



Oologah  
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“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” Matthew 28:20

Church of Christ • 13800 S. 4080 Road • P.O. Box 527 • Oologah, Oklahoma 74053

## What Is the Church of Christ?

Chuck Northrop

When you hear the term “Church of Christ,” what do you think about? Many people think about a building in a particular locality with the name “Church of Christ” on it. Others may think about what they view as a denomination within Christendom. Still others may think about a friendly and benevolent group of people who call themselves the “Church of Christ.” In this article, we are considering the term *church of Christ* from the standpoint of the Bible. Biblically speaking, ***what is the church of Christ?***

***The Church of Christ Is an Institution Established by God.*** An institution is an organization within society or culture. There are numerous institutions — some good, some not so good. However, there are only three institutions established by God.

When God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...” (Genesis 1:26), and when He made woman from the rib of Adam (Genesis 2:21-23), He established the oldest institution — the home. When Jesus spoke of marriage (Matthew 19:5), He quoted Genesis 2:24. He said, “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh.” Thus, the home was establish at the very beginning of creation.

As the population of man grew, God established His second institution — governments. Paul wrote, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of

God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (Romans 13:1). God established governments to serve two basic purposes: “for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well” (1 Peter 2:14).

In the city of Jerusalem, God established His third institution — the church of Christ. Though it was in the mind of God before the creation of the world (Ephesians 3), the church was not established until the Jewish holiday of Pentecost in AD 30, fifty days after the crucifixion of Jesus. On that marvelous and miraculous day, the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, and they began to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in its completeness for the first time. Those who heard “were pricked in their heart” and asked, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). “Then Peter said unto them, 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 Spirit” (Acts 2:38). On that day, there were three thousand souls immersed into Christ and added to the church (Acts 2:41).

***Not Only Is the Church One of Three Divine Institutions, It Was Planned, Prophesied, and Promised.*** In the fifth century BC while in exile in Babylon, Daniel interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. He saw five kingdoms. The fifth kingdom would be an eternal kingdom that would never be destroyed and would stand forever. Daniel saw it would be established by the God of heaven in the days fourth kingdom — the Roman Empire (Daniel 2:44).

During the eighth century BC, Isaiah prophesied the establishment of the Lord’s house (Isaiah 2:2-3) which is the church (1 Timothy 3:15). He saw all nations flowing into it which has its fulfillment in the gospel age (Romans 1:16). He also saw the word of the Lord going forth from Jerusalem which, again, is fulfilled in Acts 2.

Jesus and His disciples as well as John the baptizer preached, “the kingdom of God is at hand” (Matthew 4:17; 10:6-7; Mark 1:14-15). In fact, Jesus said, “There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom” (Matthew 16:28). The kingdom (or church) was so much “at hand,” it was to come in the lifetime of some living in Jesus’ day.

In Acts 2, the kingdom/church was established in the city of Jerusalem as prophesied in Joel 2. As previously noted, its establishment was to take place in the days of the Roman kings (Daniel 2), and all nations flowed into it (Isaiah 2). Throughout the epistles of the New Testament, the kingdom existed, and Christians were citizens of it (Colossians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; Hebrews 12:28). Since her establishment, people of various nations with various social status, and of various racial and ethnic backgrounds have flowed into the church of Christ just as it was prophesied of old.

*Not Only Is the Church a Divine Institution That Was Prophesied and Promised, but It Is Divinely Regulated in Doctrine, Worship, Mission, and Organization.* Because the church of Christ belongs to Christ, it is not left to man to regulate. When men take it upon themselves to regulate the church, it is “will worship” (i.e. self-imposed or self-made religion; Colossians 2:23). Christ Jesus is the testator of the New Testament (Hebrews 9:15-17). Stating this in another way, the New Testament is Christ’s testament. It was given for us to study, understand, and follow. Since “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4), then to not follow Christ’s testament is sin. Since Jesus purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28), then the church is His church, and all men should follow His instructions concerning the worship, mission, and organization of the church.

More could be written, but this should suffice to help identify the way the term *church* is used in the Bible. What about the church where you are a member? Is it an institution established by the God of heaven or was it established by man? Does its history take you back to Jerusalem during the days of the Roman Empire or does it date back to the third century or the protestant reformation? Is it regulated in doctrine, worship, mission, and organization by the divinely inspired New Testament revelation of Christ or is its regulation by the creeds of men? Your answer to these questions is eternally important.

Faithfulness

A preacher was asked to define “faithful attendance at worship.” He replied, the best way to understand it was to apply the same standards of faithfulness we do in other areas of our life. Consider the examples he gave:

- If your car started one out of three times, would you consider it faithful?
- If the paperboy missed Monday and Thursday, would those papers be missed?
- If you did not show up at work two or three times a month, would your boss call you faithful?
- If you attend worship only often enough to show some interest but not often enough to get involved are you faithful?

It bears some serious thought.

Author Unknown

Observations and Concerns

June 21, 2023

**Welcome Visitors!** We are delighted to have you as our guests.

“Give unto the LORD the glory *due unto* his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts” (Psalm 96:8).

**Expression of Gratitude:** We appreciate the cooperation of everyone this past Lord’s Day when the electricity was down. Because everyone worked together, everything seemed to work out well.

**Summer Series** — The Summer Series speaker this evening is *Landon Rowell*. He preaches for the church in Ramona, OK. His topic is *“It Is More Blessed to Give than to Receive”* (Acts 20:35).

Remember in Prayer:

- ▶ *Sherry Carmona* had knee surgery last week and is recovering at home.
- ▶ *Shawn Smith*, son of Vance and Darla Smith, suffered a heart attack and is recovering at home.
- ▶ *Gary and Margie McNatt*, friends of the Carmonas, are having a difficult time.
- ▶ *Alexis*, daughter of Stephanie Huckleby, is going through hardships. See Stephanie for more details.
- ▶ *Pat Taylor* has been in the hospital concerning diabetes.

Hopefully, everyone has their electricity back on by now. It is always amazing how people do not appreciate the blessing of simple things like electricity until we do not have it.

Schedule of Services	Assignments			
		Wednesday, June 21	Sunday, June 25 AM	Sunday, June 25 PM
	Announcements	Chuck Northrop	Chuck Northrop	Russ Earl
	Song Leader	Doyle Jackson	Doyle Jackson	Ross Swearingen
	Prayer	Paul Praschnik	Bill Dilks	Doyle Jackson
	Lord's Supper (speaker)		Chris Nelson	Chris Nelson
	Lord's Supper		Ross Swearingen	
	Lesson	Landon Rowell	Chuck Northrop	Chuck Northrop
	Prayer / Door Attendant	Russ Earl	Paul Praschnik	Bill Dilks / Russ Earl
Sundays				
Bible Classes. . . 9:30 AM				
Worship . . . . . 10:30 AM				
Worship . . . . . 5:00 PM				
Wednesdays				
Bible Classes. . . 7:00 PM				
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