

THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT

Lesson 1 -- The Nature of the Church

This first lesson is about the general descriptions of the church found in the New Testament. After we are aware of what terms are references to the church we will look in our next lesson to find the origin of the church. Before we look at the Scriptures, let me give you a little language lesson. The word "church" is the translation of the Greek word "ekklesia". This term literally means "the called out" It was used in the Greek language to refer to an assembly of people who were gathered for some purpose. For example, a group of citizens who are called together to discuss village matters could be called an "ekklesia".

In the New Testament we will see the word church used in two senses. The first sense of the word is ALL of God's people everywhere in the world. We sometimes call this the church in a universal sense. These are all the people that God has called out to be His own. At other times in the New Testament, the word church will refer to a group of God's people in one geographical area (like a city). We sometimes call this the local church.

THE CALLING

If we want to be a part of the people God has called, let's first take a look at the nature of that calling. Read 1 Peter 2:9.

1. God has called us out of _____ and into His _____.
2. The purpose of our calling is so we can declare the _____ of God.
3. We have been called to be a _____ people, a royal _____, a _____ nation, and a people _____ to _____.

The people God has chosen will be different from the people of the world. God has called them to be "holy". "Holy" means "set apart for a purpose". God has set His people apart so that they can give proper service to God. His people will also be a priesthood. All believers are part of the called out (church) priesthood. It is not limited to preachers or ministers to be priests. All believers are priests of God. A priest is someone who represents God to the people and who approaches God on behalf of the people. All of us should approach God on behalf of those who are lost, we do this through prayer. All of us should live lives so that people who see us will see a reflection of God, and we should be bringing the words of God to them so that they to will come to be part of the called out. We have been called out of a life of sin and darkness into life with God where there is forgiveness of sins.

THE KINGDOM

Besides referring to the church as people who are "called out," the New Testament frequently calls the church "the kingdom". As Jesus began His ministry, He taught about the kingdom. Read Mark 1:13-14.

4. Jesus proclaimed, "The _____ of God is near."
5. Read Mark 9:1. Jesus also taught that some of the people listening to Him would not _____ before they saw the _____ of God come with power.

The kingdom of God was to be started during the lifetime of people Jesus talked to. Some people today try to convince you that the kingdom began within the last one hundred years. If that was true, then someone listening to Jesus lived to be over 1900 years old or Jesus was a liar. Neither of those are true possibilities, so we must accept the fact that the kingdom began within a normal lifetime of the people Jesus was speaking with. Some may ask to see the kingdom if it really exists. Read Luke 17:20-21.

6. The Kingdom of God is _____ you.

Jesus is telling His disciples that He came to establish a spiritual kingdom. The place the kingdom would be found is inside us. You can not point to a building and say that it is part of the kingdom. The kingdom is inside of people. Read Colossians 1:13-14.

7. God has rescued us from _____ and brought us into the _____ of His Son.

Notice that the same thing you read earlier in 1 Peter (see question 1-3) about being "called out" is said about being brought into the kingdom. It is being taken from darkness of sin and entering the light of sins forgiven. Notice also that Paul refers to this being brought into the kingdom in the past tense. The kingdom was established and operating during Paul's life. Read Hebrews 12:22-29. There is many things that can be learned from this passage, but I want you to see one point right now.

8. The writer says that his readers "have come to . . . the _____ of the firstborn." (verse 23)

The word "assembly" (KJV) or "church" (NIV) is the Greek word "ekklesia". The writer says that coming to the church is the same thing as coming to Mount Zion, coming to the rejoicing angels, coming to God, coming to Jesus, and coming to the blood which Jesus shed.

9. He then says that all of these comings are the same as receiving a _____ which cannot be _____.
(verse 28).

So the kingdom is received inside of you when you come to God and His Son. It is received by you when you accept (come to) His blood. You become a part of the kingdom when you become a part of the church (using church in the universal sense). Of course, if we are a part of a kingdom, then we must have a king. Read John 18:36-37.

10. The only king over the church is _____.

THE BODY

Another name given to the church in the New Testament is "the body of Christ". Read Ephesians 1:17-23.

11. God placed Christ to be _____ over all things for the _____, which is His _____.

So Christ is the head and the church ("ekklesia") is the body. A body receives all of its directions from the head. The head uses the body to perform its will. The body does not rebel against the head or try to choose a new head. The true church will not place anyone in the position of being the authority other than Jesus. But how does one part of the body act toward other parts of the body? Or how should one member of the church act toward other members of the church? Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.

12. Can all parts of a body do the same things? For example, can your eye hear like your ear?

13. Does your answer to question 12 mean that the eye is not a part of the body?

14. So God has arranged so that there are many _____, but one _____. (verse 20)

15. Can one part of the body decide it does not need the other parts of the body? For example, can the eye decide that it does not need the foot?

16. Now the church is the _____ of Christ and each person is a _____ of that body. (verse 27)

So all members of the church must work together like a body works together. Not all members will be able to do the same things. Some will be able to teach, some will be able to encourage, some will be able to help the sick, and so on. We should each figure out what we can do and then we should do it to the greater glory of the body. But we must not act in rebellion to our head, Jesus Christ.

One final point from this passage. Reread verse 13 and notice that we must be baptized by (or with or in) the Spirit in order to be a part of the body. There will be more about baptism in the next lesson which is on the origin of the church.

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Lesson 2 -- The Origin of the Church

This lesson is about the beginnings of the church. As we learned in the last lesson, the church may also be called "the called out" (chosen, elect), "the kingdom", or "the body." Before we look at its actual beginning, we will look at the passages that indicate that the kingdom was about to start.

Read Matthew 3:1-3.

1. John preached that the kingdom was _____.

Since John (who preached in the years immediately before Jesus began to preach) said the kingdom was "near" or "at hand", then the kingdom had not been established while John was preaching. But John knew that it would only be a short time before the kingdom (church) would begin. Unfortunately, John was executed by Herod before the kingdom came so he never saw the fulfillment of his own prophecy. Read Matthew 4:17.

2. After Jesus' baptism and temptation (Matthew 3:13 - 4:11), Jesus also preaches that "the kingdom of heaven is _____."

Read Matthew 10:2-7. Here Jesus is sending out His twelve apostles to help Him preach to the many villages in Israel.

3. Jesus told them to preach that "the kingdom of heaven is _____."

In the final year of Jesus' life, He was still preaching that the kingdom was near, but He became more specific about how near it was. Read Mark 9:1.

4. Jesus said that some of those listening to Him would not _____ until they saw the kingdom of God _____ with _____.

So Jesus indicated that the kingdom would come within the lifetime of some of His hearers. There are those who teach that Jesus did not set up His kingdom until the 20th century. If that were true, then either there were some two thousand year old men still living or Jesus had lied to his hearers when he said some of them would not taste death before they saw the kingdom come. Neither of those possibilities are true, so we know that Jesus did indeed set up His kingdom within a few years of His statement in Mark 9.

But we are not to look for an earthly style kingdom where you can point at the king and at the borders of the kingdom. Our king is Christ in heaven. His kingdom is His church. Read John 18:36-37.

5. Jesus said that His kingdom is not _____.

Read Luke 17:20-21.

6. Jesus said the kingdom is _____ you.

The church, the kingdom of God, is inside of you. Christ did not use the term "church" to refer to a building or a denomination. Church refers to the body of believers. Only God knows for certain who is in His kingdom because only God knows the heart. We can know how to be a part of that kingdom or church by studying the word of God. (If you do not know how to be added to God's church, then perhaps you should study the series on "What Must I do to be Saved?" Just tell me if you want to start studying that series.)

After Christ died, was buried, arose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, then the disciples start to teach that the kingdom is in existence. That is because, until Christ went to heaven, He was not yet on His throne. There can not be a kingdom until the king is on His throne. Read Acts 2:32-40. Peter is the speaker at the beginning of this reading.

7. Peter says that God has made Jesus both _____ and _____.

When Peter's listeners understood and believed that Jesus was ruling in heaven, they were afraid because they were the people who had crucified Jesus while He was on earth. They wanted to know how they could be saved. God had put the kingdom into the hands of Jesus, and the Jews who were listening to Peter knew that salvation was only for those who were in that kingdom. How could they be saved since they had killed the king?

8. Peter told them to "_____ and be _____ in order to have _____ of sins." (verse 38)

Salvation meant that their sins would be forgiven, including the sin of murdering their king. Peter said that they could be forgiven and enter the kingdom by repenting of their sins and having those sins washed away in baptism. Read Acts 2:41-47.

9. Those who believed (received the word gladly) were _____. (verse 41)

10. And the Lord added to _____ daily those who were being _____. (v. 47)

Jesus as the King of His church determines who has entered. He looks at the heart and decides who is to be added to His kingdom. If you want to be sure that you have been saved (added by Christ to His church), then please take time to study the lessons on "What Must I Do to be Saved?". From Acts 2 forward through the rest of the Bible, the kingdom is always referred to as already existing (See, 1 Corinthians 15:24, Colossians 1:13, Revelation 1:9 for examples).

So Christ's church (kingdom) was established when Christ ascended to heaven and sat on His throne. Those who are a part of the church are those who are being saved. Beginning with the next lesson we will try to determine if the congregation (the local church) that you may be meeting with is a part of the church that Christ established when he returned to heaven. Please feel free to add any comments or questions below:

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THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT

Lesson 3 -- The Organization of the Church

This lesson is about how the church is to be governed. In the world today, we can see many different types of governments for churches. Some churches are governed by a single man (e.g., the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church, or the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Anglican Church), other churches are governed by a group of men (e.g., the General Synod of the Lutheran Church or the Southern Baptist Convention). But what kind of rulership did Jesus set up for His church? This will be one of the characteristics which we can use to determine if the local church we belong to is a part of the church that Jesus built.

As we mentioned in our first lesson, the term "church" can be used to describe the entire group of all believers (past, present and future) which we sometimes call the universal church. Or the term "church" can refer to a local group of believers who meet together at one location and work together to spread the word of God which we sometimes call the local church. We will now look at the government Jesus gave for the universal church and then look at the government Jesus gave for the local churches.

ORGANIZATION OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

As we also saw in the last two lessons, the universal church is also called the kingdom or the body of Christ. Read John 18:36-37.

1. Who is the king of the kingdom Jesus established? (verse 37)

There can only be one king in a kingdom. The only kingdom that has more than one king is a kingdom that is having a civil war. The entire church must accept that Jesus is the one and only king. Read Ephesians 5:23.

2. Since the church is the body, who is the head?

A body can only have one head. It is the head which gives all the directions to the body. The church must accept Christ as the one and only head of the church. The church must obey Christ in all things just like the body would only listen to the commands which came from the head. Read Matthew 28:18-20.

3. Who has all authority?

Since Jesus has all authority, then no one else can claim His authority. No one can claim to act as Christ's representative today since Christ has not appointed anyone to be His representative. Christ said He would always be with us. Since He is with us, He does not need or want anyone to act as His representative. That is all the organization or structure that Christ gave to the government of the universal church. Christ is in control and everyone follows Him and listens to Him.

ORGANIZATION OF THE LOCAL CHURCHES

The local churches are groups of individual Christians in one location who meet together and work together. Each individual is responsible to follow the directions of the head of the universal church (Christ). In order for the local church to function well, Christ gave each local church some leadership. This leadership is in the form of older, more experienced Christian men who have lived and are living a good life and meet certain qualifications. Read Acts 14:23.

4. Paul and Barnabas appointed _____ in each church.

Read 1 Peter 5:1-4.

5. Peter tells the elders to be _____ of the flock of God. (verse 2)
6. He also says that they are to serve as _____. (verse 2)
7. The elders are to serve as _____ to the flock. (verse 3)

When Peter says that the elders are to serve as shepherds, the word he uses in the Greek is pastors. Sometimes people think that the preacher is a pastor, but in Christ's church, the pastors are the elders. The word Peter uses for overseers can also be translated bishops. You see that the leadership of a local church is in the hands of elders, who can also be called pastors or bishops. A bishop is not someone who rules over more than one local church. A bishop is one of the men who leads a local church of which he is a part. Also remember that Peter said that the elders would lead by their example. The elders (pastors or bishops) have no right to command the local church. The local church is to follow the example of those men, but the only one who has authority to make commands is Christ. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

8. The _____ must be the _____ of one wife. (verse 2)
9. He must be able to manage his own _____ before he can take care of the church. (verse 5)
10. He must not be a _____. (verse 6)
11. He must have a good _____ with outsiders. (verse 7).

You can see here that the bishop (overseer, elder, pastor), must be a man. No woman can be the **husband of one wife**. Also he must be a married man in order to be a husband. He also must have demonstrated his ability to lead by having raised children who were obedient. Any local group that has women functioning as elders (pastors, bishops, or overseers) can not be a part of the church that Jesus built. God gave differing roles and functions to men and women. The leadership of the local congregation he put into the hand of experienced, Christian men who were known (even by those who are not a part of the church -- outsiders) to live a good, moral life.

Along with the elders, there are to be deacons in each local church. The deacons are men who are helpers or servers. They have been given special responsibilities by the local church to meet certain needs. Of course, all Christians are required to be servants and helpers of each other, but deacons have been set apart to meet some special needs. Read 1 Timothy 3: 8-13.

12. A deacon is to be the _____ of one wife. (verse 12)

You can see in these lists for the elders and deacons what is required of the men who serve in those offices. There are to be elders and deacons in each local church. If the church does not have men qualified to hold those positions, then the local church must continue to work together as best as they can until some men become qualified. If the local church you are meeting with is not organized in the pattern that Christ left for His church (where qualified elders lead by example in each local church and Christ has all authority to make commands for the universal church), then you need to realize that you are not obeying your king and Savior, Jesus Christ.

There is no group or individual on earth who has the right to rule over any church. Elders are to lead by example the local church in which they are members. No one individual can be an elder for more than one local church, and each local church should have more than one elder. The only rulership for the universal church is Christ Jesus, who bought the church with His own blood.

In our next lesson we will look for more ways to be certain that the local church you are meeting with is a part of the church that Jesus built. Please feel free to add any comments or questions below:

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Lesson 4 -- Membership in the Church

This lesson is about how one can become a member of the church that Jesus built. Many churches have various formulas for how to determine if one is a member of the church. You might be required to produce a document saying that you have completed the necessary acts for being a member. The church may require you to learn and recite certain statements or passages as a prerequisite for being considered a member. But our question is not what do churches require you to do to join them, but what does Jesus require for you to join His one church?

WHO DECIDES IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH?

Is there a group of people or an individual who can tell you whether or not you are in the church? Many denominations have such groups. Are they referred to in the Bible? No. Read Acts 2:36-47.

1. What did Peter tell the crowd they should do in order to be saved? (verse 38)
2. What did the people do when they accepted the message that Peter presented? (verse 41)
3. After they were baptized, what did the people do? (verse 42)
4. Who determined if the people were added to the church? (verse 47)

We can see that it is up to the Lord to determine who is a part of the church. Remember that Christ is the king of His kingdom (the church). As king, He has the right to determine who will be His people and who will not be His people.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO BE A MEMBER?

Peter said that after we believe that Jesus is the Christ, we must still repent and be baptized to be saved. And the Lord adds to the church those who are being saved. If you want to find out more about being saved, ask me to send you the lessons on "What Must I do to be Saved?" In a later lesson, we will look at what the church should be doing. But I hope you see that in verse 42, there are some things for the members of the church to do. Read Acts 5:12-14.

5. Men and women who _____ were added to the number.

Although this passage only mentions belief, we know from the verses in Acts 2, that everyone who believed was also baptized. And just like before and always, it is the Lord who decides who is a member of His church. Read Matthew 28:16-20.

6. Jesus told His disciples to go and make _____ of all nations.

7. In order to make the people into disciples, they would have to do two things: they would _____ them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and they would _____ them to obey all of the commands Jesus had given to His disciples.

That is what is required to become a part of the church that Jesus built. You must believe on Him, repent of your sins, have your sins washed away through baptism, and be ready to learn and obey all of the commands that Jesus and His apostles said and wrote down in our Bibles. It seems so simple because Jesus did not desire to make it complex. There are no fancy rituals or pieces of paper that are involved. Of course Jesus is looking at the heart. He knows if you are sincere when you come to Him in baptism. That is why the passages say that the Lord adds to the church. We can not judge each others hearts. We only know if the person has outwardly complied with the commands of God. Jesus knows if we are following Him in our heart.

WHAT DO YOU GAIN BY BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH?

Read Colossians 1:9-14.

8. When we are brought (translated) into the church (the kingdom of the Son), we have been rescued from _____ . (verse 13)

That is why Peter told the people how to have their sins forgiven when they asked what to do to be saved. Before we are added by Christ to His kingdom, we are in a kingdom of darkness. That is, we are lost in our sins. The devil is the ruler of that kingdom and the devil is trying to keep you from getting out of his kingdom. But when our sins are washed away God brings us into the kingdom of His Son. Being made a part (member) of the kingdom (church) of Christ is often referred to as being "in Christ" or being "children of God". Read Galatians 3:26-29.

9. You become a child of God by _____ in Christ Jesus. (verse 26)

10. But that faith also included _____ into Christ in order to clothe yourself with Christ. (verse 27)

Again we see that baptism is necessary to be "in Christ" and that baptism is the result of faith. When you believe in Christ, then you should want to be baptized so that you can be a part of His kingdom. If you are worshipping with a local church that does not teach or practice the only way that Christ ever taught for people to be added to His church (belief, repentance, confession, and baptism), then you should find out why they do not practice what Jesus taught. It is only in the church that Jesus built that you can escape from the kingdom of darkness.

Our next lesson will be on the purpose of the church (That is, what a local church is supposed to be doing). Please feel free to add any comments or questions below:

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THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT

Lesson 5 -- The Purpose of the Church

This lesson is about what the local churches are supposed to be doing. Now that we know that the church is the group of believers (the called out) and not a building, and since we know that the church is the kingdom of God, and we know how to become a member, what do we do once we are a member? The question could be divided into two questions: "What should I be doing as a member of the church?" and "What should the local church as a unit be trying to do?"

Various denominations have come up with different answers to those questions. Some teach that the individual does nothing once he is a member. Some say the church as a unit should get involved in the social and political needs of the community. But we are interested in what the Bible says, not in what man has been teaching. If we are going to be a part of the church that Jesus built, then we need to give up any ideas that did not originate within the word of God. Read Acts 2:37-47.

WHAT DO INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH DO?

1. After they were baptized (and therefore, added to the church), the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' _____ and to the _____, to the breaking of _____ and to _____ . (verse 42)
2. All the believers had _____ in common. (verse 44)
3. They broke _____ in their homes and _____ together with glad and sincere hearts.
4. They were praising _____ and enjoyed the _____ of all the people. (verse 47)

Here we have the first account in the Bible of what believers (who had become members of the church) did after they were baptized. There certainly are a lot of things that an individual Christian should be doing as a part of the church. Since they were devoted to the apostle's teaching, we as individual Christians should devote ourselves to studying the teachings of the apostles. These teachings have been gathered together for us in the Bible. So we should be studying our Bibles. We should be devoted also to fellowship with other believers. Fellowship is a word which can be described as "a joint participation toward a common goal". We should feel that we are a team of believers with a common goal. The local church that you worship and work with should be a team and you should want to give as much time as you can to being together with those other members.

The "breaking of bread" referred to in verse 42 is a reference to partaking of the Lord's Supper. In Acts 20:7, we learn that the early disciples gathered on Sunday of each week to remember the death of Christ by partaking of the memorial supper. The local church you are meeting with should also be meeting together each Sunday to partake of the Lord's Supper. You as an individual Christian are responsible for wanting to be there and partaking in a proper manner. As individual Christians, we should also be spending a lot of time in prayer. Prayer is the only way for us to communicate with God. God can help us in all of our struggles but we must pray to Him for His help.

We also see that the early Christians shared everything they had with each other as there was need. As an individual Christian, we each have a responsibility to make sure that our fellow believers are not without the basic needs of life. If we know Christians who do not have a place to live, or enough to eat, or decent clothes to wear, then we as individuals are responsible to meet those needs. Of course, we should be happy to provide those things for fellow believers because Christ said that if you do something for the least of your brothers (fellow Christians) then you have done it for Him. See Matthew 25:31-46.

The early Christians also spent time eating meals together in their homes and they came together to praise and worship God. We as individual Christians are also responsible to bring ourselves to gatherings of the local church so that we can join in the praise of our God who has saved us from the death our sins deserve. And as we go

about our daily lives we should be doing good deeds for everyone we meet. People should see Christ reflected in our actions. Then the people will be glad that we are in their community.

WHAT SHOULD THE LOCAL CHURCH BE DOING AS A UNIT?

I am referring here to the local church. As we saw in the lesson on organization, Jesus arranged His church as local churches without any man or group overseeing the work of more than one local church. So what kind of work should each local church be doing? Read Ephesians 4:11-16.

5. Christ gave some people to be _____, some to be _____, some to be _____, and some to be _____ and _____.
6. These people are to prepare _____ for _____. (verse 12)
7. This preparation for service will result in the _____ of Christ being _____. (verse 12)
8. The body will continue to be built up (edified) until we all reach _____ in the faith and _____ of the Son of God and become _____. (verse 13)
9. When we are mature, then we will speak the _____ in love. (verse 15)

This is a truly beautiful picture of how the church should function. In each local church the teachers and elders (pastors) and evangelists should be training the other individuals. Since the apostles have all died and the gift of prophecy has ceased (see 1 Corinthians 13:8-13), then we must use the written words of the apostles and prophets as part of our instruction. Within each local church, the individual Christians will become mature and are then ready to serve God by speaking the truth in love. Read John 17:17. This passage is part of a prayer from Christ to the Father.

10. What does Jesus say is truth?

So Ephesians is telling us that the church should be preparing the individual Christians to go out and tell people who are not in the church about the words of God. If your local church is not functioning to prepare you to teach others, then it is not fulfilling the purpose God gave for the church. Of course, this adds another item to what we are required to do as individuals. We must seek to grow in our faith and knowledge so that we can teach the lost about Christ. Read Hebrews 5:11-14.

11. There is a time when all Christians ought to be _____. (verse 12)
12. In order to be a teacher and a mature Christian, we must learn to distinguish _____. (verse 14)

This lesson should have given you some basic ideas about what you should be doing and what the local churches should be doing. You should not think that everything you and the church should be doing has been mentioned. You need to study and learn from the word of God what else is required. In our next lesson we will discuss denominations -- are they from God or man? Please feel free to add any comments or questions below:

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THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT

Lesson 6 -- Catholicism: From God or Man?

This lesson is the first of several lessons dealing with denominations. Each lesson will discuss one or more denominations and compare their origins, practices, organization, and doctrines with those of the church that Jesus built as revealed in the Bible. We will start with the Roman Catholic church since it is one of the largest denominations.

ORIGINS & ORGANIZATION:

The Catholic church has its origin within a few hundred years after Christ and His apostles died. Elders who were supposed to guide only the local church they worked with began to assume authority over smaller churches. Soon the elders picked out a leader and called him the "Bishop" over all the churches in that area. Later Several Bishops gathered and picked out a leader over a larger number of churches and called him the Metropolitan. Then some Metropolitans took the title of Patriarch and claimed to rule all the churches in several countries. Eventually one of these "Patriarchs" claimed to be the "Universal Bishop" or "Pope". This final step was taken by Boniface III in 606 AD. (John the Faster, another Patriarch, made a similar claim about 20 years before Boniface III, but he changed his mind when all the other Patriarchs accused him of being "anti-Christ" for his presumption). So 606 AD is the founding date for the Catholic church's organization as we know it today.

But the Catholic church began to form earlier as elders began to take control away from the Bible and assumed they could control the doctrines taught in the churches. In 325 AD, a pagan emperor, Constantine, gathered as many "Bishops" as he could in the city of Nicea. He offered to stop the persecutions that had been going on against Christians, if the Bishops would agree that he, the pagan emperor, presided over all the Bishops and that they would write down what the creeds of the church were. The Bishops agreed and drew up the Nicene Creed. Any Christians who did not agree to the creed or to the overlordship of the pagan emperor were outlawed. The churches that followed the Bishops with their pagan emperor and human creed are what we call today the Roman Catholic Church.

So the Catholic Church had its origin in 325 AD. It was founded by a pagan emperor and some self-seeking Bishops. In 606 AD, the Patriarch of Rome, declared himself to be Pope. The Pope claims to have all authority on earth as Christ has all authority in heaven. The Pope claims to be the head of the church. Read Matthew 16:15-18.

1. Who was going to build (be the founder of) Christ's church? _____
2. Read Matthew 28:18. Jesus said He has all _____ in _____ and on _____.
3. Read Ephesians 5:23. Christ is _____ of the church.

TITLES:

The Catholic church has many titles given to different people. There are Cardinals, Archbishops, Monsignors, Metropolitans, and others, not to mention the Pope. These titles are supposed to represent offices given in the church. But there are only two offices ever mentioned in the Bible. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13.

4. The first office mentioned is the office of a _____. (verse 1)
5. The other office in the local church is the office of a _____. (verses 12- 13)

None of the other offices or titles used by Roman Catholics are found in the Bible. They did not come from God, they were added by man. Catholic priests expect to be addressed by the title "Father", but what did Jesus say about that title? Read Matthew 23:9.

6. Jesus said to call no man on earth "_____".

Here Jesus was referring to using "Father" as a religious title. He was not saying that you could not call your physical father, "father". Rather He was saying in religious areas, only God is your father, so do not call a man your father. Again we see that the Catholic church does not listen to the Bible and even disobeys a direct command made by Jesus.

DOCTRINES:

We do not have enough time and space to discuss all of the erroneous doctrines taught by the Catholic church. We will examine a few. If you want to learn more about other doctrines just include a note at the end of the lesson. In 998 AD the Catholic church commanded fasting, "abstaining from meat", on Fridays and during Lent. In 1079 AD priests were forbidden to be married. Read 1 Timothy 4:1-5. Here Paul is warning against the doctrines of the devil that would be a sign of those who departed from the faith.

7. The doctrines of devils include "Forbidding to _____ and commanding to abstain from _____" (verse 3).

Those are exactly what the Roman Catholic church has done. They have fulfilled the prophecy given by Paul. They have led some away from the true faith by their doctrines of devils. In 1229 AD, the Catholic church forbid all laymen from reading or possessing a copy of the Bible. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

8. All _____ is _____ and is profitable for _____.

Paul clearly expected people to read the Bible. The Catholics forbid it because the Bible is contrary to the teachings of the Catholic church. Who will you believe, God or the men who rule the Catholic church? In 786 AD, the Catholic church began worshipping crosses, relics, and images. Read Exodus 20:4-6.

9. God says, "You shall not make any _____ or any _____ in the form of anything in _____ or _____ or _____."

10. God says "You shall not _____ or _____ them"(verse 5)

Who will you obey, God or the men who rule the Roman Catholic church? Around 600 AD, the Catholics began worshipping and praying to Mary, dead saints, and angels. Read Matthew 4:10.

11. Jesus said, we are to worship _____ and only serve Him.

12. Read Revelation 22:8-9. Did the angel allow John to worship him? _____.

In 1545 AD, the Catholics proclaimed that their own traditions were equal to the commandments of God. Read Mark 7:6-8.

13. Jesus said that those who taught the _____ of men as if they were the _____ of God were worshipping in vain.

That means that God does not accept the worship offered by those who think that the teachings of men (like the men who rule the Roman Catholic church) are equal in authority to the inspired word of God. In 1215

AD, the pope declared that Jesus was sacrificed on the cross again each time Mass was offered. This is their doctrine of transubstantiation. Read Hebrews 10:12 referring to Christ's sacrifice.

14. How many sacrifices will Jesus make? _____

Do you believe the Bible or the traditions of the men who rule the Catholic church? In 1414 AD the laymen were forbidden from drinking the cup during the Mass. Read 1 Corinthians 11:20-30.

15. The proper name for the memorial is the _____ . (verse 20)

16. Everyone who partook of the Lord's supper was expected to eat the _____ and drink the _____ (verse 26).

Again, we see that the Catholic church has changed the doctrines that are taught in the Bible. So what does the Bible say about those who change the teachings of the Bible? Read Galatians 1:8-9.

17. What does Paul say will happen to anyone who changes the gospel? "Let him be _____."

Read Revelation 22:18-19

18. What will happen to anyone who adds to the word of God? _____.

19. What will happen to anyone who subtracts from the word of God? _____.

Considering that the Catholic church was founded by a pagan emperor, is not organized like the church described in the Bible, uses titles that are forbidden for Christians to use, and does not follow the teachings (doctrines) of God and Christ as revealed in the Bible but rather follows the doctrines of devils . . .

20. Is the Roman Catholic church the church that Jesus built? _____

I hope this lesson has taught you many things about the errors of the Roman Catholic church. In our next lesson we will discuss Protestant denominations and whether they are the church that Jesus built. Please feel free to add any comments or questions below:

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THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT

Lesson 7 -- Protestantism: From God or Man?

This lesson is about denominations that arose from disputes (protests) against the Roman Catholic Church. As we learned in the last lesson, the Roman Catholic church does not follow the Bible, was not founded by Christ, and is not organized in the way that Jesus organized His church. So the Roman Catholic church is clearly NOT the church which Jesus built. As a result, many people who were followers of the Roman Catholics have left that church in protest against the sinful teachings of the Catholics. These groups of people who fled from Catholicism have been called "Protestants" to show that they started with "protests" against Catholicism. This lesson will look at many of the major "Protestant" denominations. We will use the same criteria to judge these denominations as we did to judge the Catholics. These are the same things we learned from the first five lessons in this series (if you need to review the right answers to any of these questions, then please review the lesson indicated after each question).

- a. Is the nature of the church or denomination only spiritual (i.e., not of this world) (Lesson 1)?
- b. Was the church or denomination founded by Jesus Christ (Lesson 2)?
- c. Does the church or denomination have Jesus as its only head (Lesson 3)?
- d. Is membership in the church or denomination determined only by the Lord (Lesson 4)?
- e. Does the church or denomination **always** and **only** follow the teachings of the Bible (Lesson 5)?

If the answer to **ANY ONE** of the above questions is "No" for any denomination or church, then you can be sure that it is NOT the church that Jesus built.

EASTERN ORTHODOX and ANGLICAN (EPISCOPALIAN)

Normally, neither of these two groups are referred to as "Protestants", but since they were both formed as the result of a disagreement with the Catholics they can be placed with the normal Protestant denominations for our purposes. The Eastern Orthodox religion started around 1054 AD. When the pope (Leo IX) excommunicated the patriarch in Constantinople (Michael Cerularius), and the patriarch in return excommunicate the pope. The issue was a doctrinal dispute about the Holy Spirit. So the founder of Eastern Orthodoxy was the patriarch in Constantinople, not Jesus Christ. The patriarch became the head of the church and rules with the help of a council of bishops. The Orthodox churches, like the Catholic churches, teach that traditions of men are as binding as the Bible, therefore they do NOT follow only the Bible. The Orthodox churches teach that the church is and must always be a visible, earthly church; therefore, they do not believe the nature of the church is spiritual.

1. Answer questions a, b, c and e from above in respect to the Orthodox church.
 - a. Is its nature only spiritual? _____,
 - b. Was it founded only by Christ? _____,
 - c. Is Jesus its only head? _____,
 - e. Does it always and only follow the teachings of the Bible? _____
2. Is the Orthodox church the church that Jesus built? _____

The Anglican church, also called the Episcopal church, was founded by King Henry VIII of England in 1534 AD. His reason for starting a new denomination was that the pope would not grant Henry a divorce. Henry was declared to be the head over the church. So the founder of the church was Henry VIII, not Jesus. Instead of Jesus as the head of the church (the only organization allowed in the Bible), Henry VIII and all monarchs of England after him are the head of the church.

3. Answer questions b and c from above in respect to the Anglican church.
 - b. Was it founded only by Christ? _____,
 - c. Is Jesus its only head? _____,

4. Is the Anglican church the church that Jesus built? _____

LUTHERANS

The Lutheran church was founded by Martin Luther in the early 1500's. He protested against Catholic abuses. Lutherans teach that people can be saved by faith alone without baptism. Read Mark 16:16.

5. Jesus taught that whoever _____ and is _____ will be saved.

Lutherans also teach that infants (little babies) must be baptized to be saved even though it is impossible for an infant to believe or confess. Again consider Mark 16:16.

6. Can an infant believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God? _____

7. Read Romans 10:10. Can an infant confess with its mouth that Jesus is Lord? _____

So Lutherans do not teach what the Bible teaches. They teach these doctrines (salvation by faith only and infant baptism) because they are written in the Lutheran Catechisms. The Catechisms and Creeds of the Lutheran church are held by Lutherans as equal with the Bible. Also, instead of Christ being the only head of the church, the Lutherans place a group of men, called a synod, in the position of head of the church.

8. Answer questions b, c and e from above in respect to the Lutheran church.

b. Was it founded only by Christ? _____,

c. Is Jesus its only head? _____,

e. Does it always and only follow the teachings of the Bible? _____

9. Is the Lutheran church the church that Jesus built? _____

PRESBYTERIANS

The Presbyterian doctrines are heavily influenced by the writings of John Calvin. Calvin lived in the early 1500s. But the Presbyterian church was founded by John Knox in the mid-1500s. The teachings of Calvin which are taught by Presbyterians include: *that Christ only died for the saved*, not for all men; *that God extends grace only to the saved*, not showing it to all men; and *that once you are saved you can not fall from grace*. Read Romans 5:18.

10. Christ's death brought justification (salvation) for _____ men.

11. Read Titus 2:11. God's grace has appeared to _____ men.

12. Read Galatians 5:4. Those who would be justified by the law have _____ from grace.

These three passages, and many more, show that the Presbyterians do not teach the doctrines taught in the Bible. Furthermore, the Presbyterians hold the Westminster Confession, as well as other human writings, to be necessary for teaching and training along with the Bible.

13. Answer questions b and e from above in respect to the Presbyterian church.

b. Was it founded only by Christ? _____,

e. Does it always and only follow the teachings of the Bible? _____

14. Is the Presbyterian church the church that Jesus built? _____

BAPTISTS

The Baptist church was founded in 1608 by John Smyth. Baptists teach that baptism is not needed in order to be saved. (We looked at the error of this teaching in question 5, above). Baptists also generally teach that a saved individual cannot fall from grace. (We looked at the error of this teaching in question 12, above).

15. Answer questions b and e from above in respect to the Baptist church.
- b. Was it founded only by Christ? _____,
 - e. Does it always and only follow the teachings of the Bible? _____
16. Is the Baptist church the church that Jesus built? _____

METHODISTS and WESLEYANS

These two denominations were founded by two brothers, John and Charles Wesley, in 1729. The churches are very similar in their teachings. The Methodists use the Methodist Discipline as equal to the Bible in providing rules and regulations that must be obeyed. They also teach that man is saved by faith (belief) only, without baptism. (We have studied this error in question 5, above). The Methodists do not allow membership into the church until after a probation period of 6 months. The decision of membership is made by men.

17. Read Acts 2:47. The _____ adds to the church _____ those who are being saved.
18. Answer questions b, d and e from above in respect to the Methodist or Wesleyan church.
- b. Was it founded only by Christ? _____,
 - d. Is membership in it only determined by the Lord? _____,
 - e. Does it always and only follow the teachings of the Bible? _____
19. Is the Methodist or Wesleyan church the church that Jesus built? _____

We have seen in this lesson that all Protestant denominations were founded by men other than Christ and that each of these denominations believe that you must obey teachings, doctrines, and/or books other than the Bible. Some of these denominations have false concepts of the nature of the church, the wrong head for the church, and a wrong method of entering the church. None of these denominations are the church that Jesus built. In our next lesson we will look at Pentecostal denominations to see if they are the church that Jesus built. Please feel free to add any comments or questions below:

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THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT

Lesson 8 -- Pentecostalism and Charismatics: From God or Man?

This lesson is about groups or denominations that call themselves Pentecostal or charismatic. Often these groups are a branch of other denominations. This is especially true of the charismatics. For example, El Shaddai and Shalom are both Charismatic branches of the Roman Catholic Church. Likewise, there are Pentecostal branches of Protestant denominations like the Baptists. Since these groups are usually part of some denomination that has already been discussed, we will limit ourselves to looking at some of their distinctive doctrines. The previous two lessons have shown that neither the Catholic Church nor the Protestant churches are the church that Jesus built. One of the reasons was that all of these groups teach doctrines that are not found in the Bible. So we will examine some Pentecostal teachings and see if they follow the Bible. If they do not follow the Bible, then we can reject them as not being the church that Jesus built.

MIRACULOUS HEALING

One of the most distinctive elements of Pentecostal and charismatic teaching is that they claim to have the various spiritual gifts possessed in the New Testament. They claim that some of their members can heal the sick in the same way as Jesus and the apostles. Many Pentecostals refuse to take their sick children to doctors because that would be doubting the power of their ministers to heal the sick. Read Matthew 9:12.

1. What does Jesus say that the sick need? _____
2. Read Acts 9:36-42. What power did Peter demonstrate in these verses which no one has today? _____

Some Pentecostals have tried to say that they can also raise the dead like Peter, but whenever their claims are tested they have ALWAYS been found to be false. In fact the "healings" demonstrated by today's charismatics are not at all like the healings of the apostles and Jesus. Read Acts 3:1-10.

3. When Peter and John healed the lame man, he _____ received strength (verse 7) and entered the temple _____, walking and praising God. (verse 8)

Notice a few things from this passage. The healing did NOT depend on the faith of the lame man. The healing depended only on the power given to the apostles by Jesus. The healing did not take a long time to occur. The healing was of an obvious ailment. Peter and John did not go around claiming to heal stomach aches as many Pentecostals do today. In fact the healing was such that everyone knew that a miracle took place. Many fake healers of the charismatics hire actors to pretend as if they cannot walk. Peter healed those who were known by everyone in the city to be truly lame. Despite the claims of the Pentecostals and charismatics, there is not any evidence that they have the power of healing which Jesus and the apostles had.

TONGUES

Read Acts 2:1-13. There was a large crowd of people from many different lands gathered in Jerusalem. These people could all converse in the common language of the world (Greek at that time, much like English is generally spoken today), but each land had its own language (much like the Philippines today). The twelve apostles stood in front of the crowd and were speaking in tongues. "Tongues" is simply the word for languages. Each of the apostles was speaking languages they had never learned. Their words were understandable to their audience. Of course, the apostles would have to keep switching from one language to another to prove to everyone that they could speak any language. Those who heard their native language being spoken were amazed. Those who had not yet heard anything they understood (because they did not know the other languages) thought the apostles were drunk.. This occurrence in Acts 2 has led many Pentecostals and charismatics to mumbling strange sounds and calling it "tongues", but the "tongues" of the Bible were real and understandable languages. Read 1 Corinthians 14:9-25.

4. Paul, the writer, says that the person who speaks in words that can not be understood is speaking to _____ . (verse 9)
5. Someone who speaks in a tongue should also be able to _____ . (verse 13)
6. Paul would rather speak _____ understandable words, than _____ words in an unknown language.(verse 19)
7. Paul says that tongues are a sign for _____ . (verse 22)
8. In the assembly (church), should everyone speak in tongues? (verse 23)

Read 1 Corinthians 14:26-28. Often in charismatic or Pentecostal meetings, everyone mumbles some unintelligible words all at the same time.

9. How many people should speak in tongues during one assembly? (verse 27)
10. Can more people speak in tongues if the assembly decides it is okay, or did the apostle forbid more than a certain number from speaking?
11. If there is speaking in tongues, does there have to be an interpreter? (verse 28)
12. What if no interpreter is present? (verse 28)

So we can see that the Pentecostals do not follow the teaching of the Bible in the way that they claim to speak in tongues. They do not speak real languages. They do not limit the number of speakers to 2 or 3. They do not always have an interpreter. They often speak everyone at the same time. Such is NOT the church that Jesus built.

PROPHECY

Many Pentecostals claim to have the gift of prophecy. Prophecy means "a speaking for"; prophets of God are, therefore, speaking for God.. Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-6. Here Paul compares tongues and prophecy. If the language (tongue) is unknown and uninterpreted, then it cannot help the church to grow spiritually. Even if the language is understood it will not help the church to grow unless it reveals God's will and, therefore, contains prophecy. The prophecy will always help the church to grow because it is revealing the word of God.

When the church was first formed, there was no printed Bible. The Old Testament was a collection of scrolls. Most of the New Testament was not written down for several years. How were people going to know how to live and serve God? The answer was that God gave the church prophets who could speak for God.

The problem with prophets, of course, is knowing if they are from God or just lying.

13. Read 1 John 4:1 and Matthew 7:15-23. Are there false prophets in the world?

So, we are instructed to test the prophets. Read Deuteronomy 18:20-22.

14. What is to be the test of the prophets?
15. Should prophets be 100% accurate?
16. If the prophet fails only once, even in the smallest detail, is he a prophet from God?

Most modern day "prophets" (including Pentecostals and charismatics) avoid making predictions that will come to pass shortly or they will make a very vague prophecy so that they can say it was fulfilled no matter what happens. Let's look at a few Biblical prophecies. Read Acts 11:27-30, 21:10-36. In both of these cases, the prophet's words were definite and took place within a short period of time. A prophet who is speaking for God is not afraid to be

exact because God is all-knowing. Pentecostal and charismatic prophets are not prophets of God. Their churches are not the church that Jesus built.

DO WE STILL HAVE TONGUES AND PROPHETS?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:8-13.

17. Prophecies will _____.(verse 8)

18. Tongues will _____.(verse 8)

19. This will happen when _____.(verse 10)

"Perfect" is another word for "mature" or "complete". That is why Paul compares prophecy and tongues to the things of a child. The church was expected to grow out of its need for them. After the New Testament was completely written down, there was no longer a need for prophets to speak for God. God could speak for himself through His written word. Read James 1:22-25 where God's law is called "perfect". Also Read Jude 3.

20. How many times did God plan to send His words to the saints?

21. Had it already been sent when Jude wrote his book?

22. Read Galatians 1:6-9. Should we believe someone who claims to be a prophet, but teaches things not found in the gospel written down by the apostles and prophets in the New Testament?

23. Read Hebrews 1:1-2 God spoke by prophets in the past, but today He speaks to us by _____.

Tongues and miracles were a sign to confirm the word and to help the gospel to spread quickly to many regions of the world. See Hebrews 2:3-4). Read Colossians 1:23.

24. The gospel had already been preached _____.

If God meant in 1 Corinthians 13:8-13, that He would cease prophecy once His word had been preserved in written form, then He also meant that tongues were going to cease at the same time. Tongues were so that the unbeliever might believe. Read John 20:30-31.

25. What has God given us now that we might believe?

So we see that the basic distinguishing teaching of the Pentecostals and charismatics (that they can do miracles, speak in tongues, and prophecy) is not in agreement with the Bible. Since Jesus' church will follow only the Bible, it is necessary to conclude that we are NOT to follow the teachings of the Pentecostal and Charismatics. Their teaching is that of man, since it can not be supported by the word of God. In our next lesson we will look at some cults to see if they are the church that Jesus built. Please feel free to add any comments or questions below:

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THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT

Lesson 9 -- The Cults: From God or Man?

This lesson is about some cults. By "cult", I refer to groups that are not based on the teachings of the Scriptures or who deny the basic teachings found in the Bible. Some of these groups profess to follow Christ, but in reality, they deny the Christ that is taught in the Bible. We will look at only a few of the more widely known cults. These are the Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses, and Iglesia ni Cristo. We will use the same criteria to judge these cults as we did to judge the Catholics and Protestants. These are the same things we learned from the first five lessons in this series (if you need to review the right answers to any of these questions, then please review the lesson indicated after each question).

- a. Is the nature of the church or denomination only spiritual (i.e., not of this world) (Lesson 1)?
- b. Was the church or denomination founded by Jesus Christ (Lesson 2)?
- c. Does the church or denomination have Jesus as its only head (Lesson 3)?
- d. Is membership in the church or denomination determined only by the Lord (Lesson 4)?
- e. Does the church or denomination **always** and **only** follow the teachings of the Bible (Lesson 5)?

If the answer to ANY ONE of the above questions is "No" for any denomination or church, then you can be sure that it is NOT the church that Jesus built.

THE MORMONS

The Mormons (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) was founded by Joseph Smith, Jr., in the mid-1800's in America. Although Joseph Smith claimed to be a prophet, the majority of his prophecies were completely false. A few "prophecies" were almost right, but even those were wrong on numerous points. The Mormons believe that the church is the beginning of an earthly kingdom. This kingdom, they believe, will be located in the United States. The head of their church is called the "President" of the church. He is also usually given the titles of "Apostle", "Prophet", and "High Priest". Of course, their first President was Joseph Smith, Jr., followed by Brigham Young, then other men. The Mormons claim to believe in the Bible, but they do not follow the teachings of the Bible. Instead they follow the Book of Mormon. This book was written by Joseph Smith, Jr., and is full of historical mistakes, false prophecies, plagiarism from the King James Bible, and various other lies too numerous to mention here. Among other false doctrines contained in this book is the belief that the darker your skin color, the more sinful you are. That is why for over a hundred years the Mormons refused to teach in Africa (assuming that black skin would be the most sinful people). Read Galatians 3:26-29.

1. In Christ, there is neither _____ nor _____, _____ nor _____, _____ nor _____, for you are all _____.

So the Bible clearly teaches that God does not regard the color of skin as an indication of your sinfulness. The Mormons no longer stress this doctrine, and may even deny it, but it is found in their Book of Mormon. That book also teaches a gospel that is very different from the one taught in the Bible. Their book has Jesus going to America after he arose and teaching the native Americans. That is not the Gospel taught by the apostles. Read Galatians 1:6-9.

2. What will happen to those (men or angels) who teach a gospel different from the one taught by the apostles and presented in the Bible? _____.

Now let's examine their church against our list of characteristics of the church that Jesus built.

3. Answer questions a, b, c and e from above in respect to the Mormon church.
- Is the nature of the church only spiritual (i.e., not of this world)?
 - Was the church or denomination founded by Jesus Christ?
 - Does the church or denomination have Jesus as its only head?
 - Does the church or denomination **always** and **only** follow the teachings of the Bible?

If the answer to any of those questions was "No", then the Mormons are not the church that Jesus built.

4. Is the Mormon church the church that Jesus built?

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

The Jehovah's Witnesses were also founded in the 1800's in America. Their founder was Charles Taze Russell. Russell predicted that Christ would return in 1874. When this did not happen, he revised his "prophecy" to say that the return would be in 1914. As 1914 approached, he said that Christ and the apostles returned in 1874, but that they would not show themselves until 1914 when they would set up an earthly kingdom. Since Christ did not return in 1914 or set up an earthly kingdom, he taught it was only a matter of a little more time. Russell died in 1916, and was replaced as the head of the church by Judge Rutherford. Rutherford predicted that Christ would return in 1925. This "prophecy" also failed. Then he came up with the idea that Christ returned "invisibly" in 1914 and was waiting until a certain time before revealing himself.

Rutherford was so convinced that the kingdom would be earthly that he had the Jehovah's Witnesses (JW's) purchase a house in California expressly for the use of King David, Abraham, and other men of faith mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11. This purpose is even recorded in the deed to the house and still can be seen in the records in California. Of course, those men never came and the house was sold after Rutherford died in 1942. Every few years the JW's come up with a new prophecy for the end of the world but none of them come true. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.

5. When Christ returns, will it be secretly? _____
6. Read Revelation 1:7. Will Christ be "invisible" when He returns? _____

The JW's also teach that only a limited number of people will go to heaven. They say that number has already been reached, so the rest of the saved people will live on earth in an earthly paradise. Read 2 Peter 3:10-12.

7. Peter says that even the elements will be _____ by _____. (verse 10)
8. Peter says that _____ will be destroyed in this way. (verse 11)
9. On that day the _____ will be destroyed by _____ and the elements will _____ in the heat. (verse 12)

Clearly the Bible does not talk about people living on earth after Christ returns. Even the elements (the smallest parts of the earth) will be destroyed. We also have a promise from our Savior. Read John 14:1-4.

10. Jesus said that he is going to _____ a _____ for you.

JW's also deny that Jesus is God. Read John 20:26-29.

11. Thomas called Jesus "My _____ and my _____"

Jesus accepted this statement from Thomas without rebuking him. In fact He said that those who believed that He was Lord and God would be blessed. So let's compare the JW's to the church that Jesus built.

12. Answer questions a, b, c and e from above in respect to the Jehovah's Witnesses.

- a. Is the nature of the church only spiritual (i.e., not of this world)?
- b. Was the church or denomination founded by Jesus Christ?
- c. Does the church or denomination have Jesus as its only head?
- e. Does the church or denomination **always** and **only** follow the teachings of the Bible?

If the answer to any of those questions was "No", then the JW's are not the church that Jesus built.

13. Are the Jehovah's Witnesses the church that Jesus built?

IGLESIA NI CRISTO

This church was founded by Felix Y. Manalo in the Philippines in 1914. The head of the church is currently Eraño G. Manalo. The head of their church is not Jesus Christ. In fact, like the JW's, Iglesia ni Cristo denies that Christ is God. We have already seen that we must believe that Christ is God in order to be blessed. Manalo taught that Christ would set up an earthly kingdom based in the Philippines rather than teaching the true spiritual nature of the kingdom. We do not have space to give a detailed examination of their other teachings, but since they do not accept that Christ is God as taught in the Bible, then we can be sure that they do not always follow the teachings of the Bible. So let's compare Iglesia ni Cristo to the church that Jesus built.

14. Answer questions a, b, c and e from above in respect to Iglesia ni Cristo.
- a. Is the nature of the church only spiritual (i.e., not of this world)?
 - b. Was the church or denomination founded by Jesus Christ?
 - c. Does the church or denomination have Jesus as its only head?
 - e. Does the church or denomination **always** and **only** follow the teachings of the Bible?

If the answer to any of those questions was "No", then Iglesia ni Cristo is not the church that Jesus built.

15. Is Iglesia ni Cristo church that Jesus built?

We have seen in this lesson that the cults which deny the basic truths of Christianity cannot be the church built by Jesus Christ. In the past few lessons we have seen that the Pentecostals, Protestants, and Catholics are not the church that Jesus built. So in our next, and final, lesson in this series we will look at the church that Jesus built.

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THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT

Lesson 10 -- The Church that Jesus Built

This lesson is mostly a summary of our earlier lessons. It is designed to help you realize that you can be a part of the church that Jesus built. Read Luke 17:20-21.

1. Jesus said that the kingdom is _____ you.

The church (which we saw in lesson one is the kingdom) is purely spiritual. You won't be able to point and say "There is the church". Read Matthew 16:18.

2. Jesus said. "I will _____ my church."

If Jesus was going to build His church, then we know that we must belong to His church in order to be saved. To belong to a church that was built by anyone else will leave you without a Savior. Read Ephesians 1:22-23.

3. Jesus is to be _____ over all things for the _____, which is his _____.

If Christ is to be the head of the church, then the church needs to obey its head, like your body obeys your head. Read Ephesians 4:4.

4. How many bodies are there? _____

In John 10, Jesus talks about His church like it was a flock of sheep with Him as the shepherd that leads the sheep. Read John 10:16.

5. Jesus says there will be _____ flock and _____ shepherd.

The other flock which would join the first flock and become one was the non-Jewish people. Some of the Jews were the first to believe on Christ and they became the flock. Later non-Jews also believed and they were added to the flock and it was still one flock. Those people or groups that teach you can be saved by belonging to any church are contradicting Jesus. Jesus said He would only have one church (one body). You must be following only Christ in order to be in that body, because He is the head of the body. Read Mark 7:7-9.

6. If you follow the teachings of men rather than the teachings of God, then your worship is _____.

"Vain" means that it is "empty, useless". In the past few lessons we saw how all the different denominations and cults want you to believe their teachings, even when their teachings contradict the Bible. Jesus said that if you follow such teachings that are not in the Bible, then all of your worship is useless. You cannot be saved if you practice what the Bible does not teach. Read Mark 16:16.

7. Jesus that he that _____ and is _____ shall be saved.

Some people and churches try to teach that you are saved without being baptized. They contradict what Jesus said. Will you believe Christ or will you believe what men teach? Read Acts 2:36-41.

8. Peter said, " _____ and be _____ in the name of Jesus Christ for the _____ of your sins. (verse 38)

9. Those who believed were _____. (verse 41)

10. Read Acts 2:47. Who added people to the church (their number)? _____

If you are part of the church that Jesus built, then Jesus added you to His church when you believed and were baptized for the forgiveness of your sins. If you believe, but have not been baptized (baptism is an immersion under water), then you are not yet a part of the church that Jesus built. If you were baptized (by immersion) but did not believe in Christ as your Savior when you were baptized, then you are not yet a part of the church that Jesus built.

11. Do you believe that Jesus is the son of God? _____

12. Are you willing to be baptized (by immersion under water) to have your sins forgiven? _____

Also notice that baptism is for the forgiveness of sins. Many people are baptized to join a church or denomination. That kind of baptism is not what the Bible teaches. You must be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins. At that point Christ will add you to His church (He will not add you to a denomination). Read Acts 2:42-46.

13. What did those who believed and were baptized devote themselves to doing?

You have responsibilities after you are baptized. You must continue to study. You must partake of the Lord's supper. You must pray. And you must have fellowship with other Christians. That means you will need to find a local church that meets in your area that is also trying to worship and follow God only as taught in the Bible. These groups are not part of any denomination. They seek only to follow God's word. Luckily, there are many such groups throughout the world. If you want to know where there might be such a group near you or would like to be contacted personally by members of such a group, just "X" the appropriate line below.

____ I would like to know where a group of Christians like described above meets near me.

____ I would like to be contacted personally by members of a group like that described above.

I hope you have found this lesson, and especially this series, profitable. I am glad to have had this opportunity to share with you a little knowledge about the church that Jesus built. I hope you will continue to study. If you would like to study another series of lessons with me, please indicate a topic listed below or write down a topic of your own choosing on the blank line.

____ What is Sin?

____ What Must I do to be Saved?

____ The Origins of the Bible

Please feel free to add any comments or questions below or include a note:

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