

## **Jerry C. Brewer**

The religion of Jesus Christ is the religion of reason. God addressed it to the part of man which is reasonable—the mind. Therefore, one who professes that religion must be able to give a reason for so doing. Every religion has a basis and Christ’s religion is based upon the Bible. Without the Bible, man would know nothing of the love of God, Jesus Christ’s sacrificial death, heaven or hell. The New Testament is God’s will for you and me which He expresses through His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and earth...” (Matt. 28:18).

God has given Christ all power or authority to command you and me in matters religious. That’s why Paul said that all we do in religion must be in the name of Christ. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ giving thanks unto God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17).

To do a thing “in the name of the Lord Jesus,” doesn’t mean we can select whatever suits us in religion and say, “I’m doing this in Jesus’ name.” To do something in Christ’s name means that He has first authorized it. No one can act “in the name of the State” unless the State authorities have authorized that person to so act. One might say he is acting in the name of the State, but unless the State has authorized him to act, his action is in vain.

The same is true with regard to the religion of Jesus Christ. To truly act “in the name of Jesus Christ,” one must be doing something

Jesus Christ has first authorized. Unless Christ has authorized what we preach and practice, we are not acting in His name—though we may claim to be.

Jesus Christ has all authority (Matt. 28:18) and the Hebrews writer begins with the statement that God has, “spoken unto us by his Son” (Heb. 1:1-2). God has spoken and His final revelation to man has come through Christ. For one’s religion to be right in the sight of God, it must be ordered by the word of Christ in the New Testament.

That’s why the church of Christ seems peculiar to people. We preach and practice only those things revealed in Christ’s will—The New Testament—and that’s what we’re concerned with in this tract. Why do we in the church of Christ preach and practice what we do? That is an honest question and one which anyone should be able to answer concerning his religion. Consequently, we are happy to give an answer (1 Pet. 3:15).

### **What We Preach (“In Word”)**

We preach the same message which Jesus commanded the apostles to preach. “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). The only way you and I can be saved is through the power of the gospel of Christ. That’s what Jesus commanded us to preach and that’s what Paul said God uses to save men’s souls: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth...” (Rom. 1:16). The gospel of Christ is the message of the church of Christ. We have no creed book but the

Bible. Creed books are written by men, but the Bible is from God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Men’s creed books contradict the Bible and lead men astray. That’s the way it was in the first century and Paul condemned men’s creeds: “But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8).

### **What We Practice (“In Deed”)**

Why do we use the term, “the church of Christ?” Christ promised to build His church (Matt. 16:18), He died for it (Eph. 5:25), and He is the head of it (Eph. 1:22-23). If Christ promised it, built it, died for it and is the head of it, what would you call it? The church has no name. The term, “the church of Christ” is a designation of ownership, like the phrase, “the farm of John Brown.” “The church of Christ” is not the name of the church, but simply a phrase designating ownership. In fact, we do not capitalize the word “church” because it is only a part of that phrase. The church of Christ has no name. It did not need one to distinguish it from others because when Christ built it there was only one true church. And since He has never established another on earth, there remains only one true church of Christ today—the one you find in the New Testament.

What are members of the church of Christ called? They are called the same thing they were called in the New Testament. Members of the church of Christ are simply Christians. Isn’t that peculiar in our day? When asked what he is religiously, if a person

replies “Christian” today, he is usually asked, “What kind of Christian?” But there were no “kinds” of Christians in the New Testament church. The name “Christian” is a proper name given by God to His people (Acts 11:26) and is the only name found in the Bible for Christ’s followers and the only name in which God can be glorified (Acts 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16).

Why do members of the church of Christ worship as they do? Because the worship in which we engage is authorized by Christ in the New Testament. Remember, we must have His authority for all we do in word (teaching) and deed (practice). We pray to the Father in heaven during our worship and those prayers are led by men because that’s what the New Testament authorizes (1 Tim. 2:8). We freely give of our money upon the first day of the week to support the work of the church in carrying the gospel to the world. We do this because this is what we are authorized to do in the New Testament (1 Cor. 16:2). We refuse to engage in fund-raising activities such as cake sales, car washes, bazaars, carnivals or other worldly ways of raising money because they are not authorized in the New Testament. Neither do we beg money from those who aren’t members of the church of Christ. We do not expect non-members to support our work. That responsibility belongs exclusively to us. The gospel is preached in our worship by men in order to teach those who aren’t Christians and to edify the church (Acts 20:7). Males preach because females are expressly forbidden to speak in public worship. Thus it is a sin for women to preach (1 Tim. 2:11-12).

We observe the Lord’s Supper on the first day of every week because that is the inspired apostolic example we have in Acts 20:7. The disciples met to remember Christ’s death and suffering as He commanded them to do (Matt. 26:26-29). We sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to praise God and edify each other (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). We do this without mechanical instruments of music because God specified the kind of music He wants in those two verses—*singing*. To play a mechanical instrument of music in worship adds an element which He never authorized and is rebellion against His authority.

Why do we insist upon baptism for the remission of sins? Because that’s the plain teaching of scripture. “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:38). “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). New Testament baptism is immersion in water for the remission of sins. If you had water poured or sprinkled on you for baptism, you were not baptized. Baptism requires a “going down into the water” and a coming “up out of the water” (Acts 8:38-39), and Paul says we are buried with Christ in baptism (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12).

We do not baptize babies because no such practice is authorized in the New Testament, nor was it practiced by any church in the New Testament. Baptism is “for the remission of sins,” and babies have no sins to be forgiven. They are born pure and innocent. Come see for yourself. We preach only Christ and Him crucified. Call us and we will study these things with you.

# Reason And Religion

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