



November  
25, 2014

## BIBLE EMPHASIS DAY

# The True Church According to the Bible

### Introduction

**T**ODAY we want to answer one of the most important questions many have asked themselves at some point in their lives, “Which church is the true church?” This question escapes, not only from lips, but from the hearts of thousands upon thousands of sincere Christians who desire to know the truth. It is true that some calm their consciences saying, “All churches are the same, they all talk about God.” Others say, “I can be a good Christian in my home, without worrying about a church.” What do you believe? What does the Lord Jesus have to say about this important topic?

### The establishment of the church: Peter and the rock (Matthew 16:18)

Some believe that in Jesus’ words it is insinuated that Peter was the foundation of the church. But Jesus is talking to Peter and tells him that on the Rock, in other words, on Christ Himself, the church would be built. Let’s read another couple verses that clarify this point:

“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11).

“Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:20).

Christ came to establish a church. If it had not been important, He would not have done it. Jesus did not do anything that was not important and decisive.

### The purpose of the church

“Which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15).

“And they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Timothy 4:4).

### Which church is the true church?

The questions that naturally arise are: “How can I know what the true church is?” “Is there a way to know?” “There are so many different churches, and they all say they have the truth.”

If there is a true church, is there a way to identify it? The Bible does not say what the true church is; in other words, it does not give a name. But it does provide enough characteristics to identify it. It is like identifying the flag of Guatemala. Let’s suppose there is a room with all the flags of the world and you want to identify the Guatemalan flag. How would you do it? A blue stripe? Many have that. A white stripe? Many have that as well. Another blue stripe? Many have that. Now we have a problem. Nevertheless, something becomes clear. Not all the flags that have blue and white stripes are the Guatemalan flag. The flag from El Salvador has a blue stripe, a white one, and another blue one, just like the flag from Guatemala, but with one major difference, there is something missing: the quetzal, as a symbol of freedom. Now you see that the problem was not so difficult; you can check one by one, and begin discarding those that have something extra or something missing, until

**OPENING  
HYMN:**  
Adventist  
Hymnal, no. 272

**SCRIPTURE  
READING:**  
Exodus 17:8–13

**CLOSING HYMN:**  
Adventist  
Hymnal, no. 273

**SERMON**

you find the authentic one, in this case the Guatemalan flag. There is only one true one of those (apply this illustration to your flag).

I will try to mention some characteristics of the church in the Bible. The true church should be in agreement with all of these characteristics. It is not enough to have just some of them.

1. Jesus and not Peter are the foundation of the true Church (1 Corinthians 3:11).
2. Jesus is the only mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). He is the only One that can forgive sins. This leaves some churches out.
3. The Bible is the only guide (John 8:32).
  - In Brazil the Seventh-day Adventist Church is known as the “church of the Bible.”
  - The literal interpretation of the Bible (as done by Adventists) avoids the confusion found in some Catholic circles (*Universal Fatima News*, December 1966, p. 1)
4. God is the Creator (Revelation 14:6, 7). This eliminates modern churches that accept evolution.
5. Awaits the second coming of Christ, which is soon and literal (John 14:1–3; Revelation 1:7).
6. Should accept that the dead are resting (John 11:11).
7. Teaches that Jesus will come and revive the good and the evil, and the judgment is still to come (John 5:28–29).
8. Accepts the Ten Commandments as valid and current (John 14:15; 1 John 2:2, 3; Revelation 14:12).
9. Observes the Sabbath as the day of rest (Exodus 20:8–11; Luke 4:16).

All churches have some of the points we mentioned, just like a lot of flags have something green, white, or red. But there is only one church that meets all the requirements: The Seventh-day Adventist Church. Someone asked me once, “Do you believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the true church?” “Yes,” I answered. If I did not believe that, I would not be a part of it, and the more I study, the more profound my conviction. Then the person asked, “Do you believe only Adventists will be saved?” “No,” I answered, “And I don’t believe all Adventists will be saved. It is not enough to have the truth, you must live it.” In all the

churches there are sincere souls that are children of God. However, I also believe that if a person is sufficiently sincere, when they know the truth they will follow it, regardless of the price (Proverbs 23:23).

### **Belonging to your church**

Some go to a specific church because it is the religion of their parents. Some, because it is near their home. Others because they are already used to it, and prefer to continue with tradition so no one will be offended. Some because they believe that it is the oldest church. But, what is the oldest church: that one that keeps the Sabbath or the one that keeps Sunday? Jesus said, “On this rock I will build My church.” We are also told that the saved formed part of the church: “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).

### **Conclusion**

The Lord has a church, a flock, and desires that sooner or later His children belong to it: “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd” (John 10:16).

### **Illustration:**

#### **The sheep follow the shepherd**

In the Middle East is common to see groups of shepherds watching their sheep. The shepherds walk in front, and the sheep follow, responding when they are called. Some tourists are fascinated by this custom. One of them told a shepherd, “I am going to walk, and will call the sheep to follow me.” After all the herds had had a drink, he put on the shepherds clothes and started walking and calling the sheep. Only a few raised their heads, and then continued resting. The man returned and asked the shepherd, “What, they never follow a stranger?” The shepherd responded, “Only when they are sick.” Sometimes we need to be brave in order to follow the steps of Jesus.

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