

What Makes The Church Of Christ Different?

Bible Answers About Denominations

Unless the church of Christ is different from all other religious institutions it has no lawful right to exist as a separate body. To establish another church and create more division among professed followers of Jesus Christ is both foolish and wrong. There are therefore certain distinct factors that distinguish the church of Christ from all others and we believe that these differences are absolutely essential.

One of the significant features of the church of Christ is its attitude toward the Holy Scriptures in terms of the nature of the Bible and the authority inherent in this sacred Book. We believe the Scriptures are from God, and through them the divine Mind has been revealed.

We therefore, occupy the position that the Bible is the full and complete revelation of God to man of His will and plan for our salvation and for our worship of the Most High. Paul wrote, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17 NAS). Because of this position regarding the Bible we have no uninspired manuals, creeds, confessions or such like to govern us. We do not need them because the Bible provides us with everything we need.

We have no need for a direct revelation from heaven as some claim. Since the Scriptures make us perfect and thoroughly furnishes us unto all good works, and since they "Grant to us everything pertaining to life and godliness" (2 Pet 1:3 NAS) what need could we have of anything to guide us except the Bible? This attitude distinguishes us from all others.

Furthermore, we advocate the Bible as the inerrant word of God; and as absolute authority. God alone has all authority to speak and guide man because He is the Creator of us all. Paul wrote, "There is no power but of God" (Rom. 13). Jesus said that even when the Holy Spirit speaks, "He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak" (John 16:13). Even Jesus declared that the things He spoke were not His own, but that they were of the authority of God. "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or {whether} I speak from Myself" (John 7:16-17 NAS).

Since such is the case, we know that no pope, no preacher nor anyone else has any right to speak one single thing beyond that which he finds revealed in the Book. Jesus said, "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him" (John 7:18 NAS). That which is not in the Bible is inherently

wrong and that which is in the Bible is inherently right. That is our position about all religious matters and no other church holds this position. This likewise distinguishes us from all others.

The church of Christ urges that the Bible contains all that is necessary to prompt, encourage, or cause a person to be converted and receive salvation in Christ Jesus. Paul wrote, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it {the} righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous {man} shall live by faith" (Rom 1:16-17 NAS). Since the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, the gospel is the only thing necessary to bring a person to God. It provides faith, because "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). It provides the reason for repentance because "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom. 2:4). It makes baptism possible, for we are "cleansed by the washing of water with the word" (Eph. 5:26). Without the word of God, washing in water could never be baptism. The Bible makes it possible. This distinguishes us from all others.

We occupy the position that the New Testament furnishes us with everything we need to worship the Most High God (2 Pet. 1:3). Therefore, we do not use mechanical instruments of music, the burning of incense, animal sacrifices, or choirs in our worship. We do not meet upon the Sabbath day (Saturday) but rather upon the Lord's Day, the first day of week, because that is the day our Lord rose from the dead and that is the day the church of the New Testament assembled for worship (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2). Just as the first century church sang praises to God, prayed to Him, ate the Lord's Supper, studied the Scriptures, and gave of their means as they were prospered (Acts 2:42; I Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), so do we. This distinguishes us from all others.

It should be evident to everyone that the one real difference between the church of Christ and all others is in our attitude toward the Bible as the word of God. The Bible is always right because it is inspired and eternal. Jesus said, "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak. "And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me" (John 12:48-50 NAS). Since the word of Christ will judge us in the last day then those who conform to it will be saved. All others will be lost, for even the ignorant will be held responsible. "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31 NAS).

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