

When There Were NO DENOMINATIONS

by J. T. Smith

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.”(Matthew 16:18)

Is it possible to duplicate Christ's Church today by reading the New Testament? I maintain that it is. In Hebrews 8:1-5 the writer said, “Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,^{2a} Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.³For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer.⁴For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law;⁵who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, “See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”

Just as the writer says, As Moses was required to make all things according to the pattern that Jehovah showed him, so God has given us a pattern that we are to follow in building the heavenly tabernacle, Christ's church? That pattern is given in the New Testament.

What Constitutes A Pattern?

All that God has said on any subject constitutes a pattern. In order to know God's Pattern on any subject we must read the New Testament. If one moved to an area where there were no churches, he could read the New Testament and learn God's teaching on becoming a Christian, and the Worship and Work of the church.

For those who would become Christians we must believe the facts concerning Jesus Christ. We must not only believe that Jesus died and was buried, but that arose from the grave. In I Corinthians 15 we read, “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,²by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.³For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures ⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the

third day according to the Scriptures,⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.” Yes, there were more than 500 eye-witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus.

Facts of History

You may be asking the question, “How do I know this is true. I wasn't there.” True! It is a matter of historical record that Jesus arose from the dead. We accept facts of history of every kind because of eye-witnesses and history.

Examples: Did George Washington live? Was he our first president? How do we know? We were not there. “But there were eye-witnesses and it was recorded in history” So was the birth, life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. These events are all recorded in the New Testament by eye-witnesses .

So for one who believes the facts and believes that the Bible is God's Word, how would he go about establishing the same church that Jesus established through His Apostles in Jerusalem in Acts 2.

The Book of Acts – The Beginning and Early History of Christ's Church

Before His ascension into heaven, Jesus told His apostles - ... “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.¹⁶”He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16). The gospel must be preached. These people who HEAR it must BELIEVE it and be BAPTIZED to be saved.

Luke said, Luke 24:47 “and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” The apostles were also to preach REPENTANCE and REMISSION OF SINS BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM.

The apostles remained at Jerusalem as Christ had instructed them before His ascension. He told them to wait for the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:5 “And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.”

The Spirit empowered them to speak in tongues (different languages) Acts 2:8 “And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?” (Please read the entire chapter of Acts 2). They told the people, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”³⁷Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”³⁸Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:36-38). They preached just what Jesus instructed them to preach: HEAR the gospel, BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ (or Messiah) REPENT and BE BAPTIZED for the REMISSION of SINS. Now if preaching these things brought remission of sins THEN (they

were saved) if we preach the same thing today why won't it bring about remission of sins (salvation) today?

Then, in Acts 2:41 we read, "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them." Then verse 47 says, "praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." To which church was The Lord adding them? TO CHRIST'S CHURCH – THERE WERE NO DENOMINATIONS IN EXISTANCE TO WHICH THEY COULD BE ADDED.

**What
Denomination
Did These
Early Christians
Belong To?**

Peter
James
John
Paul
Silas
Timothy
Mark
Barnabas
Luke

The Answer
NONE
There Were No
Denominations
Then!

These men were all members of Christ's Church. "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47)

Christ and the Church			
	<u>Founder</u>	<u>When?</u>	<u>Where?</u>
N T Church	Christ	33 A.D.	Jerusalem
Roman Catholic	Bishops of Rome	251	Rome
Lutheran Martin	Luther	1530	Germany
Presbyterian	John Calvin	1536	Switzerland
Baptist	John Smythe	1611	Holland
Methodist	John & Charles Wesley	1739	England
Mormons	Joseph Smith	1830	America
Jehovah's Witnesses	Charles T. Russell	1872	America

Now here is the point. IF we teach the same thing that Peter taught, wouldn't we be saved and added to LORD'S CHURCH just like they were?

Notice in the chart on the different cases of salvation they all did the same things to become Christians. And, the Scriptures specifically say that before they were said to be saved, receive the remission of sins or went on their way rejoicing that they were BAPTIZED.

The Plan of Salvation As Given In The Book of Acts					
Heard Gospel	Believed	Repented	Confessed	Baptized	Saved
Rom. 10:17	Heb. 11:6	Acts 17:30	Rom. 10:10	Acts 22:16	Mark 16:16
3 Thousand 2:1-47	Not Specified	Repented 2:38	Not Specified	Baptized 2:38, 41	Sins Remitted
Samaritans 8:5-12	Believed 8:12	Not Specified	Not Specified	Baptized 8:12	Saved MK 16:16
Ethiopian 8:36-39	Believed 8:37	Not Specified	Confessed 8: 38	Baptized 8:37	Rejoiced 8:39
Saul 9:1-18; 22:16	Believed 9:5-6	Not Specified		Baptized Acts 22	Sins Washed Away
Cornelius 10-11-18	Believed 11:18	Repented	Not Specified	Baptized 10:48	Saved 11:14
Jailor 16:30	Believes 16:31	Not Specified	Not Specified	Baptized 16:33	Rejoiced 16:34

That is the reason we deny that the church of Christ meeting at 4608 Nebraska Avenue is a man-made denomination. We follow God's Pattern in Conversion, Worship and Work. We can give book, chapter and verse not only for our teaching on conversion, but for every act of worship and work we do. Come, visit us, and compare what we are doing with what the New Testament says.

All can do what we are doing and establish Christ's Church if they follow the New Testament pattern and abide in the doctrine of Christ. What did the apostle John say would happen if we DO NOT abide in the doctrine of Christ. "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son" (II John 1:9). Also, Jesus said, ¹⁸"For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

Presented by:

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