

# The New Testament Church

## Ephesians 1:2-14

### Introduction:

- A. Mankind is not left to grope in the dark. Left to our own devices there is no telling what we would do. Without God as the Creator we would not have an idea or plan for our eternal destiny.
- B. Since before the foundations of this world were laid, God had a plan to save His people through the church.
- C. The church is divine because it came from God (Matthew 16:18), “upon this rock I will build my church.” The church belongs to Jesus, therefore the church is a divine institution.
  - 1. Not promised as an Old Testament institution, but promised in the Old Testament
  - 2. To be established and opened up in the New Testament (Acts 2:47), therefore it is a New Testament church.

### I. What is the church?

- A. The church is the people, not a building (Acts 8:3; “But Saul *began* ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.”)
- B. Made up of saved people
  - 1. Acts 2:47; “ And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”
  - 2. Ephesians 2:16; “ and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.”
  - 3. Ephesians 5:23; “...*Christ is the* head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body.”
  - 4. Those who **heard** the Gospel (vs 20), **believed** and **turned** to the Lord (vs. 21), **received** the grace of God (vs. 23), were **added** to the church (vs. 26) and the **disciples** were called **Christians** for the first time (vs. 26). (Acts 11)
- C. The Kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19; “...upon this rock I will build My **church**; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. ‘I will give you **the keys of the kingdom of heaven**;’” Peter used the keys, the Gospel, for the first time in Acts 2 and ≈ 3000 were saved.))

### II. Where and when (establishment)?

- A. Divine in origin
  - 1. Began in the mind of God (Ephesians 1:4; 3:10-11; “so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*. *This was* in accordance with **the eternal purpose** which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.”)
  - 2. Started by Jesus (Matthew 16:18)
  - 3. This means that the church is not man-made, with man-made ideas, and man-made names.
- B. Foretold in the prophets (Psalm 2; Isaiah 2:1-4; Daniel 2:44 Joel 2, **Luke 24:47** - In Jerusalem on Mount Zion)

### III. One church

- A. The promise was for only ONE Church/One Kingdom (**Matthew 16:18**). There is One Body (Ephesians 4:4), thus One Church.
  - 1. Many members in One Body (**Romans 12:4-5**)
  - 2. Since there One Bread, we who are many members are of One Body (**1 Corinthians 10:17**)

3. Baptized into One Body (**1 Corinthians 12:13**; “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body”)
  4. Reconciled in One Body (**Ephesians 2:16**; “...and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity...”)
  5. Called in One Body (**Colossians 3:15**; “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful...”)
- B. Bible does not speak of other churches, denominations or divinely sanctioned religions. If the Bible does not speak about other churches, then every other church is contrary to God’s wisdom and divine plan.
- IV. Universal and Local Church
- A. Universal church
1. Made up of all the saved, past present and future (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; **Revelation 7:9**; “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands...”)
  2. Universal church has no organization: elders, deacons, no work or treasury.
- B. Local church
1. Made up of saved people in a locale (1 Corinthians 1:3, Revelation 2-3)
  2. There are many local churches, often referred to as congregations (Romans 16:16)
  3. Organized with elders, deacons, preachers, members (Philippians 1:1)
  4. Mission:
    - a. Evangelism (**1 Timothy 3:15**; “so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.”)
    - b. Edification (**Ephesians 4:16**; “...from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”)
    - c. Benevolence (1 Timothy 5:16)
  5. Treasury (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)

Conclusion:

- A. The church is the most wonderful gift God gave mankind. The price paid for the church was the blood of Jesus. Christians should take a zealous and courageous stand for the Lord’s Bride.
- B. Exhort members to carry out the mission so that many can be a part of John’s heavenly vision in Revelation 7.