



TRUTH & RIGHT

the bulletin of the Wellsburg church of Christ

WELLSBURG
CHURCH OF CHRIST



www.wellsburgchurchofchrist.com

Volume 17 Issue 8

February 20, 2022

DID JOHN ESTABLISH THE CHURCH?

There are some people I meet who have been taught that John the Immerser established the church before Jesus Christ. I have even heard some Baptist people say that "Jesus was a Baptist."

They teach that John established his church before Jesus ever died. Is this true? Let us read the Bible and learn who established the church we read about in the New Testament. **The**

Testimony Of John And Christ

If John established the church before Christ, and our Lord was indeed a part of the church that John established, why did Jesus say to Peter, *"I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell (Hades, the grave, death -JM) shall not prevail against it"* (Matt. 16:18)?

We must ask the question, "Was Jesus establishing a church *in addition to* the one John founded?" Was Jesus in competition with John? When John was on earth, he said they

were not in competition (Jn. 3:25-36). He made it clear, *"He (Christ) must increase, but I (John) must decrease."* He described himself as equivalent to the "best man" at a wedding (Jn. 3:29-30). He was not another groom! Yet if Jehovah directed John to establish a church, why did Jesus say what He did in Matthew 16:18, pointing to a future time when His church would be built? If Jesus simply entered into the church that John established, why was He building a church and getting His apostles ready for its consummation?

The Testimony Of The Apostles.

I find it more than coincidental that the apostles, the *"ambassadors for Christ"* (II Cor. 5:20), the eyewitnesses to Him (Acts 10:39, 41); the ones who would preach the gospel to *"all nations"* and *"every creature"* (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15), never once said anything about John establishing a church. They consistently spoke of the

church belonging to Christ. For example, the apostle Paul said Christ purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). He told the Roman Christians, "*the churches of Christ salute you*" (Rom. 16:16). Seeing that this is the case, why do we not read about "churches of John" (or "Baptist" churches for that matter) in the Bible? "John's church" is missing from the New Testament! Paul spoke of a "*great mystery*" concerning "*Christ and the church*" in Ephesians 5:23-33. Why did he never talk about "John and the church" if John was the founder? If John established the church, why do we not read about a church even being in existence until *after* Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension (Acts 2:47, 5:11, 12:5, 13:1, 14:23; I Cor. 1:1; II Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:2; I Thess. 1:1; II Thess. 1:1; Rev. 1:4, 11)? The testimony of John, Jesus, and the apostles makes it clear that John did not establish any church. That was Christ's job, and He accomplished it! **If John Established The Church...** For those who insist that John established a church, let us consider seven consequences we must face if John established the church we read about in the New Testament. If John established the church instead of Jesus 1. Jesus did *not* purchase "*the church*" with His own blood, but "a church." This contradicts Paul's statement to the Ephesian

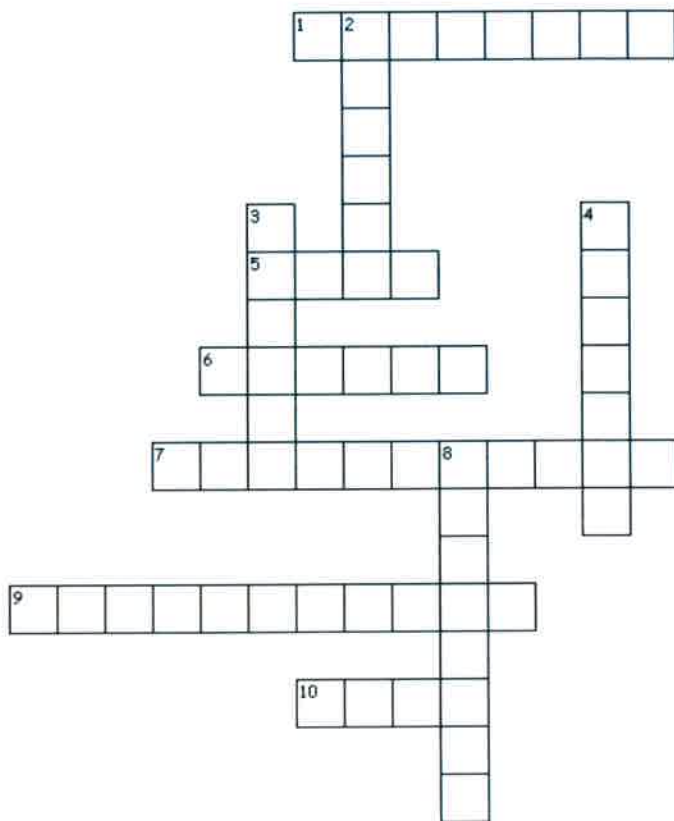
elders in Acts 20:28 and what he wrote in Ephesians 4:4. John's church had none of Christ's blood associated with it because Christ was crucified some years after John's death (Matt. 14:3-12; Matt. 27). 2. The church John established began under the Law of Moses, and not in the "Christian" dispensation because John died before Christ was crucified and the old law nailed to the cross (Matt. 14:3-12; Col. 2:14)! 3. The church John established was built upon something other than the confession of Christ as the Son of God (Matt. 16:16)! The confession of Christ is the foundation of Christ's church (Matt. 16:18; Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:37)! No such confession was made while John lived! 4. Paul was wrong to refer to congregations as "*churches of Christ*" (Rom. 16:16). They were, in fact, "churches of John." 5. Christ saying He "*will build*" His church meant two churches were competing with one another as John's disciples had supposed (Jn. 3:25-36). Yet, Paul said there was only *one* body (Eph. 4:4). Is the Bible contradictory? 6. John is the head of the church and not Christ. Such a position contradicts Paul (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22), Jesus (Matt. 28:18), and the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 14:37). 7. Death prevailed against the church, for John was beheaded (Mk. 6:16, 27), buried (Mk. 6:29), and "his sepulcher is with us to this day." Our Lord Jesus Christ,

on the other hand, was crucified, buried, but arose from the dead, never to die again (Acts 2:22-24, 13:34). Christ said death would *not* prevail against His church, and it didn't. If John established a church, and Christ merely continued what he started, then death prevailed against the church! **Conclusion** John's work was to prepare the way for the Messiah. He was *"the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord"* (Jn. 1:23). John was the forerunner for Christ, but he was not Christ (Jn. 3:28). He decreased as Jesus increased (Jn. 3:30). He did not establish the church, nor was Christ a "member" of "John's" church! Contrary to what some folks claim, Jesus was not a "Baptist" or anything akin to it. Jesus established His church, and if we are going to please Him, we will be a part of it through faith, repentance, confession, and baptism into Christ (Jn. 8:24; Lk. 13:3; Rom. 10:10; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:47). Christ is the founder of the church (1 Cor. 3:11), and anyone who lived before or after Christ cannot create a church! I wish to belong, not to a church started by some man, but to the church established by Christ (Rom. 16:16). I want to be a member of the church purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28); the church of which Christ is the head (Col. 1:18), the church which is called His body (Col. 1:24). How about you? John did

not establish a church, but Jesus did! Let us be a part of it and live in such a way that we please God all the days of our lives (1 Cor. 15:58). – Jarrod Jacobs.

Thoughts From The Past

"Error never dies a natural death, it has to be killed with the sword of the Spirit I do know this, nothing, but nothing, beats old time gospel preaching and hard-nosed Bible study. This is what it will take to keep the church on the straight and narrow path. When we depart from the fundamentals, we take our first step toward apostasy. Could it be that we are more concerned about being politically correct than with being Scripturally correct?" – James P. Needham



ACROSS

1. In Antioch, it was told how God opened a door of faith to _____. (Acts 14:27)
5. When you _____, go in your inner room and close the door. (Mt. 6:6)
6. Two _____ pulled Lot back into his house and shut the door. (Gen. 19:10,15)
7. Isaiah sung, "Close the doors behind you until _____ passes by." (Is. 26:20)
9. Whoever entered a _____ house became unclean until evening. (Lev. 14:46)
10. Once inside the ark, God closed the _____ behind them. (Gen. 7:16;6:16)

DOWN

2. _____ told a widow to shut the door behind her while pouring oil. (2 Kgs. 4:4)
3. Jesus _____ a door no one could shut in Philadelphia. (Rev. 3:8;7)
4. God knew _____ would say the wilderness had shut Israel in. (Ex. 14:3)
8. The doors were shut where Jesus _____ to the disciples. (Jn. 20:19)