

Identifying the Church

Introduction:

1. We are presently studying 13 great themes that the Bible addresses.
2. In our last 3 lessons we covered passages that relate to the following subjects:
 - a. "obeying God"
 - b. "the plan of salvation"
 - c. "a case of conversion."
3. When a person obeys the Lord's plan of salvation something very special occurs -- the Lord adds him/her to His church (Acts 2:47).
4. For our tenth great Bible theme we are concentrating on "identifying the church."
5. Specifically, we are examining the church's builder, its name, its head, its unity, and its purity.

Discussion:

I. THE CHURCH'S BUILDER

- A. In a discussion that Jesus had with His disciples He identified Himself as the builder of His church (Matthew 16:13-19).
- B. Additional verses identify Jesus as:
 1. "the foundation" (1 Corinthians 3:11)
 2. "the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:19-21).
- C. Any church that was not built by Christ cannot be the church of the New Testament.

II. THE CHURCH'S NAME

- A. In the New Testament we read about various "churches" [congregations] in different locations (Revelation 1:11).
- B. Scriptural expressions for the church include:
 1. "the church of God" (1 Corinthians 1:1-2)
 2. "the church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15)
 3. "the church of the firstborn" (Hebrews 12:23).
- C. One particular expression used in Romans 16:16, "the churches of Christ," draws special attention to the church's builder, Christ.

III. THE CHURCH'S HEAD

- A. The New Testament clearly identifies Christ as the head of the church.
 1. Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23
 2. Colossians 1:18
- B. Because Christ is the church's head we must follow the admonition given in Colossians 3:17.

IV. THE CHURCH'S UNITY

- A. Just before He was arrested Jesus prayed that His followers would be one (John 17:20-21).
- B. The platform for achieving the Lord's request is revealed in Ephesians 4:3-6.

V. THE CHURCH'S PURITY

- A. When a person is saved and added to the Lord's church he is washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Corinthians 6:11).
- B. The Lord wants His church to remain pure (Ephesians 5:25-27).
- C. The Lord's blood continues to cleanse His followers who walk in the light and confess their sins (1 John 1:7, 9).