

# The Old Paths

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## “Did John Establish The Church?”

Jarrod Jacobs

There are people I meet from time to time 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 the 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 -JJ) 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). In fact, 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. He was not the groom! Yet if John was directed by Jehovah 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. Paul said Christ purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). He said, *“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 New Testament? Seems like “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)

### If John Established and Founded The Church, Then....

1. Jesus did NOT purchase *“the church”* with His own blood, but *“a church.”* This is contrary to Paul’s statement to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28 and what he wrote in Ephesians 4:4.

2. The church John founded was founded without Christ’s blood. Remember, Christ was crucified some years after John’s death. (Matt. 14:3-12; Matt. 27; etc.)

3. The church John founded was founded 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 (Col. 2:14)!

4. The church John founded was founded without the confession of Christ as the Son of God (Matt. 16:16), the very foundation of Christ’s church (Matt. 16:18; Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:37)! Such a confession was made by men only after Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection!

5. Paul was wrong to refer to congregations as *“churches of Christ”* (Rom. 16:16). They were, in fact, “churches of John.”

6. Christ saying He *“will build”* His church meant there were two churches in competition with one another as John’s disciples had supposed (Jn. 3:25-36). Yet, Paul said there was only ONE body (Eph. 4:4). Who is right? Is the Bible contradictory?

7. 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).

8. 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 was a member of it, then death prevailed against it!

### 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! Jesus was not a "Baptist" as some folks claim, 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 and baptism into Christ (Mk. 16:16; Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:47).

Christ is the founder of the church (I 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 belonging to 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 (I Cor. 15:58).

## "What Ruins A Good Influence?"

"Sound Doctrine", September 26, 1999

- ☞ Inconsistency (Romans 2:21)
- ☞ Appearance of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22)
- ☞ Avoiding people (I Corinthians 7:12, 16)
- ☞ Being unreliable (Acts 15:38)
- ☞ Having an uncontrolled tongue (Ecclesiastes 5:3)
- ☞ Being conceited (III John 9-10)
- ☞ Always complaining (Jude 16)
- ☞ Avoiding opportunities to make peace (Romans 14:19)
- ☞ Never admitting when wrong (Proverbs 12:15)

Brethren, what kind of influence are WE having on the world, on our children, and those who love us? (Matthew 5:16)

## A.D. 33 OR 1906?

James P. Miller

Searching the Scriptures, April 1962

I am indebted to our beloved brother A. W. Dicus for this masterpiece of logic relative to the establishment of the church. In conversation with one of the brethren in Tampa who had revolted against the score of loyal churches in the city and divided the body to start an institutional group on the north side, brother Dicus asked this question, Can a church be a loyal congregation of the Lord's people and not contribute or believe in contributing to a human institution out of the treasury? If the brother has answered, "Yes," he then would not have been justified in starting another congregation. However, he answered, "No," to which brother Dicus replied, "Well, you will have to change the date for the establishment of the true church of Christ. You will have to stop preaching that it was established on Pentecost in A.D. 33, and start teaching that it began after the founding of Spring Hill Orphan Home in 1906." Brethren, that is not about it, as one of the old greats used to say, that is exactly it. The church of the Lord as it was known in the New Testament and as we know it today, did not give a dime out of the treasury for 1800 years. Are you ready to change the date?

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