

Identify - cont.

... Episcopalian, Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Mormon, Adventist, Jehovah's Witness, Pentecostal, etc.

Age of the Church

The Lord's church began on the day of Pentecost, c. A.D. 30, and during the period of the Roman Empire. This was prophesied in Daniel 2:40-44 (see also Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 16:18; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:3, 8; 2:1-5, 47).

Churches of men (and other religions) today began at times other than the day of Pentecost: 1445 B.C. (Judaism), 500-300 B.C. (Eastern Religions), A.D. 606 (Catholicism), A.D. 600's (Islam), A.D. 1500's (Protestant Reformation), A.D. 1800's (American Frontier Churches).

The Founder of the Church

The Lord's church was founded by Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:18; I Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:20).

Churches of men today were founded by persons other than Jesus Christ, like Martin Luther, Henry VIII, John Calvin, John Smythe, John Wesley, Mary Baker Eddy, Charles T. Russell, etc. [cont. next week] - *Chris Reeves*

- Word of the Week -

"Incorruption" (Gr. ἀφθαρσία) is a word that means, not dying, not decaying, not perishing, or not breaking down. Often it is used in the NT with reference to the afterlife (Romans 2:7; I Corinthians 15:42-54). But, in Ephesians 6:24, Paul uses it with reference to the Christian's love for the Lord Jesus. May we always have an undying love for Jesus to serve him under any and all circumstances. Let's go out this week and continue to love Jesus by keeping his word just like we did last week and just like we will do next week.

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Wednesday: 7 pm

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THE WARFIELD BULLETIN

March 1, 2026



For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

How to Identify the Lord's (True) Church - Part I

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

- Matthew 16:16-19 -

Why This Study?

Many churches today claim to be the Lord's church. So, which one is right? Why take a look at how to identify the Lord's church? This is an important study because, if the Lord is going to save "the body" (the church) when he comes again (Ephesians 5:23), then we must be a part of that church in order to be saved. We must know which church is the Lord's church and be a part of it.

It is important for all of us to be certain concerning the church of which we are a part. We must examine our-

selves to see if we are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5) and we must "test the spirits" or the teaching that we are hearing (1 John 4:1). The church is not a topic or study where we simply decide to settle for anything. Believing something "close" or "near" to the one, true church will not do.

How can I know how to find the Lord's church and help someone else find it also? Well, how would you find or identify anything that is important to you?

How To Identify Anything

When it comes to identifying things that are important to us, we don't use feelings or human opinions. What do we use? We look for certain characteristics. For example, if you want to find your car in a parking lot you look for the characteristics of your car like color, make, and model. How do you find your house in a neighborhood? You look for the address. How do you find a runaway or missing person? You look for their physical features like height, weight, hair color, etc.

In the same way, we can find the Lord's church today by looking for certain New Testament characteristics. Here is what we can use to find the Lord's church: birthplace, name, age, and various characteristics.

Birthplace of the Church

The Lord's church began in Jerusalem. This was prophesied in Isaiah 2:1ff and Micah 4:1ff (see also Luke 24:46-47).

The churches of men today were not started in Jerusalem. Rome was the starting place for Catholic Church. Germany was the starting place for the Lutheran Church. England was the starting place for the Church of England and the Methodist Church. Switzerland was the starting place for the Presbyterian Church. America was the starting place for several churches like the Mormon Church, Adventist Church, Christian Science Church, Jehovah's Witness Church, Pentecostal Church, etc.

Name of the Church

The Lord's church (people) were described with such names as "Christian" (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:11), "churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16), and other Bible designations (1 Corinthians 1:2; Hebrews 12:23).

Churches of men today describe their members with names like Catholic, Lutheran... - *continued*