

WEST COLUMBIA CHURCH OF CHRIST



“every disciple that is perfect shall be as his master.” Luke 6:40b

THE CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (PART 1)

No one should be interested in any church except the one that is revealed in the New Testament. Everyone should be interested in the church that Jesus built. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18 ASV).

This church is revealed as the great scheme of redemption for sinful man. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10-11 ASV). The church is the greatest institution in the world, and membership in it is the greatest privilege accorded to man.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH? We must let the New Testament answer this question. Man can define human institutions, but only God, through the Holy Spirit, can tell us what this divine institution is. Since Christ built the church and purchased it with His own blood, he can, through the Holy Spirit, define His church.

The New Testament declares that this church is the body of Christ. "And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23 ASV). Here, the Holy Spirit says through Paul that "the church" "is his body."

Again, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church" (Col 1:24 ASV). So here we have the Holy Spirit calling the body "the church". Hence, the church is "the body of Christ," and "the body of Christ" is "the church."

Moreover, the church is the kingdom of God. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church...and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:18-19). In one sentence, Jesus calls this institution, "my church," and in the next sentence he calls the same institution, "the kingdom of heaven."

Again, the Holy Spirit said, "Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Col. 1:13 ASV). These Colossians who had been translated "out of the power of darkness," or the world, "into the kingdom of the Son of his love" constituted the church at Colosse (Col. 1:2).

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SERMONS THIS SUNDAY:

AM: HARVEY ALLEN

PM: HARVEY ALLEN

JOIN US IN
NEW TESTAMENT
CHRISTIANITY
TODAY!

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard,
lest at any time we should let them slip. ...
How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation;” - Hebrews 2:1-3

A Warm Welcome awaits you at all our services. Come see!
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SERVICES

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Sunday 11 AM, 6 PM Assembly
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LADIES CLASS

To be announced

EVANGELIST

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“PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER” - James 5:16

- **REMEMBER IN PRAYER: Judy Walker, Miles Johnson, Richard Ramkinson, Margaret Herring, Wilson Burton, Betty Mathis, Lamar Reeves, Elma Berrier.**
- **Judy Walker** was admitted to Baptist hospital last week and was getting some relief with her breathing. She'll be staying with her son on D avenue for awhile after that. She really misses the church, pray earnestly for her.
- **Anna Porter** was in LMC after severe breathing problems, but is doing some better. Anna also misses being with the church here, keep her in your prayers.
- Continue to remember **Jones Gamble's sister, Margie** who continues to be treated for kidney problems, a recent transplant is being rejected.
- Keep all these, and **the church here**, in your prayers. Our thanks and gratitude to those who watch, and work and pray for the church here.

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." - Hebrews 13:5

“AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY” - Acts 2:42

- Remember to **send cards to our visitors.** **Marshall Mancuso** had had a bunch of nice cards printed, and **Jones Gamble** faithfully gets visitor cards posted with addresses. So help out yourself! Send a card, invite people to visit, then send more cards! Postage for a post card is \$.32, Send 3 for a dollar and keep the change!

"Humble yourselves therefore in the sight of God, and he shall lift you up." - James 4:10

IN THE BIBLE WE'LL DELVE IN 2012

**“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord,
shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;**

but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” - Matthew 7:21

THE CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (PART 1) (cont. from page 3)

There are 27 different churches mentioned in the New Testament. All of these churches had the same faith, wore the same name and practiced the same things. These were not different denominations as we now have them. The New Testament does not teach anything about the different denominations as constituting "the church of God." Each member of the denomination wears the peculiar name of that denomination, believes certain tenets of faith as prescribed by that denomination, and practices different forms of worship as may be outlined by the denomination.

There is no resemblance between the denominations today and "the churches of Christ" of New Testament times.

- H. Leo Boles, 1874-1946, Gospel Preacher

(Part 2 next week—How to enter the church, Can we be saved outside the church?)

THE CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (PART 1) (cont. from page 1)

And the Holy Spirit said, through John, Christians were made "to be a kingdom to be priests unto his God and Father" (Rev. 1:6). So, the church is the "kingdom of heaven."

The church is also said to be the "house of God." "**These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God...**" (1 Tim. 3:14-15 ASV). The family of God dwells in "the house of God." "**For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named**" (Eph. 3:14-15 ASV).

Furthermore, it is called "the church of God" eight times in the New Testament (1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 3:5, 15). One time it is called "**the church of the Lord**" (Acts 20:28) and the plural is used three times as "churches of God" (1 Cor. 11:16; 1 Thess. 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:4). One time we have the expression, "**churches of Christ**" (Rom. 16:16). Here the term "church" is used in the local or congregational sense.

One time we have the expression "**church of the firstborn**" (Heb. 12:23). The term "firstborn" is in the plural in the original, and the expression means "the church of the firstborns."

Again, the church is called "a spiritual house." "**Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**" (1 Pet. 2:5). These and other Scriptures teach us what the church is. No institution but the church of our Lord answers these statements of the Holy Spirit.

HOW MANY CHURCHES? The New Testament answers this question also. It may be clearly seen that the term "church" is used in a general sense and in a local sense. All Christians constitute the church in the general sense, and the different congregations of Christians compose the churches in the local sense.

There is but one church over which Christ presides as Head. There is but one kingdom of God on earth and but one body of Christ. "**But now they are many members, but one body**" (1 Cor. 12:20 ASV). "**For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another**" (Rom. 12:4-5 ASV).

The New Testament frequently declares that there is but one body, and that this one body is the church. "**There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all**" (Eph. 4:4-6). All Christians are instructed to give "**diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**" (Eph. 4:3 ASV).

"Church," when used in the plural, has reference to the different groups of Christians meeting for worship at different places. We have "**the church of God which is at Corinth**" (1 Cor. 1:2), "**the churches of Galatia**" (Gal. 1:2), "**the church of the Thesalonians in God**" (1 Thess. 1:1), "**the church which was in Jerusalem**" (Acts 11:22), the church of the Laodiceans (Col. 4:16), and "the church of Ephesus" (Rev 2:1).

- (Continued on page 2)