

## WHICH CHURCH WOULD JESUS ATTEND TODAY IF HE WERE HERE ?

1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:3-4; 14:33

(Not entirely original with me)

**Introduction:** There are countless people who would be followers of Jesus if there weren't so many denominations and conflicting doctrines being taught by so many who also profess to be Christians. Religious differences and confusion certainly don't come from God but are a work of the flesh. Is it possible to simply be a Christian and not have to be a part of some denomination? If Jesus were to come back to visit, what Church would He attend?

### I. JESUS SET THE EXAMPLE FOR CHRISTIANS

1. In Jesus' day there were religious differences.
  - Israel was living under the Law given by God to Moses.
  - In God's law, He made no provision for Israel to be divided into religious parties.
  - In Jesus' day, the Jews had formed several religious parties.
    - The Pharisees who were conservative.
    - The Sadducees who were very liberal, modernists of their day.
    - The Essenes who were radical isolationist and wanted no part with anybody else.
    - The Herodians or Zealots who were more of a political group.
  - Any one in Jesus' day would have to be associated with one of these four groups.
2. Jesus kept Himself apart from all the groups in keeping His relationship with God.
  - Jesus belonged to NONE of these groups.
  - Jesus kept His relationship with God without joining any religious sect/group.
    - Being an Israelite, with the Law of Moses still in effect, Jesus was simply an "Israelite."
    - Jesus did teach and encourage everyone to live by the Law. Matthew 5:17-20
    - Jesus encouraged everyone to simply be/do what the Law of Moses intended.
  - If Jesus were here today, what Church, what denomination would He be a part of?
    - Would Jesus be a Baptist, Catholic, Presbyterian, a Methodist, a Pentecostal, etc?
    - If Jesus were simply an Israelite then, wouldn't He simply be a Christian today?
    - His disciples were simply called "Christians." Acts 11:26
  - If Jesus' disciples were simply called "Christians," nothing more, nothing less, shouldn't that be the case today?

### II. THE CHURCH JESUS STARTED

1. The Church was promised by Jesus.
  - Jesus promised to "build HIS Church..." Matthew 16:18
  - "Church" comes from the Greek, ekklesia, meaning the "called out" group, assembly, congregation.
  - Jesus promised to create His own group of people who had been "called."
2. Jesus's Church was established through preaching the Gospel.
  - What did Jesus mean by those who had been "called?"
  - Paul teaches that a person is "called" by the Gospel. 2 Thessalonians 2:14
  - Peter "called out" those who were willing to express publicly their faith in Jesus. Acts 2:38-41
  - Anyone who responded in faith, repentance and baptism were "added."
    - Those who responded were added to what and by whom?
    - Acts 2:47 - "And the LORD added to the church daily those who were being saved."
  - The Day of Pentecost was the beginning of the LORD'S Church - His "ekklesia."

- This first "called-out" group was created when the Gos[pe]l was preached and people responded to it.
3. The Church grew through preaching the Gospel.
    - The Church first started in Jerusalem.
    - As the Gospel spread, and people responded to it, groups of these saved people met in various places together.
    - Each group became known as a LOCAL Church.
    - During Paul's first missionary journey, many LOCAL Churches were established. Acts 14:21-23
    - Teaching the Gospel of Christ formed a LOCAL Church when those responding and obeying the Gospel joined together in worship and work.
  4. The Church was lifted up and advanced through the doctrine of the Apostles.
    - Although united in Jesus Christ, the LOCAL Churches were independent from one another and from any united human organization.
    - Jesus directed His Church through His inspired Apostles who taught the people how to worship and work together. Acts 2:42
    - The Apostles did the teaching themselves directly and sometimes appointed helpers, emissaries. 1 Corinthians 4:17
    - Sometimes teaching was done through letters (epistles) written by the Apostles.
    - The Church paid close attention to the doctrines of the Apostles and therefore were able to be ONLY Christians, without all the confusion that exists today.

### **III. HOW TO GET OUT OF RELIGIOUS CONFUSION OF TODAY**

1. Do only what the Gospel says to do.
  - Jesus called then and calls today to HIS Church (ekklesia) through the Gospel - ONLY!
  - Today, begin by obeying the SAME instructions that Peter gave on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:38
  - Repenting of one's sins, being baptized for the remission of one's sins, he/she then receives the SAME blessings as did the 3,000 on that day - SALVATION!
  - By following the basic beginning guidelines, one can be saved and know that the Lord truly adds to His Church TODAY just as He added then. Acts 2:47
2. Follow the example of the early Christians.
  - The early Christians continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine. Acts 2:42
    - They joined NO other religious organization - neither should anyone today.
    - In Jesus Christ one is automatically united with all others who are in Him (saved).
  - Study carefully the New Testament description of the Church, how it continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine.
    - Look in the Book of Acts and the Epistles for a clear description of the proper doctrine.
      - How to worship the Lord acceptably.
      - How to be scripturally organized as local congregations.
      - How to live and work together as Christians, spreading the Gospel of Christ through the word and example.
  - The Apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit therefore what they wrote and taught was exactly what Jesus wanted.
    - By duplicating the early Churches, by following the instructions of the Apostles, one will be simply a "Christian" and be certain that Jesus is pleased.
    - Jesus said: "He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me..." Luke 10:16

## CONCLUSION:

1. Being the "kind" of Christian that Jesus wants is not as difficult as it appears:
  - There are thousands of LOCAL congregations who are exactly as Jesus wants.
  - There is probably one near where YOU live.
  - Then there is the option of starting a congregation right in your own home.
2. Only by following the example and teachings of Jesus, as the Apostles reveal, one can be led out of all the religious confusion that is rampant today.
3. Wouldn't it be great to just simply be a Christian, a member of the LORD'S Church?
  - Render obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as Peter and the other Apostles taught. Acts 2:36-38
4. It is God who assures one of salvation, not some denomination or religious institution.
5. Once one has become a Christian, the he/she has the responsibility to learn and follow the teachings of the Apostles as one serves the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 2:42
6. "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about 3,000 souls were added to them..." Acts 2:41
7. So, which Church do YOU think Jesus would attend if He were here today?