

Should the Mount Olive church of Christ Exist?

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Introduction: It is important to see clearly where Jesus expects us to stand.

A. When one examines the evidence for Jesus Christ and the Bible, he sees

God's plan to clearly communicate to men the path to God. (**Jn 8:31-32**)

John 8:31-32 - Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

1. Why did God reveal Jesus the way He did?
2. His plan was for men to be humble and to dig deep for the truth.
3. Men of necessity had to learn to discern, reason and deal with relationships that challenged men to different paths.

B. The religious bodies of the day all were in opposition to Jesus and His way.

1. What answer would be given to "who is Jesus of Nazareth?"

(**Jn 7:47-49; Mt 16:13-15**)

John 7:47-49 - Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? ⁴⁸ "Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? ⁴⁹ "But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

Matthew 16:13-15 - When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" ¹⁴ So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

2. Should men disagree with the trained theologians of the day? Jesus asked: "But who do you say I am?"
3. What religious body did Jesus become a part of? (**Mt 15:12-14**)

Matthew 15:12-14 - Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" ¹³ But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴ "Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

4. Should this church exist? Are we following Jesus Christ or men?

I. Jesus established His church for all of His followers

A. Jesus came to be "the great shepherd" over all men that would come to Him.

1. Jesus would establish a church, a body of men under His headship.

(**Mt 16:18; Lk 6:46**)

Matthew 16:18 - "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Luke 6:46 - " But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?

2. The apostles were *an essential element in the formation and direction* of this body. (**Acts 1:8; 2:14; Eph 2:19-21**)

Acts 2:14 - But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.

Ephesians 2:20 - having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*,

3. It was the apostle's doctrine that would be *the sole guide* of this new body. Does *your local church make this clear?* (**Acts 2:42; 1 Jn 4:1, 6**)

Acts 2:42 - And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

1 John 4:1 - Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1 John 4:6 - We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

B. It became clear that the Lord *revealed new provisions* through the apostles.

1. There were to be local organized bodies called "churches." (**Acts 14:23**)

Acts 14:23 - So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

2. There was to be *specific assemblies and specific things done* in those assemblies. (**1 Cor 11:23-25**)

1 Corinthians 11:23-25 - For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵ In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me."

3. Should *apostolic authority be followed today?* If so, how should we view the writings given in the New Testament?

4. The battleground in the 1st century *is the same battleground today*. Do we "hold fast to the head" or will we *be moved by relationships* and pious looking people? (**Col 2:18-19**)

Colossians 2:18-19 - Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹ and not holding fast to the Head, from

whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God.

II. Jesus gave a pattern for the salvation of all men

A. Paul spoke of a “form of doctrine” when obeyed from the heart that would set men free from sin. **(Rom 6:17-18)**

Romans 6:17-18 - But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. ¹⁸ And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

1. “form”- **tu,poj-** pattern, example, model, standard. – Newman’s Lexicon
2. We learn that Jesus *has given an understandable pattern to obey*. This is one of many conditional promises which are doorways to God’s grace.

B. This pattern was first revealed on Pentecost.

1. As a fulfillment of prophecy, there will be revealed *a way to call upon the name of the Lord* for salvation! **(Acts 2:21)**

Acts 2:21 - And it shall come to pass *That* whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.'

2. When men asked how to do that, they were given *a specific, understandable conditional promise*. **(Acts 2:36-39)**

Acts 2:36-39 - "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." ³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?" ³⁸ Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

C. How can I be sure of what the Head wants concerning *my teaching on salvation*?

1. Can I be sure about this? Look at what the apostles did and what they wrote. *Take all the Bible says on this subject* and see the harmony.
2. What did *Jesus teach* in the great commission? **(Mk 16:15-16)**

Mark 16:15-16 - And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

3. *How* did Paul obey that “form of doctrine?” **(Acts 22:16)**

Acts 22:16 - 'And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

D. Can we *know and stand* on these clear promises?

1. If one has sincerely misunderstood, then they need to be taught the correct “form of doctrine” *and obey it.* (**Acts 19:1-5**)

Acts 19:1-5 - ³ And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." ⁴ Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." ⁵ When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

2. Those who teach another “form of doctrine” are *not with fellowship with God.* (**Gal 1:6-10**)

Galatians 1:6-10 - I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. ¹⁰ For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

3. In history these questions have always demanded a common understanding or a separation in fellowship.
4. Are there *other churches in this area* taking such a stand?

III. Jesus gave a pattern for our worship in local churches

A. Simple instructions were delivered by the apostles. (**1 Cor 11:23-25**)

1 Corinthians 11:23-25 -³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread.....

1. What *elements are to be used* and for what purpose?
2. We simply take all of the divine instructions and *stay with what has been delivered.*
3. “Where does the bible say not to use hamburger?”

B. The first day of the week is a God ordained day for *a specific kind of assembly.* (**1 Cor 16:1-2; Acts 20:7**)

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 - Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: ² On the first *day* of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

Acts 20:7 - Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

1. The same approach to the apostle’s instructions gives us a sure path.

2. What is the difference between one who views the apostle's instructions as divine or a product of 1st century culture?
(1 Thess 2:13; 2 Thess 3:6, 14)

1 Thessalonians 2:13 - ¹³ For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 - But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

2 Thessalonians 3:14 - And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.

3. This approach will also make a difference is how we sing to God!

C. The work of local churches is plainly given by the apostles. (Eph 4:11-12)
Ephesians 4:11-12 - And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

1. How did Jesus equip His church? For what purpose? (Jn 6:44-45; 26-27)
John 6:44-45 - "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵ "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

John 6:27-28 - "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." ²⁸ Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"

2. Does it matter how a church spends the money collected on the first day of the week? Any churches in this area taking this stand?

3. What if this church decided to extend fellowship to others churches without any doctrinal discernment? (2 Jn 9-11)

2 John 1:9-11 - Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; ¹¹ for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

4. A compromised fellowship will in time determine practice! (1 Cor 5:6)

1 Corinthians 5:6 - Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

Conclusion: Is undenominational Christianity possible? There is a great challenge and a great freedom in such a stand!