

“Why I am a member of the Church of Christ”

- I. Introduction:
 - a. Hundreds of different religious organizations in existence
 - i. Over two hundred different “protestant” denominations in America
 - ii. Over 1500 branches of those denominations
 - b. Could’ve joined one of them – Passed them up to be a member of the Church of Christ
 - i. Not “Catholic”
 - ii. Not “Protestant”
 - iii. Not a member of any denomination - Plain and simple New Testament Christian
 - c. Give reasons why one should be a member of the Church of Christ
- II. Foundation of the Church of Christ
 - a. **(Isa 28:16)** “Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”
 - i. Precious corner stone is Christ
 - b. **(Matt 16:13-19)** “When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the **Christ, the Son of the living God.** And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon **this rock I will build my church;** and the **gates of hell shall not prevail against it.** And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”
 - i. Not built upon Peter
 1. Peter acknowledged that Jesus was the foundation
 - a. **(Acts 4:11-12)** “This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”
 2. Not built upon any priest, pope or rabbi
 - ii. Built on the Son of God – Jesus Christ
 1. Every person coming into the church must make this confession.
 - c. **(1 Cor 3:11)** “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”
 - d. **(Eph 2:19-22)** “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the **household of God;** And are

built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, **Jesus Christ** himself being the **chief corner stone**; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an **holy temple in the Lord**: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

- e. Jesus Christ is the Foundation of His church.
 - i. Not the foundation of any lodge or club
 - ii. Not the foundation of any denomination
 - iii. He is the foundation of His church

III. The Creed

- a. Creed – from Latin – “Credo” meaning “I Believe”
 - i. A man’s creed is whatever he believes
 - ii. The creed of a church is whatever that church believes
- b. **(Matt 17:5)** “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; **hear ye him.**”
 - i. Christ is the Ultimate Authority
 - 1. His church
 - 2. His Faith
- c. **(Matt 28:18)** “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”
 - i. He has all power (Authority)
- d. All that we know about Christ and His Word is found in the New Testament
 - i. We get our Faith from what we read from God’s Word
 - 1. **(Rom 10:17)** “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
 - ii. The New Testament is therefore our sole and only creed of the Church of Christ
 - 1. Whatever is in the New Testament we believe
 - 2. Whatever is not in the New Testament we reject
- e. This Creed is perfect
 - i. **(James 1:25)** “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”
- f. It will last forever
 - i. **(1 Peter 1:25)** “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”
 - 1. Last forever – never needs revision
- g. It is for the whole world
 - i. **(Mark 16:15-16)** “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - 1. The gospel is for the whole world
 - ii. Human Creeds are for their own denomination
 - 1. Doesn’t meet the needs of the whole world

- IV. Christ is the Head
 - a. Christ is the head of the Church of Christ
 - i. (Eph 1:22-23) “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”
 - ii. (Col 1:18) “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”
 - b. The Church of Christ has no county, state, national, or international headquarters
 - i. Christ is our head our headquarters is in heaven
 - 1. (Gal 4:26) “But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.”
 - ii. He is the head and our Authority for what we practice and do
 - 1. (Col 3:17) “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
 - iii. We are subject to Christ – He has the preeminence
- V. Then Name of the Church
 - a. Names are important in the sight of man
 - i. We name our children
 - 1. Peter
 - 2. Paul
 - 3. Mary
 - ii. We wouldn't name our children
 - 1. Nero
 - 2. Judas Iscariot
 - 3. Jezebel
 - b. Names are important in God's sight
 - i. He changed the name of Abram to Abraham
 - 1. (Gen 17:5) “Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.”
 - ii. He changed the name of Sarai to Sarah
 - 1. (Gen 17:15) “And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.”
 - iii. He changed the name of Jacob to Israel
 - 1. (Gen 35:10) “And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel.”
 - c. (Isa 65:15) “And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name:”
 - d. (Isa 56:5) “Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.”

- i. God planned to give his people a new name
- e. (Acts 11:26) "...And the disciples were called **Christians** first in Antioch."
- f. (Acts 26:28) "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a **Christian**."
- g. (1 Peter 4:16) "Yet if any man suffer as a **Christian**, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."
- h. (Acts 4:12) "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - i. Salvation is found only in the name of Christ
 - ii. We are to only were the name Christian
- i. Human names dishonors God
 - i. Against the teaching of unity
 1. (John 17:11) "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."
 2. We Can't all be united on a human name but we can be united on the name of Christ
- j. Wearing a human name along with the name of Christ is sinful
 - i. (1 Cor 1:10-13) "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **that ye all speak the same thing**, and that there **be no divisions among you**; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the **same mind** and in the **same judgment**. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of **Paul**; and I of **Apollos**; and I of **Cephas**; and I of **Christ**. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"
- k. Church has many titles but they all direct ownership to Christ
 - i. (Matt 16:18) "I will build **my church**."
 - ii. (Acts 20:28) "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 1. Paul gives us his meaning of the phrase "church of God"
 - a. He's speaking of Christ
 - b. We can safely conclude that anytime he uses the phrase "church of God" he's speaking of Jesus Christ
 2. (1 Cor 1:2) "Unto the **church of God** which is at Corinth,"
 3. (1 Cor 10:32) "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the **church of God**:"
 4. (Heb 12:23) "To the general assembly and **church of the firstborn**,"
 - a. Christ is firstborn from the dead never to die again

5. (**Rom 16:16**) “**The churches of Christ salute you.**”
 - iii. These phrases distinguish ownership
 1. Church (Called out) of (belonging) Christ (The Son of God)
 - l. The name is never used in the sense of a denomination – distinguishing different human concepts
- VI. The Truth on Baptism
- a. I am a member of the Church of Christ because it teaches the truth on baptism and it is the only church which does teach the whole truth on that subject
 - i. What is baptism?
 - ii. Who should be baptized?
 - iii. Why should people be baptized?
 - b. What is baptism?
 - i. Baptism is a burial in water. – immersion
 - ii. Baptism – from Greek which means “to dip, to plunge, to bury.”
 1. Never means to sprinkle or pour.
 - iii. John baptized in the Jordan River
 1. (**Matt 3:13-16**) “**Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:**”
 - a. Jesus came up out of the water – Buried
 - iv. Philip and the Eunuch
 1. (**Acts 8:38-39**) “**And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.**”
 - v. (**Rom 6:3-4**) “**Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**”
 - vi. (**Col 2:12**) “**Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.**”
 - c. Who should be baptized?
 - i. Only believers should be baptized

1. **(Mark 16:16)** “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”
 - ii. In every case of Bible baptism the subject had to **hear and believe** the gospel before they were baptized.
 - iii. Infant baptism never happened in the Scriptures – no example
 1. People must be old enough to believe the truth before they can be baptized.
 2. Not only must people believe before baptism but they must repent before baptism
 - a. **(Acts 2:38)**
 - iv. After the heart is changed by believing and the life is changed by repenting then one is prepared to confess his faith in Christ and be baptized.
 - d. Why should people be baptized?
 - i. For the forgiveness of sins
 1. **(Acts 2:38)**
 2. **(Acts 22:16)** “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”
 - ii. Because it is commanded
 1. **(Mark 16:16) (Matt 28:19)**
 - e. Some denominations are right on some parts
 - i. Must accept the truth of Baptism and do it
 1. What is baptism?
 2. Who should be baptized?
 3. Why should people be baptized?
- VII. The Lord’s Supper
- a. The New Testament teaches that Christians are to commune on the first day of the week.
 - i. **(Acts 20:7)** “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”
- VIII. The Contributions
- a. Since the Christians were assembling on the first day of the week for the purpose of communing, Paul told them to have their contributions collected on that day.
 - i. **(1 Cor 16:1-2)** “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”
 - ii. Notice that the preachers that think the “upon the first day of the week” doesn’t mean first day of ever week when it comes to the Lord’s Supper, takes it as so when it comes to the contributions.
 1. Many will take up collection every time they assembled

2. The Church of Christ follows God's word and does it on the first day of the week, every week, and only on the first day of the week.

IX. The Unity of God's people

- a. I am a member of the Church of Christ because here I may plead for the unity of God's people.
 - i. Jesus Prayed for all his followers to be one
 1. **(John 17:20-21)** "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: **that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.**"
 - a. Unity is possible – Christ prayed for it.
 - i. Else Christ prayed for something he knew would be impossible
 - b. "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me"
 - i. An unbelieving world is the result divisions
 - ii. People don't know what to believe!
 - ii. We can plea for unity:
 1. Get rid of the human creeds
 2. Be unity on the word of God
 3. Get rid of the denominations
 4. Be unity in his body – the church that belongs to him

X. Destiny of the Church

- a. I am a member of the Church of Christ because it has a glorious destiny.
 - i. **(Acts 20:28)** "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 1. Christ purchased His church with His blood.
 2. The church is of great value to him
 - ii. Every person who becomes a Christian also becomes a member of the church at the same time.
 1. **(Acts 2:47)** "...And the Lord **added** to the church daily such as should be saved."
 - a. God doesn't add you to a denomination – man does
 - b. God adds to you the church that belongs to Christ
 - c. The Church of Christ is not a social club
 - d. The Church of Christ is the congregate of saved people – God's children
- b. It is a common thing for men to teach that the church makes no difference, the church is not important and such like
 - i. They will say, "When we get to heaven we will all be Christians together."
 - ii. Why not be Christians together now?

- c. Denominations will perish with time – Christ’s Church has glorious destiny.
 - i. **(Eph 5:25-27)** “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, **That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.**”
 - ii. The destiny of the church is heaven
 - 1. **(2 Tim 4:8)** “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”
 - 2. **(Col 1:4-5)** “Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;”

XI. Conclusion

- a. A few reasons for being a member of the church of our blessed Lord.
 - i. Christ loves His church
 - ii. He died for her
 - iii. He adds every child of God to His church
 - iv. We ought to love the church even more than we love our own lives
- b. I plead with everyone of you to be Christians – nothing more, nothing less.