

## Does Jesus' Church Exist Today?

### Introduction

1. **In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, "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 prevail against it."**
  - A. **Does the church that Jesus built in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century still exist today?**
2. **In the lesson this morning I want to establish the fact that the church that Jesus built is in fact still in existence today.**
  - A. **Some question that some 2,000 years later that the church in which Jesus established is still existing today.**
  - B. **It is important that we are assured that the church Jesus built is still here on earth and man may be a part of it.**
3. **The following points must be seriously considered:**
  - A. **If the church Christ established has perished from the earth, if it no longer exists, then no religious institution has a biblical right to exist.**
  - B. **If the church of Christ is extinct from the earth today, all religious institutions in existence today are purely of human origin and everyone who belongs to one of them belongs to the wrong church.**
  - C. **IF the church Jesus built does exist on the earth today, then everyone ought to find it and do whatever is necessary to become a part (member) of it.**

**4. There can be no question about the existence of the church of Christ in the early days of the Apostles.**

Acts 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Acts 8:4 Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.

**5. There are two extreme views that must be examined when this subject is considered are:**

**All Religious Institutions Today Are the Church**

**1. Most religious institutions today feel that all denominations are branches of the true vine.**

**2. This view is a gross misapplication of Scripture in John 15:1-8.**  
**John 15:1-8**

**A. In the context of this passage the Lord is discussing the relationship between himself and his disciples on an individual basis.**

**1) To make Christ's statement apply to denominations as the branches is a total misapplication of His words.**

**3. Such a view of the Lord's church would cause man to look upon the church as a freak, for Christ would be head over many bodies.**

Ephesians 1:22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

4. **This concept of the church would also dispute Christ's prayer for unity of all believers.**  
**John 17:20-23**

## **Does the Church In Acts 2 Exist Today?**

1. **Some contend that there is no unit of organization except "the body universal concept," that the local assembly of saints is without authority. To these objections, the following is offered:**

- A. **The church IS instructed to assemble together.**

Hebrews 10:25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

- 1) **This assembling requires a place, and this place is the meeting-house of the local church in that place.**

- B. **The Jerusalem church was a visible church; it was visible enough to be scattered abroad.**

Acts 8:3-4 As for Saul, he **made havoc of the church**, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.

- C. **Christians are also instructed to comfort one another and edify one another together under the oversight of qualified elders.**

**1 Thessalonians 5:11-15**

- D. **The church is just as visible as people for the simple reason that the church is made up of converted people.**

**Acts 2:37-41**

## Can a Continuous Line be Drawn?

1. **Some ask whether a continuous line can be drawn through history back to the establishment of the church Jesus established (according to Acts 2) back in the first century? Let us consider:**
2. **Can any religious group today trace its history in an unbroken chain back to the apostles?**
  - A. **The Roman Catholic church claims that they can trace their history back to the apostle Peter as their first pope. Let's examine this claim.**
    - 1) **From an outline prepared by the author in *First Century Preaching by Twentieth Century Preachers*, the following facts concerning Peter are presented:**
      - a. **Peter was a married man  
(Mark 1:30; 1 Corinthians 9:5; 1 Peter 5:1)**
      - b. **Peter refused man's homage  
(Acts 10:25-26)**
      - c. **Peter taught others to wear Christ's name  
(Acts 4:12; 1 Peter 4:16)**
      - d. **Peter did not claim to be infallible  
(Galatians 2:11)**
      - e. **Peter taught that Christ was head of the church  
(Acts 2:29-36)**
      - f. **Peter never wore such names as Holy Father, Pope, etc.; he knew that God condemns such  
(Matthew 23:9)**

- 3) **These facts ought to be apparent that Peter was not a pope as the Roman Catholics claim.**
  - 4) **There is absolutely no historical evidence of the existence of the Roman Catholic church until 606 A.D.**
- B. Some Baptist theologians also attempt to trace the chain of their denomination back to the apostles but in reality can not go back any further than John Smyth.**
- 1) **In 1607 he formed the first English Baptist Church.**
  - 2) **Some Baptists claim that John the Baptizer was a Baptist.**
    - a. **To even suggest that John was in the Baptist church places the establishment of the Lord's church in Acts 2, after the establishment of the Baptist church.**
    - b. **This would make the Baptist church a church without Christ as its founder.**
  - 3) **These and others have tried to trace their line back to the apostles but without success.**
- C. Therefore, is it really necessary to trace the history back in an **unbroken line** to the apostles to establish that a church today is the Lord's Church?**
- 1) **I do not think it is for the following reason:  
**Luke 8:4-16****

3. **This is a discussion of the parable of the sower.**
  - A. **The point of emphasis in the parable is the nature of the good seed. (Example: sowing the truth of the gospel in the hearts of mankind) to produce believers in Christ.**
  - B. **Let us notice some facts about the seed in the parable:**
    - 1) **The power and characteristics of seed.**
      - a. **Seed brings forth after its kind (Genesis 1:11)**
      - b. **We may know the seed by its fruit (Matthew 7:20)**
      - c. **“Seed” is that which perpetuates all institutions.**
    - 2) **What is the seed in the parable?**
      - a. **Do we have the seed in the parable today?**
      - b. **Is the seed alive today?**  
**Hebrews 4:12**  
**1 Peter 1:23-25**
      - c. **What is the soil?**
      - d. **Who are the sowers today?**
      - e. **Just as the perpetual result of the Oak tree is in the acorn in the physical realm, in the spiritual realm the perpetuity of the church is in the seed (The Word of God).**

## Conclusion

1. **The church revealed in the Bible (the church of Christ – meaning the church which belongs to Christ) DOES exist today!**
2. **It may be found in its local sense in communities all over this nation and in many foreign countries.**
3. **The church here strives earnestly to replicate Christ’s church in all aspects according to the Word of God.**
4. **Will you respond now to Christ’s invitation to come to Him?**  
**Matthew 11:28-30**
  - A. **Be part of His church – the one that He established by obeying Him.**  
**Mark 16:16**  
**Acts 17:30**

