

Let Us Understand the Lord's Will for the Church
(Ephesians 5:17)

Introduction:

1. The last 3 Sundays we studied passages that help us understand the Lord's will for the family, government, and the church.
2. Last Sunday morning we pointed out the Lord's will concerning the church's builder, its name, its head, its unity, and its purity.
3. This evening we are covering several additional matters that relate to the church.

Discussion:

- I. ACCORDING TO ACTS 2, THE CHURCH WAS ESTABLISHED IN JERUSALEM
 - A. During His ministry, Jesus promised to build His church (Matthew 16:13-19).
 1. He would build His church upon the foundation that He is *"the Christ, the Son of the living God."*
 2. *"The gates of Hades"* would not prevent His church from being built.
 3. Jesus spoke about His church and the kingdom of heaven interchangeably.
 4. Jesus gave *"the keys of the kingdom"* to Peter.
 - B. In Acts 2, the occasion was Pentecost (vs.1), and Peter was the main spokesman (vs.14).
 1. Peter showed how Jesus overcame the gates of Hades when He was resurrected (vs.25-32).
 2. Peter declared that Jesus is *"both Lord and Christ"* (vs.36).
 3. Peter revealed *"the keys of the kingdom"* (vs.38).
 - C. The church in Jerusalem consisted of those who were saved (Acts 2:41-47).
 1. This congregation is described in vs.42-47a.
 2. It grew when the Lord added those who were saved to it (vs.47b).
 3. It is mentioned many times in Acts (5:11; 8:1, 3).
- II. AS THE GOSPEL SPREAD FROM JERUSALEM, "CHURCHES" [CONGREGATIONS] WERE ESTABLISHED IN VARIOUS AREAS
 - A. Individual congregations in different cities are mentioned.
 1. A congregation was formed in Antioch (Acts 11:19-26).
 2. Luke mentioned the congregation in Caesarea (Acts 18:22).
 - B. Congregations in larger areas are also mentioned (Acts 9:31; 15:41; 16:5).
 - C. These "churches" were not different religious groups -- men invented "denominationalism" many years later.
 - D. By examining these references to various churches we learn that God wants those who are converted to worship and serve Him in a congregation.
 1. Luke emphasized this pattern as he wrote about people being converted to the Lord.
 2. Paul's example in Acts 9:26 also confirms this point.

Conclusion:

1. God blessed man by establishing the family, government, and the church.
2. Unfortunately, God's plan for each has been changed.
3. Our mission is to understand the Lord's will for each and restore His plan.