

# Bedford Bulletin

Columbus Street church of Christ

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BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE  
**FAITH**  
1 Corinthians 3:9-11

## Things That Divide (Part 3) The Church of Christ

In this third issue on things that divide we'll continue with a discussion on the "Church". Understanding the Church, what it is and what it is not is crucial to the whole concept of unity. And as was stated in the first issue we encourage you to get your Bible, study with us, with an open mind remembering the words of the inspired Apostle, "...that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written..." (1 Cor. 4:6), understanding our main purpose is to come back to the Bible, and be as God would have us to be.

If we accept Bible Authority then we must also accept that the church, the body of Christ, is described in the written word. If we're to know what the Church of Christ is, the answers must come from the Bible. Many, if not most, fail to understand and recognize the genuine church of Christ because their understanding of "church" comes from personal experience and sources outside of the written word. There are so many "churches" today which are all divided, different, and all because they have added or subtracted from God's word on the church. We must be concerned, right now, with what the Bible has to say about the church and what the revelation of Christ is in regard to "His" church.

In Matthew 16 begin verse 13 and read through verse 20. What did you read? Jesus asked, "*Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?*" (v.13). In verse 16 Simon Peter answered, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" What was Jesus' response? "*Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not [a]prevail against it*" (vs.17-18). Note: 1. On Peter's confession Christ said, "*I will build my church,*" and 2. Jesus uses a singular noun, "church", not churches. So then, from this point forward when you read anything referencing the church, it points back to this promise of Christ, and is the church of the Lord, the only one that you read about in the teachings of God's revelation.

First let's understand the Bible refers to the "church" in two distinct ways. First, when Christ said, "*I will build my church,*" He was talking about the church in the universal sense that includes all the saved. Read John 15:1-8. Note: Many have perverted this by adding to it (Read Gal. 1:6-10). How do they pervert this? By teaching it this way, "I am the vine and you are the branches, and the branches represent all the churches." That, my friends, is perverting the word of God. Observe that Jesus did not say the branches are churches but acknowledged the branches as men. He said, "*If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch...*" Jesus is talking about individuals and not churches. It is unfaithful individuals who have "*withered*" being unfruitful who are gathered up and thrown, "*...into the fire, and they are burned*". The universal church is eternal (see; Dan. 2:44; Eph. 3:9-11; Heb. 9:15), cannot be destroyed, cannot be burned, but individuals who are unfruitful in the kingdom, will. So, the universal church is made-up of all souls who have been "called out of the world", which is exactly what the Greek word [ἐκκλησίαν] means. [ἐκ] means "out from and to", and [καλέω] means "I call, summon, invite", thus, the church is the called out people of God, composed of people who have been separated from the world by the blood of Jesus Christ, redeemed, through faith and baptism (Mark 16:16). Note: Without the blood of Christ


# Knowing & Doing God's Will

Proverbs 11:14

there would be no church! It was Jesus only who died for the church, paid for the church with His own precious blood (Acts 20:28).

The Redeemed: How is one redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and how does one gain entrance into the church which is the body of Christ (Read: Col 1:18, 24)? Note this, that after the day of Pentecost everyone is redeemed the same way. In every case of conversion you read in the book of Acts, before anyone was ever added to the church the body of Christ, they obeyed the commandments of God by believing and being baptized. Read (Acts 2:37-38, 41, 47; Acts 8:12, 13, 35-39; Acts 9:10-19; Acts 10:1-6, 44-48; Acts 16:14-15, 25-43; Acts 18:7-8; Acts 19:1-5; Acts 22:16). Fact is, nowhere does the Bible even infer you're added to the body of Christ by just believing in God or Jesus. In every case, to become a member of the church, one had to be sanctified, separated by the blood of Christ; and no one can be sanctified and separated by the blood of Christ unless they've obeyed what God said, and everyone comes in contact with the saving blood the same way, in death.

Read Romans 6:2-5. When one repents, they "die to sin", (Rom. 6:2, 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Cor. 7:9-10; 2 Tim. 2:25). Paul's description is of one whose died, "repentance", and is buried with Christ in the waters of baptism, "*baptized into His death*", which is where the blood was shed. (His Death (John 19:34; 1 John 5:6), and for water see Acts 8:36). After being buried that same one, "*just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*". Notice, where not talking about literal blood that was shed upon the cross of Calvary. Truth is that had you been standing under the cross the day the Son of God was crucified, and a drop of the blood of His precious blood landed on your head, it would not have sanctified, saved you in any sense of the word. Contacting the blood means you've contacted the life of Christ, for He's no longer dead, but lives. In obedience to His gospel, you're "*united together in the likeness of His death*", and then you're raised by the power of God, "*in the likeness of His resurrection*" (v.5). This is the only way one can become a member of the universal church of Christ (Ref. Acts 2:37-38, 41, 47). So, I hope you can see that the Church is composed of people who have died to sin (Repentance) are separated by blood (In Baptism), and that they were added to the body of Christ by the hand of God.

 <p><b>TODAY WE CHOOSE TO REJOICE</b></p> <p><b>Daniel 7:14</b></p>	<p><i>"Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed."</i></p>
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What this leads us to now is the fact that members of the church of Christ are not dead, but are separated to be the living body, called out of darkness into the marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9), called out of the kingdom of the devil, into the kingdom of God. That's why, when we ask, "What's the church", we needed to begin at the beginning with the understanding of what the church is composed of, that is people who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, people who are separated spiritually from the dead, to the living, people who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, people who have enough humility and love and faith to simply say, "Lord, you speak and I'll obey." So, when Jesus said, "*I will build my church,*" He was more literally saying, I will call the faithful out of darkness into the light to live for Me, to do the work I've commanded, till I come again.

As we've seen there is one church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4) and only one way of entrance (Acts 2:38, 41, 47; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:5). When you obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, you will not be added to any other named church, for He built but one, which He owns, which Paul describe as "*the churches of Christ*", (Rom. 16:16). Any other, established after 32 AD, and in another place other than Jerusalem, and with any other founder's name, is not the church of the Lord, the church of Christ.

So then, when you ask the question, “What is the church?”, The first answer is it is the universal, spiritual body of Christ made up of people who have obeyed the gospel. It is not a physical building, not anything established by any man.

As always, in Love

Dave Scarpino

*“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 1:10-11)*

### Times of Our Services

Sunday Morning Bible Study	9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship	9:50 AM
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:30 PM

### What Must I Do to Be Saved?

Hear the gospel-----	John 6:45; Romans 10:17
Believe the gospel-----	John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6
Repent of sins -----	Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30
Confess Christ-----	Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10
Be baptized-----	Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38
Remain faithful unto and until death-----	Revelation 2:10; Matthew 10:22