

# The Church

1. What is the Church?
  - Many evangelicals are looking for the Church that Jesus established (See Introduction to Unveiling the Mysteries of the Orthodox Church)
  - The Body, founded by Jesus, through which He is present and active in the world today
  - Founded by Christ through the apostles
  - Apostolic Succession: historical connection through 1) ordination 2) right teaching/worship (Jude 3)
  - “Where the Spirit of God is there is the Church, and where the Church is there is the Spirit of God, and every kind of grace; but the Spirit is truth.” (Irenaeus of Lyons). The Spirit is above all, including the Bible as well as the Pope.
  - Fr Theodore Stylianopolous of Holy Cross Seminary in Brookline, MA: “the Orthodox Church is the true Church of God on earth and maintains the fullness of Christ’s truth in continuity with the Church of the apostles. This awesome claim does not mean that Orthodox Christians have achieved perfection: for we have many personal shortcomings. Nor does it mean that other churches do not serve God’s purposes positively: for it is not up to us to judge others but to live and proclaim the fullness of truth. But it does mean that if a person carefully examines the history of Christianity he or she will soon discover that the Orthodox Church alone is in complete sacramental, doctrinal, and canonical continuity with the ancient undivided Church as it authoritatively expressed itself through the great Ecumenical Councils.”
  - Changelessness
  - The Nicene Creed
    - One
    - Holy
    - Catholic
    - Apostolic
  - Visible/Invisible
  - Universal/Local
  - Has 2 natures
  - Matthew 16:18
  - Matthew 28:20
  - I Tim 3:15
  - II Thessalonians 2:15
2. The claim of the OC to be the true church is based on 4 factors:
  - The OC has maintained unbroken historical continuity with the original Church founded by Jesus in Jerusalem.
  - The OC has faithfully maintained the apostolic faith “once delivered to the saints.”
  - The OC faithfully worships God in spirit and truth, providing its members with access to the life and grace of the Holy Trinity.
  - The OC has produced numerous saints who bear witness to the uncreated grace of God.
3. Its inception and development (the Acts of the Apostles)
4. The Church and the Bible
5. What happened to the Church after Acts 28?