

# Must One Be Either Catholic, Protestant Or Jewish — Or Can One Be Just A Christian?

## Bible Answers About Denominations

"Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He {began} asking His disciples, saying, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some {say} John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt 16:13-16 NAS)

The tendency was to give Jesus a label, to put Him into some category and to dismiss Him from their thoughts. This saved them the trouble of really looking at Jesus and making a fresh, independent evaluation of Him. However, the different categories into which the people put Jesus were all wrong. Jesus was not John, Elias, Jeremiah or one of the past prophets. The tragic part of this story is that those people never realized that Jesus was new and unique and that He did not fit into any of the categories they made for Him.

We face the same kind of problem today. There is a tendency for people to consider the church of Christ and to pigeonhole it without giving it due consideration. Therefore, those of us who are Christians only— members of the church of Christ, find it difficult to convey to our neighbors and friends the distinctive and unique position of the church of Christ. The reason for this is that the world has a tendency to classify churches by putting them into one of three categories—Catholic, Protestant or Jewish. Let me be crystal clear, the church of Christ does not fit into any one of these categories.

### **Are We Jewish?**

Those of us who seek to follow Christ today are related in a remote sense to the Jews you read about in the Old Testament. We worship the same God Abraham, Isaac and Jacob worshipped. We read and believe in the Old Testament Scriptures followed by the Jews because we believe they were inspired by God. We believe in the same basic moral principles as taught in the Ten Commandments. However, we are not followers of the Jewish religion. The differences that keep the church of Christ from being Jewish are numerous and significant.

We believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the divine Son of God and the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. We believe that the New Testament is also inspired of God and that it furnishes us with everything we need to know and do today (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). We believe the Old Testament Law was nailed to the cross and was done away with (Col. 2:14-17; 2 Cor. 3:3-18; Gal. 5:1-4). Clearly one can see that the church of Christ does not fit into the pigeonhole called Jewish.

## **Are We Catholic?**

We certainly share the same God as our Catholic neighbors. We believe as they do that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and our Savior. We share with them the belief that the Bible is God's Word. We also share with them the belief that the church is universal. However, we are not Catholic for many reasons.

We are different than the Catholic Church because we differ over the position that should be given to the traditions of men. It is their belief that the "Traditions of the fathers" are equally authoritative along with the inspired Word of God. The Catholic Church has an elaborate organizational system made up of the Pope, College of Cardinals, Archbishops and parish Priests. The church of Christ acknowledges only Jesus Christ as the head of the church and believes that only elders and deacons are to be appointed in every church (Eph. 1:22-23; Acts 14:23; I Pet. 5:2; Phil. 1:1; Eph. 4:11-12). We disagree with their system of worship involving the use of incense, lighting of candles, the use of images and instrumental music. The New Testament church engaged in simple worship without any of those things (Acts 2:42; Eph. 5:19; I Cor. 16:1-2). Therefore, one can see that the church of Christ does not fit into the pigeonhole labeled Catholic.

## **Are We Protestant?**

We share with our Protestant neighbors the worship of the same God, the same Savior, the same Holy Spirit; and the same belief that the Bible is the Word of God. We also join with our Protestant neighbors in protesting against the un-scriptural practices and doctrines of our Catholic friends. But, we part company with all Protestants for a number of reasons.

God never intended that such division as seen among Protestants should exist between His professed followers (Jno. 17:20-21; I Cor. 1:10; Phil. 3:16). Therefore, we reject the religious decrees of councils and the creeds that men have written to establish and guide the various Protestant churches. We believe that the only authoritative and dependable guide to heaven is the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Acts 20:32). Therefore, the church of Christ does not fit into the pigeonhole called Protestant.

It Is Our Sincere Purpose To Be Simply And Only New Testament Christians

We do not seek to establish another sect or faith. We advocate a return to the original church Jesus built, by following God's blueprint found in the New Testament. Therefore, we have:

- No denominational officers and no organization other than that described in the New Testament.
- We wear no name other than the precious name of Jesus Christ.
- We have no requirements for admission into the church other than those given in the New Testament.
- We have no human creed, denominational manual, confession of faith or human by-laws serving as a test of fellowship. The New Testament is our only guide in all matters of faith, worship and practice.

As Jesus was neither John the Baptist, Elias nor Jeremiah so the church of Christ is neither Jewish, Catholic nor Protestant. Using the New Testament as our blueprint we have restored the New Testament church and invite you to examine our claim.

Visit us online at: [montevista.church](http://montevista.church)  
or  
Stop by and worship with us!

**Monte Vista**  
**church of Christ**