

The Series On Baptist Doctrine – The Church

Text: Matt. 16:18

I. WHAT IS A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH?

1. Is it a building?
 - a. A building may house a church when it meets, but a building is not the church.
2. Is it a denomination?
 - a. There are no denominations in the New Testament.
3. Is it something invisible?
 - a. No word for ‘church’ in the Greek found to mean something invisible.
4. Is it something universal?
 - a. No word for ‘church’ in the Greek found to mean something universal.
 - b. The Greek word that is found is ‘ekklesia’, occurring 114 times.
 - c. It was a Greek word in common usage in the Greek language and is from a combination of two words, ‘ek’ and ‘kaleo’.
 - (1) ek – from among, out of, forth
 - (2) kaleo – to bid, to call forth
 - (3) It always meant in every original usage: to call forth, out from, for the purpose of assembling.
5. The New Testament Church is an ‘ekklesia’, in every case meaning an assembly called out for the purpose of assembling.
 - a. It never meant anything other than this in the common usage of the already established Greek word.
 - b. It was always local and it was always visible. An assembly can only be visible. People cannot come together and not be seen.
 - c. When the Lord applied the word to His assembly, He in no way changed the ordinary Greek usage.
 - d. The universal, invisible church theory is an invention of men. It is not found in the New Testament nor does it make any reasonable sense.

II. When DID THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH BEGIN

1. We see Christ giving orders to it during His earthly ministry so it had to be in existence then:

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Matt. 18:15-17

2. The beginning of the New Testament Church can be ascertained by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

a. First, we see a passage of Scripture where the definition of ‘ekklesia’ is fulfilled.

And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him.

And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:

And Simon he surnamed Peter;

And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite,

And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house.

Mark 3:13-19

b. Next, we find a verse of Scripture that ties the apostles to the New Testament Church.

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. I Cor. 12:28

c. Putting these two passages of Scripture together shows that the church started during Christ’s earthly ministry.

c. Nowhere in Scripture does it say the church started on the Day of Pentecost. That is an invention of man.

d. A list of activities the church performed before the Day of Pentecost (read list)

e. A list of when other churches began (read list)

II. REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

1. Salvation and baptism

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. Acts 2:41

2. To what were they added?

*Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added **to the church** daily such as should be saved. Acts 2:47*

3. Notice it was the Lord added to the church:

But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. I Cor. 12:18

III. HOW DID THE CHURCH OPERATE?

1. Each church is an independent, self-governing body with Christ as its Head, and conducts His business through a congregational vote under pastoral leadership.

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Ephes. 5:23-24

And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. ¶

Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. ¶

For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. ¶

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. ¶

And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. Acts 1:15-26

2. Officers of the church are Pastors (also called bishops or elders) who are the undershepherds to Christ in the place of leadership and Deacons who are servants of the church.

Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Phil. 1:1

This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. ¶

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. I Tim. 3:1-13

3. Ordinances of the church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper

a. Baptism

But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Acts 8:12 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

Acts 18:8

(1) Baptist distinctive regarding baptism: alien immersion rejected.

Baptisms accepted from churches of like faith and practice.

b. Lord's Supper

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.¶

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.¶

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. I Cor. 11:23-29

(1) Baptist distinctive regarding Lord's Supper: that it be restricted (closed) to the membership only.

(2) Only way church discipline can be regulated in its relation to the Lord's Supper.

I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

I Cor. 5:9-11

4. Discipline in the church. In all church matters, each member is subject to the church, which is the highest and final authority.

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Matt. 18:15-17

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. ¶

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. II Thes. 3:6-15

5. Finances in the church. Tithes and offerings, without any outside endeavors.

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. I Cor. 16:2

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Mal. 3:10

IV. WORK OF THE CHURCH

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. ¶

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matt. 28:16-20

1. Evangelize – Teaching/preaching the Gospel and getting folks saved.

2. Baptizing the converts

3. Teaching and preaching the Word of God.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; Ephes. 4:11-14

V. THE IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH

1. The body of Christ

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:¶

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Ephes. 1:19-23

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. Col. 1:18

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: Col. 1:24

2. The New Testament teaches only one 'body', one type of church.

a. One stands alone. One is unyielding. When there is one, there can't be two or three. That is the essence of the Law of Exclusion.

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 you all.

Ephes. 4:4-6

b. Every New Testament church is a Body of Christ, with Christ as its Head.

VI. CHRIST'S PROMISE TO HIS CHURCH

1. A promise of perpetuity (perpetual existence)

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matt. 16:18

- a. That can't happen if the church was built on a man.
- b. Matt. 16:18 is a play on words:
'...*That thou art Peter* (Gr. Petros, a stone; see also John 1:42), *and upon this rock* (Gr. Petra, a rock; see also I Cor. 10:4) ***I will build my church.***'
- c. '*..and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*'
 - (1) What was the church promised there? Perpetual existence!
 - (2) Our church is proof of it. It's the same as the first century's. All the others have apostatized.
- d. We have these precious promises:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matt. 28:19-20

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. I Cor. 11:26

Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. Ephes. 3:21

- e. These verses declare what history confirms – that there has never been a time since the days of our Lord on Earth when a New Testament Church could not be found somewhere on the face of the Earth.

(1) "Always despised, at times almost blotted out, with a testimony written in blood, these loved churches of the Lord have kept the faith and witnessed to the saving grace of God." – Robert Sargent

VII. WHAT THE CHURCH POSSESSES – EPHES. 3:10

1. The church possesses the manifold wisdom of God, which should be no surprise since it's the pillar and ground of the truth!

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. I Tim. 3:15

- a. That makes the church the prime place for a teaching ministry.

b. I mean, don't you and I learn a lot in Sunday School and church?

VIII. FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE CHURCH AS WE GO INTO 2020

1. One characteristic of the church occurs over and over again in Scripture, the expression, 'in one accord, of one mind'.

And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. Acts 1:13-14

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. Acts 2:1

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Acts 2:46
Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. I Cor. 1:10

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; Phil. 1:27
Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Phil. 2:2

2. It is of utmost importance that we be that kind of church in order to have boundless success in the new year.