

## THE CHURCH IN THE BIBLE

### Int.

1. Aim: To show that the church in the Bible is in existence today and we should be members of it.
2. Jesus said: "Upon this rock I will build my church." Matt. 16:18
3. Is that church in existence today? If so how do we know for sure that this is the church mentioned in the Bible? Identifying Marks
4. Illustration: Suppose we find a car in the parking lot and want to know what kind of car it is. It has been stolen and stripped of the motor and tires and all of the tags and names of the kind of car. It has been burned and there are no papers in the car. There are certain **identifying marks** which we can use to determine the kind of car that we have found.
5. Jesus started a church. The foundations were started during the centuries of the O.T. and then completed while Jesus was upon earth.
6. Let us study what the Bible teaches about the Identifying marks of the Church.

### Discussion

#### I. THE CHURCH WAS PLANNED FROM THE BEGINNING

- A. The Church in Prophecy
  1. Promises to Abraham
    - a. About 2500 BC - Gen. 12:1-7 - Promised Abram
    - b. "All families of the earth be blessed"
  2. About 670 BC - Isa. 2:2-3
    - a. The house of the Lord would be established in the last days.

- b. And it would be established in Jerusalem
- 3. About 630 BC - Micah 4:2 "And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."
- 4. About 530 BC - Daniel 2:44 "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, [but] it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
  - a. Kingdom - never be destroyed - shall stand forever
  - b. In the Days of the Roman Kings

## B. The Church in Preparation

- 1. Promises after the Birth of Christ that a Kingdom or church would be established
- 2. About 30 A.D. - Matt. 3:1-2 "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."-
  - a. John the Baptist came to prepare the way of the Lord and to make his paths straight
  - b. I sa. 40:3, Luke 3:4
  - c. He came preaching "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Mt. 3:4
  - d. It was his mission to teach men to look for the coming Messiah, and to make their hearts receptive.

3. About 31 A.D. - Matt. 4:17 "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
  - a. Jesus also prepared the way for the establishment of the kingdom during His personal ministry.
  - b. About 32 A.D. - When the apostles were sent out Matt. 10:7 "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."
  - c. Mark 1:15 "And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."
  - d. Mark 9:1 "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."
  - e. Matt. 16:18 "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
    - (1) His church was in existence yet
    - (2) But it would be in the very near future

### C. The Church in Existence - Day of Pentecost

1. All references to the church before this day were looking forward
2. After this day in Acts 2 they were looking backward
  - a. Acts 2:1-4 The beginning of the church - 1<sup>st</sup> Pentecost after the resurrection
  - b. Acts 2:47 "...and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
  - c. The saved are in the church in the New Testament
  - d. The Lord adds us to this church, His church, the One He died to establish.
3. Acts 8:1 - persecution against the church

4. Col. 1:13 "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"

## **II. THE MEANING OF THE WORD CHURCH**

- A. MATT. 16:18-19 "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

1. The Church and Kingdom are used interchangeably
2. Peter was going to be given the keys to the Kingdom which is the church

### B. The Word Church

1. Found 118 times in the N.T. not mentioned in the O.T. But referred to in other ways.
2. Word - Ekklesia -The Called out
  - a. From ek, "out of," and klesis, "a calling" (kaleo, "to call"), was used among the Greeks of a body of citizens "gathered" to discuss the affairs of state, [V.E.D.N.T.]
  - b. Means a local congregation of people and never a building.
  - c. Tyndale translated the word always as congregation
  - d. It may mean the worship of the people - 1 Cor. 14:4-5, 23
  - e. Universal sense - Matt. 16:18

### **III. IDENTIFYING MARKS OF THE CHURCH IN THE BIBLE**

#### A. Where it Started

1. Jerusalem - predicted in I sa. 2:3 Micah 4:2
2. Acts 2:5, 47

#### B. When it Started

1. About 33 AD
2. Luke 3:23 "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was [the son] of Heli,"
3. At age 30 he began his ministry which lasted a little over 3 years
4. This means the church in the Bible was established in Jerusalem about 33 A.D.
5. 1<sup>st</sup> Pentecost after the resurrection and Ascension of Christ

#### C. Days of Roman Kings - Dan. 2:44

#### D. All Nations - Jew and Gentile

#### E. Christ is the Head or Founder of the church

1. Col. 1:18 "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all [things] he might have the preeminence."
2. The founder of the church was not:
  - a. John the Baptist - - - Peter - - John - - Paul
  - b. John Calvin - - John Wesley - - Joseph Smith - - Martin Luther Mary Baker Eddy - - Or any other man or woman
3. Eph. 1:22 Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

## F. When Christ Did Not Build the Church

### 1. Not during the lifetime of John the Baptist

- a. Matt. 3:1-2 "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- b. He died before the church was established - Matt. 14:1-12
- c. Notice what Jesus said about John: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."  
Matt. 11:11

### 2. Not before the prayer of the disciples

- a. Matt. 6:10 "Thy kingdom come...."
- b. The kingdom and church are referring to the same thing - Matt. 16:18-19
- c. It was still in the future

### 3. Not at the sending out of the Twelve Apostles

- a. Matt. 10:7 "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- b. "At Hand" - near but not yet established - - it was approaching

### 4. Not at Peter's confession

- a. Matt. 16:16-18 "I will build my church"
- b. In the future - not yet established

### 5. Not at the Passover Feast

- a. Lk. 22:18 "For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come."
- b. "Shall come" - future

## G. Names

1. Disciples, Christians - Acts 11:26
2. DESCRIPTIVE TITLES OF CHURCH
  - a. Kingdom of Heaven - Mt. 3:2
  - b. Kingdom of God - Mt. 6:33
  - c. Bride of Christ - Rm.7:4
  - d. The Church - Acts 2:47
  - e. Churches of Christ - Rm. 16:16
  - f. Body of Christ - Eph. 1:22-23

## H. The Creed - What we believe

1. Is the New Testament - message of Christ
2. Heb. 1:1-2 "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by [his] Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;"

## I. Conditions of membership

Belief, Repentance, Confession, Baptism

## J. Organization - Elders - Deacons

## K. Worship - Prayer - Singing - Preaching - Lord's Supper - Giving

## L. Work [1] Teaching the Lost [2] Helping the needy - benevolence

## M. Why should we be interested in these basic facts of the N.T. church?

1. To identify the church of the Bible
2. To learn about this congregation to see if it compares to the church of the Bible

## Conclusion

1. Can you find the church of which you are a member in the New Testament?
  - a. Did some man start it, not Christ ?
  - b. Did it begin in some city other than Jerusalem ?
  - c. Was it established after 33 A.D. ?
  - d. Does it practice what the church in the N.T. practiced
2. Christ is the head of the Church in the Bible - Not some man or group of men or women
3. The N.T. church is the only one that can save us - Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
4. The other churches are man-made denominations that cannot save our souls
  - a. There are not many churches in which we can be saved. There is only one and that is the church in the New Testament.
  - b. There are not many churches which we can join - there is only one and we don't join it, the Lord adds us to it.
5. The church in the Bible is important for only by being a member of it can you be saved eternally !!!!

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