

Subj: The Church
Text: Mat. 16:15-18
Meth: Expository
Titl: Identifying the Church

Introduction:

- A. Read Matthew 16:18: With respect to building His church, Jesus promised only one (Eph. :22-23; 4:4; Col. 1:18-24)
- B. There are over 400 denominations with over 1400 divisions among them in existence, all claiming to be right.
- C. Only a thorough study of the O.T and N.T. can reveal the true church that Jesus built, and to which thousands became members of in the first century A.D.
 1. If the church Jesus built can be identified from the Bible, it can be, and must be, reproduced, for it is as unique in nature and mission as the Lord who bought it (Acts 20:28)
 2. If it can be Biblically proved that there was a wholly divinely originated and approved church that predated the Roman church and all Protestant denominations, then it is to that church that we must seek to belong, for it is the only one revealed by, and thus approved of, God

I. The church Jesus built is identified by the place it began

- A. Read Micah 4:1 and Isaiah 2:2-4
 1. Jehovah's house is identified in 1 Timothy 3:14-15 as the church
 2. According to Isaiah and Micah it began in Jerusalem
- B. Jesus said that the church would begin in Jerusalem (Luke 24:47)
 1. The apostles were instructed to tarry in Jerusalem (Ac. 1:4-5)
 2. The Great commission was to be initiated in Jerusalem (Ac. 1:8)

II. The church Jesus built is identified by the time it began

- A. Micah and Isaiah said that Jehovah's house would be established in the "Latter Days"
 1. Read also Joel 2:28-29
 2. Joel was fulfilled in Acts 2:14-21
 3. Hebrews 1:1 establishes the last days as during the period which Jesus Christ is the authority
- B. Joel 2:28-29 teaches:
 1. Holy Spirit was to be poured out upon all flesh in the last days--Peter taught this was fulfilled in the events of Acts 2:14 ff.
 2. Pentecost was the beginning of the Last Days
 3. Church was not established before Acts 2, or after Acts 2
- C. Also note Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4
 1. The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4)
 2. Power came when the Holy Spirit came (Acts 1:8)
 3. Church/kingdom began when power came (Mark 9:1)

III. The church Jesus built is identified by its founder and foundation

- A. Jesus is the founder and owner (Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28)
- B. Jesus is the foundation of the church (1 Corinthians 3:11)
- C. Any church founded by or upon any other than Jesus is not the true church

IV. The church Jesus built is identified by the names with which it is identified

- A. The church of the Lord (Acts 20:28)
- B. The church of God (1 Corinthians 1:2)
- C. The house of God, the church of the living God (1 Timothy 3:15)

- D. The church (Acts 11:22)
 - E. Churches of Christ (Romans 16:16)
 - 1. There is everything in a name (Acts 4:12)
 - 2. The true church does not wear man-made names
- V. The church Jesus built is identified by the manner of its worship**
- A. Prayer (Acts 2:42)
 - B. Preaching and Bible study (Acts 2:42; 20:7)
 - C. Giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)
 - D. Singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16)
 - E. The Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20-26)
- VI. The church Jesus built is identified by the Law it is governed by**
- A. The law of the New Testament church is the New Testament (2 Corinthians 3:4-11; Galatians 3:19-25; Hebrews 8:6-13; 9:15-17)
 - B. James 1:25 refers to the law of Christ as the "*perfect law of liberty*"
- VII. The true church is identified by its terms of membership**
- A. Hear the gospel (Romans 10:14-17)
 - B. Believe the gospel (John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)
 - C. Repent of sins (Luke 13:3)
 - D. Confess Christ (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32-33)
 - E. Baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27)
 - 1. When one is forgiven he is added to the kingdom (Colossians 1:13-14)
 - 2. One has forgiveness when he obeys the gospel (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:17-18)
- Conclusion:**
- A. The church of the New Testament can be identified from among all false churches by:
 - 1. Where it began
 - 2. When it began
 - 3. Its founder, owner, and foundation
 - 4. The names with which it is identified
 - 5. Its manner of worship
 - 6. The law by which it is governed
 - 7. Its terms of membership
 - B. The true church does not add to, or take away from the inspired principles which identify it
 - 1. To change God's word is sin (2 John 9; Revelation 22:18-19)
 - 2. Any church that does not follow the biblical pattern, and which cannot be identified in terms of O.T. prophecy and N.T. fulfillment is not the true church
 - C. The church is a wholly divine institution, outside of which there is no salvation (Ephesians 2:12)

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