

**DOES IT  
MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE  
TO WHICH  
CHURCH YOU  
BELONG?**



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With all the confusion of Christian societies and forms of religion and with churches bearing many names with as many different beliefs and doctrines, the question arises, “Does it make a difference to which church you belong?” What do you think?

Please turn the page and, together, let us examine just a very few Scriptures that will point us toward the answer to this question.

Does it Make a Difference ...

*... Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*

Here, in Matthew 24:4-5, Jesus tells us “many” will deceive the unwary, and therefore lead many astray from the true gospel. We read also in Matthew 7:13-14:

*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

With these warnings coming directly from the Lord, concerning the many that shall deceive and be deceived, and of the one gate and narrow way, we can surely see how necessary it is to find that one way.

Assuming that we all believe in life after death — an everlasting life — it is very important that we find out what to do to gain everlasting life; and not do as many do: remain unprepared because they have entered the wide gate. Remember that not all the truth is pleasant, especially if it is different from that which we have been taught previously. Jesus warned us against following traditions in Mark 7:9:

*...Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.*

... to Which Church You Belong?

That is strong language! There are no two ways to heaven in that statement. We find a good many “Christians” do not believe it necessary to be baptized by water and by the Spirit. However, the Bible still reads the same. Someone must be wrong.

***Now, to follow the Lord in baptism:***

“... and [they] were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan ...” (Mark 1:5)

“... they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.” (Acts 8:38)

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water ....” (Matthew 3:16)

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism ....” (Romans 6:4)

“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him...” (Colossians 2:12)

***According to the Bible then, let us see what is required for baptism:***

1. There must be “water.”
2. It takes “much water.”
3. We need to go “down into the water.”
4. It is a burial in water, or immersion.
5. After being “buried” in water, we “rise” up again and come “out of the water.”

### Does it Make a Difference ...

Thus we find the sprinkling and pouring methods to agree in only one point: the use of water. Therefore, it is wrong.

Some churches compromise by letting the one wishing to be baptized have his choice of three ways: sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. What a departure from the "**strait and narrow**" way!

Many churches are like the people Paul found at Ephesus who had been baptized by Apollos (Acts 19:2):

*He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.*

On that occasion they were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Following this proper water baptism they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands. "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, The Holy Ghost came on them ..." (Acts 19:6)

This completes the two-part baptism spoken of by Jesus in John 3:3-5, and mentioned by Peter in Acts 2:38.

Some churches which recognize the need for baptism by immersion in water do not recognize the need for the baptism of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. Paul warned that some will disregard the doctrine of Christ in their teaching (II Timothy 4:3-4):

### ... to Which Church You Belong?

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

John also gave a similar warning (II John 9-10):

*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God...If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed.*

### ***Of what is the Kingdom of heaven made?***

Webster says a kingdom is the "territory of a king". To have a kingdom, of necessity there must be subjects or people to be ruled over, and a king with subordinate officers under him. So, to find what the "kingdom of heaven" consists of, let us again refer to the Bible:

1. The King: Christ is the head, and by Him, all things consist. (Colossians 1:17-18)
2. Subordinates: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;" (Ephesians 4:11); Bishops and deacons (Philippians 1:1); "...ordained them elders in every church ...." (Acts 14:23).

As Christ established His church, He set His chosen apostles as the spiritual leaders of the Church in His

### Does it Make a Difference ...

absence. Concerning His subordinates, or as is commonly referred to today, His ministry, we find this explicit instruction in Hebrews 5:4:

*And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*

As we read in Exodus 28:1, we find that, indeed, Aaron was called of God by divine revelation given to Moses; this to be the pattern for Christ's church forever, for, "**Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and today, and forever.**" (Hebrews 13:8)

One might ask: Is every one who performs baptism by immersion acceptable to God? After all, there are a number of churches that do baptize in this way. The question is answered in the story of Apollos found in the 18th chapter of Acts. Apollos was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures" (Acts 18:24). He was "instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John." (Acts 18:25). He is the man who baptized the people in Ephesus whom Paul later baptized and laid hands on as previously described.

Paul explained how the baptism Apollos gave them differed, and when they heard "... they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 19:5). Only then could they receive the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 19:6)

### ... to Which Church You Belong?

***Now, let us find out what the principles of the doctrine of Christ are, again by use of the Bible:***

*Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. (Hebrews 6:1-2)*

In addition to these six basic principles, we find that the Lord gives nine spiritual gifts to whomsoever He will (I Corinthians 12:8-10):

*For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.*

We are further admonished that without charity, or love, these gifts are unprofitable. (I Corinthians 13:1-6). If any of these things have ceased or seem to have ceased, then it is because of unbelief; for if miracles have ceased, then so has faith. We of the Church of Christ can testify that these things have not ceased.

**Does it Make a Difference ...**

We have briefly shown that it *does make a difference* which church we can expect to lead us in that one way through the “strait gate,” the only way to eternal life; and that is the one that is complete in its spiritual structure with *nothing left out, nor anything added*. It must be a Church established according to the pattern *given by Christ*.

There are two things that the honest searcher must do, as pointed out in James 1:5 and II Timothy 2:15:

*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

Further, do not let any preacher do your thinking for you. Think and study for yourself. See if the preacher is right; he may be right, but how do you know?

**... to Which Church You Belong?**

We are the **Church of Christ**, with headquarters on the Temple Lot in Independence, Missouri. You and your family have an open invitation to attend services at any of our local churches throughout the world. For further information, write:

**The Church of Christ (Temple Lot)  
P.O. Box 472  
Independence, Missouri 64051**

*Please stop by our Visitor's Center at the southwest corner of River and Lexington in Independence.*