

The Church of Christ

The Church in Prophecy

Introduction:

The word “church” (Gr. *ekklesia*) is defined as “an assembly of the citizens regularly summoned, the legislative assembly... to call an assembly” (LS 239). There are two important things to note when considering the church. First, when one speaks of the church the idea of citizenship is alluded to. To be a citizen infers that one is a member of a town, state, country, kingdom etc. The New Testament (NT) reveals a spiritual kingdom known as the church (I Cor. 1:2) whereby its citizens conduct themselves in accordance with the king (i.e., Jesus; Col. 1:13) and his authority (Eph. 2:18-22). Secondly, note from the definition of the word church, that people are “summoned” or “called to an assembly.” The gospel of Jesus Christ calls individuals to become citizens of the kingdom of God (i.e., the church) (cf. II Thess. 2:13-14). The purpose of this lesson will be to examine the origin of the Church by looking to the prophets.

I. The Old Testament speaks of a future Kingdom:

- A. II Samuel 7:12-17; Isa. 9:6-7
- B. Consider Luke 1:30-33

II. The Old Testament speaks of a future King of this kingdom:

- A. II Sam. 7:12-17; Isa. 9:6-7
- B. The NT reveals the name of this new king to be Jesus (Lk. 1:31-33 [comp. Dan. 7:13-14 / Matt. 26:64]).
 - 1. Jesus is the head of the church (Eph. 5:22).
 - 2. Jesus’ body is a representation of the church (Eph. 1:22-23).
 - 3. Jesus’ teaching is the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20).

III. The Old Testament speaks of a future Purpose through Law in the kingdom:

- A. Isa. 2:3; 65:17; Jer. 31:31ff (purpose was to forgive sins; cf. Heb. 8:6-12).
- B. The apostle Peter preached this law on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37-39).
- C. The king would provide said forgiveness (cf. Lk. 1:31-32 / Matt. 1:21).
- D. When one is forgiven they become a part of the kingdom of God (i.e., the church) (Col. 2:13).
- E. Said forgiveness could not take place under the Mosaic Law (cf. Heb. 7:18-19).

IV. Has this Kingdom (church) now come or is it something to look forward to in the future?

- A. The OT and NT reveal the church to have been established on the day of Pentecost.
- B. Consider the fact that the prophets said the church would be established in the “*latter days*” (Isa. 2:2-3; Dan. 2:28). The NT reveals the latter days to be that of Pentecost (Acts 2:16-17; 3:24).
- C. Jesus tells us that the kingdom would be established during the lifetime of some who heard Him preach (Mk. 9:1).
- D. The OT reveals the kingdom to be established during the days of the Roman Empire (Dan. 2:44; fulfilled Lk. 3:1-2).
- E. The kingdom is said to begin at the point of the law going forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; Lk. 24:45-49) and so it was fulfilled on Pentecost (Acts 2:1, 37-38).

V. How can I be sure that the Kingdom of God has been established on Pentecost?

- A. Jesus said that His kingdom would come with power (Mk. 9:1; Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:6-8). Acts 2:1-4 indicate the power of God on Pentecost.

B. Secondly, note that after Acts 2 the church is spoken of as having already been in existence (cf. Acts 5:11; 8:1; etc.).

Conclusion:

Thanks be to God for providing the means whereby man can receive the remission of his sins. When one is forgiven of their sins they are added to the Lord's church. As a member of the church I am subject to its laws and precepts. When I follow these precepts I am assured of a heavenly rest.