

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHURCH OF THE BIBLE (Ephesians 1:22-23)

I. Who was the founder of the church of the Bible?

- A. On any website affiliated with denominational bodies one can find who was the human founder of that denomination.
 - 1. Every Methodist is proud to say that John Wesley founded their church.
 - 2. Every Lutheran is proud to point back to Martin Luther as their human founder.
 - 3. Every Presbyterian is proud to point back to John Calvin as their human founder.
 - 4. If we had time or interest we could point out the founder of each denomination and that it was a man or woman.
- B. We say this to point out that each denomination is human in origin.
- C. This is not true of the church of the Bible (Matthew 16:18).
 - 1. This verse introduces us to the builder of the church of the Bible.
 - 2. Jesus Christ is the builder of this church.
- D. When one studies his Bible, he comes to Acts 2 where this church was first established.
- E. Any religious groups that cannot trace their beginnings to this day do not qualify as the church of the Bible.
- F. An interesting point is that although there are many workmen charged with helping to erect the building, only one was authorized to be the founder of the church - Jesus.
 - 1. Ephesians 2:20.
 - 2. 1 Corinthians 3:11.

II. Who is the head of the church?

- A. It is impossible for a body to exist without a head.
- B. It is not natural for a head to have more than one body.
- C. There is only one divine church and its head is Jesus.
 - 1. Ephesians 1:22-23.
 - 2. Ephesians 5:23.
 - 3. Colossians 1:18.
- D. The church is subject unto Christ (Ephesians 5:24).
 - 1. This means it is not subject unto any councils, conventions, catechisms or creeds.
 - 2. It is also not subject to any earthly head such as a pope or a king.
- E. A body cannot have more than one head unless there is a major deformity - this is true of the church as well.

III. What was the name of the church?

- A. Despite what many say, there is much in a name.
- B. Names serve to distinguish and identify things.
- C. The church of the Bible is called the "church of God" (1 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:13).
- D. The church of the Bible is called the church of Christ (Romans 16:16).

1. This goes along with Matthew 16:18.
 2. Since a bride wears the name of her groom this is appropriate.
- E. The church of the Bible is called the “body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 4:12).
- F. These are all scriptural names for the church of the Bible.
- G. Notice that the church of the Bible is not called Baptist after an ordinance or man; not called Presbyterian after the eldership, Methodist after its ways of doing God’s will or Wesleyan or Lutheran after good men.
- H. Also, we need to look at the names given to the members of the church of the Bible.
1. They were called disciples (Acts 9:1).
 2. They were called brethren (Acts 11:1).
 3. They were called children of God (1 John 3:1).
 4. They were called saints (Acts 9:13).
 5. They were called Christians (Acts 11:26).
- I. How many times have you asked someone what they are religiously and they called themselves by a denominational title?
- J. We should be exactly what the members of the church of the Bible were.

IV. What was the creed of the church?

- A. When you study denominations, all of them have some manmade document as a creed, manual or catechism.
1. These serve to govern the religious lives of its members.
 2. All these are the intellectual writings of men about their religion and not about the church of the Bible.
- B. The creed of the apostles and early church was simply Christ
- C. Men were told to believe on Jesus as the Son of God (Acts 16:31).
- D. Jesus said if He was lifted up, He would draw all men to Him, not some creed or manual (John 12:32).
- E. Human creeds get constantly updated and revised, but the doctrine of Christ found in the New Testament needs no such thing.

V. What was the government of the church?

- A. The church of the Bible was governed by the teaching of Jesus..
- B. John 12:48.
- C. Romans 2:16.
- D. As the statement of restorationists has always been about creeds: If they contain more than the Bible they contain too much; if they contain less than the Bible they don’t contain enough; and if they contain the same thing they unnecessary.

VI. What were the terms of admission into the church?

- A. If the church is the greatest institution in existence then it is necessary to know how to become members of it.
- B. In man-made organizations there is one way into membership.
- C. The same holds true for the Lord’s church in that all must enter the same way.
- D. Membership in the Lord’s church is not a question of feeling but of fact.
- E. Either one has done what it takes to be placed in the church or he has not.

- F. When one wants to know how to enter the Lord's church he should go to its recorded beginnings in Acts.
 - 1. The first converts were told to repent and be baptized (2:38).
 - 2. We see people told to repent and be converted (3:19).
 - 3. We see people being preached to about Jesus who were baptized after they believed what they were told (8:12).
 - 4. We see a man being preached to about Jesus who confessed Christ and was immediately baptized after he pointed out a body of water (Acts 8:36-39).
- G. We could go on, but what we see is people who believed, repented, confessed and were baptized.
- H. These acts made them a Christian which also made them each a member of the church of the Bible.
- I. These same laws are still binding and we have neither the right nor the authority to change them.

VII. What was the worship of the church?

- A. Notice what is said of the first converts (Acts 2:42).
- B. Christians met together to partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7).
- C. They gathered together to admonish one another and glorify God through singing with their voices (Ephesians 5:19).
- D. They studied God's word and prayed together as well.
- E. All of this was done each first day of the week.
- F. It was very simple, yet powerful because this is all God asked of them.
- G. These same avenues of worship are in effect today, and like terms of admission, men don't have the right or authority to change them.
- H. We must worship as God has commanded (John 4:24).

From a sermon by H.G. Harward