

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

I. The Beginning of the Lord's church.

A. The church in PURPOSE.

1. Eph. 3:7-12--The church was in the eternal purpose of God.
(Let us note it is not a substitute)
2. Rom. 16:25-26--Revelation of the mystery.

B. The church in PROMISE.

1. Gen. 3:15--To Adam & Eve.
2. Gen. 12:22--To Abraham.
 - a. Numerous offspring--Gen. 13:16; 15:3-5; 17:2, 4; 22:17.
 - b. God would be God to him & his seed--Gen. 17:1-8.
 - c. Everlasting possession--Gen. 17:7; 13:15; 15:18-21; 17:3.
 - d. Bless all nations thru him & his seed--Gen. 12:3; 22:18.

Discuss the two-fold fulfillment of each part of the one promise. ### It was ONE PROMISE--Acts 2:39; 13:23, 32; 26:6; Rom. 4:14, 16; Gal. 3:15-29.

C. The church in Old Testament PROPHECY.

1. 2Sam. 7:12ff--David's throne to be established forever.
2. Jer. 31:31--(Heb. 8:8-12)--A new covenant will be established with the house of Israel. (Rom. 2:28-3:ff)
 - 3* a. Jer. 31:32--Covenant is not to be like former one.
 - b. Jer. 31:32--Covenant to be in people's hearts.
 - c. Jer. 31:34--They shall all know the Lord. Jno. 6:45.
 - (1) Jno. 7:17--We can know God's will today.
 - (2) Mt. 5:16--We can be filled with knowledge of God's will.
3. Isa. 2:2ff & Micah 4:1-2
 - a. Last Days (Joel 2:28 & Acts 2:16) The same last days; the last dispensation--truly the sun-light age.
 - b. Mountain often refers to a kingdom. Since the kingdom of God & the church of His Son are the same, the mountain of the Lord's house must be His church or kingdom.
 - c. Isa. 2:3--Law would go forth from Jerusalem. Acts 1:8.
 - d. All nations--Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:16.
4. Daniel 2 --- (2:38-45)--Interpretation of the dream.
 - a. Thou art the head of gold--Babylonian empire--606-536 B.C. Destroyed Jerusalem & carried Judah captive. Captivity co-eval with the empire.
 - b. Another kingdom (silver)--Persian Empire--536-330 B.C. Permitted Jews return from captivity & aided their re-est. as a nation.
 - c. A third (Brass)--Greek Empire--330-146 B.C. Ruled Palestine in Period between the testaments. World power passed from Asia to Europe.
 - d. A fourth strong as iron--Roman--146 B.C.--to 476 A.D. Ruled the world with force. In power when Christ came. ### God's kingdom shall stand forever--set up during time of Roman empire. A stone not cut with hands will break in pieces the former kingdoms & consume them.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KINGDOM WHICH WILL LAST FOREVER:
contd.....

5. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KINGDOM WHICH WILL LAST FOREVER:

- a. Divine in its origin--a "Stone cut out of the mountain without hands." Isa. 7:14; Jno. 1:12,13.
- b. Humble in its beginning--a "Stone," small, rough, insignificant in its appearance--Isa. 53:2; Phil. 2:8.
- c. Victorious over all opposition--"Breaking into pieces"--the opposing kingdoms of the world & "subduing" all to itself. 2 Cor. 10:4f; Acts 5:39.
- d. Onward in its progress--growing from a little stone into a "great mountain". Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20; Isa. 9:7.
- e. Universal in its ultimate extent--destined to "fill the whole earth." Psa. 72:11,17; Phil. 2:9,10; Col. 1:23; Mt. 28:18-20.
- f. Everlasting in its duration--never to be "destroyed" or to "be left to another people," or succeeded by another kingdom, but to "stand forever." Psa. 52:17; Rev. 11:15; Isa. 9:7.

6. Micah 5:2--Ruler to come from Bethlehem. (Mt. 2:1)

D. The church in N.T. Preparation (or Prophecy).

1. John the Baptist--Mt. 3:2-5 (Mal. 4:5--Mt. 11:11-14) #Acts 19:1-5.
2. The 12--Mt. 10:7
3. The 70--Lk. 10:9
4. Jesus--Mt. 4:17 (Jno. 4:1-2--discuss)
 - a. Mk. 9:1--Kingdom to come with power.
 - b. Mt. 16:18--Jesus to build His church.
5. Lk. 24:47--Repentance and remission of sins to be preached first at Jerusalem. Note--C, 3, c.--Isa. 2:3; Acts 1:8.

E. The church in Perfection (Est. of)

1. Foundation of church.
 - a. 1 Cor. 3:11--Jesus and no other is foundation.
 - b. Eph. 2:20--Apostles, prophets, and Christ is the corner stone.
 - c. Mt. 16:18--On this rock (1 Cor. 10:4--note genders) the ch. built.
 - d. Isa. 28:16--Prophecy concerning the foundation.
 - e. Mt. 21:42; Acts 4:11--The head corner stone.
 - f. Rom. 9:33; Mt. 10:34ff--A stone of stumbling. Isa. 8:14.
 - g. Yes, the stone shall be a stone of stumbling; parents, children, lands, money, etc. will cause one to stumble. Our consolation is found in Mt. 19:28-30. Eternal life.
2. Establishment of the church. Acts 2.
 - a. The kingdom was to come with power--Mk. 9:1.
 - b. The power was to come with the Holy Spirit--Acts 1:8.
 - c. The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost--Acts 2:1-4.
 - d. Therefore, the kingdom came on Pentecost.
- 2a. Establishment of the church.
 - a. Kingdom to begin and law to go forth from Jerusalem--Isa. 2:3; Lk. 24:47.
 - b. Law went forth on Pentecost from Jerusalem--Acts 2:37-38.
 - c. Pentecost the beginning--Acts 2:1-4; 11:15.
- 2b. Establishment of the church.
 - a. The law was to go forth from Jerusalem--Isa. 2:2-3.
 - b. The apostles commissioned to preach--Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16;

but instructed to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit...to come and guide them before beginning--Lk. 24:49.

- c. Spirit came on Pentecost and preaching of the gospel, the law of the kingdom began on Pentecost--Acts 2:31-34, 36-38.

3. Pentecost marks the beginning--Acts 11:15.

- a. The beginning of the Christian age--The N.T.--Heb. 8:8; 9:15-17.
- b. The beginning of the church--the kingdom.
- c. The beginning of gospel preaching---(DBR)
- d. The beginning of remission of sins--Lk. 24:47 (Mt. 26:28)

F.F. After Pentecost the church or kingdom always spoken of as in existence. Acts 2:47; 5:11; 8:1; 11:22; 13:1; 14:27; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9, etc.

Study Acts 2 more----2:29-36---Christ on David's throne today.

II. THE FALLING AWAY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.

A. Bible prophecies of the falling away.

1. Jesus--Mt. 7:15

2. Paul

a. 2Thess. 2:1-12.

- (1) Falling away is to be before Christ's second coming.
- (2) Lawlessness already at work.

b. 1Tim. 4:1-5.

- (1) Latter times some will fall from the faith.
- (2) Forbid to marry, command to abstain from meats.

c. Acts 20:28-30.

- (1) Elders were to draw away some after themselves.
- (2) After Paul's departing especially.

B. Historical reasons for the falling away.

1. The church grew so rapidly that thousands were taken into the church who knew little. Soon the majority knew but little because of the rapid growth.

Ex. Discuss the dangers of a church growing too fast!!

Every time any local church falls, there is a reason.

2. The church lost its scriptural organization. Instead of the elders deciding matters, sometimes matters were put to a vote. Since the unlearned majority was more numerous than the learned minority, it is but natural that disaster came.

Ex. Discuss the matter of voting in the church. (The dangers of it, etc.)

3. The church spread all over the world. After the apostles had all died, what was the source of authority? If the original church had stayed with the original authority, would it have fallen?

Ex. Discuss our authority today.

4. The church began to convert or half convert many pagans. These pagans began to bring in their paganism. Many Jews were converted and they brought in their Judaism. Soon the church in many places was a mixture of Christianity, Judaism, and paganism. What is a false religion today except a mixture of the same????

Discuss dangerous tendencies today.

III. THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH (about 15 lessons)

#1. The church is the called out body:

A. The meaning of the word church--

1. ekklesia-(Gk.)--"a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly; (1) Among the Greeks, an assembly of the people convened at the public place of council for the purpose of deliberating: Acts 19:39. (4) In the Christian sense, an assembly of Christians gathered for worship."

Thayer.

The word church, then, means a called out body of people.

2. The word is used in two senses:

- a. Universal--All those called out of the world into God's service. Mt. 16:18; Eph. 5:23-25; And all the terms used to designate its nature.
- b. Local sense--The called out in any locality. 1Cor. 1:2; 1Thess. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Gal. 1:2.
(All the Christians in any community compose the Lord's church. They should meet together and worship God. Heb. 10:25)

E:

B. The nature of this calling:

1. God calls, hence, divine--Gal. 1:15; 1Thess. 4:7; 2Th. 2:14; 2Tim. 1:9; Heb. 5:4.
2. God calls us all--1Cor. 7:15, 17.
3. God is no respecter of persons--Rom. 2:11; Acts 10:34
#If God calls some but not others, He is a respecter of persons. What about so called "called preachers?"

C. All are called:

1. To follow in the footsteps of Christ--1Pet. 2:21.
2. To salvation or to be saved--2Thess. 2:13-14.
3. Eternal life--1Tim. 6:12.
4. For freedom--Gal. 5:13.
5. Out of darkness--1Pet. 2:9 (Col. 1:13)
#If called out of darkness, we are called away from blind guides. 1Jno. 4:1.

D. God calls us by:

1. The gospel--2Thess. 2:13-14 (Rom. 1:16)
2. The calling is made possible by Christ's death--1Pet. 2:21.

C. & D. God calls us out of darkness, to be saved, and to follow in Christ's footsteps by the GOSPEL. All called. Since the gospel is for all are called.

E. Purpose of the calling:

1. Riches of the glory--Eph. 1:18-19.
2. For a prize--Phil. 3:14.
3. One hope of calling--Eph. 4:4.

One hope of calling-----One calling.

How could some be called to be preachers and others to a different hope and still be the same calling....one hope.

ALL PEOPLE ARE CALLED ALIKE BY THE GOSPEL.....

III. THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

(Remember, all of the terms used to show the nature of the church, picture the universal aspect of the one church)

#2. The church is the body of Christ.

- A. The church is called the body of Christ.
Col.1:18,24; Eph.1:22-23
- B. There is one body (church).
 - 1. There is one body--Eph.4:4; 1Cor.12:12-13,20.
 - 2. The one Head does not have many bodies. Nor vice versa.
 - 3. Since there is one body and it is the church, there is one church.
- C. Christ is the Head.
 - 1. Plainly stated--Col.1:18; Eph.1:23.
 - 2. All orders come from headquarters--Mt.28:20; Gal.1:6-9.
 - 3. Christ is Head over all things to the church--Eph.1:22.
 - 4. He has all authority--Mt.28:18.
- D. If one is IN CHRIST--he is a Christian and a member of the one body.
 - 1. Many members in the one body--1Cor.12:12-31.
 - 2. The disciples (followers) were called Christians--Acts 11:26.
 - 3. The followers were in subjection to the Head, even Christ.
 - 4. No clergy--no laity--members are equally important--1Cor.12:21-26.
 - 5. Various functions of the members of the body--Rom.12:4-5; Eph.4:11-12.
- E. One becomes a member of the body of Christ:
 - 1. By being baptized into it--1Cor.12:13.
 - 2. By getting into the light (Jno.1:7) or into Christ and he must continue to walk in the light.--1Jno.1:7.
 - 3. Faith and repentance must precede baptism--Acts 2:38; Acts 16:31-32; Mk.16:16.

THEN, WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST ????

Paul defines the church as the body of Christ. God is the Father, Christ is the Head, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the body. Christ without the church were: a Head without a body, a King without a kingdom or subjects, a Captain without soldiers, a Bridegroom without a bride, etc. The church without Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit were: a body without a Head, a son without a Father (or body--group of sons), and a body without a Spirit.

"For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead." James 2:26. Although this scripture is not referring to the church, the same could apply. The church is dead if it is not directed by the Holy Spirit through the word of God.