

### Is One Church as Good as Another?

Someone asks, “Is one church as good as another?” That depends. Churches originating in the minds of men are relatively equal to each other. Hundreds of years after the first church was promised by (Matthew 16:18) and established upon Jesus Christ as its foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11), deviations from the church appearing in Acts 2:47 occurred, as foretold (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 2 Timothy 4:3-4). Over the centuries, deviations from the church of the Bible continued to diverge more radically from the church belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ. In addition, a couple millennia after the establishment of the Lord’s church in Jerusalem in about A.D. 33, literally thousands of manmade churches or denominations now exist. All of them differ from each other, and more importantly, they differ from the church about which we can read upon the pages of the New Testament.

The Lord’s church still exists, but it is more difficult to discern that church from the great number of counterfeit, manmade churches. Often, the church of our Lord is obscured by the sheer number of human religious organizations. Due to the popularity of contemporary religion in so-called Christendom, sometimes members of the Lord’s church desire to fit in with denominationalism—much the same way that Israel of old desired an earthly king to become like the nations around them (1 Samuel 8:5, 19-20).

The identifying characteristics of the church that Jesus Christ established are clearly observable in various New Testament passages. For instance, there are several biblical designations or names ascribed to the church of the Bible (e.g., “churches of Christ,” Romans 16:16; “the church of God,” 1 Corinthians 1:2). The church of the Bible was congregational, autonomous and overseen by elders (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-2). Church worship consisted of weekly participation in teaching or preaching, a collection, singing, praying and communion (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 14:15). Manmade churches that comprise the denominational world differ from the Lord’s church in name, organization, worship and doctrine. Doctrine makes a difference, as the Holy Spirit inspired New Testament writers to promote “sound doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:10; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1).

It is true, more or less, that one **manmade church** is as good as any other **manmade church**. However, **no manmade or denominational church can compare with the church that Jesus died to establish and for which one day He will return to retrieve**. It is immeasurably better to be members of the church for which Jesus Christ is coming back to take to Heaven (John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17), than to be members of manmade or denominational churches. Jesus Christ will present only His church to the Heavenly Father (1 Corinthians 15:24).

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