WAS THE SABBATH FIRST GIVEN?

A proper understanding of this will help us to determine which is applicable today. In Exodus 16:23 "And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe ('boil') that ye will seethe ('boil'); and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning."

In Nehemiah 9:13-14, "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant." From the above, it is evident that God gave the sabbath to these people when He gave Moses the Law. The contention that the sabbath was commanded from the beginning is false and cannot be proven. But let us notice also:

TO WHOM WAS THE SABBATH GIVEN?

Again we go to the Bible, this time in Deuteronomy 5:2-3, "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." God did not make this covenant with their fathers, but with them and them alone. Notice also Exodus 31:16-17, "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout all their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." These passages definitely prove that the sabbath was given by God to the children of Israel or the Jewish people. The Gentiles never observed it. There is **no record** that Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob ever kept the sabbath, they all lived before the giving of the law. Next, let us notice that the nature of the institution necessarily limits it to the Jews & their land:

- A. NO WORK WAS TO BE DONE, EXODUS 20: 10.
- B. THEY WERE TO ABIDE IN THEIR PLACES, EXODUS 16: 29.
- C. THEY COULD NOT KINDLE A FIRE, EXODUS 35: 3.
- D. THE PENALTY FOR VIOLATION WAS DEATH, EXODUS 31: 14-15.

THE LAW OF THE SABBATH WAS DONE AWAY IN CHRIST.

In Colossians 2:14 it reads, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." Yes, The old law was nailed to the cross of Christ. It passed away, and was superseded by another law, the law of Christ. Is the law of the sabbath included in it? Are we still obligated to keep the sabbath as some claim we are? Well, let's go to verse 16 and see, "**Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days.**" If the sabbath is no longer binding, then what day is? In order to answer that question, we must go to the New Testament and notice the following facts:

1. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST WAS ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, Luke 24:1-3.
2. CHRIST MET WITH HIS DISCIPLES ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, John 20:19.

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME TO REMAIN ON EARTH ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, Acts 2:1-4. This all happened on Pentecost. Pentecost always came on the first day of the week, Sunday - Leviticus 23:15-16.

4. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST WAS ESTABLISHED UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK. Since Pentecost came on the first day of the week, it then logically follows that the Church was established on the same day. Notice v.47 of Acts 2 - "**Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**"

Next, we need to locate the day upon which New Testament Christians are commanded to assemble. First of all we go to Hebrews 10:25, "**Not forsaking (Ref. # 1459, 'to abandon, desert') the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.**" In this passage we have the command to assemble, but the day is not specified. Let us see if we can locate the day. In Acts 20:7, "**And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech unto midnight.**" Thus the Holy Spirit specifies the day upon which the early disciples met to observe the Lord's Supper. As added proof that they customarily met on this day, let us notice I Cor. 16:1-2, "**Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.**" In Revelation 1:10 we read the following: "**I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet...**" Yes, when we add up all the truth that we have gleaned from the New Testament, we can safely agree that upon the first day of the week, Sunday, the disciples assembled to worship God in spirit and in truth - John 4:24. Please read **Hebrews 9:14-28; Matthew 12:40.**

12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

THESE COMMENTS ARE SUBMITTED BY DON SNOW

It is interesting to note in Amos 8:4-10 that this Old Testament prophet speaks about many of the Jews who did not like the holy days of God, and so in their rebellious attitude *'they were wanting to know when the new moons and sabbath days would be gone, so that they could buy, sell, and do their sinful practices on these days.'* - (verses 5 & 6)

God does not approve of sins mentioned here, yet the prophet writes in verse 9: **"And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day."** Please note that the new moons and sabbath days were all being observed while Jesus Christ was on earth. However, when Jesus was crucified on the cross, there was darkness from the 6th hour to the 9th hour. This darkness began at the sixth hour, or 'NOON' and lasted three hours - (**Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44**). This wasn't a brief eclipse. Therefore, the New Testament records that when Jesus Christ died there was darkness AT NOON, and that HE fulfilled the Old Testament Law and brought it to an end as a binding covenant - brought an end to the sabbath days, new moons, and other holy days of the Old Testament Law - (**Colossians 2:11-23**). Yes, Jesus Christ completely fulfilled the many prophecies of the promised Messiah recorded in the Old Testament (**over 330**). And so God the Father brought an end to the Old Law of Moses as a binding covenant. He gave mankind (*both Jews & Gentiles*) the promised Savior who can forgive one's sins when that person chooses to believe and obey Christ and His blood-sealed New Covenant. God the Father "...so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" - John 3:16. While some people do not believe that these scriptures in Amos 8 are referring to the coming Savior, yet everyone must choose whether to accept or reject the message in Colossians 2:11-23, that Christ "wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way having nailed it to the cross" (v. 14, NKJV). However, the Old Testament is a great source of information for Christians (**Romans 15:4; I Cor. 10:1-13**).

Please consider that under no circumstances can two agreements, contracts, or covenants be binding at the same time. No court or legal system will recognize such. This situation creates conflicting conditions - the very picture of religious confusion today. Jesus said to His apostles in Luke 24:44 **"These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me."** For a few scriptures see: Genesis 3:14-15; Deutonomy 18:15-19; Psalms 2:1-12, & 110:1-7; Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7, & chapter 53; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Galatians 5 & 6; Ephesians 2 & Hebrews 8, 9 & 10.

12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

7 - "ITS OPPOSITION TO INNOVATIONS IN RELIGION."

Many people do not understand why we approve of innovations in material matters, but oppose them in divine matters. According to the dictionary an innovation is: "**something newly introduced; new method, a change in doing things.**" However, there are two kinds of innovations:

1. INNOVATIONS INVOLVING MAN'S ARRANGEMENTS.
2. INNOVATIONS INVOLVING DIVINE ARRANGEMENTS.

With the first, we have no objection, but with the second we do. Many innovations have been introduced into our way of life during the past few years. And usually for the better. However, religion is no exception. Man has also added his touch to things divine. This should not be, and this is where the trouble arises. In *Jeremiah* 6:16, "**Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.**" Today we have much the same attitude and situation. We need the "old way," but man with all his innovations says, "**We will not walk in it.**" - "**It is too old fashioned.**"

Note again *Isaiah* 55:8-9, "**For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.**" Because man does not think nor act like God, it is impossible for him to know what God wants and doesn't want without going to the Bible. In *Proverbs* 14:12 it reads, "**There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.**" Many times man will say, "**I don't see anything wrong with this,**" or "**Why would it be wrong to do it this way?**"

A good example of "Innovations" is recorded in *1 Samuel* 15:1-22. God commanded King Saul to go over to the land of Amalek and utterly destroy the people and all that they possessed for attacking Israel after they came out of Egyptian Bondage. After reaching the land, Saul spared the best of the flocks and oxen, and even the king. Behind his actions was a noble purpose -- at least it would appear so. But let us not forget that God commanded this man to do something, and regardless of the motives behind his actions he still has failed to do what God commanded. Will Saul be held responsible? Let us see: "**And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.**" - *1 Samuel* 15:20-22.

THE CHURCH IS A DIVINE INSTITUTION.

In Matt. 16:18 we hear Jesus as He says, "**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.**" - (NKJV). The church is divine because Jesus, the Son of God, built it. Notice again in Eph. 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...: 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.**" Since the Lord's church is a divine institution, the church must use only divine names, and teach approved doctrine.

WE DO NOT NEED CHANGES IN THE DIVINE PLAN.

The idea that we need innovations today in order for the church to be successful is totally unfounded. The plan of God is adapted to the needs of all men in every age. Why should we think that we need new gospels, or creeds, or other forms of organizations? What is wrong with the old tried and true? With far too many people, religion has become a social and cultural thing. Subtract the social and entertaining features of religion, and many people would soon lose interest. Hence, the excuse of modernism is that such devices are necessary for a survival of religion. With religion this might be true, but not true of Christianity and the Lord's church. May God help us capture the tenor of these verses in John 8:28-29, "**Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.**"

THE RESULTS OF INNOVATIONS.

Innovations bring about gradual changes which seem harmless. But soon with the passing of time, one can see the harmful results. The Jews furnish us a good example in Mark 7:7-9, "**Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.**" The early Christians made the same mistake during a period of time known as the Dark Ages. However, this did not happen overnight. Finally, at the end of this long period of apostasy, many came crying: "**Back to the Bible.**" And with the help of God they began an historic journey back to spiritual Jerusalem. The reason we feel so keenly about it, is because of the **LAW OF LIMITS** declared in **Galatians 1: 6-10.**

12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

8 - "ITS OPPOSITION TO INNOVATIONS IN DOCTRINE."

It would be impossible in the course of one lesson to notice all the innovations that have been introduced into the doctrine of Christ. However, we do want to notice at least two of the most frequently taught. They deal with the subjects of faith and grace. First, let's look at the subject of faith.

THE NECESSITY OF FAITH.

To begin with, let us prove the necessity of faith, lest someone gets the idea that we doubt it. In Hebrews 11:6 it reads, **"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."** In Romans 1:17, **"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith"** And finally, 2 Cor. 5:7, **"For we walk by faith, not by sight."** We can clearly see that faith (*'conviction of the truth of God's word,'* - #4102). is a vital part of our salvation. But the question is, **"Can faith only, by itself, save a person from sin?"** The only way to answer that question is to go to the scriptures and see if they teach such a doctrine.

DOES FAITH ALONE SAVE?

It is noteworthy that many leading churches and church creeds teach that faith alone saves. Some even state that - **"The doctrine of faith only is a wholesome doctrine and full of comfort."** But let us read James 2:24, **"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."** How, then, can man justify his erroneous teachings of faith only? Let us see more of the inconsistencies into which this doctrine leads us. In James 2:19 - **"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."** Now if one is saved by merely believing, then the devils will be saved too. And we know this could not be. Again we read in John 1:11-12, **"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."** If faith only saves, then the believer would be a child of the Father. But this passage teaches that as a believer, he only has the freedom to become a child of God, if he so chooses.

Notice further in John 8:31, **"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed."** Remember these Jews **"believed on him."** If faith alone saves they are saved, because they believed. However, verse 44 tells us more, **"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."** From this verse the Jews who believed on Jesus were of the devil. Faith didn't save.

CONSIDER GRACE AND SALVATION.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God..."- Eph. 2:8. This passage proves that we are saved by grace. It does NOT prove that we are saved by grace only. Yet, we are interested in whether or not, after one is saved, can he fall from grace & be lost. Man says, NO.

We offer this quote as proof that some people teach that we cannot fall from God's grace: **"Does a Christian's sins damn his soul? We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his**

attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul. All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform, will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit, from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger. The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul." **(THIS STATEMENT IS BY: SAM MORRIS, AT THE TIME, PASTOR OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, STAMFORD, TEXAS).**

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Even though man says "NO," the Bible says a definite "YES." The doctrine that man cannot fall from God's grace is an old one. The **devil** preached it to mother Eve in the garden of Eden. He said, "**Ye shalt not surely die**" - (Genesis 3:4). She believed him, *and the result is still with us today.*

- 1. THE BIBLE WARNS AGAINST IT.** In I Cor. 10:12, "**Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.**" The word of God recognizes the possibility of falling. Would it not be foolish for the Lord and the Bible to warn us of something that is not possible?
- 2. A BIBLE EXAMPLE.** In I Cor. 10:8 we are given a Bible example of some people who fell from grace. "**Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.**" A great multitude of people sinned. The result: they fell.
- 3. THE BIBLE SAYS WE CAN FALL - in plain, distinct terms.** Listen - "**Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace**"- (Gal. 5:4). Can anyone deny such plain language as that? How can a man stand before an audience of intelligent people and tell them that they cannot so sin and be lost because of it, when the Bible says, "**ye are fallen from grace.**" God's grace does not give Christians a license to live sinfully - **Eph. 2:10 & 2 Peter 1:5-11.**

12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

9 - "THE CHURCH'S TEACHING ON BAPTISM."

The English word 'baptism' comes from the Greek word 'BAPTISMA,' which means '*to immerse, submerge, dip, plunge, etc*' - Ref. # 908. No religious subject provokes more controversy than baptism. And with many, there is no room for discussion. This conflict is not due to a lack of Bible teaching, for the Bible has much to say about the subject. The problem seems to be a failure to properly apply Bible teaching.

One such area of misunderstanding is brought about by a failure to distinguish between the different baptisms of the Bible. In the New Testament, we read of six baptisms. It should be noted that baptism is exclusively a New Testament word. If there are six baptisms mentioned, how do we harmonize that with the statement by Paul in Ephesians 4:5 - "...there is one baptism?" This apparent problem is solved when we realize that of six baptisms, four have already served their purpose, one is yet future, and one, "the one," is currently in force.

1. THE BAPTISM OF MOSES.

The account of this baptism is recorded in Exodus, chapter 14. The New Testament mention is made in 1 Cor. 10:1-2. In these verses Paul affirms "**that all our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.**" This was an historical event. It happened only once. Today we have no relationship to it, except in a typical and illustrative way. In verse eleven Paul stated that, "**...it happened unto them for ensamples,**" or by way of example. Today we are "**baptized into Christ**" - (Galatians 3:27). Since the baptism of Moses is a symbolic baptism, it could not be the one commanded by Christ nor the one spoken of by Paul in Ephesians 4:5.

2. THE BAPTISM OF JOHN.

The baptism of John is recorded in Matthew 3:1-11. John prepared the people for the coming of Jesus (Luke 1:17). Israel was in great wickedness when John came, hence the necessity for someone to come and make the people ready for Jesus. John's mission and his baptism, was preparatory in nature. The baptism of John differed from the baptism commanded by Jesus in that those baptized by John had to believe on Jesus who was to come, whereas those baptized by Christian baptism had to confess their faith in Christ (Acts 8:36-38), who had already come. After the great commission was given by Christ, people were baptized into "**the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,**" - (Matt. 28:18-20, NKJV). John never baptized in this name. John's baptism was for Jews only. Not so with Christian baptism; it was for all mankind - Mark 16:15-16). A study of Acts 19:1-5 makes it clear that John's baptism is not in force today, since Christ has come. Thus, we may conclude that John's baptism became invalid after Christ's death.

3. THE BAPTISM OF SUFFERING.

We read of this in Matt. 20:22-23. Jesus often referred to His future sufferings as a baptism, i.e. a burial or immersion in those sufferings. This is a figurative baptism in that it is a reference to the pain and anguish with which Christ was submerged when He died on the cross for our sins (Matthew 27). Thus we can say that Christ was buried in suffering. This, however, cannot be the baptism commanded of all mankind by Christ.

4. THE BAPTISM OF FIRE.

In Matthew 3:11 we read, "**I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.**" John was speaking to a mixed multitude,

some of whom would later become the disciples of Christ and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Others would reject the Messiah and be baptized with fire. Hence they were called a “**generation of vipers,**” v. 7; 12:34. The baptism of fire, therefore, refers to the punishment awaiting those who reject Christ. It is the final abode of the wicked in “***hell fire***.” It is being cast into everlasting fire (**Matt. 25:41**) - “**...cast into the lake of fire and brimstone**” (Rev. 20:10) - a baptism of fire, yet to be fulfilled **Matt. 13:41-42**.

5. THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

In this same verse (Matt. 3:11), Jesus promised to baptize some with the Holy Spirit. To whom did Christ make this promise? The answer is found in John 14:16-17, 16:1-4. In both passages, it’s clear that the apostles were the ones to whom the promise was made. God has said in Joel 2:28, “**...I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh...**” In this reference, there are only two kinds of flesh - Jewish and Gentile. In Acts 2:1-4 we have an account of the Spirit being poured out on the Jews (Apostles) on the day of Pentecost. In Acts 10:44-48, we have the account of the Spirit being poured out on Gentiles at the house of Cornelius. It should be noted that the baptism of the Spirit was a promise and not a command. No one was ever commanded to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, and only certain ones received the promise. Today there is but one baptism and it is not Holy Spirit baptism. On Pentecost, Peter witnessed two baptisms, the Holy Spirit baptism of the Apostles, and water baptism on the 3,000 converts (Acts 2:1-4, 38-41). About ten years later, Peter again witnessed two baptisms in the house of Cornelius - Holy Spirit baptism and then water baptism (Acts 10:44-48). But in A. D. 64, Paul wrote that there is one baptism (Eph. 4:5). When Paul so wrote, the Holy Spirit baptism had served its purpose and passed away. (*For further study of Holy Spirit baptism, see page 14*).

6. CHRISTIAN BAPTISM or BAPTISM OF THE GREAT COMMISSION.

That leaves us with one baptism to discuss. None of the five we have studied thus far are the baptism with which we are to be baptized today. In order to help us understand Christian baptism or baptism of the Lord's Great Commission, we have some well-worded questions that will pin-point what this baptism does.

A. DOES THE BIBLE MENTION BAPTISM?

YES IT DOES. There are over 100 references in the New Testament to the words baptism, baptize, and baptized.

B. DOES THE BIBLE DEFINE BAPTISM?

YES IT DOES. In Colossians 2:12 it reads, “**Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.**” Also Romans 6:3-4, “**Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**” Baptism is an immersion in water. Sprinkling or pouring don’t fit.

C. DOES THE BIBLE GIVE EXAMPLES OF BAPTISM?

YES. In Acts 2:37-41 we have an example of about 3,000 being baptized. In Acts 8:26-40 we read of the Nobleman from Ethiopia. Again in Acts 16:25-34 we read of the conversion & baptism of the Philippian Jailer. If you read the book of Acts you’ll be given a detailed picture of many people being baptized in harmony with the Lord's commands.

D. DOES THE BIBLE SAY WHAT BAPTISM IS FOR?

YES. We will let Acts 2:38 answer that question. “**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." Thus baptism is performed in order that we might receive the remission of our sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

E. DOES THE BIBLE SAY WHAT BAPTISM DOES?

YES IT DOES. In 1 Peter 3:21 it reads, "**The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**" Acts 22:16 reads, "**And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.**" In Mark 16:15-16, "**And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.**" In Gal. 3:26-27 it reads, "**For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.**" From the above scriptures, we can see that baptism **saves, washes away sins,** and **puts one into Christ.** With such testimony, who would say that baptism is not essential?

F. DOES THE BIBLE INFORM US WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Yes, it definitely does. Note the following outline:

THOSE WHO ARE TAUGHT - Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Col. 2:6-10

THOSE WHO GLADLY RECEIVE GOD'S WORD - Acts 2:41; Mark 4:13-20

THOSE WHO BELIEVE - Mark 16:15-16; John 8: 21-30; Romans 1:16-17

THOSE WHO ARE WILLING TO REPENT- Acts 2:38; 2 Peter 3:9; Luke 13:3, 5

THOSE WILLING TO STATE FAITH IN CHRIST - Acts 8:37; Matt. 10:32-33

Anyone who can meet the above requirements can be baptized. Those who cannot meet them are not ready for baptism. But someone says, "**What about babies?**" That is a good question, for there is no scriptural basis for baptizing infants or sprinkling a little water on them. The Bible does not teach such. Infants are incapable of believing, repenting, confessing, and receiving the word. Because of this they cannot be baptized scripturally. Baptism is for the remission of sins, and infants have never sinned. Therefore they do not need baptism. Please see Matthew 18:1-4 & 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-15; Luke 18:15-17

G. DOES THE BIBLE SAY WHEN ONE SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

YES. Indeed it does. The answer is - NOW. Saul was asked in Acts 22:16, "**Why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins...**" In Acts 8:12 it reads that, "**when they believed they were baptized.**" The Jailer in Acts 16 was taken the same hour of the night and was baptized, verse 33. It is something that should not be put off. Death is too certain, and eternity too long for one to gamble with his soul. For this reason, when one accepts his duty, baptism should soon follow.

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WHAT KIND OF HEART (or 'DUST' - Genesis 2:7) ARE WE?

"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."
(Matthew 13: 19-23, NKJV) - Jesus Christ - "Parable of the Sower"

12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

10 - "ITS OPPOSITION TO INNOVATIONS IN WORSHIP."

It will be impossible for us to notice all the innovations that have marred the worship of the Lord's church. For that reason, we have selected three items of worship, and shall notice some of the innovations that have destroyed their original beauty. They are: **Music in the church; The Lord's Supper; and, The Teaching of the Word of God.** In John 4:24 we read the following - **"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."** All acceptable worship must come from a pure heart, whose motives are just and true. And, all acceptable worship must be offered according to the truth of God's Word. A failure to observe either renders the worship vain and ineffective.

MUSIC IN THE CHURCH.

A careful survey of the New Testament will reveal that only vocal music was used by early Christians in worship and praising God. Such scriptures as the following bear this out: 1 Cor. 14:15 **"I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."** In Eph. 5:19 **"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;"** And in Col. 3:16 **"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."** Whence came the instrumental music in Christian worship? The Roman Catholics were the first to introduce an organ into the worship of any church claiming to be Christian - (See any good encyclopedia). This was over 650 years after Christ. It was introduced by Pope Vitalianus I. When it threatened division in the Catholic Church, it was removed to preserve unity. However, some eight hundred years after Christ, the organ was reintroduced into the Roman church. The Greek church rejected it. For men to bring musical instruments into the Lord's church and worship of God, they had to go back to the Old Testament, **NOT TO THE BLOOD-SEALED COVENANT OF CHRIST.** **Musical instruments give physical pleasures to the worshipers, not spirit and truth worship to God.**

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The simple account of the Lord's Supper may be found in any of the following scriptures Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20; & 1 Cor. 11:23-29. We do not have the space to read all of them here, but will give Matt. 26:26-29, **"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."**

1. JESUS TOOK BREAD

2. HE BLESSED IT AND BRAKE IT (Ref. # 2806, *'to break, the breaking of bread'*)

3. HE GAVE IT TO THE DISCIPLES & THEY ALL BREAK AND ATE -

I COR. 10:16-17

4. JESUS TOOK A CUP CONTAINING FRUIT OF THE VINE

5. HE GAVE THANKS FOR IT

6. AFTER DRINKING, HE GAVE IT TO THE DISCIPLES

7. AND THEY ALL DRANK FROM IT

But today we see a change in this pattern. In the 1800's A.D. individual cups with fruit

of the vine and pieces of bread were introduced into congregations. Whence came these changes? Again we must go to history for our answer. I quote from **Sacrament of The Lord's Supper** - by Thomas H. Warner "*Until near the end of the nineteenth century the chalice, or cup was used in the distribution of the wine at the Lord's Supper. At that time more attention began to be paid to hygiene, and the use of the common cup began to be unpopular with the communicants. Rev. J. G. Thomas, who was both a minister and a physician, was the originator of the idea of Individual cups. From his medical practice he learned the uncleanness and danger of the common cup and felt that the Lord's Supper could be made more attractive and beautiful by the use of Individual cups. His first patent was granted in March, 1894. The first Individual cup service was held in a little Putnam County Church in Ohio.*" So there is the authority for individual cups in each congregation. This is where they originated - in Ohio, not in Jerusalem. By a doctor, not by the Savior. The use of one cup, as opposed to more than one, is taught in the scriptures by example, command, and necessary inference.

1. **CHRIST TOOK ONE CUP & GAVE THANKS FOR ONE CUP. Mark 14:23**
2. **JESUS GAVE ONE CUP TO HIS DISCIPLES. Matthew 26:27**
3. **JESUS CALLED THE CONTENTS OF THE ONE CUP HIS BLOOD. Mark. 14:24**
4. **JESUS COMMANDED HIS ASSEMBLED DISCIPLES TO DRINK OF ONE CUP CONTAINING FRUIT OF THE VINE. Matthew 26:27**
5. **THE DISCIPLES OBEYED AND ALL DRANK OF ONE CUP. Mark 14:23**
6. **THEN WE READ: "THE CUP OF BLESSING WHICH WE BLESS, IS IT NOT THE COMMUNION (Ref. # 2842) OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST?" 1 Cor. 10:16**
7. **THE COMMUNICANTS OF AN ASSEMBLY ARE ADMONISHED TO DRINK OF (Greek Ref. # 1537, 'from out of, out from') ONE CUP. 1 Cor. 11:27-29.**
8. **"...THIS CUP IS THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MY BLOOD: THIS DO YE AS OFTEN AS YE DRINK IT, IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME." Luke 22:20; I Cor. 11:25.**

In I Cor. 10:16-17, "**The bread which we break, is it not the communion (Ref. # 2842 'joint participation, fellowship') of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread ('loaf', Greek Ref. # 740). May God help us to restore the primitive beauty of the Lord's Supper. We should never observe the Lord's Supper, nor any worship of God, in a congregation to please men - GALATIANS 1:8-10.**

THE TEACHING OF THE WORD.

How did the New Testament church teach the word of God? Was it in an undivided assembly, or in segregated classes? Did men only do the public teaching, or did men and women teach in the church? The answer to these questions are basic, and important, because innovations have again entered the church. The pattern of public teaching in the New Testament is very plain. Always one man speaking at a time to one audience (I Cor. 14:31). This was the practice of Jesus while He was in the world. And it later became the practice of the church. The following passages show this: 1 Cor. 11:20 "**When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper.**" This passage shows that it was the practice of the church to come together into one place. They evidently did not segregate themselves into Bible classes or Sunday school classes as many do today. Also First Corinthians 14:23 - "**If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?**" Again, we see the Bible practice of assembling in one place. In fact, not one case of the church dividing into classes for public teaching can be cited in the entire New Testament. Can you find one?

WHAT ABOUT WOMEN TEACHERS? Let us go to the Bible for the answer. In 1 Cor.

14:34-35 "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." Now someone says "but that only applies to the wives of the prophets." Well, suppose it does, why must the wives of the prophets remain silent? "it is a shame for women to speak in the church." Any woman. Also verse 37 "...the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." In First Timothy 2:11-14, "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority (Greek Ref. # 831, 'to govern, to exercise dominion') over the man, but to be in silence." Why? "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." But, what about women singing? Singing is not teaching as spoken in these verses. If singing were teaching, each person would sing one at a time - I Cor. 14:31-33.

MODERN SUNDAY SCHOOLS INTRODUCED INTO THE CHURCH – After 1783 A. D.
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC INTRODUCED INTO WORSHIP -- After 658 A, D,
INDIVIDUAL CUPS & WAFERS INTRODUCED INTO WORSHIP – After March, 1894
"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"
Matthew 15:9, John 4:23-26 & Colossians 2:22-23.

**PLEASE NOTICE THESE OTHER COMMANDMENTS OF MEN
INTRODUCED INTO THE LORD'S CHURCH WORSHIP:**

- 120 A. D. - Holy Water Introduced - From Idol Worship
- 211 A. D. - The Doctrine of Purgatory Introduced [See Dictionary]
- 250 A. D. - Sprinkling Introduced for Baptism (Immersion)
- 296 A. D. - Title of Pope First Applied To A Bishop of Rome
- 313 A. D. - They Decreed That Elders Could Not Marry
- 325 A. D. - Introduction of Creeds, Prayer Books, Manuals
- 370 A. D. - First Case of Infant Baptism
- 428 A. D. - Praying To Statues Introduced Into Christian Worship
- 632 A. D. - The Rise of Mohammed & The Koran
- 795 A. D. - Incense Introduced Into The Worship
- 814 A. D. - First Sale Of Indulgences Was Offered [See Dictionary]
- 1700's A. D. - Development of Denominations

Plus More

12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

11 - "IT OPPOSES INNOVATIONS IN ORGANIZATION."

As in other areas, innovations have crept into the organization of the New Testament church. In fact, it seems that it was in this area that innovations first made their entrance into this sacred body of Christ. We read in Acts 20:28-30 **"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."** The apostle Paul is talking to the Elders of the church at Ephesus. He tells them that from among themselves men would arise and draw away disciples. **This was done.** Through the executive make-up of the Lord's Body, Satan found a way to destroy that which was good. And it eventually led to the Dark Ages. (*See a good Encyclopedia.*)

What type of organization did the church have? Where was its headquarters, and who ruled it? All of these questions are important, and demand an answer. First of all we must remember that Christ is the head of the church. In Ephesians 1:22-23 **"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."** Again in 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."** Since Christ is the head, and He is in heaven, the church has no earthly headquarters. If it did, that would be proof that it was being governed by human beings, and **not God**. Thus any other regulatory make-up that the church might have, must be in harmony with the teachings of scriptures, and the Head, Christ.

It might be well to point out presently that there is no such organization as is common to human denominations known in the Bible. No boards, directors, superintendents, etc. The papal system is also unscriptural. There is no authority for an earthly, universal head of the church. This entire system came about by a misuse of power and a misinterpretation of the Scriptures. In New Testament times each congregation was an independent group. They had their own Elders and Deacons. They exercised no authority over other congregations. Nor were they engaged in unscriptural co-operative efforts. This is known as **"congregational autonomy."** Meaning that each church was a unit within itself. That is the way it should be today, but alas--innovations! Just how long this continued, we don't know. We do know that soon after Paul had the conversation with the Ephesian elders the trend away from things scriptural started. The churches formed organizations - grouped themselves together. For example the elders of one church would get together with the elders of another church and so on until many churches were represented. Men were chosen out of the group to represent them at even larger meetings with other groups until this process built, and built. Finally the end was the election of one man to become the universal Bishop over the entire church. He was called the Pope. Now, granted this did not happen over-night. In fact, it took many years even for the first few steps to take place.

Today, religious organizations are being built largely upon the likes and dis-likes of men. The main object is **"get the job done."** The how isn't even taken into consideration - that is with reference to its being scriptural. What we need now is for the church to return to the original plan of organization. Each church is a unit with its elders and deacons. In Philippians 1:1 - **"Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."** The bishops were originally the principal

officers in the local church or congregation, along with the deacons. The title “bishop” or “elder” applied to the same person. “Elder” referred to his maturity and dignity, while “Bishop” referred to his work of superintendence or overseer of God’s spiritual matters. The title “deacon” primarily denotes a servant, attendant, or domestic. Elders or Bishops in each congregation served in spiritual matters, while deacons served in domestic matters.

Let us now notice the qualifications of these men called bishops and deacons. In 1 Tim. 3:1-13 - **"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?); Not a novice (*'new convert'* - # 3504), lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.**

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husband of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

So gives the qualifications of men who are to exercise the oversight in the local congregation along with their helpers (See **Titus 1: 5-16**). It was the job of the preacher or evangelist, the one (or ones) who established the congregation, to set in order each congregation so that they could stand on their own and be the pillar and ground of the truth.

For convenience we have outlined the qualifications of Elders and Deacons for you on the following chart:

| ELDERS | DEACONS |
|--|--|
| 1. Must desire office | 1. Grave - (<i>'of honorable character'</i>) |
| 2. Without reproach or blameless | 2. Blameless - (<i>'above reproach'</i>) |
| 3. Husband of one wife | 3. Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience (<i>free of guilt, conduct</i>) |
| 4. Temperate - (<i>'controlling one's self'</i>) | 4. Proved - (<i>'genuine, approved'</i>) |
| 5. Sober-minded - (<i>'curbing one's impulses'</i>) | 5. Not double-tongued - (<i>'not to deceive'</i>) |
| 6. Good Behavior - (<i>'a well-ordered life'</i>) | 6. Not <u>given</u> (<i>attached</i>) <u>to much wine</u> |
| 7. Given to hospitality - (<i>generous to guests</i>) | 7. Not greedy of filthy lucre - <i>see # 18</i> |
| 8. Apt to teach - (<i>skillful in teaching</i>) | 8. Husband of one wife |
| 9. Not <u>given</u> (<i>attached</i>) <u>to wine</u> | 9. Rule children and own house well. |
| 10. No striker - (<i>'bruiser, contentious' Greek Ref. # 4131</i>) | 10. His wife must not be a slanderer, but temperate, & faithful in all things. |
| 11. Of good behavior - (<i>'a well ordered life'</i>) | |

| | |
|---|--|
| 12. Rules own house well, having faithful children | |
| 13. Have good testimony from outsiders | |
| 14. Lover of goodness and good things | |
| 15. <u>Holy</u> - (<i>'pious towards God'</i>) | |
| 16. Just - (<i>'a just judgment on others'</i>) | |
| 17. Not a brawler - (<i>'not contentious'</i>) | |
| 18. No lover of money - (<i>'eager for base gain'</i>) | |
| 19. Not a novice - (<i>a new convert</i>) | |
| 20. Not self-willed - (<i>'arrogant, self-pleasing'</i>) | |
| 21. Not soon angry - (<i>'irascible, hot tempered'</i>) | |

12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

12 - "TEACHING ON THE HOLY SPIRIT & SPIRITUAL GIFTS."

The subject of the Holy Spirit is one of the most mis-understood of all religious topics. Many people claim to have the gift of the Holy Spirit, but don't know in what measure they have it. Others say it's impossible to get it all, and still others say that only a select few can obtain it. Also there's disputes about how one will react if he has it. For that reason we'd like to review it with you.

I. THE COMMON GIFT OF THE SPIRIT.

By the common gift, we mean the gift common to all who obey the gospel of Christ. This gift is mentioned in the following passages: Acts 2:38 - "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." In Galatians 4:6 it reads: "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father." Also in Acts 5:32 "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

It is evident that every obedient child of God receives the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is received at baptism. This common gift was not super-natural. It is the Spirit clothing put on at baptism - Acts 2:38; Romans 8:9. In Ephesians 1:13-14 we are told that this clothing is part payment in advance of the ultimate and ideal clothing of eternity - "which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." This then is what we mean by the common gift of the Spirit. But, the gospel warns that we can "grieve the Spirit" (Eph. 4:30) & "quench the Spirit" (I Thess. 5:19).

II. THE GIFT THROUGH THE LAYING ON OF HANDS.

This gift of the Spirit is entirely distinct from the one just noticed. The above gift always immediately followed baptism. The laying on of hands always imparted supernatural power; the gift just discussed never imparted supernatural power. **ONLY THE APOSTLES COULD IMPART THIS GIFT, IT WAS IMPARTED BY THE LAYING ON OF THE APOSTLES HANDS.** There were nine such gifts. Please turn in your Bible and read I Cor 12: 8-12. The nine gifts were:

1. THE WORD OF WISDOM - 2. THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE
3. SUPERNATURAL FAITH - 4. HEALING - 5. THE WORKING OF MIRACLES
6. PROPHECY - 7. THE DISCERNING OF SPIRITS - 8. TONGUES
9. THE INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES (Languages)

Let us now find an example of this type of gift of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. In Acts 8:14-19, "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." Realizing this gain, Simon wanted to buy this power. But he couldn't. Only apostles of Christ had power to impart these gifts.

III. BAPTISMAL MEASURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Now we wish to study the highest form of spiritual gifts. This is the ultimate gift of the Spirit. It was never imparted to anybody at any time, but always came directly from God.

It was never commanded of anyone, but was merely a promise to the apostles. Thus those who claim that a reception of it is necessary to salvation, just do not understand the teaching of the Bible on this subject. There are only two cases of it in the entire Bible. Let us notice both of them carefully: Acts 2:1-5 "**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. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.**" This case of Holy Spirit baptism is given to the apostles only. It enabled them to preach and perform miracles in spreading the gospel of the kingdom. They also spoke in "**other tongues**" (which happened to be other intelligent languages of this world), because the people had to hear the gospel of Christ in their own language, and choose to obey it or reject it. However, this speaking in tongues was not some non-sense which could not be understood. It was not some gibberish incoherent to both speaker and hearer.

The next case of Holy Spirit baptism is in Acts 10:44-48 and takes place at the conversion of Cornelius and his household. The purpose is to show that God has accepted the Gentiles. "**While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 'Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?' And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.**" This covers the two examples of Holy Spirit Baptism in the New Testament. To confuse this gift of the Holy Spirit with the other two is a very serious mistake that is responsible for much of the confusion in the world today.

Since the apostles and those in Acts 10 are the only ones who ever received Holy Spirit baptism, we have no reason for supposing that it still exists today. No one except the apostles were ever promised it. It never was a general promise to all persons. Also since the apostles were the only ones who could lay hands on a person and impart spiritual gifts, it follows then that when the last apostle died, this power ceased. When the last man died upon whom an apostle had laid hands, then there were no longer miraculous manifestations of the Spirit in existence. This leaves only the common gift of the Spirit. The gift which each obedient, baptized believer receives (**Acts 2:38**). But, remember that even in the days of the apostles this common gift carried no miraculous power with it. Thus there's no reason to assume that it carries any with it today, regardless that some people claim to do miracles that are an illusional shadow of what Jesus & apostles did.

In **John 16: 5-15**, we have a list of things that the Holy Spirit would do, as part of His work. **Please read and behold:**

1. THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS NOT GIVEN TO MAKE PEOPLE BRAG NOR BOAST OF THEIR POWER.

Simon in Acts 8:9-23 is a case in point. This man was somewhat of a magician. He dazzled people with his works and power. He was, however, converted to Christ. As he followed the Apostles he saw not only their miracles, but their power to lay hands on people, thus imparting to them the power to work miracles. Simon wanted that power so much that he offered the Apostles money to receive it. His motive was wrong. He was told v. 20 "**Thy money perish with thee.**" Today we see and hear many who boast of their power to heal the sick, raise the dead, etc. Some even write books about their 'Greatest Miracles.' The Holy Spirit doesn't make people boast of their miracles. The Holy Spirit came to glorify Christ, not Himself -

(John 16:14).

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS NOT GIVEN TO KEEP PEOPLE ALWAYS WELL.

The idea that God never allows His people to get sick and does not want them to seek medical help when they are sick, is against Bible teaching. Paul told Timothy to drink "**...a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities**" (1 Tim. 5:23). Paul did not say "just have faith" and "the Holy Spirit will heal you." Notice also that Paul left Trophimus at Miletum sick (2 Tim. 4:20). Why didn't Paul heal Trophimus? The answer is simple, the power of the Holy Spirit was never for the purpose of just making sick people well. Even Paul himself had infirmity of the flesh, according to Galatians 4:13. Why then does the Bible speak of people being physically healed by the power of God? The answer lies in the purpose behind miracles. Notice John 11:15, "**And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe.**" The real motive was to produce faith. Today God's word produces faith according to Romans 10:17, "**So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**" We do not need miracles today to produce faith since we have the Bible. But, miracles also confirmed the truth. In Hebrews 2:3-4, "**How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?**" In short, the scripture says that miracles certified the message by authenticating the messenger. Thus, by 'means of miracles' Jesus was shown to be "**...a man approved of God unto you...**" - Acts 2:22. We are told in 2 Cor. 12:12 that Paul's miracles were the "**sign of an apostle.**" Those today, who claim to have power to make sick people well, fail to realize why the apostles healed people in the first century. It was not just for the purpose of making them well, but served to confirm the word of God and produce faith in people's hearts, and then obedience to the Word of God.

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL NOT CAUSE YOU TO FALL AND ROLL AROUND ON THE GROUND, NOR INJURE YOURSELF.

With many, excitement is the name of the game. They run, shout, jump church pews, roll on the ground, get dirty and often injure themselves. Some even teach that rolling on the ground and getting dirty shows submission to the Holy Spirit and a sign that the Holy Spirit has come upon them. However, note the behavior of those who received the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4 and 10:44-46. There is no hint of this type of behavior. In Acts 19:13-16 & Mark 5:1-5, the Bible says it was an "evil spirit," not the Holy Spirit.

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL NOT SAVE YOU SEPARATE AND APART FROM THE WORD OF GOD.

Some teach today that the Holy Spirit must work on you from within before you can be saved. "*An experience better felt than told.*" They claim that it is impossible for a person to come to God unless the Holy Spirit directly calls him. This teaching has led some to claim that they "*have seen bright lights,*" "*had visions,*" or "*heard voices in the night,*" etc., all of which prove that the Holy Spirit has called them. However, in the matter of salvation, pardon comes from and takes place in the mind of God. "**Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon,**" - *Isaiah 55:7*. This being the case, any evidence of pardon must come from God and not from within ourselves. For me to say that "*I have been saved because I saw a bright light,*" means nothing since God has said nothing about such an experience being evidence of my pardon. Hence, the only way I can know that I've been pardoned is to comply with God's word of truth. (Please read Matthew 9:9-13; Acts 1 & 2; I Cor. 6:9-11 & James 4: 7-10).

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL NOT PROTECT YOU FROM TEMPTATIONS, NOR KEEP YOU FROM SINNING WITHOUT YOUR HELP.

Some people claim to be immunized from temptations and sins by the Holy Spirit. Many of us know people today who have, in time past, claimed to be led by the Holy Spirit, who are living in sin, some even serving prison terms. We have Bible accounts of men like Peter and Barnabas who, having received the Holy Spirit, were tempted and sinned (**Gal. 2:11-21**). The Holy Spirit did not protect them from sinning. They, as we, have to cooperate with God and His Word of truth by "*walking in newness of life*" - (**Romans, 6**). Paul writes in **1 Cor. 9:27**, "**But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.**" Christ was tempted in all points as we, yet without sin (**Hebrews 4:15; Matt. 4:1-11**). While God will not let us be tempted above what we are able, (**1 Cor. 10:12-13**), yet this idea that the Holy Spirit will protect us is false.

6. THE HOLY SPIRIT DID NOT COME TO MAKE PEOPLE RICH.

There are some who teach "*prosperity doctrines*." The idea is that God intends for none of his children to be poor. The promise of riches lures many of these men and their false doctrines. People who can ill afford it, often send in their last dollars believing their donation will somehow return making them rich. They are told to "*plant a seed of faith*." The truth is, the only ones getting rich are the preachers of this misleading doctrine. What a tragedy! Peter spoke of false teachers like these in **2 Peter 2:3** "**And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you...**" The Holy Spirit did not come to make people rich.

12 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

”RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SCRIPTURES.”

In Romans 4:3, the Apostle Paul asked, **"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."** Again in Galatians 4:30, **"Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bond woman and her son: for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."** In both passages under consideration, Paul made an appeal **to the scriptures**. How different that is from what happens today. Many make appeals to almost everything imaginable before considering what God says. What a tragedy this is! Such practices lead to not only a disregard for what the Bible says, but enhance things that never settle the issues of life.

Many today appeal to social standards, instead of asking, ***"What saith the scriptures?"*** They ask: ***"What saith society?"*** - ***"Are other people doing it?"*** - ***"Do they believe it?"*** - ***"Is it popular with the people?"*** Society can never make determinations of right and wrong. Only the Bible can do that, because social standards and traditions change from time to time, creating uncertainty and doubt about what is right or wrong.

Others appeal to family beliefs and traditions. ***"What do my ancestors think?"*** ***"What has our family always believed?"*** These are questions asked by many. Such reasoning overlooks a very important point: i.e., if we follow what others have believed before us, we never change. We never learn from past mistakes. Suppose a son of an atheist became an unbeliever just because his father was an unbeliever? Suppose a Hindu remained one because of his ancestors? Such reasoning would cause us to remain in error and never allow us the chance **to learn truth and change when necessary**. These are false approaches to seeking what is right.

Our appeal must always be to the Bible and only the Bible. **"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..."**- (1 Peter 4:11). This simply means that when men preach they should preach only that which is revealed in the word of God. No more, no less. Our attitude should be that of Peter and John who, when they were commanded **"...not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus,"** replied, **"...Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."**- Acts 4:18-20. What the world needs today are men who will boldly declare the scriptures in their fullness and plainness - **"rightly dividing the word of truth"** - (2 Timothy 2:15).

QUALITIES and ATTRIBUTES of GOSPEL PREACHERS and PREACHING.

The Gospel preacher is commanded to, **"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine, For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."**- (2 Timothy 4:2-4). In delivering the sacred message preachers should have these qualities:

1. LOVE, A PURE HEART, and UNFEIGNED FAITH.

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" - 1 Timothy 1:5. Preaching the gospel demands that the message come from a pure heart; from a man whose **faith and love** is sincere. Today those who preach for fame and money do great harm to the cause of **truth and right**.

2. A GOOD SOLDIER.

Those who preach must be good soldiers and wage a good warfare. **"Fight the good**

fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses,” - I Timothy 6:12. The preacher must be faithful to his position and responsibilities. He cannot draw back from confrontation. Nor can he run from the enemy.

3. A PURE EXAMPLE, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FAITH.

"Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure" - 1 Timothy 5:22. **"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"** - (1 Tim. 3:15). **"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee"** - (1 Tim. 4:16). All of these scriptures testify to the necessity of a pure life for those men who preach the gospel. Those who preach one thing and practice something different, send mixed signals which confuse and mislead. Yes, All Christians are informed in Romans 6:4, **"that we also should walk in newness of life."**

4. NO LOVER OF MONEY.

Far too many have fallen into this pitfall. Preaching for money has spelled the doom of men who otherwise could have been useful to the cause of truth and right. Men who beg for money over the airwaves, betray their real reason for preaching. Men who grab from their listeners every penny they can are a disgrace to the lofty position they claim to occupy. When men ask for donations, promising to send a "prayer cloth" or "bottle of oil" that is supposed to heal one of all infirmities, LOOK OUT, you are about to be taken. Neither the cloth nor the oil will heal you, and your money will be gone forever. Please read **1 Timothy 6**. Shame on any man who uses preaching for worldly gain.

5. MUST NOT BE ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith'" - Romans 1:16-17. The man of God cannot be ashamed of the commands or promises of the gospel of Christ. We should take glory in its power and prospects. The fact that it can transform the vilest of sinners, whether Jew or Gentile, causes us to stand in awe of its power.

6. MUST PREACH THE WORD.

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine" - (2 Timothy 4:2). Timothy was commanded to preach the word, not his opinion. Preaching the word is not telling stories, nor sharing personal ideas as opposed to God's truth and ideas. Far too many spend valuable time talking about what famous people think, rather than telling what God says.

7. STUDY THE BIBLE.

Finally, the man of God must study the Bible. **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."** - 2 Timothy 2:15. When a man preaches for thirty minutes and never reads nor quotes one Bible verse, something is wrong. The man has been studying the wrong material. Much preaching today is made up of human wisdom and relies on human sources. The result is false religion. Friend, **"What Saith The Scriptures?"**

We need to read and listen to God's Word for ourselves, and personally know something of what God has said in His Word of Truth, in order to catch mistakes & false doctrines. The Lord said in John 8:32, **"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."** The next time you ask your preacher a Bible question, be sure his answer is from the **scriptures** and

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not from his opinion or human sources.

Jesus warned in Matthew 15: v. 14, “... if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” In describing the Day of Judgment, the Lord said in Matthew 7:21-23, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (*without God's law, working evil, # 458*).

DO FAITH & TRUTH MATTER ?? - John 8:31-32

**YOU HAVE AN INVITATION TO WORSHIP WITH
THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.**

[Please See Inside Front Cover For Location & Time - God Bless.]