

The Church Of Christ

By Ron Boatwright

What is the difference between the church of Christ and the many differing denominations? Why is the one church that belongs to Christ referred to as the church of Christ (Romans 16:16), instead of being named after some other man such as Martin Luther or John the Baptist, or after a city such as Rome, or the apostles, or the Day of Pentecost, or the community, or the methodical way of doing things? They seem to be ashamed to wear the name of Christ. But Jesus says, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

The church is the Lord's bride. "Just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything" (Ephesians 5:24). What if the wife told her husband when they were married that she did not want to wear his name, but she wanted to wear the name of one of her old boyfriends? How do you think her husband would feel? He would feel the same way Christ feels when the denominations take on other names that give glory to other people, things, or places. By their own names they don't even claim to belong to Christ.

The Lord's church is referred to as the church of Christ (Romans 16:16), because Christ built it and He called it His own, when He said, "Upon this rock I will build **My** church" (Matthew 16:18). Christ "gave Himself for her" (Ephesians 5:25), the church, "which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). Christ is the "head over all things to the church, which is His body" (Ephesians 1:22-23), of which there is only "one body" (Ephesians 4:4). There is only one body and this one body is the Lord's one true church. Christ only has one church that He has promised to save, since "He is the saviour of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). People in the many denominational churches will be lost since they have no promise of salvation from the Lord. They are not in the Lord's one church, the one body He is going to save.

We read in Acts 2:47, "The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." The Lord only adds the saved to His one church. But who are the saved? Jesus says, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). The vast majority of the denominations say that baptism is not necessary to be saved, but Jesus says that it is necessary. It is when one is baptized that one is saved and "baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13),

the church of Christ. Even though we are sad for those who will be lost in the many denominations, we should "rejoice because your names are written in Heaven" (Luke 10:20).