

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Int.

1. Aim: To discuss what Jesus taught in the text that helps us identify the New Testament church.
2. Many people are seeking New Testament Christianity
 - a. They are tired of religious services where the Bible is not taught or practiced.
 - b. They can read their Bibles and they want the word of God preached
 - c. They are hungering and thirsting after righteousness
 - d. People of all ages and all places need the truth
3. Matthew 16:13-19 - Jesus tells about building His Church.
 - a. v. 13 - Place = Caesarea Philippi - lots of hills and rocks
 - b. v. 14 - Opinions of men
 - (1) John the Baptist - Elijah - Jeremiah - prophet
 - (2) Herod thought he was John - Matt. 14:2 maybe his boldness suggested Elijah - or his weeping Jeremiah
 - (3) Believed that men came back in the bodies of other men.
 - c. v. 15 - First time Jesus asked this question
 - d. V. 16 - Peter was quick to respond
 - (1) The Christ - long expected deliverer
 - (2) Son of the living God - Jews had not expected the Messiah to be Divine
 - e. V. 17 - Revealed by God through Jesus' teaching and miracles
 - f. V. 18 - (1) Upon this rock (2) I will build my church (3) Gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

g. V. 19

(1) Keys = ability to open the doors of faith to Jews Acts 2 / Gentiles Acts 10

(2) Bind or loose = forbid or allow

(3) Kingdom and church are the same

4. Let us see what the New Testament teaches about this church Jesus said he would build

a. It's Foundation ROCK

b. Architect I

c. Time of Building WILL

d. A spiritual building..... CHURCH

e. Death cannot stop it..... "HADES"

f. The church is not a denomination

Discussion

I. IT'S FOUNDATION - Matt. 16:18 "ROCK"

A. Foundation

1. Definition

a. The act of founding, especially the establishment of an institution.

b. The basis on which a thing stands; underlying support; base. ¹

2. The foundation of the church is predicted as being on a rock - Isa. 28:16

"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner [stone], a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."

B. Christ is the foundation or cornerstone

1. 1 Pet. 2:1-8
 - a. Jesus is that precious corner-stone
 - b. The stone which was rejected
 - (1) They were offended because of his lowly birth and life.
 - (2) He was born in a stable, laid in a manger, nursed under the palms of Egypt, schooled in a carpenter's shop, attended by fishermen, mocked by soldiers, crucified between two thieves, and buried in a borrowed grave.
 - c. Ill. Tradition about the rejected stone - CHURCH
 - d. Acts 4:11 "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner."
 - e. Eph. 2:20 "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner [stone];"
2. 1 Cor. 3:11 "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

C. Matt. 16:18 "Upon this rock"

1. What does "rock" refer to? The Catholics say it is Peter. "Peter you are a rock, and upon you I will build my church."
2. Peter And Rock
 - a. Peter - - Petros = small detached rock * Rock - - Petra = massive rock
 - b. Petros is masculine and Petra is feminine in gender. They cannot be used together if they are of the same genders and refer to the same thing.
 - c. Therefore Peter was not the rock upon which Jesus built the church.

d. Meaning = Peter you are a rock, a small pebble. But upon this massive truth that you just confessed (thou art the Christ, the son of the living God) I will build my church.

D. The Foundation of the church is the Truth that Christ is the Son of the Living God.

II. ARCHITECT Mat. 16:18 "I"

A. Christ is the master architect of the church He built

1. "I" Not all of you
2. All Authority - Matt. 28:18 = All power

B. Men today decide that they have a right to change the plans and so we have many man-made churches.

C. Christ did not give men the right to change or alter the church to suit themselves.

III. TIME OF BUILDING - Matt 16:18 "Will Build"

A. Future

1. Did not build it in the days of John the Baptist
2. Something yet to be done
3. John died before Christ - Matt. 14 - he was beheaded by Herod

B. BUILD

1. Does not mean to remodel, repair, enlarge
2. The word "build" means to construct, establish, to found, build up from the foundation.

C. When did Christ build his church?

1. His death must come first !
2. After his resurrection
 - a. Spent 40 days on the earth
 - b. Gave the great commission
 - c. 10 days after He ascended
3. Day of Pentecost - Acts 2
 - a. Holy Spirit came upon them - Peter preached salvation in the name of Jesus
 - b. Many believed and were baptized
 - c. The church spread to Judea, Samaria and Galilee
 - d. Acts 2:47 "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
4. On the day of Pentecost Christ fulfilled his promise "I will build my church."

IV. SPIRITUAL BUILDING - Matt. 16:18 "Church"

A. Church

1. Ekklesia - the called out, assembly
2. Word describes an assembly, decided by context
 - a. It may be used in a non-religious way Acts 19:32- 41 Uses the word "Assembly" - it was a mob of people who wanted to kill Paul
 - b. Church assembly - religious sense
3. The Church is those people called out of the world of sin to live for God.

B. Misunderstanding of this truth

1. Mormons

- a. Salt Lake City has a circular auditorium that will seat 10,000. Acoustics are so perfect all can hear without any PA system. Mormon elder told Gospel preacher that "God dwells in that building."
- b. Preacher quotes Acts 17:24 "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;"

2. Members also misunderstand about the "Church"

- a. Some will not eat in the church building
- b. Women not allowed to teach in the church building

C. John 18:36 "My kingdom is not of this world"

- 1. The meeting house is not the church
- 2. Jesus purchased us (our spirit) with his blood - Acts 20:28

V. HIS DEATH DID NOT PREVENT ESTABLISHMENT OF CHURCH

Matt.16:18 Hades

A. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Mat. 16:18

- 1. Hell = Hades, place of departed spirits
- 2. He would die first and his body go into the grave and his soul to hell or HADES !
- 3. But death could not keep him from establishing his church - it would not prevail against the establishment of the church.
- 4. He overcame death on the 3rd day - Acts 2:31-32

5. Christ unlocked the gates of hades and carried away the key

6. Rev. 1:18 "... I have the keys of hell and of death."

B. His church today is in existence because the same seed can be sown in the hearts of people and produce the same fruit. Luke 8:11 "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God."

C. Church succession is not essential nor is it taught in this verse

1. Some allege that these words mean that there will be church succession all down through the years.

2. They claim the validity of all church ordinances depends upon it.

3. For example they say that baptism must be by someone who was baptized by a man, who was baptized by a man...all the way back to the apostles.

4. This view is not supported by scriptures

a. If such a view was correct then we could not obey without someone else having done so. Our salvation would depend upon the correct baptism of others all the way back to the apostles. We could never know if we were acceptable to God.

b. How could one trace all the way back?

5. We must teach and preach the same word and it would produce the same results.

D. The N.T. teaches that there would be a great apostasy

1. Acts 20:28-30 grievous wolves

2. 1 Tim. 4:1 "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith..."

3. 2 Thes. 2:3 ff - - the falling away

4. Departures did occur
 5. There is no evidence that the N.T. church existed in unbroken sequence since the day of Pentecost.
 6. It is not necessary for the church to have been in continual existence for the church to be in existence today.
 7. These words do not teach that such would be the case.
- E. The gate of Hades would not prevent the N.T. church from being established.
1. Ill. - Upon this lot I will build my house and the authorities of the city shall not prevail against it. Against what? The building of the house.
 2. In spite of his death he would still keep his promise and build his church !

VI. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH IS NOT A DENOMINATION

- A. What is a denomination?
1. "A religious organization larger than any local church on earth and yet smaller than all the Christian people on earth."
 2. Definition of Denomination: The name of a religious organization. The word is used primarily to distinguish the many sects of Christendom that {profess} to be Christian.
 3. The word "Church" used in a religious sense in the N.T. refers either to a local congregation or it embraces all Christians
 - a. Matt. 16:18 - - Universal
 - b. 1 Cor. 1:1-2 - - Local

B. The N.T. church was nameless

1. Denominate means = "to give a name to, designate" Denomination means = 2.

"Name, designation; esp. a general name for a category" - Web. P. 220

2. The church of the N.T. was not given any specific name. It is called by many descriptive titles:

- (1) Kingdom of heaven - Mt. 3:2
- (2) Kingdom of God - Mt. 6:33
- (3) Kingdom of God's dear son - Col. 1:13
- (4) Kingdom of Christ and of God - Eph. 5:5
- (5) Kingdom of Jesus Christ - Rev. 1:7
- (6) The church of God - 1 Cor. 11:22
- (7) The church - Acts 2:47
- (8) Family of God - Eph. 3:15
- (9) House of God. 1 Tim. 3:15
- (10) House of Christ - Heb. 3:1-6
- (11) Body of Christ - Eph. 1:22-23
- (12) Household of Faith - Gal. 6:10
- (13) Churches of God - 1 Cor. 11:16
- (14) Churches of Christ - Rom. 16:16
- (15) Churches of the Saints - 1 Cor. 14:33
- (16) Churches of the Gentiles - Rom. 16:4
- (17) The Churches - Acts 15:41
- (18) Churches of Judea - Gal. 1:22
- (19) Churches of Galatia - Gal. 1:2

(20) Churches of Macedonia - II Cor. 8:1

(21) Churches of Asia - 1 Cor. 16:19

3. These are descriptive titles - not names.
 4. The members of the N.T. church were called Christians, disciples, saints, brethren, children of God
- C. The denominational concept was introduced hundreds of years after the N.T. church was established. We could have unity in religion today by all going back to a practice of undenominational Christianity.

Conclusion

1. The N.T. Church is in existence today
 - a. We can teach and practice what the church of the first century did and be the same for we have the same word.
 - b. Whether we be 5,000 miles from Jerusalem or 5, and whether we are separated by 2,000 years or 2 years from the same gospel, when it is preached it will produce the same N.T. church.
 - c. Our aim is to be a N.T. church doing all that God has commanded.
2. The conditions of membership are simple
 - a. Hear - Rom. 10:17
 - b. Believe - Mk. 16:16
 - c. Repent - Acts. 2:38
 - d. Confess - Rom. 10:10
 - e. Baptized - Acts 25:38 Mk. 16:16 1 Pet. 3:21
 - f. Then we are added to the Church - Acts 2:47

3. The members are required to live a godly life, adding the Christian graces (2 Pet. 1:5-8), growing in the grace and knowledge of the truth.
 4. Will you become a member of the N.T. church?
-

Bibliography

1. The Second Coming and Other Sermons - by Guy N. Woods
"The Geology of the Church" P. 83-97
2. Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons - N.B. Hardeman
"What Church to Join" - P.s 219-232
3. Sermon's Chapel Talks and Debates - Arvy Glenn Freed
"Upon this Rock" - P. 199-207

1."The American Heritage® Concise Dictionary," *Microsoft® Encarta® 97 Encyclopedia*. The American Heritage® Concise Dictionary, Third Edition
Copyright © 1994 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Electronic version licensed from
and portions copyright © 1994 by INSO Corporation. All rights reserved.

Sermon by Arthur Pigman - Sunday Night - Oct. 4, 2009
Evans Church of Christ
515 Gibbs Road
Evans, Ga. 30809
706-855-1249
evanscoc@bellsouth.net
www.evansgachurchofchrist.org