

Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

John West

When was the church of Christ established? By whom was it established? What creed does the church of Christ use? These are all questions that arise from time to time concerning the church of Christ.

Many think the church of Christ is just another denomination, but what does the Bible teach concerning the church? The church of Christ is found in the Bible (Rom. 16:16) and one can know that it IS the New Testament church because:

1. The Church Of Christ Has The Right Founder. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, *"...I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* Jesus promised to build his church. At that time, it had not yet been built, but he said, **"I WILL BUILD my church."** Christ said this would take place while some of those in the first century were still living. In Mark 9:1, he said, *"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."* Christ is the only one who has the RIGHT to "start" a church (i.e., be the founder). He has that right because he laid down His life for the church. He purchased the church with His own blood. In Acts 20:28, speaking to the elders of the church at Ephesus, Paul said, *"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"* (emphasis mine, JW).

As the founder, **Christ is the HEAD of the church.** Ephesians 1:22-

23 records, *"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 fullness of him that filleth all in all."* Colossians 1:18 also affirms that Christ is the head of the body and the body is the church. Ephesians 4:4 plainly says **there is only ONE body.** There are as many bodies as there are Gods. There are as many bodies as there are Christs (Lords). The Bible says there is only one, and that Christ is the head of the one body (cf. Eph. 4:4-6).

2. The Church Of Christ Was Established At The Right Time. The great prophets of the Old Testament prophesied the establishment of the kingdom. In Isaiah 2:2, Isaiah writes, *"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."* Isaiah said that the "mountain of the Lord's house" shall be established in the last days. This is a reference to the "government" of the Lord or the church. The last days has reference to the Christian age. Joel also records about the coming of the kingdom in Joel 2:28-32. This was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost after the ascension of Christ (Acts 2). In Acts 2:16, Peter said, *"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel."* He wanted the people to know that the events taking place on the day of Pentecost were the very events about which Joel prophesied. The church (kingdom) was established in the first century on the first Day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

3. The Church Of Christ Was Founded At The Scriptural Place. Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 2:3, *"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."* He said the "word of the Lord" would go forth from "Jerusalem." In giving the "great commission," Jesus said in Luke 24:47, *"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."* In verse 49 Jesus said, *"...but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."* In Acts 1:8, Jesus said, *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."* The apostles were told that the church would have its beginning in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-4). That took place on the day of Pentecost following the ascension of Christ back into heaven.

4. The Church Of Christ Wears The Right Name. We must always do that which exalts Christ. To wear a name that does not exalt the name of Christ is to disgrace the name of Christ. When we wear a human name, it undermines the authority of Christ. We wear the name "church of Christ" because it is found in the Bible. In Romans 16:16 we read, *"...the churches of Christ salute"*

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What Is The Church?...



Editorial...

WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

Garland M. Robinson

The church of Christ is not a man-made denomination as are the scores of “churches” listed in the telephone book. It is undenominational — non-denominational. Unlike denominations of men, the church of Christ (the Lord’s church) dates back to Pentecost 33 A.D. when Peter and the other apostles preached the first Gospel sermon. About 3,000 repented and were baptized that day “for the remission of sins” and were added by the Lord to his body the church (Acts 2:38,41,47). Men and women have become members of the church the same way since that day.

The church of Christ is the **CALLED OUT**. Its members have been delivered from the power of darkness (the sin and lust of the world), and translated into the kingdom (church) of God’s dear Son (Col. 1:13). It is a holy calling (2 Tim. 1:9). We, therefore, are to walk worthy of it (Eph. 4:1) so that we might stand approved of God (2 Peter 1:10). The calling is not as denominations teach, a miraculous, spiritual calling or urging. God calls all men through the preaching of the Gospel (2 Thess. 2:14). When men **hear, believe, repent, confess Christ**, and are **baptized**, they become members of God’s eternal kingdom, the church (Acts 2:38,41,47).

The church of Christ is the **BODY OF CHRIST**. God “...hath put all things under his (Jesus) feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body...” (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). The Lord only has “one body” (Eph. 4:4) and it is not made up of all the denominations. There are many members “yet but one body” (1 Cor. 12:20). The many members are individual people, not denominations. Only those in the one body will be saved for Jesus is “the saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23). It is by water baptism that one enters the body. “For by one Spirit are we all **baptized into one body**” (1 Cor. 12:13).

The church of Christ is the **“HOUSE OF GOD, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and**

ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the **household of God**” (Eph. 2:19). We are “sons of God” (Phil. 2:15).

Are you in the **body of Christ, the house of God?** Have you been called out of the world to live a new life in Christ? Obey the Gospel that you may be God’s own possession (1 Peter 2:9).

WHAT SHOULD ALL MEN KNOW ABOUT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

The church of Christ was **not built on John the Baptist, Peter, Paul or any other man**. “Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. *Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?*” (1 Cor. 1:12-13)?

The church of Christ was **built by Jesus Christ**. Jesus said to his apostles, “...upon this rock I will build **my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18).

The church of Christ was **built on Jesus Christ as the only foundation**. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11). “This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:1-12).

The church of Christ was **purchased by the blood of Christ**. Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus, “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**” (Acts 20:28). What a shame and tragedy that men today belittle the church for which the Lord Jesus died. Claims are made, “give me Jesus but not the church!” Friend, you cannot separate the two. You can’t have

Jesus without the church. Neither can you have the church without Jesus. Jesus died in order to purchase the church and bring it into existence. The book of Acts is filled with the disciples of the Lord establishing churches in every city (Acts 15:36; 16:5).

The church of Christ is **composed of the saved who are added to it by the Lord who saves them**. The command on Pentecost was to “repent and be baptized...for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were **added** unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41). “...And the Lord added to the church daily...” (Acts 2:47). There is no “adding” without repentance and baptism!

The Lord will save only his church (Eph. 5:23). Are you a member of the **CHURCH OF CHRIST?**

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"AM I THEREFORE BECOME YOUR ENEMY, BECAUSE I TELL YOU THE TRUTH?"

Steve A. Miller

When the truth of God's Word is preached, there will always be some who will count you as an enemy for telling the truth.

As Paul wrote to the Galatians, he addressed whether they were under the old Law of Moses or under the new Law of Christ. Paul found that some had perverted the Gospel. *"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another: but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ"* (Gal. 1:6-7). The apostle reasoned with them, *"O Foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith"* (Gal. 3:1-2)?

Paul continues by telling them that we are redeemed under the law of Christ, by the Gospel. The Galatians were being told that it was necessary to practice the Law of Moses to be a Christian. *"Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fullness of the time was come. God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons"* (Gal. 4:3-5). Their problem is stated in this same chapter. *"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage"* (4:8)?

In verse 16 of chapter 4, Paul writes, *"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"* The Galatians viewed Paul as an enemy for telling them the truth about their present situation. Paul did not declare his opinions or the words of men, he declared the Gospel of Christ. *"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of*

me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12). They once were thankful and appreciative of the work and preaching of the apostle Paul, but now they were at odds with the man who revealed to them the revelation of Christ.

The attitude of the Galatians can still be found today. When the truth of God's Word is preached, there will always be some who will count you as an enemy for telling the truth.

AM I YOUR ENEMY?

- In preaching *the plan of salvation*: Hear (Rom. 10:17); Believe (Heb. 11:6); Repent (Luke 13:3); Confess (Rom. 10:10); Be Baptized (Acts 2:38)?
- In preaching *the one true church* (Matt. 16:18)?
- In preaching that we must *restore the practice of church Discipline* (1 Cor. 5)?
- In preaching there is only *one exception for divorce and remarriage*? Matthew 19:9 teaches that fornication, NOT desertion, illness, incompatibility, in-law problems, inattention, etc. There is one, and only one, Scriptural cause for divorce; and, that is fornication.
- In preaching that *one elder cannot dictate and dominate over the Lord's church* (1 Peter 5:1-3)?
- In preaching on the *five acts of worship*: Praying (Acts 2:42); Lord's supper every first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-34); Singing (Eph. 5:19); Giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2); and preaching (Acts 2:42; Rom. 1:16)?
- In preaching that *we must serve rather than be served* (Matt. 20:28)?

- In preaching that *Jesus Christ is the head of the church* (Col. 1:18)?
- In preaching that *we will all stand before Christ in the judgment* (2 Cor. 5:10)?
- In preaching against *alcohol, abortion, homosexuality, pornography, tobacco, euthanasia, dancing, immodest dress, gossip, profanity, gambling, dishonesty, sexual immorality, drug use, suicide, murder, etc.* (Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11)?
- In preaching that *ALL Christians are ministers* (Matt. 20:28; Acts 8:4; Mark 10:45)?
- In preaching that *we must study to show ourselves approved of God* (2 Tim. 2:15)?
- In preaching *we must be faithful to all services of the church* (Heb. 10:25)?
- In preaching that *every member should be involved in the work of the church* (1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:16)?

Gospel preachers have the responsibility to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2) and to teach the truth without apology. *"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee"* (Titus 2:1,15). *"Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work"* (Titus 3:1).

When preachers, as earthen vessels, proclaim the divine message from heaven, and are counted as enemies, remember Paul's question, *"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"*

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GOD IS ON THE THRONE NOT ON STAGE

The God we serve is an august, spiritual being both deserving and desirous of our deepest respect. Though described in Scripture as a friend to man (Isa. 41:8; James 2:23), he is not some sort of “good buddy” to joke with or about. Our God is still on the throne (Psalm 45:6), his ways remain higher than our ways (Isa. 55:9), and his authoritative Word still promises to judge us in the Last Day (Rev. 20:12).

No measure of self-appointed, flip-pant familiarity with the God of heav-

en detracts one bit or whit from his inherent majesty. Our God is eminently worthy of our reverence, thus we must serve him “*acceptably with reverence and godly fear*” (Heb. 12:28). Truly, reverence is the “**very first element of religion**” [Charles Simons].

Moreover, our periods of public worship should express this spirit of reverence. “*God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all (them that are) about him*” (Psa. 89:7). Worship per-

formed “*in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24) suggests a demeanor of awe and reverence.

We agree that our worship services should be permeated with expressions of joy and thanksgiving — they should not come to resemble a congregational visit to the dentist; but neither should the reverent worship of our heavenly Father be confused for a carnival or a rock concert. Whether our worship is that offered during a Sunday morning service, that which involves a lectureship assembly, or that which is engaged in by a zealous throng of young people attending a youth rally — regardless where, when or by whom the worship is performed — it must be characterized by reverence and decorum. “*Let all things be done decently and in order*” (1 Cor. 14:40).

The worship assembly is not the proper setting for screaming, whistling, clapping, and stomping the feet in response to a speaker’s message. We do not gather to pay homage to men, but to worship God. We do not come together as to a football game or a stage-band concert; we come to worship God. We do not assemble with the intent of being entertained or sensually excited; we come to worship God. Any assembly of saints with the intent of worshipping and praising the God of heaven should reject that which emphasizes the carnal emotions and minimizes the spiritual man. An outsider should be able to attend one of our Sunday assemblies, or one of our many youth gatherings, and see a marked difference between the worship of God and the Johnny Carson show.

In the realm of worship, “zeal without knowledge” paves a dangerous road toward pagan, flesh-oriented, and riotous assemblies. Most of our denominational neighbors have long gone this route, with services geared more toward entertaining man than worshipping God. May we learn to temper our joy in Christ with a Christ-like reverence for things holy. And may we teach our children so.

Remember, **OUR GOD IS ON THE THRONE — NOT ON STAGE.**

— Dalton Key

IN MASSACHUSETTS YOU MAY “MARRY” YOUR DOG

A recent decision by the Supreme Court of the state of Massachusetts allows what has been called “gay marriage.” Like all promoters of error, these people attempt to redefine words to accommodate whatever they want. Seeing the low level of morality in this nation it would not surprise me that such travesty of truth becomes the norm throughout the nation.

Why the title of this article? It is because the term “dog” is used at least twice in the Bible to refer to homosexuals. Deut. 23:17,18, “*There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the Lord thy God.*”

Strong’s Concordance defines the word “dog” as a euphemism, a male prostitute. That presents a homosexual regardless of whatever else it says. Clyde Woods commented in his commentary on Deuteronomy that “the term is pejorative for the male prostitute, as the marginal rendering ‘sodomite’ in the RSV suggests.”

Revelation 22:15, “*For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*” The word translated “dogs” is called by Thayer a metaphor in various but always reproachful senses, a man of impure mind, probably understand sodomites. That should be clear enough.

But who is a sodomite? The dictionary defines a sodomite as one who practices sodomy, the homosexual proclivities of the men of Sodom; copulation with a member of the same sex or an animal. There is more to the definition that reminds us of the immoralities of the recent President Clinton which some so-called “Christians” supported anyway.

The truth is that the Bible uses the term “dog” to refer to a sodomite. In the state of Massachusetts, the home of so many “moral giants” in recent years, one homosexual can “marry” another homosexual if they choose. So why is it wrong to say that you can “marry” your dog in Massachusetts? Carried to its “logical” conclusion, and seeing the degenerate attitude toward morality in many places of America, one will soon be able to “marry” his literal dog as well as a so-called “gay person.”

God bless America? Why should He?

James W. Boyd

CHOOSE YE: THE BIBLE OR SUBJECTIVISM

Marvin L. Weir

Many never give a moment's thought to choosing the philosophical theory of "subjectivism" over the "objective" teaching of God's Word. People continue to make religious decisions based solely upon their feelings. Far too many subscribe to the theory that if it "**feels right**" it must be right! Folks have been led to believe in the fatal doctrine that **all** knowledge is subjective and relative. People who believe in a "thus saith the Lord" and emphasize the Word of God are ridiculed. Those who believe in "heart-felt" religion are praised and exalted.

This attitude manifested itself during the time of the Judges. *"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes"* (Judges 21:25). If a person **felt** that he was doing right, he considered himself to be right. Surely one who is thinking rationally and reasonably can see the folly of such a conclusion. The Bible reveals a vital principle in stating, *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24). The Holy Scriptures must guide a person's attitude as well as his action. It is not enough for one to just "feel" that he is right!

The havoc that "subjectivism" has wrought in the religious realm will indeed boggle one's mind. Let us observe some areas that prove "subjectivism" is alive and well today:

- **"Attend the church of your choice.** I *feel* that one church is as good as another and that there are Christians in all churches."

Answer: Christ promised to build only one church (Matt. 16:18; cf. Eph. 4:4) and He has promised to save only

His body (Eph. 5:23). The church is *His* body of which *He* is head (Eph. 1:22-23). This means that man-made denominations with man-made names *cannot* be the church of the Lord! The Savior speaks of the blind leading the blind and then warns, *"Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up"* (Matt. 15:13).

- **"Give me Christ and not the church. I feel one is saved by God's grace and not some church."**

Answer: Christ and His church are inseparable. Salvation is located *"in Christ"* (2 Tim. 2:10). People are saved because of God's grace (Eph. 2:8-9), but His grace is extended only to those who are obedient to His will (Heb. 5:8-9). It is mere mockery to claim to love the Christ while detesting or renouncing the church He died for.

- **"I would not trade this feeling for a stack of Bibles. It does not matter to God how much you know as long as you love Him."**

Answer: One can "feel" he is right, but be wrong (cf. Jer. 10:23; Prov. 14:12). God's Word is to be our guide (Psa. 119:105). Jesus said, *"If ye love me, keep my commandments"* (John 14:15). It is impossible to love God and yet refuse to be guided by His truth. The words of Jesus again declare, *"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 who is in heaven"* (Matt. 7:21). Hosea knew that his people were *"destroyed for lack of knowledge"* (4:6). The Scriptures, not one's feelings, will make him *"wise unto salvation"* (2 Tim. 3:15).

- **"I feel that worship has to be spontaneous and exciting. Unless I**

am emotionally challenged, worship is boring."

Answer: Worship is not meant to be an "entertainment experience." Emotions run "high" and "low," and they come and they go. All would do well to imitate the Bereans who searched the Scriptures for truth — not their emotions (Acts 17:11).

- **"I just know God loves me, and I don't feel that He will condemn anyone to an eternal hell."**

Answer: God does indeed love man, and He sent His Son to die on Calvary's cross so that man might have the opportunity to be redeemed (Eph. 1:7). The loving Father *"would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim. 2:4). But **truth** is what God's Word says and not what man feels! Christ states that the majority are traveling the broad road to destruction (Matt. 7:13-14). He will say to these people, *"Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Matt. 25:41). People should fear the one who can *"destroy both soul and body in hell"* (Matt. 10:28).

Naaman thought (felt) his leprosy could be cured "his way" instead of "God's way" (2 Kings 5:9-14). He was wrong, and so are all people today who are content to be guided by their feelings.

Christ warns, *"And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit"* (Matt. 15:14). In the pit, one's feelings will be no source of comfort!

Beware of subjectivism and cleave to the everlasting Word of God (1 Peter 1:24-25).

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ANGRY WITH GOD

Victor M. Eskew

A child lives only two days after birth. SIDS has taken her precious little life. Mom and Dad are angry with God. A couple has been planning for retirement. One month before the husband's last day on the job, he is diagnosed with cancer. He is given only three months to live. The couple is angry

with God. By the age of ten, a little boy has been in four foster homes. He never knew his father. His mother abandoned him at the age of five. He, too, is angry with God. A fifty-eight year old man has worked diligently to build a business. A poor economy and a corrupt business partner force him into bankruptcy. He is

angry with God.

God has been the target of much anger. Humans rationalize that since God is almighty, He can stop all the evil in the world. They also think that since God is love, He should pour out His benevolence so that no one suffers pain and anguish. Since this does not always

happen, men and women and children blame God for the heartaches they suffer. They ask: "Why didn't God do something?" The more they think about their situation, the more their anger toward God burns within them.

Some of us have been in these situations. Others have witnessed the anger that others have had toward God. The question that often comes is: "How do I deal with this anger?" or, "How can I help another who tells me about the anger he has toward God?" We hope that some of the thoughts in this article will help.

First, *we must remember that human beings are beings of choice.* "...Choose you this day whom ye will serve..." (Josh. 24:15). If we did not have the ability to choose, we would only be puppets in the hand of God. Our service to Him would not be voluntary. It would not be done out of love. The fact that we are free moral agents is important from two standpoints. One, sometimes we make choices that bring us harm. God has nothing to do with that. Two, sometimes other individuals make choices that harm us. Again, God has nothing to do with such things. In these cases, it is wrong to blame God. We need to direct our anger toward those who are responsible for our hardship or grief.

Second, *we must remember that God is not the only force that exists in this world.* Satan is the prince of this world (John 12:31). He walks about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). His presence, although evil, is here. He presents the side that is in opposition to God. Sadly, his presence can bring harm to human beings. He lures and deceives humanity. Those who yield to him take a hard road (Prov. 13:15). Why men never want to be angry with the devil has always been a mystery.

Third, *God never promised an easy road, free from tribulation in this world.* In fact, He promised difficulties. In John 16:33 we read: "*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*" If we have had adequate warning about the difficulty of our sojourn here, why do we get angry about it? Nothing has been hidden from us. God has not lied to us. A general once rode with his troops to the battle line. He warned them of the bloodshed and death they would experience. The battle was as predicted. The soldiers who survived

never said an angry word to their commander. Instead, they thanked him for the forewarning. It eased the pain of their suffering and loss. Why can't we be as thankful to our Commander? He has lovingly cautioned us about the hardships of life.

Fourth, *we sometimes fail to remember that not all suffering is harmful to us.* In fact, it can be a means of strengthening our character and bringing forth fruit unto God. Let us remind you that we are not saying suffering is pleasant. We are only asserting that it can be beneficial. This was a lesson the Hebrew writer sought to get across to his readers. Apparently, they were experiencing difficulties. Some were beginning to waver. Thus, the inspired penman writes: "*Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yeildeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby*" (Heb. 12:11). James also set forth this same lesson in James 1:2-4. It was such a vital point that he exhorted his readers to rejoice in their temptations. "*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be complete and entire, wanting nothing.*"

Fifth, *those who are angry with God need to remember that God sometimes tests our faith.* The devil says that the only reason we serve God is because He is always good to us. God knows better. He knows that many men serve Him for nothing. They serve God because He is God and for no other reason. Job was such a man. In Job 1:9, Satan asked God: "*Doth Job fear God for naught?*" God then put His servant to the test. He was afflicted physically, economically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Job, however, held up under the test. Even when his wife tried to get him to curse God, he would not. Here's how he answered her chiding: "*...Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips*" (Job 2:10).

Anger is a God-given emotion. Expressed at the right time, in the right way, and toward the right person, it can serve a purpose. God, however, should never be the recipient of our anger. Even if He seems to act against us, He is not. God loves us and cherishes us as His

children. He knows this world in which we live is only a temporary existence. He is more concerned about our living with Him in the world to come (2 Cor. 4:16-5:4).

We want to look at one other point. There are many people who use their anger toward God as an excuse. Serving God is demanding. It involves sacrifice. If one is angry, he doesn't have to serve. He can always say: "I'm too mad to serve God right now." What is interesting is that many of these individuals were not faithful before the plight for which they are angry with God. Their anger is used in an attempt to justify their continued unfaithfulness. Those who use anger in this manner are not people of integrity. Sadly, they will stand before God lost, trying to blame their Saviour for their lost condition. Think about that one. It is sobering indeed.

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What Is The Church?...

(Continued from page 9)

you." Paul mentions a multiplicity of congregations that were saluting the brethren at Rome. The phrase in Romans 16 has reference to the churches belonging to Christ. IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, DOES THE NAME YOU WEAR EXALT THE NAME OF CHRIST? If you are wearing a human name, you are dishonoring Christ.

As members of the body of Christ, we are given a name to wear. The name we wear is the name "Christian." There are three places in the Bible where the word "Christian" is used (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). If we are not called by a Bible name, then we are not obeying God.

5. The Church Of Christ Is Right In Organization. The church of Christ does not have an earthly headquarters where a group of men govern what we do or what we believe. The organization as set forth in the New Testament is: elders, deacons, preachers and members.

First Timothy 3:1-8 and Titus 1:5-11 lists the qualifications for those who are "elders" or "bishops." This word is from the Greek word *episkopos* meaning overseer (Moulton's Analytical Greek Lexicon, p.160). Paul used this same

word in Acts 20:28 when he told the elders of the church at Ephesus that they were “overseers, to feed the church of God.”

In 1 Timothy 3:8-13, Paul records the qualifications of the deacons. A deacon by definition means to “serve” or be a servant.

Next in organization there are preachers or evangelists. In 2 Timothy 4:5, Paul told Timothy to “do the work of an evangelist.” In Ephesians 4:11 Paul wrote, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” Notice the separation between “evangelists” and “pastors.” A preacher is NOT the pastor, he is the “evangelist.” The word pastor means “overseer.” This has reference to the elders, not the preacher.

“Members” are next in this list of the organization. In 1 Corinthians 12:27 we read, “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” Romans 12:4,5 records, “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”

6. The Church Of Christ Is Not A Denomination. Many today believe the church of Christ is a mere denomination among hundreds of others. The word denomination means “division,” and division has been condemned in the Bible. In 1 Corinthians 1:10 Paul wrote, “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” Paul said that we must speak the same thing, but that is not true among the denominations. He also said, “that there be NO divisions among you.” In John 17, Jesus prayed for unity. Unity cannot be joined with division. This unity must be had among believers **through truth.**

The church of Christ makes the plea to “speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent” (1 Peter 4:11). We must “call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways.”

The church of Christ believes in restoring First Century Christianity and going back to the New Testament for the answers. Our guide is the inspired Word of God and not the creeds of men (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 1 Peter 1:3).

(Some of the main points were taken from Leroy Brownlow’s book, *Why*

I Am A Member Of The Church Of Christ)

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IT SEEMS NOBODY IS GOING TO HELL ANYMORE

I was watching Fox News the other day when a correspondent was interviewing two Muslims; one a newsman himself, and the other a Muslim cleric. The Fox correspondent was trying to get these two men to speak out against the abuses of Osama bin Laden. The two Islamic men were trying their best to “dodge” the issue. They would say, “Well, Osama has a great following in the Muslim world, but we want you to understand, sir, that Islam is a peaceful religion. We are opposed to violence.” The Fox correspondent tried again to get them to repudiate Osama, but they would not come out and say he is wrong and personally responsible for much of the terrorism that is going on today. They would not come out and say, “Osama is wrong and is not a faithful Muslim.”

Finally, the Fox correspondent, in great frustration, asked, “Why doesn’t some cleric or some Muslim leader just say clearly for all to hear, ‘Osama bin Laden is an apostate and is going to hell?’” Neither of the two Mohammedans would say this. In fact, they seemed rather shocked at the statement.

As I watched this exchange on TV I was reminded of similar exchanges I have had with some of my very brethren in the Lord’s church. I have preached that those who will not obey the gospel are hell bound. I have not said this with any glee, nor have I been mean-spirited about this sad affair. However, I have had members of the church come to me and say things like, “Now Jim, you must not say a person is going to hell. That’s judging, and you are not their judge! Let’s leave that up to God.” One even said, “I would never, ever tell a person that they are going to hell, for I do not have that right.”

Strange, isn’t it? It is certainly strange how “politically correct” we attempt to be even in the churches of Christ these days. I heard a story some time ago about a young, college man coming to a country church to preach. He stood in the pulpit and exclaimed that he would never tell another human that they were going to hell. At that, an older brother stood up in the back of the little building and said loudly, “Young man, point them out to me and I’ll tell them!”

The fact is, brothers and sisters, there are many who are indeed hell bound, and if you and I do not tell them, they may never know it. Are we satisfied with allowing them to go to hell with a smile on their face? Are we, in the name of “tact” allowing precious souls to go to a place prepared for the devil and his angels?

Many will go down the broad way into destruction (Matt. 7:13-14). Who are these? They are the ones who are not obedient to the Lord; who will not walk in His light. Non-believers, and those who will not submit to the Lord will be lost (Mark 16:15-16; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 22:14). The lost ones are they whose names are not written in the book of life (Rev. 20:11-15).

It is sin that separates one from God (Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 6:23). If one dies in his sins, he will be eternally lost (John 8:24; James 5:19-20). The Muslim religion does not recognize Jesus as the Christ (Messiah). They say he was a prophet, but not nearly as important as their “Mohammed.” Therefore, all who hold to this false view are “in their sins” and therefore separated from God (John 8:24; Isaiah 59:1-2). They may think they are right, but are, in fact, very, very wrong (Prov. 14:12). Is Osama bin Laden going to hell? Yes indeed! That is, unless he repents of his false religion and accepts Jesus as the One He says He is; the King of kings and the Lord of lords!

In fact, all who will not accept Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords, and who will not then submit to Him in humble and meek obedience are lost! What about YOU? Do you want to go to this place of eternal punishment, eternal destruction, eternal judgment; this place prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 10:28; 25:41,46)? Surely you do not want to go there. Believe therefore, and repent of your sins. Submit yourself to the meek and lowly Jesus as the Lord and Saviour in baptism for the remission of sins (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Be ye reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:18-21).

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THERE WILL BE NO SEEK THE OLD PATHS LECTURESHIP THIS YEAR

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