

# The Churches of Christ Salute You

Lesson One

(Romans 16:16)

February 3, 2008

## LESSONS FROM THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM

### Overview:

1. Paul wrote to the Romans about the “churches of Christ.”
2. A plurality of churches did not mean a number of different denominations.
3. Instead, each was a local body of believers that belonged to Christ.
4. Since we also are a church of Christ, there are many lessons to be learned from these early churches.

### Introduction:

1. The church at Jerusalem was the first (and for a time, the only) church of Christ.
2. It began on the Day of Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus.
3. Its establishment – under unique circumstances – is recorded in Acts 2.
4. It is mentioned numerous times throughout the book of Acts.
5. Consider these lessons from the church at Jerusalem...

### I. It Was Doctrinally Sound

- A. Acts 2:42 – “*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine.*”
- B. It was the apostles’ (plural) doctrine.
- C. It was the apostles’ doctrine (singular).
- D. They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine.

### II. It Was Without Distinctions

- A. People from all classes of society were a part of this congregation.
  1. Apostles – who were fishermen, tax collectors, etc.
  2. Palestinian Jews
  3. Hellenistic Jews
  4. Proselytes (Gentiles)
  5. From all parts of the Roman Empire.
- B. People from various economic backgrounds made up this church.
  1. Landowners (Acts 4:34 – 5:3)
  2. Widows (Acts 6:1)
  3. Impoverished (Acts 2:44-45; 4:35)
- C. People of different spiritual backgrounds were members of this church.
  1. Apostles
  2. Faithful followers of John the Baptist and Jesus
  3. Those who had betrayed, denied and crucified Jesus
- D. Yet, there was no respect of persons among the congregation!

### III. It Was Without Division

- A. They had a unity of practice.
  1. All had heard the same message (Acts 2:22-36).
  2. All had obeyed the same Gospel (Acts 2:37-41).
  3. All followed the same pattern (Acts 2:42).
- B. They had a unity of place.
  1. They met in the temple (Acts 2:46-47).
  2. They met from house to house.
- C. They had a unity of purpose.

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1. They were of "one accord" (Acts 2:46; 5:12).
2. Literally, they were "with one mind; with one passion; unanimous."
- D. They had a unity of prayer.
  1. They continued in prayer (Acts 2:42).
  2. They prayed in unity (Acts 4:23-24).
  
- IV. It Was Daily Compassionate
  - A. They gave sacrificially when needed.
    1. Acts 2:44-45
    2. Acts 4:32-35
  - B. They cared for those in need on a daily basis.
    1. Acts 6:1-2
    2. Even meeting any obstacles that might distract them!
  
- V. It Was Devotedly Evangelistic
  - A. It began due to evangelism.
  - B. The apostles continued to preach (Acts 3:12ff; 4:31; etc.).
  - C. Others began to teach and preach (Acts 5:28, 42).
    1. They did so daily.
    2. They preached publicly.
    3. They taught privately.
    4. They filled the city with the Truth of the Gospel!
  - D. Even when persecution arose, they continued to preach (Acts 8:4).
  
- VI. It Was Disciplined
  - A. The Bible clearly teaches that there must be discipline in the Lord's church.
    1. Jesus taught it (Matthew 18:15-20).
    2. Paul taught it (Romans 16:17-18; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15).
    3. Corinth demonstrated it (1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:6-7).
  - B. The first case of such discipline occurred in the church at Jerusalem.
  - C. Ananias and Sapphira were disciplined for their sin (Acts 5:1-11).
    1. This was God's action – death is not for the church to mete out.
    2. However, it emphasizes how serious God is about purity in the church.
  
- VII. It Was Dedicated
  - A. All who live the Christian life will suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12).
  - B. The church at Jerusalem was no exception (Acts 7:54 – 8:4; 9:1-2, 21).
  - C. However, they remained dedicated to Christ in spite of their suffering!
    1. They preached in spite of prison (Acts 4:1-4).
    2. They preached in spite of threats (Acts 4:17-21).
    3. They preached in spite of beatings (Acts 5:40-42).
    4. They preached in spite of death (Acts 7:54-60).
    5. They preached in spite of scattering (Acts 8:1-4).
    6. They preached in spite of murder (Acts 12:1-4).
  - D. How different the Jerusalem church was from many Christians today who find any excuse to become unfaithful to the Lord!

## Conclusion:

1. May we learn to imitate the good qualities of these Christians.
2. May we strive to be a faithful and dedicated congregation of the Lord.