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## Christ the Head of the Church

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In this article, four questions will be asked and, then, answered according to Bible teaching. The questions are: (1) Did Christ build a church? (2) How many churches did he build? (3) Is Christ himself the head of that church? (4) Did Christ appoint an earthly head (a pope) to serve over his church? The Bible answer to these questions are. (1) Yes. (2) One. (3) Yes. (4) No. Let us now expand these answers in some detail.

### Did Christ Build A Church?

The plain Bible answer is: Yes, he did.

1. *Isaiah prophesied that he would.* Hundreds of years before Jesus was born of Mary, the prophet Isaiah said, "And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it" (Isaiah 2:2). This is obviously a prophecy of the establishment of the Lord's church (cf. 1 Timothy 3:14-15; Acts 2:16-47). The "house" of the Lord is his church.
2. *Jesus promised to build his church.* While in the district of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus said, "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" (Matthew 16:18). Jesus here told the Apostle Peter that upon the truth (that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God) which Peter had just confessed, he (Jesus) would build (establish) his church.
3. *The church of Christ was established* on the first day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2). Before the day of Pentecost, it is clear that the church was not yet established. It is equally clear that beginning with Pentecost the church was in existence (Acts 2:1-47; 8:14; 9:31; cf. Colossians 1:13).

### How Many Churches Did Christ Build?

The answer to this is very simple: one. Isaiah prophesied one would be built ("the house of the Lord"). Jesus promised to build his C-H-U-R-C-H! He did not promise to build churches (save in the sense of a multiplicity of local congregations of that one church, Romans 16:16).

After identifying the church as "his body" (Ephesians 1:22-23), Paul said, "There is one body ..." (Ephesians 4:4). If the body is the church (and it is, Col. 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23), and if there is one and only one body (and there is, Ephesians 4:4), then there is one and only one church of Christ.

### Is Christ Himself the Head of His Church?

Again, the Bible answers a crucial question in plain, simple language. The apostle Paul said, "... and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Further, Paul said, "... but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ ..." (Ephesians 4:15).

Still further, Paul said, "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands

in everything" (Ephesians 5:23-24).

Christ is both head of the church and savior of the church.

**Did Christ appoint any earthly head (a Pope) to serve over his church?**

There are those who claim that Christ made a "sweeping bestowal of power over all in Christ's earthly kingdom"; i.e., that he appointed a mere human being to be his (Christ's) official representative on earth and to speak with authority in matters of faith and practice. These people further claim that "history testifies" that these so-called earthly heads (whom the Roman Catholic church calls popes) have claimed to be the vicars (substitutes for, representatives) of Christ "beginning with Peter and continuing down the centuries in unbroken succession."

This claim is completely and absolutely without Biblical foundation and/or authorization. Nowhere in the Bible is Peter (or any one else) called the pope (earthly head) of the church. Nowhere in the Bible is Peter given any power which the other apostles did not have. When Peter erred, Paul withstood him to the face (Galatians 2:11-12).

It is true that Peter is prominent (in the sense that the New Testament says a great deal about him) but nowhere does the Bible teach that Peter was pre-eminent! Every effort to prove that Peter had preeminence over the rest of the apostles involves perversion of the plain teaching of the Bible.

Peter himself never even claimed to be the pope over the church. No other Bible writer claimed that Peter was the pope. Jesus never said Peter was the pope. In fact, there is nothing in the Bible which teaches either explicitly or implicitly that Peter was "the vicar" of Christ on earth.

The one -- and only! -- head of the church of Christ is the Lord Jesus Christ himself (Ephesians 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; Ephesians 4:4; 15; 5:23). And, as head of the church, Christ authorized no mere man to be head (pope) over that church.

Christ is the foundation upon which the church was built (I Corinthians 3:11). He was and is the one and only head of that church.

May all men come to see and accept this vital truth!