

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

I. It is the church.

- A. The word “church” means “called out ones.”
 - 1. The Greek word was used by secular writers regularly to refer to specific groups of people that had separated themselves from others for specific reasons.
 - 2. However, the Lord was the first to apply it to the group of people that would follow Him.
- B. Matthew 16:18.
 - 1. This church that Jesus would build was to be a called out body of believers.
 - 2. That which calls them is the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14).
 - 3. That from which they are called out is the world (2 Corinthians 6:16-17).
 - a. The people in that day were called out of unbelief, paganism and Judaism.
 - b. Today, people are still called out by the gospel to come out of the world of denominationalism, humanism, atheism and any other ism.
- C. The church was established on the Day of Pentecost following the death and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2).
- D. From that time on, the church was spoken of as being in existence (Acts 2:47).

II. It is the kingdom.

- A. The church and the kingdom signify the same institution.
 - 1. Matthew 16:18-19.
 - 2. The two terms are here used interchangeably.
- B. Because we are part of the kingdom, Paul rightly wrote that our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20).
- C. Philip went to Samaria and preached about the kingdom (Acts 8:12).
- D. John wrote that God made us to be a kingdom (Revelation 1:6).
- E. The Jews were looking for an earthly kingdom and this caused their spiritual sight to be blinded to the truth of Jesus.
 - 1. Jesus never came to set up an earthly kingdom (John 18:36).
 - 2. He consistently and continually prophesied His own death and resurrection.
 - 3. He always had in mind, and God always had planned for, a spiritual kingdom with Christ as its King (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 19:16).
- F. Notice Luke 22:17-30, Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 11:20-24.
 - 1. The apostles were not to partake of the Lord’s Supper until the kingdom was established.
 - 2. Jesus told them the Lord’s Supper would be observed in His kingdom, but it is actually observed in the church.
 - 3. Either the church and the kingdom are one in the same or the apostles partook of the Lord’s Supper in the wrong institution.

III. It is God's building.

- A. 1 Peter 2:5.
 - 1. The church is a spiritual house.
 - 2. Each Christian is a living stone making up that house.
- B. Notice 1 Corinthians 3:9.
- C. Ephesians 2:19-21.
 - 1. The church is referred to as a building.
 - 2. However it is not a material structure (Acts 7:48).
- D. It is God's building because He is its designer and creator.
 - 1. It was always in His plans to have a church in which the saved would be placed.
 - 2. This is seen in the fact that the prophets prophesied about it (Isaiah 2:2-3; Daniel 2:44).
 - 3. John said the kingdom of God was near (Matthew 3:1).

IV. It is the family of God.

- A. 1 Timothy 3:15.
 - 1. The term house means household or family (2 Kings 20:1).
 - 2. Hezekiah's house signified his family.
- B. Cornelius "feared God with all his house."
- C. The Philippian jailor was told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ "with all thy house" (Acts 16:31, 33).
- D. One is "born again" into the family of God.
 - 1. John 3:5.
 - 2. God becomes our Father spiritually speaking at conversion.
 - a. He begets us by the word (James 1:18).
 - b. When we come out from the world, God can be our Father (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).

V. It is the body of Christ.

- A. Ephesians 1:22-23.
- B. Colossians 1:18.
- C. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.
 - 1. Notice that we all make up one body (vs. 12).
 - 2. We are baptized into that one body (vs. 13).
 - 3. There are many members but one body, with each member being vital but different and distinct (vs. 14-22).
 - 4. All members are to care for one another as their own body (vs. 25-26).
 - 5. This body is known as the body of Christ (vs. 27).
- D. Paul told the Ephesians that there is only one body (Ephesians 4:4).
 - 1. This ends the idea of denominationalism.
 - 2. They claim to be many bodies that make up one universal church.
 - 3. The New Testament teaches one body that is the universal church.