

It Pays to Investigate

Have you ever asked yourself the question, “Why there are so many churches today and which one did Christ build?” At some time, almost every religious person has pondered this problem. What answers does the Bible give to these important questions?

Jesus said to Peter in Matt. 16:18: “Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” Just as Jesus had predicted, after his cruel death on the cross, he established his church, in Jerusalem, on the first Pentecost after his resurrection from the dead (Acts 2). Peter, along with the other apostles, stood in the midst of a great crowd of people who had come from all parts of the Roman Empire. Peter preached the first gospel sermon.

The results of Peter’s sermon were profound. Thousands of people responded to the sermon and asked, “Brethren, what shall we do (Acts 2:37)?” Peter answered them by saying, “Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38).” “They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls (Acts 2:41; See also 2:47).” No one voted these almost 3,000 souls into church; the Lord added them to his church. This was the first congregation of the Lord’s church.

These apostles, taught by Jesus, also taught and recorded in the New Testament all the instructions and authority needed for the work, worship, and organization of the church. With this written record of instructions in the New Testament, there is no need for any additional creeds, dogmas, disciplines, manuals, conventions, synods, or earthly headquarters. Jude and the Revelation warn us about adding or taking away from the New Testament teaching. Jude said, “Whosoever goes onward and abides not in the teaching of Christ has not God (Jude 3).” The Revelation promised plagues on those that add or take away from “the words of the prophecy of this book (Rev. 22:18-19).”

The Lord builds his church only according to the New Testament pattern. Paul wrote to Timothy, “Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 1:13).” The sound words tell us all that we need to know about the nature, laws, and practices of the church (2 Tim. 3: 17).

When we investigate what church Jesus built, we must look for the church that follows the teaching and examples of the New Testament, and the church that carries his name, church of Christ.