

The New Testament Church

Introduction:

1. According to Acts 2, the Lord established His church in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost that followed His crucifixion and resurrection.
2. We learn from vs.47 that, when a person obeys the Lord's plan of salvation, the Lord adds him/her to His church, the church of the New Testament.
3. In our lesson we are concentrating on passages that help us in identifying and restoring the New Testament church.
4. Specifically, we are identifying the church's builder, its name, and its head.
5. We are also pointing out that the church is to be united, and it is to be pure.

Discussion:

I. THE CHURCH HAS:

A. A Builder

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

B. A Name

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

C. A Head

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

D. In addition, the New Testament teaches that . . .

II. THE CHURCH IS TO BE:

A. United

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

B. Pure

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