

Three Facts Regarding the Church

SCRIPTURE READING: Ephesians 1:15-23

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Jesus said, “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).
- B. When Jesus promised to build His church, He was talking about something much greater than a physical organization of men or even a physical building.
- C. In this lesson, I would like to consider three facts regarding the church that Jesus built.

I. THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST.

- A. When a person obeys the gospel of Jesus Christ, they become a part of the body of Jesus Christ.
 - 1. According to Acts 2:47, the Lord *“added to the church daily those were being saved.”*
 - 2. The apostle Paul wrote, *“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit”* (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).
- B. The apostle Paul said to the Christians in Corinth, *“Now you are the **body of Christ**, and members individually”* (1 Corinthians 12:27).
- C. Jesus is the head over all things to the church, His body. (Ephesians 1:19-23)

II. THE CHURCH MAKES KNOWN THE WISDOM OF GOD.

- A. The church reveals or makes known the “manifold” wisdom of God. (Ephesians 3:8-13)
 - 1. The word manifold (NKJV) means “much varied.” The NASB reads, “multifaceted wisdom of God.”
 - 2. The wisdom of God is revealed by the church, the body of Christ to everyone

including *“the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”*

- B. Consider a few aspects of God’s wisdom made known by the church. (Ephesians 3:8-13)
 - 1. The *“unsearchable riches of Christ”* are made known by the church.
 - 2. The eternal purpose of God accomplished in Christ Jesus is made known by the church.
 - 3. The boldness we have in Christ as well as our access through faith in Him is also made known by the church.

III. THE CHURCH IS COMPOSED OF GOD’S OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE.

- A. Before the death of Jesus, the physical descendants of Abraham were God’s own special people.
- B. God’s people rebelled and rejected His covenant and law which He gave on Mount Sinai.
- C. Because of Israel’s disobedience, God determined to establish a new covenant built upon better promises. Under this new covenant, God would put His *“law in their minds, and write it on their hearts.”* (Hebrews 8:1-13; cf. Hebrews 9:13-15)
- D. This new covenant would be for all people who come to the Lord to learn from Him.
 - 1. Isaiah and Micah both prophesied that many nations would flow to the *“mountain of the Lord’s house”* (Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-4).
 - 2. The apostle Paul wrote, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for **everyone who believes**, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’”* (Romans 1:16-17).
 - 3. In his letter to the Christians in Ephesus, Paul wrote, *“...that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the **same body**, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,”* (Ephesians 3:5-6).
- E. Peter refers to Christians as being *“a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and holy nation, His own special people...”* (1 Peter 2:4-10).
 - 1. In verse 10, Peter wrote, *“who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”*
 - 2. This statement points us back to God’s promise that Israel, who had fallen and

was no longer God's people, would one day be His people. (Hosea 1:9-10; 2:23)

3. Under the New Covenant of Jesus, "**whoever** calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts 2:16-21; cf. Romans 10:11-13)

CONCLUSION.

- A. While there is much more we could say about the church, let us remember these simple truths:
 1. The church is the body of Christ. Jesus is the head of the body and all the faithful are members individually of that body.
 2. The church makes known the "manifold" wisdom of God to the physical world as well as to all the heavenly beings.
 3. The church is composed of God's "own special people."
- B. If you are not yet a Christian, then humble yourself before the Lord today and answer the gospel's call to salvation.
 1. On the day of Pentecost, those who heard the gospel's message believed and were convicted within their hearts.
 2. They said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)
 3. Peter replied, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)
 4. "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand soul were added to them." (Acts 2:41)
 5. "...And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47)