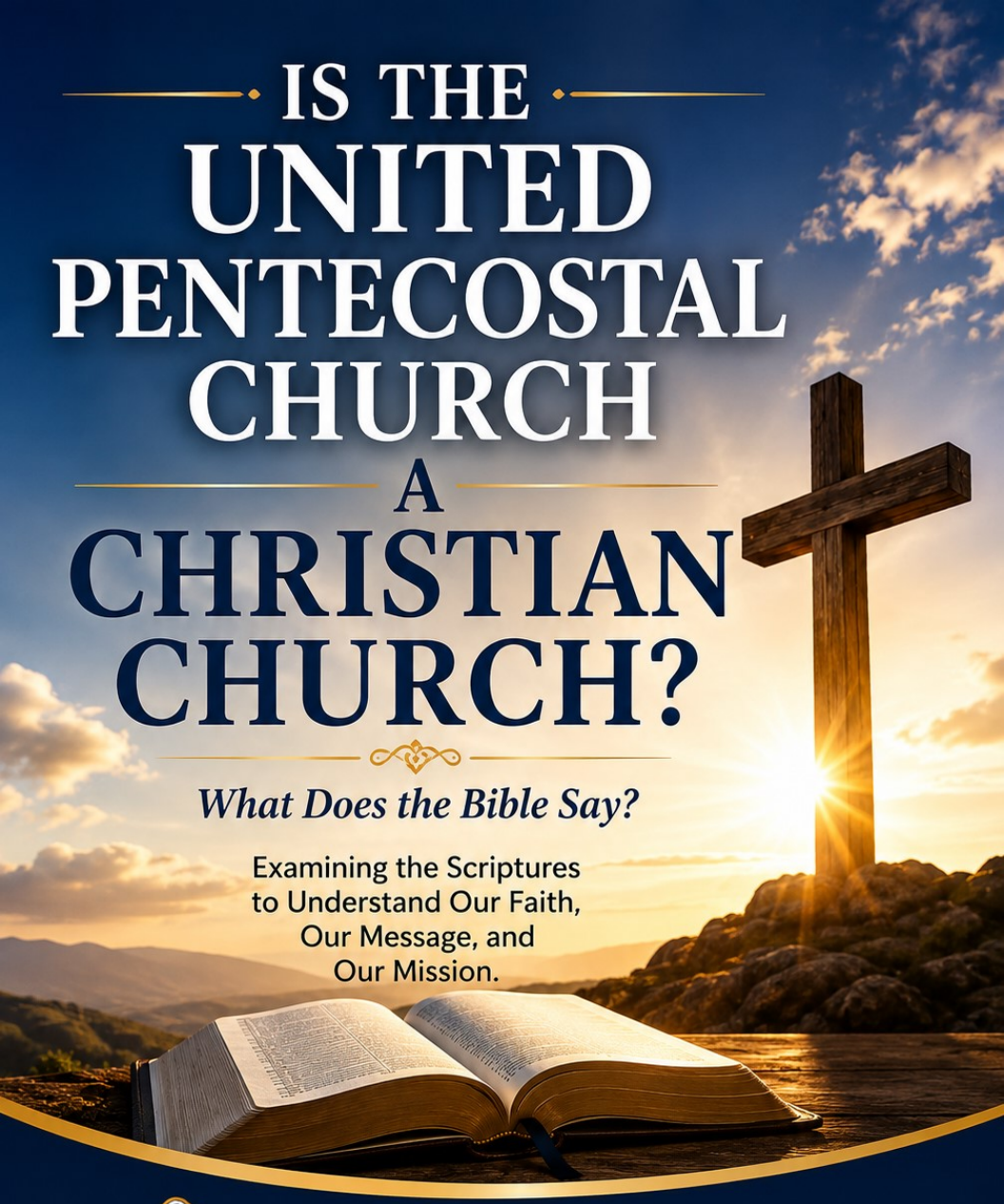
IS THE UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH A CHRISTIAN CHURCH?

What Does the Bible Say?

Examining the Scriptures
to Understand Our Faith,
Our Message, and
Our Mission.



THE
NORTH JERSEY
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IS THE UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH A CHRISTIAN CHURCH?

What Does the Bible Say?

This is a question that is sometimes asked about the United Pentecostal Church.

Some ask sincerely because they are unfamiliar with Pentecostal beliefs. Others have been told that because United Pentecostals do not accept the traditional doctrine of the Trinity, they cannot properly be considered Christians.

Rather than allowing denominational labels, church traditions, or accusations to answer the question, there is a much better standard:

What does the Bible say identifies a Christian church?

If Christianity began with Jesus Christ and His apostles, then the teachings of Jesus Christ and His apostles must be our standard.

1. WHAT DOES "UNITED PENTECOSTAL" MEAN?

The word **United** refers historically to the merger of two Pentecostal organizations in 1945: the Pentecostal Church, Incorporated and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ. From that merger came the United Pentecostal Church.

The word **Pentecostal** points us much farther back—to the events recorded in Acts chapter 2.

Pentecost was the Jewish Feast of Weeks, occurring fifty days after the offering of the firstfruits. It was on the Day of Pentecost following the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ that the promised Holy Ghost was poured out upon His disciples.

The Bible records:

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

— Acts 2:4 KJV

This event marked the public beginning of the Spirit-empowered New Testament church.

2. WHAT HAPPENED ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST?

When the Holy Ghost was poured out, the people in Jerusalem heard the disciples speaking in other tongues.

Some were amazed.
Some were perplexed.
Others mocked.
Peter stood with the eleven apostles and explained what was happening:
“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them... For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.”
— Acts 2:14–16 KJV
Peter did not present Pentecost as the beginning of a strange new religious movement.
He declared:
“This is that.”
What they were witnessing was the fulfillment of what God had already promised through the prophets.

3. THE FIRST CHURCH WAS PENTECOSTAL

The word *Pentecostal* did not exist as a modern denominational designation in Acts chapter 2.
Nevertheless, the experience from which the term comes certainly did.
The first believers received the Holy Ghost on Pentecost.
They spoke with other tongues.
They preached Jesus Christ.
They baptized believers in the name of Jesus Christ.
They experienced miracles, signs, and wonders.
They gathered for worship and prayer.
And they continued in the apostles' doctrine.
Acts 2:42 says:
“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
Therefore, when we call ourselves **Pentecostal**, we are not claiming that possessing a particular denominational name makes us the church.
We are identifying ourselves with the experience and teaching recorded in the book of Acts.

4. A NAME ALONE PROVES NOTHING

Of course, simply putting the word *Pentecostal* on a church sign does not guarantee that everything taught inside that church is biblical.

Neither does putting *Christian*, *Apostolic*, *Bible*, or *Church* on a building prove that its teaching is correct.

Jesus warned that false teachers would arise.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

— Matthew 7:15 KJV

Paul likewise warned:

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."

— Acts 20:29 KJV

The test of a church cannot merely be its name.

The test must be its doctrine.

5. JESUS GAVE US THE STANDARD

Shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus prayed not only for His apostles but also for the generations of believers who would follow them.

He said:

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."

— John 17:20 KJV

Notice the expression:

"THROUGH THEIR WORD."

Jesus expected future believers to believe on Him through the message proclaimed by His apostles.

That gives us an important biblical standard.

If we want to know what Christianity is supposed to believe, we should examine what **Jesus taught His apostles and what His apostles taught the church.**

The church of Acts did exactly that:

"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine..."

— Acts 2:42 KJV

6. WHAT DID THE APOSTLES PREACH ABOUT JESUS?

The apostles preached Jesus Christ.
They proclaimed His death.
They proclaimed His burial.
They proclaimed His resurrection.
They proclaimed His ascension.
They proclaimed His Lordship.
They proclaimed forgiveness of sins through His name.
Peter declared:
"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
— Acts 4:12 KJV
Paul wrote:
"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
— Colossians 2:9 KJV
United Pentecostals believe that **Jesus Christ is Lord.**
We believe He is God manifested in the flesh.
We believe He was born of the virgin Mary.
We believe He lived a sinless life.
We believe He died for our sins.
We believe He was buried.
We believe He bodily rose from the dead.
We believe He ascended into heaven.
And we believe that **Jesus Christ is coming again.**
These are not the beliefs of people who have rejected Christ.
They are beliefs centered completely upon Jesus Christ.

7. BUT UNITED PENTECOSTALS DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE TRINITY

This is usually the real issue behind the question.
United Pentecostals do not accept the traditional doctrine that God eternally exists as three distinct divine persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Instead, we believe the declaration of Scripture:
"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD."
— Deuteronomy 6:4 KJV

We believe there is **one God**.
We believe the Father is God.
We believe Jesus is God manifested in flesh.
We believe the Holy Ghost is God.
But we do not believe these descriptions require three separate divine persons within the Godhead.
We understand Father, Son, and Holy Ghost through the biblical revelation of the **one God who has revealed Himself to humanity and came to us in Jesus Christ.**
Paul wrote:
"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh..."
— 1 Timothy 3:16 KJV
Jesus said:
"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."
— John 14:9 KJV
And Paul declared concerning Jesus:
"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
— Colossians 2:9 KJV
The disagreement between Oneness Pentecostals and Trinitarians is therefore not about whether **Jesus matters**.
It is about **how the biblical revelation of the one God in Jesus Christ should be understood.**

8. DOES REJECTING THE TRINITY MEAN REJECTING CHRIST?

Some Christians answer yes.
They argue that the later historic creeds correctly define the Christian doctrine of God and that anyone rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity has therefore departed from historic Christianity.
We respectfully disagree.
Our final authority is not a council, creed, denomination, or church tradition.
Our final authority is the Word of God.
The apostles preached the gospel long before the theological controversies and church councils of later centuries produced the terminology used in subsequent creeds.
Therefore, the ultimate question should not simply be:

“Does this church agree with a later creed?”
The more important question is:
“DOES THIS CHURCH BELIEVE AND TEACH THE WORD OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES?”
That is the standard we must examine.

9. WHAT GOSPEL DID THE FIRST CHURCH PREACH?

When the people on the Day of Pentecost became convicted and asked what they should do, Peter answered:
“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”
— Acts 2:38 KJV
That message was not invented by modern Pentecostals.
It is written plainly in the book of Acts.
United Pentecostals continue to preach:
Repentance.
Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.
The infilling of the Holy Ghost.
A transformed and holy Christian life.
We preach these things because we find them in the teaching and practice of the apostolic church.

10. WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN CHURCH?

The word translated *church* in the New Testament comes from the Greek word **ekklesia**, referring to an assembly or congregation.
But a building does not make a church.
A denominational organization does not make a church.
And a name on a sign does not make a church.
The true church belongs to **Jesus Christ.**
Jesus said:
“I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
— Matthew 16:18 KJV
Therefore, the church must be measured by its relationship to **Jesus Christ, His gospel, His Word, and the teaching He entrusted to His apostles.**

SO, IS THE UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH A CHRISTIAN CHURCH?
YES.

United Pentecostals believe in **Jesus Christ**.
We believe He is **God manifested in the flesh**.
We believe in His **death, burial, and bodily resurrection**.
We believe that salvation is found in **Jesus Christ alone**.
We believe the **Bible is the Word of God**.
We believe in the **apostolic gospel**.
We believe in **repentance, baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost**.
And we seek to continue in:
"the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."
— Acts 2:42 KJV
We recognize that other Christian traditions disagree strongly with our understanding of the Godhead and with certain aspects of our doctrine.
But disagreement does not settle the question.
Scripture must settle the question.
Jesus prayed for those who would believe on Him **through the apostles' word**.
That remains our goal today:
TO BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST
AND CONTINUE IN THE FAITH
TAUGHT BY HIS APOSTLES.

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