

THE CHURCH AND ITS ESTABLISHMENT

Introduction:

1. The New Testament uses many terms and concepts to describe the church of Christ.
2. As members of the church, it is important for us to know what the church is – and what the Lord expects it to be.
3. Thus, as we study these divine descriptions of the church, we will learn how we are to conduct ourselves individually and as a congregation of God's people.
4. Before we discuss the specific terms of designation, there are a few fundamental facts that must be considered.
5. First, we must understand the role of the church in God's plan of redemption...
 - a. Eternal purpose
 - b. Connected to the crucifixion
 - c. Result of the resurrection

I. The Church in Purpose (Ephesians 3:8-12)

II. The Church in Promise (Genesis 12:1-3)

- A. God would establish the descendants of Abraham as a nation in the land of Canaan for the purpose of bring blessing – salvation – to all mankind (Gal. 3:26-29).
- B. Because of their sins, Israel forfeited their right to these promises; thus, the coming of the Messiah became their judgment.
 1. They lost their right to the land...
 2. They lost their identity as a nation...
 3. They lost their salvation by rejecting the Son of God...
- C. This promise of salvation included the establishment of the church.
 1. Amos 9:11-12; Acts 15:13-17
 2. Isaiah 49:6; Acts 13:46-49
 3. Isaiah 66:18-24; 1 Peter 2:9-10
- D. Ephesians 2:11-17

III. The Church in Prophecy

- A. An eternal kingdom (2 Samuel 7:12-16; 1 Tim. 3:15; Matt. 16:18-19; 1 Pet. 2:5; Heb. 1:5; Luke 1:31-33; Heb. 12:28-29; Daniel 2:44)
- B. Established during the Roman Empire (Dan. 2:44; Luke 2:1)
- C. Established in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:1-4; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8; 2:5)
- D. Established with power (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:1-4)

IV. The Church in Preparation (Matthew 3:1-17)

- A. Before Pentecost, the kingdom is always referred to as coming in the future.
- B. In the time of John the Baptist and Jesus, the kingdom was "at hand."

V. The Church in Perfection (Acts 2)

- A. On the Day of Pentecost, the church came into existence in perfection by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit.
- B. After Pentecost, the kingdom is always referred to as existing (Col. 1:13; 4:11; 1 Thes. 2:12; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 1:9).