

Lesson 8 - The Church

In order to have a way of getting the good news of His death, burial and resurrection to all the world, Jesus started His church while He was here on earth. He gave it everything needed to do the job and even promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against it.

What is a Church?

In studying the churches in the New Testament we find that they have at least three things in common. First, they were groups of people. The Greek word translated church is *EKKLESIA* and means *an assembly*. There is no such thing as a universal or invisible church. All of the churches in the New Testament were local groups of people. Second, all of these people had been baptized. (Of course they had to be saved before they were baptized.) So, without proper baptism we cannot have a New Testament type church. And, third, they had a purpose. That purpose was to carry out the commands of their head, Jesus Christ. Those commands were to preach the gospel to every creature, baptize those who believe, and then teach them to do what Jesus taught. This purpose is sometime called an agreement or church covenant. So a church is a group of Scripturally baptized believers who have banded together to carry out the Lord's commands.

A church was a group that could be gathered together.

Acts 14:27:

And when they were come, and had _____ the _____ together, they _____ all that _____ had _____ with them, and how he had _____ the _____ of _____ unto the Gentiles.

Everyone in the church had been baptized.

Acts 2:41:

Then they that gladly _____ his _____ were _____: and the same _____ there were _____ unto them about _____ thousand _____.

Christ, the Head of the church, gives the directions.

Colossians 1:18:

And he is the _____ of the _____, the _____: who is the _____, the _____ from the _____; that in all _____ he might have the preeminence.

Assignment. Look up the following Scriptures in the book of Acts concerning the church at Jerusalem and answer the questions.

1. 1:15 - How many disciples were in the upper room? _____
2. 2:41 - How many people were added to the church at Jerusalem? _____

3. 4:4 - How many men were now in the church at Jerusalem? _____

4. 4:32 - What word is used in this verse to describe the amount of people now in the church? _____
5. 5:14 - What word is used in this verse to describe the amount of people now in the church? _____

God's Promise to His Church

Christ promised His church that it would remain here in the world until the end of this age. History records that there have been New Testament churches in every age since Christ until this present time.

The gates of hell will not stop His church.

Matthew 16:18:

And I say also unto thee, That thou art _____, and _____ this _____ I will _____ my _____; and the _____ of _____ shall not _____ against it.

Christ will be with His church unto the end of the world.

Matthew 28:19-20:

Go ye therefore, and _____ all _____, baptizing them in the _____ of the Father, and of the _____, and of the _____: Teaching them to _____ all things whatsoever I have _____ you: and, lo, I am with you _____, even unto the _____ of the _____.

Assignment: Read Ephesians chapter 5 and answer these questions.

1. Who is the head of the church? v.23 _____
2. To whom is the church subject? v.24 _____
3. What did Christ do for the church? v.25 _____
4. What will Christ do with the church? v.27 _____
5. The union between a husband and wife is typical of the union between whom? vs. 31-32 _____

The Offices of a Church

In the New Testament the churches had two offices, pastor (called *elders* or *bishops*) and deacons. The pastors were the leaders. (The name *bishop* means *overseer* or *superintendent*.) The deacons (which means *servant*) cared for the material problems so that the pastors could give their time to study and prayer.

The pastors (elders) were to oversee and feed the church.

Acts 20:28:

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the _____, over the which the _____ hath made you

_____, to _____ the _____ of _____, which he hath _____ with his own _____.

The deacons were chosen to relieve the apostles of a problem.

Acts 6:3-4:

Wherefore, brethren, _____ ye _____ among you _____ men of _____ report, _____ of the _____ and _____, whom we may _____ over this _____. But we will give ourselves _____ to _____, and to the _____ of the _____.

Assignment. Read I Timothy chapter 3 and answer these questions.

1. If a man desires the office of bishop (pastor), what does he desire? v.1 _____
2. To what is a pastor to be given? v.2 _____
3. What are a pastor's children to be? v.4 _____
4. What must a pastor have of them that are without? v.7 _____
5. What are three things a deacon is not to be? v.8
 - (1) _____
 - (2) _____
 - (3) _____

The Ordinances of a Church

The churches of the New Testament observed two pictorial ordinances. They were baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The Lord's Supper (also called Communion) pictures the broken body and shed blood of the Lord.

Baptism, a burial and resurrection.

Romans 6:4:

Therefore we are _____ with _____ by _____ into death: that like as Christ was _____ up from the _____ by the _____ of the _____, even so we also should _____ in _____ of _____.

The Lord's Supper shows His death.

I Corinthians 11:26:

For as _____ as ye _____ this _____ and _____ this _____ ye do shew the Lord's _____ till he _____.

Assignment: Read Matthew 26:17-30 and answer these questions.

1. What feast was being observed? v. 17 _____
2. What did the bread represent? v.26 _____
3. What did the cup represent? vs.27-28 _____
4. When did Jesus say He would drink of the fruit of the vine again? v.29 _____
5. How did they end the supper? v.30 _____

The Independence of a Church

Each church in the New Testament governed its own affairs. Christ was the only head and they answered to no earthly organization. Each church took care of its own business without interference from any other church. There was no denomination or headquarters.

The church at Antioch sent missionaries.

Acts 13:2-3:

As they ministered to the _____, and fasted, the _____ said, Separate me _____ and _____

for the _____ whereunto I have _____ them. And when they had _____ and _____, and _____ their _____ on them, they _____ them away.

The church at Corinth was told to dismiss a member.

1 Corinthians 5:13:

But them that are _____ God _____. Therefore put _____ from _____ yourselves that _____ person.

Assignment. Read I Corinthians chapter 5 and answer these questions.

1. What problem was there in the church at Corinth? v.1 _____
2. What was the church's reaction to the problem? v.2 _____
3. With what kind of person were they not to keep company? v.9 _____
4. List the five kinds of people that the church was not to keep company? v. 11
 - (1) _____
 - (2) _____
 - (3) _____
 - (4) _____
 - (5) _____
5. What were they to do with that wicked person? v. 13 _____

DO THE TEST FOR LESSON 8