



Church Changes

Truth about the original faith

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The first followers of the Savior never “went to church.” The original faith in Messiah was originally just a sect of Judaism. They were called “Nazarenes” or “Followers of the Way.” In the Apostle Paul’s trial before Felix, the lawyer for the prosecution said, “We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ring leader of the Nazarene sect,” Acts 24:5.

The word “church” originally comes from an Old English term “kirke,” which means circle. Long ago, the Anglo-Saxons referred to their pagan places of worship as “kirkes.” When the Anglo-Saxons accepted Christianity, they simply continued to call their worship centers “kirkes,” which eventually evolved into “churches.” The word “kirke” is also the root of the English term “circus.” The “kirke/church” is where the term “three ringed circus” originated.

Catholics proclaim that the church began when the Savior commissioned Peter to become the first Pope. They believe the Apostles were the original Catholics who started the new religion of Christianity. Catholics reason that God turned his attention to the rest of the world since Jesus was killed by the Jews. After the crucifixion, the apostles passed the faith to the Early Church Fathers. Later, the masses followed as emperors and monarchs accepted the creed. It was Roman Emperor Constantine “the Great” who mandated Christianity to be the universal religion. However, before he did this, Constantine made huge changes in the faith. Constantine gave several edicts that would separate the church from Biblical Judaism. These decrees mandated that ancient pagan practices, like Christmas, Easter, and Sun day worship, should be considered as “Christian.”

The original building program was developed by Emperor Constantine as well. The first “church” buildings were placed over the tombs of popular martyrs. The cathedrals were also named after patron saints, much like the pagans who named their temples after various gods. These buildings were patterned after the Roman basilica which served a similar function as college auditoriums do today. Rowed seating was provided for

passive crowds to watch a performance. “The professional clergy performed the acts of worship while the laity looked on as spectators,” wrote John White in *Protestant Worship and Architecture*.

Stained glass was first used in the sixth century as an attempt to represent the beauty of heaven. And the “steeple” was born when pagans who “converted” to Christianity insisted a pagan obelisk be used at all church buildings. The Almighty expressed His contempt for such in Leviticus 26:30, “And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.” Additionally, the New Testament never calls a four walled building the “church.”

Before these changes, the first followers of Messiah met at local synagogues (Acts 15:21; 21:26; James 2:2; Luke 4:16) and in their homes for worship (Acts 20:20; Romans 16:3). Their meetings were open, participatory, and included the working of Spiritual gifts. Pastors, ministers of music, pulpits, collection plates, communion wafers, and altar calls were not part of the original faith handed down from the Apostles. Such a pure faith *does* exist today in the hearts and homes of those willing to forsake manmade traditions and seek truth. This type of “church” is one that meets spiritual and physical needs through honest practices set forth in the Scriptures. “Let us contend for the most holy faith that was delivered to the saints once for all time,” Jude 1:3.