

Redwater Restorer

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness..." (Matthew 3:3)

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How To Be A Christian Without Joining Any Denominations

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Church of Christ

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It is a fact of history, that all denominations came into existence many centuries after the time of Jesus Christ. Denominations were unknown during the times that the apostles of Christ lived and wrote the New Testament. Divisions, or denominational tendencies, that is, the tendency for one group of Christians to teach a doctrine different from that taught by another, were known about and experienced during the first century. Contrary to many religionists today, who praise division or denominationalism the apostles who (by the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God) wrote the New Testament condemned denominationalism. Paul, in I Corinthians 3:3-4, has stated, *"For you are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul: and another, I am of Apollos; are you not carnal?"*. In I Corinthians 1:10, Paul also discussed division, or denominationalism, *"I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."* (Study also Romans 16:17).

Thus, we can see that there were no denominations in the original New Testament church, indeed, the few small schisms that came into existence were quickly stamped out by the action of the apostles. Denominationalism was neither necessary nor desirable. Then, we must

ask, to what church did the Christians of the first century belong? It had to have been the Lord's church or body of Christ that Jesus died to save, that only and no other. *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."* (Acts 20:28).

It is both reasonable and logical to ask, "Can I join the Lord's church today?" If one could join the Lord's church today, he would not be joining a denomination. The Lord's church is not a denomination nor does it contain denominations. The Lord's church would have all its New Testament markings and would not have those markings identifiable with denominationalism.

The main marking of the Lord's church is that of strict compliance with and submission to the apostle's doctrine as revealed in the New Testament. Creeds or other books (in addition to the Bible) and additional revelations are not needed and are against the teachings of the apostles who wrote in Galatians 1:8-9, *"But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."* The Bible reveals that all the knowledge that is needed for us to do every good work has already been supplied. *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That*

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the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (II Timothy 3:17). Additionally, I Corinthians 4:6 warns us against going beyond that which has been written.

Other markings of the Lord's church are having Christ as its head rather than some earthly person or office; having its headquarters in heaven rather than in some earthly city: and its members using the name of Christian rather than some denominational name. Study Col. 1:18, 3:1, and 3:17.

But, how do men, today enter this pre-denominational church? Simply by doing the same thing as was expected of people in the first century: For the words of the apostles are to all mankind of any race and any century. They are for us.

One first and obvious step is to believe that Jesus is the Christ and that through Him, and Him only, mankind can be saved. But, contrary to the teachings of man, we must go on beyond this simple belief or acknowledgment. We must be obedient to the commandments of Christ, for Jesus said, "*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*" (Luke 6:46). Obviously we must believe fervently that Jesus is God's Son, our Savior, The Christ. We must be obedient to both the commands of Jesus and those of the apostles. The apostles were told what to write in the Holy Scriptures which are the New Testament, for Jesus promised, "*But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to you remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you*" (John 14:26).

There are several things a believer must do before he becomes a member of the Lord's church. One of these is to believe (Mark 16:16), another is to repent (Acts 17:30), and yet another is to be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38, 22:16; Gal.3:26,27). Few teach baptism for the remission of sins and this requirement is yet another marking of the Lord's church, for Acts 2:38-47 reads, in part, "*Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins** . . . Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls . . . And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*".

Thus, you cannot join the Lord's church in the sense that you join a club or other man-made organization. Through your complete obedience to the will of God you make yourself acceptable to Him. God will then add you to the Lord's church, to His only, and none other. Thus, in this ancient manner it is possible to become a Christian without joining any denomination.

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