

THE IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH

part a

TEXT: Eph. 3:10-11

INTRODUCTION:

- A. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH IS A PART OF GOD'S "ETERNAL PURPOSE."
1. It was built by Jesus Christ (**Mat. 16:18**).
 2. We must be a part of it to be saved(**Eph. 5:23**).
 3. The word "church" comes from a Greek word that literally means "the called out" (**1 Pet. 2:9-10; Col. 1:12-13**).
 4. It is evident that one cannot be saved out of the church.
 5. **We need to make sure that what we are in is indeed the church that Jesus built (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-5)**.
 6. How can we distinguish it from all the denominations of the world which claim to be the Lord's church?
- B. HOW DO WE IDENTIFY THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.
1. If we are looking for a man or an automobile, we want all the **identifying marks** (age, color, size, make, model, etc.).
 2. If we are looking for the church we read about in the Bible, we need to know its identification marks.
 3. **The church as God planned it and as Christ built it is described in the New Testament.**
- C. WE WANT TO STUDY THE IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH.

I. THE WORD "CHURCH" IS USED TO REFER TO THE SAVED IN TWO SENSES:

- A. THE UNIVERSAL(**Mat. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; Acts 20:28**).
- B. THE LOCAL(**1 Cor. 1:1-2; Gal. 1:1-2; Rom. 16:16**).

II. IDENTIFYING THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH:

- A. WHO IS THE **HEAD** OF THE CHURCH?(**Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18**).
1. Who has all authority?(**Mat. 28:18**).
 2. What about the Pope? The head of the church of England is the King or Queen of England. The Mormons have their president, other's have their councils, conferences, and conventions which legislate and enforce laws.
 3. This makes the church its own head. The church has **NO** authority and makes no laws. When it does, it has rejected Christ's authority. The Lord's church looks to **Jesus** for guidance, **he is its ONLY head**.
- B. WHO IS THE **FOUNDATION**(**1 Cor. 3:11; Mat. 16:13-20**).
1. What about the Catholic claim that Peter was the foundation?
 2. Around whom was the Mormon faith built?
 3. What is the guiding principle of the Jehovah's Witnesses?
- C. **WHO STARTED** THE CHURCH?(**Mat. 16:18; 15:13; Psa. 127:1**).
1. Who started the Mormon Church? Joseph Smith. Who started the Methodist? John Wesley. Lutheran? Martin Luther. Mrs. Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy started

the Church of Christ Scientists.

2. These and many other denominations are eliminated because they have and claim the wrong founder.
- D. **WHERE AND WHEN DID THE CHURCH BEGIN?(Acts 2).**
1. Those who were baptized were added to the church (**Acts 2:47 kjv**). We find also that they were gathered in **Jerusalem(Acts 2:1-5)**.
 2. We can know that any church that started at a later date(**33 A.D.**) or in another place is not the church of the Lord.
 3. For example, the Lutheran Church began October 31, 1517, in Germany. The Methodist began in 1729 in England. From the Bible we know when and where the church began.
- E. WHAT WAS IT **CALLED**?(**Heb. 12:22-23; 12:28; Gal. 1:13; Rom. 16:16**).
- F. WHO ARE THE MEMBERS AND WHAT ARE THEY CALLED?
1. All the saved are members(**Eph. 5:23-27; 1 Cor. 12:13**).
 2. Called "Christians"(**Acts 11:26; 1 Pet. 4:15-16**).
- G. WHEN REFERRING TO THE CHURCH IN THE UNIVERSAL SENSE, THE WORD "CHURCH" IS ALWAYS **SINGULAR. THERE IS NO ORGANIZATION FOR THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH.**

CONCLUSION: ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THIS CHURCH?

- A. DOES THE CHURCH YOU'RE A MEMBER OF FIT THE DESCRIPTION?
- B. HOW DOES ONE GET INTO THE CHURCH OF THE LORD? (**1 Cor. 12:13**)