

# **THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST**

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## **ANSWERING DENOMINATIONAL DOCTRINES “Misconceptions about the church of Christ”**

**Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.* Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

What do you know about the church of Christ? Have you ever heard of the church of Christ?

There are many misconceptions about the church of Christ. In our series of lessons answering denominational doctrines one of the things we need to address is some denominational misconceptions about the Lord's church.

We hope and pray that your aim today is simply to do what the Bible says- to be nothing more nothing less than of a Bible believer, a person who wants to put their faith in the word of God.

Maybe you've heard this about the church of Christ- 'They're the ones who don't believe in music.'

That's just not true. We believe in music. We love to sing. We have some of the best singing that you can imagine, but the misconception is we don't believe in music. Again that's just not found in the Bible, nor is it fair to the text.

Maybe you've heard of the church of Christ- 'They're the ones who don't believe in the Old Testament.' Again this does not true. We believe the Old Testament is from God. It is inspired of God. God gave it to us to know Him and know how He expects us to relate to Him.

Maybe you've heard of the church of Christ- 'They're all

Campbellites.' You don't find Alexander or Thomas Campbell or Barton Stone in the New Testament. It would be impossible to be a Campbellite if he's not in the Bible. Christians don't claim to be Campbellites. We don't claim to be followers of any man.

Let's think for a few moments about some of the misconceptions that you may or may not have heard about the Lord's church.

Number one many people will say when they think of New Testament Christians, members of the church of Christ, that they are followers of Alexander or Thomas Campbell and sometimes referred to as Campbellites. That's just not true. Here's how you can know that is not true. While there were men in the restoration movement who had maybe good ideas and good intentions of going back to the Bible, their desire and their purpose was not to make followers of themselves. While Thomas Campbell or Alexander Campbell or Barton Stone- or whoever it may have been sought to go back to the Bible- they are not key figures that you will find in the Lord's church. How do I know that? I'm not a follower of Campbell.

My religion and my faith does not go back to Alexander Thomas Campbell. My faith is built up on the word of God.

The question really to consider is- Can you be a Christian without Thomas or Alexander Campbell or Barton Stone? Absolutely you can! How do we know that? Because the church wasn't founded by these men.

Who founded the church? Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I'll build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." I'm not a Campbellite. I'm not a follower of Alexander or Thomas Campbell or Barton Stone. I'm a Christian. I'm a follower of Christ. My religion and faith does not go back to the reformation movement.

My faith is built upon Jesus, a solid foundation. He is the founder and foundation of the church. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 3:11 that Jesus is the true foundation. "No other foundation can any man lay except that which is laid which is Jesus Christ."

Denominational is wrong. It is wrong to divide over men's names. It was wrong the First century. 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 Paul said, "I hear that their divisions among you some of you. Some say 'I am of Apollos. I'm of

Cephas. I'm of Peter. I'm of Christ.” Paul said, “Let there be no divisions among you.” Just as it was wrong in the First century to follow Peter or to follow Paul or to follow Apollos- it is just as wrong the following or Alexander Campbell or Thomas Campbell or Martin Luther, John Calvin or any man.

My faith and my trust in the Bible isn't based on these men.

Here's what I would ask you to consider- if these men had never existed, would you still have the Lord's church? Is the Lord's church dependent upon some restoration movement leader? Not at all friend! If I can find the church that God tells me to in the Bible without these men and I can, then be sure my faith is built on the word of God.

Now here's what I ask you, do you find these men's names in the Bible? Of course you don't! You can look and you'll never find them in the Bible. They're not there.

You do find the one church. Ephesians 1:22-23 and Ephesians 4:4 the Bible says that Jesus is the head of the church and there's only one body. There's just one body. There's just one church. Whose church is it? Jesus said, “I'll build my church.” It's the church of Christ, the church that Jesus himself died for. What were Christians called in the first century those who simply were members of the Lord's church and who follow the Bible? What were they called? They weren't called Campbellites, Baptist, Methodist, or Calvinists. The Bible says in Acts 11:26 “They were called Christians first in Antioch.”

The religion that God set forth, the New Testament Christianity, His church goes all the way back to the New Testament. You can find the church of Christ and you can find Christian in the Bible.

Now let me suggest to you why this misconception is propagated by many. Can you find the Baptist Church in the Bible? Can you find the Methodist Church in the Bible? Can you find the Presbyterian or Lutheran or the Catholic Church in the Bible?

We are not saying those things to offend anybody, but listen carefully; you can't find those in the Bible. It is a very weak attempt to bring the Lord's church down to man-made denominational size, and friend God will not

allow that and the Bible won't either.

Sometimes people will say about the Lord's church, the church of Christ, that it is just one of many denominations. A denomination by its very name is a division. It causes division. It's not right in God's sight.

What makes a denomination? Denomination had its starting among men and not the Bible. It divides instead of uniting. Jesus said in John 17:20-21, "I pray that they may all be one as You Father are in Me and I in You that they all may be one in Us that the world may believe that You sent Me." Jesus prayed and died for unity.

The Bible says in Psalm 133:1, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Paul said, "Let there be no divisions among you." Is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ a division from that which is the original? Absolutely not!

Denominationalism is against the will of God. The Lord's church doesn't seek to divide. We want to build our faith upon the word of God which does not change.

Maybe you've heard this misconception. Sometimes people will say of the Lord's church 'they're the people who don't believe in the Old Testament.' That's just not true. The Lord's church absolutely believes in the Old Testament as inspired of God and as an accurate representation of the will of God. The history of Israel and the nature of who God is.

Let's be clear. While the things that were written aforetime were written for our learning, we are not under the Old Testament. Here's what the Bible says about that. In both Ephesians chapter 2 and in Colossians 2:14-16 the Bible say that Jesus, when He died on the cross, 'He nailed the old law to the cross in His flesh. He did away with the enmity that is the law commandments, and He made out of both Jew and Gentile one body, one group of believers.' The Old Testament has been done away with as old law that we live under to be judged by. Hebrews 8:13 says that which is 'growing old and vanishing away is ready to depart.' We don't live under the old law.

A lot of people want to mix a little of the old law with a little of the new

law. You just can't do that. James chapter 2 says 'if we depart from one law we're condemned by it all.' You can't just have bits and pieces of each. Imagine you live under the Old Testament, Leviticus times, you say something or do something that's not right. You have got to go to the field and get an animal. You've got to slit its throat. You have to skin it. You've got to take that before the priest there and offer that and burn it on the offering. Then what happens tomorrow? You would have to do that all over again. Do you really want to live under that law old law? It did not have Christ at the central. Christ is coming. I understand that's clear in the Old Testament. The law where your sins cannot be removed until Christ comes Galatians 3:20-26. We believe in the Old Testament. We believe that it's inspired of God. "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 complete thoroughly equipped for every good work."

The Old Testament is an accurate account of the history of Israel and God's dealings with man. It can teach me great lessons about the fundamentals of God and His relationship with man. When I think about the Old Testament, I think of great lessons to learn. I think about lessons like that in the days of Noah. I think of people like David. David was a man after God's own heart. David sinned, and David had severe consequences because of that. Yes, there are great lessons to learn. I'm not going to be saved by, nor do I worship under, the same law they worshiped under.

A Jew living under the old law, as part of the worship, would have to go to Jerusalem twice a year. There were many other intricacies of the law they had to keep as part of their worship. The old law has been nailed to the cross. I'm not accountable to that. Now someone says, 'What about the 10 Commandments? Are you throwing out all 10 the commandments?' No not at all friend. 9 of the 10 Commandments are brought back in under the teaching of Christ in the New Testament. Although we're not to remember the Sabbath, we're to remember the Lord's death on the first day of every week, Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2. The old law was nailed to the cross. The old covenant, the 10 Commandment law, is not what judges us today.

Another misconception you've heard about the church of Christ is that these are the people who don't believe in music. What people mean is we don't have mechanical instruments of music. We don't have any man-made organs or pianos or things of that nature. Christians don't believe in music

again is not true. We absolutely believe in music and singing. 1 Corinthians 14:15 Paul said, "I'll sing with the spirit, and I'll sing with the understanding." We sing according to the teaching of the New Testament. We sing songs that are true to the Bible and with man spirit with his whole heart, soul, mind, and being we sing to God. We sing one to another. Ephesians 5:19 in the Scripture tells us about singing. Paul will say on the great subject of singing in Christian worship, "Christians are to be speaking to one another in Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Do Christians sing and believe in music? Absolutely we're singing one to another. We encourage. We uplift. We teach. We sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. We're to 'make melody in our heart.' Where's the music made? In the New Testament, as it relates to the music, it's made in the heart. What's the heart? The mind. Melodies are made in the heart. Christians in the New Testament are never commanded to use mechanical accompaniment in their singing that is man-made organs or pipes or drums or guitars or piano. You don't find that in the New Testament.

Someone may say, 'What was is the big deal?' The Bible says that we're not to add to or take away from the word of God, Revelation 22:18-19. We're not to go beyond what's written, 1 Corinthians 4:6. Paul explicitly says that must we do all in the name and authority of Christ. Paul said such in Colossians 3:17. The proverb writer in the long-ago said in Proverbs 30:6, 'do not add to His word lest He rebuke you and you be found a liar.'

We're not living under the old law. It's been nailed to the cross. Regardless of what they did or did not do pertaining to Christian worship-that's not how we do it today. I'm under the law of Christ. I worship based on New Testament principles.

Do you find anywhere in the New Testament, the authority, to sing with mechanical instruments of music to bring that in as part of our music? No. We're told to sing to one another. We're told to make melody in our heart. We're told in Colossians 3:16 to teach and admonish one another. Matthew 26:30 Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn, and they went out. In Hebrews chapter 2 they sing in the general assembly. Every passage, as it relates to worship in the New Testament, tells us we're to sing. The reason Christians don't bring in mechanical instruments is God's not asked for it.

Let's go back and learn some principles about what God expects when He tells us His law. Take your mind back to Leviticus 10:1. There were two young men there, two priests of God. These two men offered a strange fire before the Lord which He had not commanded. What happened to those two men? How did God feel about that? 'Fire rained down from heaven and burned those two young men right there on the spot.' Was it important to God that they only did what He said? They did what He had not commanded them. Are we any different? We're no different.

Now take your mind 2 Samuel chapter 6. The Ark of God is being transported. Two men, Uzzah and Ahio, are taking it back to the people of Israel. As they come across the threshing floor, which would naturally be rough, it looks like the Ark is going to fall off. A man by the name of Uzzah reaches out to touch the ark. The Bible says that he dies there on the spot. Why is it that Uzzah died trying to protect one of the most valuable pieces of Israel's history given by God? We learn the update on that in 2 Chronicles chapter 15. The Bible says that Uzzah perished at that moment in time because he had not allowed him to touch the Ark. What was such a problem in doing that? Listen to 1 Chronicles 15:13, 'For because you did not do it the first time the Lord our God broke out against us because we did not consult him about the proper order.' In context they're asking 'why can't we do this?' David says, 'Think back to Uzzah. Why did Uzzah die?' David said 'They were to put poles through the sides of it since nobody was ever to touch it,' and David says 'because we didn't consult God about the right way to do it, Uzzah died.' If we don't consult God about how to sing, we're no different than Uzzah who was trying maybe do right- but didn't follow what the word of God said.

Maybe you've heard another misconception about the Lord's church. Sometimes people who know very little about the church will say we believe in water salvation. Friend we believe the Bible teaches that baptism is essential to salvation. We do not believe that there's anything mystical or magical about the water. We don't believe there's a magic potion in it. We don't believe that. We believe you must do what God says. The Bible says you've got to obey. John 14:15 Jesus said, "If you love Me keep My commandments." Members of the Lord's church simply believe that you must do what Jesus said to be saved. Now does that mean that baptism is taught by Christ and essential to salvation? Absolutely! It's no more important than any other step. Must a person hear the word of God?

Absolutely! Romans 10:17 says "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Must a person believe to be saved? Absolutely! Jesus said so in John 8:24. Must I repent of sin and turn from ungodly ways? You bet! Luke 13:3 says so. Do I need to make the good confession just as they did in Acts 8 and other places? Jesus said, 'One must confess,' in Matthew 10:32-33. Did Jesus command baptism for salvation? He did in the New Testament there's no denying that.

Listen to these passages. The Bible says in Mark 16:16 "He that believes and is baptized will be saved." You just can't get much clearer than that. Belief and baptism are both essential to salvation. Think with me about Acts 2:38. The people of the day of Pentecost realized they'd killed their own Savior. They cried out to Peter and the rest of the men, "What must we do?" Peter responds in Acts 2:38 by saying, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." What was the purpose of baptism? "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins." Other places teach this as well. In Acts chapter 22 Ananias comes to Saul. Ananias asked Saul this question, "Saul Saul why are you waiting?" Then he says this, "Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins." It wasn't the water. It was the completing, the doing, of God's will that saves Saul. When we obey God, we're raised to walk in newness of life. In John 3:5 Jesus said, "Unless a man is born of water and the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." In 1 Peter 3:21, probably one of the clearest passages in all the Bible, "Baptism does now also save us." Doing the will of God is what makes one right in God's sight. Baptism is essential to salvation. Baptism puts one into Christ, Galatians 3:27.

Today we ask you to think about some of the misconceptions maybe you've heard about the Lord's church. Here's simply all that we ask, take those misconceptions and examine them according to what the Lord's church truly believes and teaches- get your Bible and see if those things are true. We want you to know where the Lord's church in the Bible stands. We stand upon the Bible as the only source of authority. We have no other books of men. We don't have any man made leader. We simply believe Jesus is the head of the church and the Bible is our only authority. Whatever we do in word or deed, we do all by the authority of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Lord's church based upon the authority and teaching of Christ, believe that a person's got to hear the word, believe in Jesus, repent, make that good confession, and be immersed in water to be saved.



We believe in the purity and the simplicity of New Testament Christianity. We just simply want to be Christians nothing more, nothing less. As Christians we want to give honor and praise to God by lifting up His name and worship in the way He tells us to. We worship God in spirit and in truth. It may be popular, not what men may be telling us to do, and we simply want to please God. We want to live every day for Jesus Christ.

Are you a member of the New Testament church? Are you member of the church that you read about the Bible?

If not, we beg and plead with you- won't you become a member of the Lord's church? Nothing more, nothing less- won't you be just a Christian?

Study Questions for: **“Answering Denominational Doctrine:  
Misconceptions of the church of Christ”**

1. According to Matthew 16:18, who founded the church?
2. According to 1 Corinthians 3:11, who's the foundation?
3. What should there be none of among us according to 1 Corinthians 1:10-13?
4. Who is head of the church according to Ephesians 1:22-23?
5. What were they called in Acts 11:26?
6. What did Jesus pray for in John 17:20-21?
7. What is good and pleasant according to Psalm 133:1?
8. What does Colossians 2:14-16 say of the old law?
9. What kind of music is found in the New Testament?
10. What does Proverbs 30:6 say of adding to God's word?