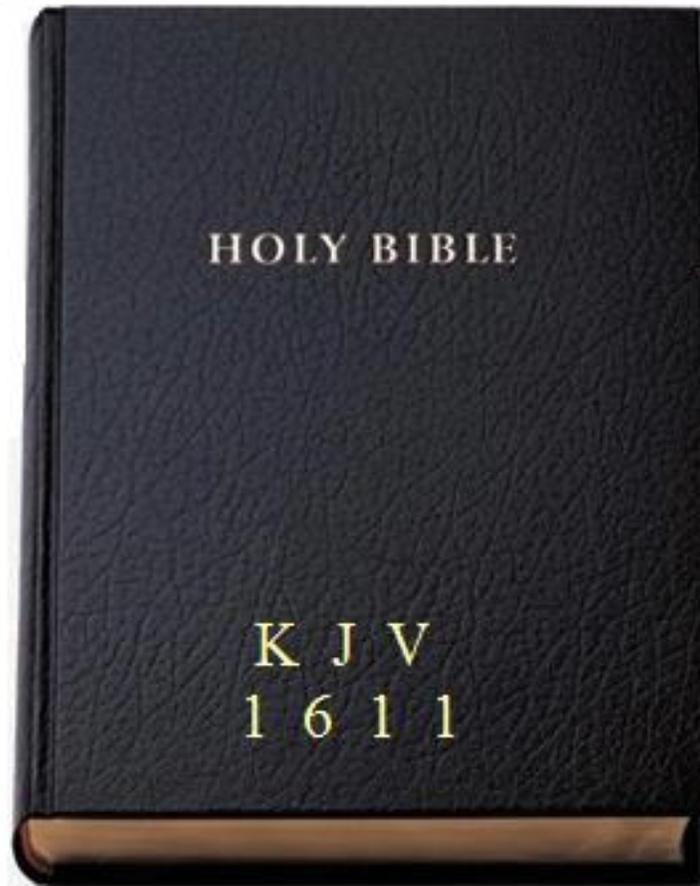


King James Bible Study



A Study Guide On
The Church Of Christ

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The Church Of Christ

I) BACKGROUND

1) Past

1. Founded around 1827 by Alexander Campbell
2. The foundation of this false religious group is built upon the works and beliefs of four men, Barton Stone, Thomas Campbell, Walter Scott, and Alexander Campbell

BARTON STONE

- Believed all Christians should unite on the basis of faith in Christ and that the divisive doctrines and practices of denominationalism should be abolished
- Came out of "Kentucky Revival" convinced that salvation had little to do with church affiliation and that "deeds are more important than creeds"
- Established churches brought disciplinary action against him and his followers prompting him to reorganize under the name "Christian"

THOMAS CAMPBELL

- Served as a clergyman in the Seceder branch of the Presbyterian church in northern Ireland
- Settled in western Pennsylvania (1807) and began advocating unity of all Christians, appealed to the Bible as the basis of faith, and practiced open communion
- After being censured, he published a "Declaration and Address" for the Christian Association of Washington County, PA; it became the Magna Charta of the Church of Christ

WALTER SCOTT

- Popularized the term *restoration*, meaning the restoration of the New Testament church
- Related faith more to the mind than to emotions
- Stressed the importance of repentance, faith, and baptism for salvation

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

- Son of Thomas Campbell and “father” of the formative theology of the Church of Christ
- Believed every church should be autonomous and independent; that creeds and titles had no justification in scripture; that the Lord's Supper should be observed every Sunday; and that baptism by immersion was for adult believers for the remission of sins
- He and his congregation joined an association of Particular Baptists, but due to heretical teachings, they received stern opposition and had to separate from that body in 1830
- Called his reorganized group the "Disciples of Christ"
- Merged with Barton Stone's "Christians" in 1832 to form the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

2) Present

1. There are over 20,000 churches and 3,000,000 members
2. Greatest concentration is in the southern United States, especially in Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Oklahoma, and Texas
3. Professes to be a restoration of the New Testament church
4. Does not profess to be a denomination- nor Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish- but the one and only true church of Christ; which he established and for which he died

5. The name "Church of Christ" is not used to designate a denomination, but rather to indicate that the church belongs to Christ
6. Churches are autonomous and independent; there are no conventions, annual meetings, or official publications
7. Each church is governed by a plurality of elders and deacons selected from among the membership
8. The motto of the Church of Christ is, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent"
9. Church of Christ preachers all seem to have the same monotonous tone of voice, the same argumentative spirit, and the same unusual way of pronouncing the word baptize (i.e.- "buptize")

II) BELIEFS

THE CHURCH

1) Assertion

1. The Church of Christ is the only true New Testament church

"...The CHURCHES OF CHRIST salute you" (Rom 16:16)

"There is ONE BODY..." (Eph 4:4)

"Since the church belongs to Christ shouldn't the church be so called? It is certainly scriptural to refer to the Lord's body as the 'church of Christ'." (*Why I Am A Member of the Church of Christ*, George Baily, p.4)

2) Answer

1. The church, as the body of Christ, is an ORGANISM, not an organization (1 Cor 12:13; Eph 1:23; 3:6; 5:30-32)
- **"The CHURCHES of Christ"** (Rom 16:16) is no more a name of the church than **"the CHURCHES of Galatia"** (Gal 1:2)

SALVATION

1) Assertion

2. Baptism is essential for salvation

"He that believeth and is BAPTIZED shall be SAVED..." (Mark 16:16)

"...Except a man be BORN OF WATER and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)

"...Repent, and be BAPTIZED every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38)

"...Arise, and be BAPTIZED, and WASH AWAY THY SINS..." (Acts 22:16)

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST were baptized into his death?" (Rom 6:3)

"...He saved us, by the WASHING OF REGENERATION..." (Tit 3:5)

"The like figure whereunto even BAPTISM DOTH ALSO NOW SAVE US..." (1 Pet 3:21)

3. One must hear, repent, believe, confess, be baptized, and live a good life to be saved

"Immersion is the converting act" (*The Harbinger*, July 5, 1830)

"Immersion and regeneration are two Bible names for the same act" (*A History of Baptists*, John T. Christian, p.431)

"To get into Christ one must hear the Gospel, believe it, repent, confess and be baptized into Christ. This puts one into Christ and he is thereby born again" (*How To Understand the Bible*, A.G. Hobbs, p.19)

"Millions of ages to come, there will be millions in paradise who will be delighted to revert to some river, or pool, or fountain, in which they put on Christ and vowed eternal allegiance to him" (Campbell-Rice Debate, p.556)

"We do not emphasize baptism as a 'church ordinance,' but as a command of Christ. The New Testament teaches baptism as an act which is essential to salvation (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16)." (*Churches of Christ- Who Are These People?* Joe R. Barnett, p.14)

"Baptism is extremely important because the New Testament sets forth the following purposes for it:

- 1) It is to enter the kingdom (John 3:5)
 - 2) It is to contact Christ's blood (Romans 6:3,4)
 - 3) It is to get into Christ (Galatians 3:27)
 - 4) It is for salvation (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21)
 - 5) It is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38)
 - 6) It is to wash away sins (Acts 22:16)
 - 7) It is to get into the church (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:23)
- (*Churches of Christ- Who Are These People?* Joe R. Barnett, p.15)

"We need to realize we've sinned. Sin is doing anything God doesn't want us to do. But we need to understand...there is nothing we can do to make our sin okay. We need to believe Jesus is the Son of God...and trust him as our Savior. Faith in Jesus comes only through studying the Bible, the word of God. Because Jesus died, was buried...and was raised from the dead...we can have hope. We must repent! Repent is a Bible word that means to recognize we are going in the wrong direction...and start going in another direction. We must turn our backs on sin...then walk with God. We must be immersed (baptized) in water. When we have the courage and willingness to admit we have sinned and confess that Jesus is the Son of God...We are told to be buried in water, for the forgiveness of sins. When this happens, we are instantly made clean, born again and added to God's family...the church." (*One Nation Under God*, The Churches of Christ of America, p.6)

"Therefore, going to church is pre-eminently essential to going to Heaven" (A.G. Hobbs)

2) Answer

1. Baptism is commanded (Acts 10:48), but is done BECAUSE sins are forgiven, not IN ORDER TO receive forgiveness (Acts 2:38) c.f. (Luke 5:12-15)

- The one saving baptism is the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:5; Rom 6:3-4; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:27; Col 2:12-13)
- Baptism is a "figure" of salvation (1 Pet 3:21)
- Jesus Christ did not baptize anyone with water (John 4:2) but with the Holy Ghost (John 1:33)
- Jesus Christ promised the thief on the cross that he would be with him that day in paradise and he was never baptized (Luke 23:43)
- Ananias called Paul a brother before he was baptized (Acts 9:17-18)
- Paul made a distinction between the gospel and baptism and said Christ did not send him to baptize (1 Cor 1:14-17)

- Paul credited the gospel as the means of salvation not baptism (1 Cor 4:15; 15:1-4)
2. Salvation is by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior, apart from any works (Eph 2:8-9; Rom 3:24,28; 4:5; 5:1,8; 10:13; Gal 2:16; Tit 3:5)

NOTE: Evangelist Joe Boyd was told by a Church of Christ personal worker that the only way he could have his sins washed away would be to be baptized. He was also told that after he was baptized he would have to continue in good works in order to secure his salvation in the end because he could not be sure of salvation until he died. Brother Boyd's response was, "In other words, you're telling me that the only way that I could be sure of getting to Heaven would be for you to baptize me and then drown me in the baptistry! Is that right?" He received no reply.

ETERNAL SECURITY

1) Assertion

1. It is possible for a born again Christian to lose his salvation (1 Tim 1:18-20; Gal 5:4-7; Heb 10:26); therefore, he must persevere in good works until the end

"To get to Heaven one must be faithful till death (Rev 2:10). Therefore we must continue rooted and grounded and growing in the faith, being faithful till death." (Eugene Smith)

"As the Bible teaches that the Christian can be lost, it likewise tells him how to remain saved." (*The Bible Is Right*, Hugh W. Davis)

"But having Christ is conditional; thus eternal life is conditional." (*Falling From Grace*, James M. Tolle, p.29)

2) Answer

1. The true born again Christian cannot lose their salvation

- The born again Christian HATH (present tense) everlasting life (John 3:36; 5:24; 6:47; 1 John 5:12-13)
- We are graven upon the palms of the Lord's hands (Isa 49:16) and no man can pluck us out (John 10:27-29)
- We are kept by the power of God through faith (not works) (2 Tim 1:12; 1 Pet 1:5; 4:19; Jude 24)
- We are sealed with the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption (Eph 1:14; 4:30) and he bears witness with our spirit that we ARE (present tense) the children of God (Rom 8:16)

NOTE: A lady who had been saved out of the Church of Christ said she confronted her Church of Christ preacher and asked him what would get her lost again if she could be saved and then lost. He said, "Falling into sin." She responded, "Then would I have to be baptized again?" He said, "No." Why would God require baptism to be saved the first time, but not the second time?

THE LORD'S SUPPER

1) Assertion

1. The Lord's Supper must be observed every first day of the week to be scriptural

"And upon the FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, when the disciples came together to BREAK BREAD..." (Acts 20:7)

"To live up to the Bible one must worship as taught in the Bible. The New Testament Church met on the first day of the week to break bread

(Acts 20:7). No church is living up to the Bible that does not do likewise. (*What Difference Does It Make?* A.G. Hobbs)

"So we follow the approved example of the church at Troas and meet upon the first day of the week to break bread in order that we may be approved of the Lord. Every week has a first day- so we meet on the first day of the week. Therefore, every Lord's day we proclaim the Lord's death till he come." (*The Lord's Supper*, A.G. Hobbs, p.19)

"The Lord's Supper is part of the worship and edification in all our stated meetings." (Alexander Campbell)

"Churches of Christ are different from many in that we observe the Lord's Supper on the first day of every week. Again, our reason centers in our determination to follow the teaching of the New Testament. It says, describing the practice of the first-century church, 'And upon the first day of the week...the disciples came together to break bread...' (Acts 20:7). Some have objected that the text does not specify the first day of every week. This is true- just as the command to observe the Sabbath did not specify every Sabbath. The command was simply, 'remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy' (Exo 20:8). The Jews understood that to mean every Sabbath." (*Churches of Christ- Who Are These People?* Joe R. Barnett, p.11-12)

2) Answer

1. There is no scriptural command on when and how frequently churches should observe the Lord's Supper; these type of decisions rest with the local church (Matt 18:18; 1 Cor 11:33)
- If the "breaking of bread" is the Lord's Supper (as Campbellites conted), then it must be observed DAILY (not just on the first day of the week); and FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE (not in a church building) (Acts 2:46)

- The "breaking of bread" is to "sit at meat" (Luke 24:30; Acts 2:46); the Lord's Supper is not mealtime (1 Cor 11:22,34)
- There is a difference between KEEPING the seventh day and OBSERVING the first day (Exo 20:8; Acts 20:7); the seventh day is called the Sabbath, the first day is not called the Lord's Supper day

WORSHIP

1) Assertion

1. Since the New Testament does not mention musical instruments as part of worship, any true New Testament church will refrain from use of them (Matt 26:30; Acts 16:25; Rom 15:9; 1 Cor 14:15; Eph 5:18-19; Col 3:16; Heb 2:12; Jam 5:13)

"Furthermore, the church of the New Testament did not use mechanical music in worship, but vocal music-singing." (*What Difference Does It Make?* A.G. Hobbs)

"To use mechanical music in worship is to abide not in the doctrine of Christ...to teach such is to preach 'another gospel'...Addition of mechanical music to the worship is a presumptuous sin." (*Mechanical Instrumental Music in Worship*, A.J. Edward Nolin)

"We are seeking to worship according to the instruction of the New Testament. The New Testament leaves instrumental music out, therefore, we believe it right and safe to leave it out, too. If we used mechanical instrument we would have to do so without New Testament authority." (*Churches of Christ- Who Are These People?* Joe R. Barnett, p.9)

"The Church of Christ is the only religious institution that worships scripturally- without either addition or subtraction. This we will affirm in public debate- should anyone care to deny it." (A.G. Hobbs)

2) Answer

1. Musical instruments such as trumpets, harps, organs, and cymbals are used in worship in the Old Testament (Psa 150) and there is no denouncing of this practice in the New Testament
 - The New Testament does not mention church buildings, baptistries, pitch pipes, hymnbooks, collection baskets, electricity, or air conditioning, yet the Church of Christ uses them
 - If musical instruments are used in worship in heaven (Rev 5:8; 14:2; 15:2), why would the Lord denounce it on earth?
 - No musical instrument is unclean (Rom 14:14), it is the heart of the one using it that can be (1 Cor 10:31)
 - Since the New Testament is silent regarding use of musical instruments, why isn't the Church of Christ? Is that not part of their motto?

PROPHECY

1) Assertion

1. There will not be a "rapture of the church"

"There is no doubt that Jesus will come again and that the saints will be caught up to be with Him. That it will be a secreting away of the saints is in question for the following reasons: There is to be nothing secret about Christ's coming for His saints (1 The 4:16,17; 1 Cor 15:52); When Jesus comes again the world will be destroyed (2 Pet 3:8-13)" (*Is There Going To Be A Rapture?* Delton Haun, p.4-5)

2. There will be a general resurrection and a general judgment

"There is to be one resurrection of those in the graves to one judgment...The faithful are not raised up until the last day" (*Is There Going To Be A Rapture?* Delton Haun, p.5)

3. There will not be a Millennial reign of Jesus Christ; he is reigning in his kingdom now

"The Bible certainly does not teach that there will be a 1000 year period AFTER the second coming of Christ...the day of the Lord means the day of his coming." (*The Rapture, Tribulation, and Pre-Millennialism*, Grover Stevens, p.1)

2) Answer

1. The Church of Christ fails to distinguish the Rapture from the Second Coming (i.e.- the Revelation)

- The Rapture is a mystery (1 Cor 15:51); the Revelation is not
- The Rapture is in the air (1 The 4:16-17); the Revelation on the ground (Zec 14:4)
- The Rapture is private (1 Cor 15:52; Acts 1:11); the Revelation is public (Rev 1:7)
- The Rapture is before the Tribulation (1 The 5:9); the Revelation is after (Matt 24:29-30)

2. There is no general resurrection or general judgment

- There are seven resurrections (Matt 28:6; 27:51-53; 1 Cor 15:50-57; Rev 14:14-16; Eph 2:6; Eze 37:1-14; Rev 20:11-15)
- There are seven judgments (Matt 27:46; 25:14-30, 31-46; 1 Cor 11:31-32; 3:11-15; Rev 20:10,11-15)

3. Jesus Christ will reign on this earth for 1000 years (Rev 20:3-7)

CONCLUSION

The Church of Christ is rarely, if ever, listed among the religious groups that preach a false gospel. Yet, their gospel of baptismal regeneration is just as heretical as the gospel of the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. Their twisted and contorted doctrine is the result of failing to make a distinction between salvation and rewards, churches and the church, the church and the kingdom, relationship and fellowship, faith and works, and backsliding and apostasy.

Those entangled in their doctrine love to argue and debate; therefore, it is important not to waste time if they demonstrate more interest in argument and debate rather than the truth. We are not here to win arguments or debates, but souls. If they do not want to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior, maybe someone else will.