



The Church of Christ, Who Are These People

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SOME QUESTIONS

Are you familiar with the church of Christ? Do you know what sets it apart from denominational groups? Do you know of its purpose and of the benefits of becoming a member of it? Have you asked "Who are these people?" It is the purpose of this writing to address these questions.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST... A GROUP OF BELIEVERS

Members of the church of Christ, otherwise known as Christians, believe in the eternal and all powerful God, the creator and sustainer of all life (Genesis 1:1; Acts 17:27-28). They believe that God has a desire that all men everywhere be saved from their sins and that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die as a sacrifice for all of mankind so that this would be possible (John 3:16-17). They believe that God's entire plan for man is revealed in His inspired and therefore inerrant Word, the Bible, and that the entire Bible is the Word of God (II Timothy 3:16-17). They believe that mankind must be obedient to that plan in order to be saved eternally (Matthew 7:21; John 3:36).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST... OBEDIENT TO GOD'S PLAN

Members of the church of Christ strive to be completely obedient to the New Testament pattern in all things. This means that there is no place for the doctrines of men (Mark 7:7), but only for the Word of God (I Peter 4:11).

Christians have been obedient to God's plan for entrance into the kingdom. This means that they have heard the gospel proclaimed (Romans 10:17), they have believed that Jesus is the Christ and died for their sins (Mark 16:16), they have repented of their sins (Acts 17:30), they have publicly confessed Christ (Romans 10:9-10), and they have been immersed in order to receive remission of their sins (Acts 2:38). God then has added them to the church (Acts 2:47).

Christians strive to be obedient to the New Testament pattern in their worship. This means that when Christians assemble to worship on the Lord's day (Sunday) they will sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19); they will offer prayers to God (Acts 2:42); they will partake of the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7); they will give an offering (I Corinthians 16:1-2); and they will hear the Word of God proclaimed (Acts 2:42).

Christians observe God's plan for the organization of the church. The New Testament teaches that the head of the church is Christ (Ephesians 5:23), that each congregation having men who meet the necessary qualifications must have elders (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-5), that deacons are to be appointed to carry out special areas of work (Philippians 1:1; Acts 6:1-3), and that members work in subjection to the authority of the elders as long as their decisions are in agreement with New Testament teaching (Hebrews 13:17). Working with a local congregation is an evangelist whose function is to proclaim God's Word (II Timothy 4:1-5).

Christians also strive to be obedient to God's plan for living. They try to live pure moral lives (Galatians 5:16-24). They try to live at peace with all men (Romans 12:9-18). The Christian tries to be a good worker (Titus 2:9-10; Ephesians 6:5-9). The Christian is a good citizen (Romans 13:1-7). The Christian observes Bible teaching in regard to the family (Ephesians 5:22-6:4)

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. . . KNOWN BY OTHER NAMES

The Bible refers to the church of Christ and to its members in various ways. Some of those names which refer to the church of Christ (Romans 16:16) are the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:27), the Kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19), the Body (Ephesians 1:22-23), a holy priesthood (I Peter 2:5), a holy nation (I Peter 2:9), and the House of God (I Timothy 3:15). The members of the church of Christ or Christians (I Peter 4:16) are also called brethren (Galatians 6:1), disciples (Acts 11:26), children of God (Galatians 3:26), and saints (Romans 1:7).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. . . THOSE WHO HAVE GREAT SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

Christians possess some things no other people possess. These possessions are not material but rather are spiritual in nature. Christ teaches that material possessions should not be of primary concern to the Christian (Matthew 6:19-33; I Timothy 6:7-8). Some of the spiritual possessions of the Christian include the message of salvation revealed in God's Word (Matthew 28:18-19), hope for everlasting life (Hebrews 6:17-19), an advocate or someone to plead for them (I John 2:1), a high priest who sacrificed once and for all time for sin (Hebrews 7:22-8:2), and the promise of salvation when Christ comes again (Ephesians 1:13-14; II Timothy 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. . . THOSE WHO LOOK FOR CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

Members of the church of Christ are looking forward to the second coming of Christ. This event was promised by Christ at His ascension into heaven (John 14:1-3). Both those faithful Christians who have died and those faithful Christians who are alive when Christ comes again will meet Him in the air (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). Material things will be burned up, they will cease to exist, but the spiritual things will continue (II Peter 3:8-13). The faithful Christian will receive a crown of life (Revelation 2:10), a reward in heaven (Matthew 5:12), and eternal life (Romans 6:22-23).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. . . OPEN TO ALL OF MANKIND

God, Christ and all Christians desire that you become one with them, a part of the kingdom, a member of the body of Christ, a member of the church of Christ, a Christian (Matthew 11:28-30; John 17:20-21; I Timothy 2:3-4). They want you to realize that this life is short (James 4:14) and they want you to think very seriously about the condition of your eternal soul. They know that all will spend eternity in either Heaven or Hell (Matthew 25:31-46) and they want it to be Heaven for you.

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