

# **THE CHURCH OF SCRIPTURE**

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## **Christ Is Its Founder**

The church of scripture has Jesus Christ as its founder. The writer of Hebrews made this point clear when he wrote, “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2). As “the author and finisher of our faith” Jesus Christ bears distinction as the founder of the Christian religion. The apostle Paul instructed concerning the household of God that its members 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” (Eph. 2:20-21).

## **Christ Is Its Builder**

The church of scripture has Jesus Christ as its builder. During his personal ministry Jesus promised to build his church. Matthew recorded his statement, “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” (Matt. 16:18). As previously seen, the foundational materials out of which the church of Christ was built consisted of the apostles and prophets with the entire building growing “unto an holy temple in the Lord.”

Christians make up the entire spiritual building known as the church of Christ. The apostle Peter wrote, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (I Pet. 2:5).

## **Christ Is Its Head**

The church of scripture has Jesus Christ as its head. In two of Paul’s prison epistles he brought out the headship of Christ over his church. In Ephesians he wrote, “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” (1:21-22). Further, in Colossians he wrote, “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. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell” (1:18-

19). Paul urged the Christians at Corinth to work together in unity because they were all members of the one body of Christ. He wrote, “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (I Cor. 12:12-13). In doing so they would honor Jesus Christ as the head of the church.

### **Christ Is Its Savior**

The church of scripture has Jesus Christ as its Savior. The concept of Christ as the Savior of the church follows naturally on the heels of the discussion of Christ as the head of the church, for the Bible says, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23). What this means to the Christian in addition to being set free from sin and its dire consequences is that as a member of the church the Christian is now subject to Christ in everything (v. 24). Christ sacrificed himself because of his love for the church (v. 25), through baptism into Christ the penitent believer has been cleansed from past sins and set apart as holy unto the Lord (v. 26), and as a member of the church of Christ a Christian is to keep himself pure and holy that the church might be a glorious church (v. 27).

### **Christ Is Its Sustainer**

The church of scripture has Jesus Christ as its sustainer. The book of Hebrews says that through Christ God is “upholding all things by the word of his power” (Heb. 1:3). He has promised that he will never leave nor forsake his people (Heb. 13:5). Paul promised God’s abundant supply, “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19).

### **Christ Is Its Shepherd**

The church of scripture has Jesus Christ as its Shepherd. Upon reading the tenth chapter of John where Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep,” sometimes the Bible student is carried back in thought to the comforting shepherd’s Psalm (Psa. 23; John 10:11). In his admonitions to local shepherds in each congregation Peter encouraged them, “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (I Pet. 5:4). The church of Christ is the flock of Christ over which he serves as chief Shepherd.

## **Christ Is Its Judge**

The church of scripture has Jesus Christ as its judge. Judgment begins with the house of God (I Pet. 4:17). All people, living and dead, will appear before the judgment seat or throne of Christ (Matt. 25:31-32; II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12-13). No court of appeals will be available following his righteous judgment (II Tim. 4:8). On that final day the eternal destiny of all mankind will be determined (Matt. 25:46).

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. Find the Old Testament passage that points to Jesus as the “head stone of the corner.”
2. Discuss the time and place of the church’s beginning on earth.
3. What was the rock upon which Jesus promised to build his church?
4. What are some spiritual sacrifices the holy priesthood offers up to God by Jesus Christ?
5. Name Paul’s four prison epistles.
6. Define “preeminence.”
7. How are believers baptized into the one body by the one Spirit?
8. Name five things being a member of the body of Christ means to the Christian?
9. With what does a Christian need to be supplied in order to remain faithful to Christ?
10. Memorize the twenty-third Psalm.
11. Give the verse that proves that all the dead will be raised in the same hour.