

"THE CHURCH JESUS BUILT"

Why Study The Church?

INTRODUCTION

1. In [Mt 16:18](#), we read where Jesus spoke of His church...
 - a. In which He promises **"I will build my church"**
 - b. In which not even the "gates of Hades" (i.e., death) shall prevail against it, either by trying to:
 1. Prevent its establishment (death did not prevent Jesus from building His church)
 2. Destroy the church (killing Christians does not destroy the church)
2. It is not uncommon today to hear people disparage the church...
 - a. I have heard people say in effect, **"Christ, yes; the church, no"**
 - b. Professing they love Jesus, desiring even to follow Him, they have little use for "the church"
3. This low estimation of the church may be due to several reasons, including...
 - a. A lack of understanding of what the church truly is, as taught in the Bible
 - b. A misconception of the church, fostered by erroneous views of the church
4. With this lesson, I wish to begin a study of **"The Church Jesus Built"**, in which I hope...
 - a. To increase our understanding and appreciation of the Lord's church
 - b. To make sure that our concept of the church is in harmony with the Bible
 - c. To note some of the challenges facing the Lord's church today

[In this lesson, I would like to emphasize **the importance of studying the church**. Many reasons can be given, but I will focus on two, the first of which is the high...]

I. ESTIMATION OF THE CHURCH IN THE BIBLE

A. **ESPECIALLY IN THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS...**

1. **Christ is "head over all things to the church" - [Ep 1:22](#)**
 - a. That Christ is head over all things is clear enough, but what is meant by the phrase "to the church"?
 - b. Perhaps that Christ exercises His authority over all things "in the interest" of the church (**Hendriksen**); i.e., the rule of Christ is for the benefit of His church!
 - c. Does this not say something about the Lord's estimation of His church?

2. **The church "is His body" - [Ep 1:23](#)**
 - a. The body of Christ!
 - b. It is His spiritual body, of which He is the head!
3. **The church is "the fullness of Him who fills all in all" - [Ep 1:23](#)**
 - a. Christ fills all in all; what fills Him?
 - b. The church constitutes His fullness!
 - c. If one is to be in Christ, by implication he or she must be in the church!
4. **The church is part of God's "eternal purpose" - [Ep 3:10-11](#)**
 - a. The manifold wisdom of God is made known through the church
 - b. In keeping with God's eternal purpose; i.e., His plan which He had from eternity!
5. **To God be "glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages" - [Ep 3:21](#)**
 - a. Certainly God is worthy of all glory
 - b. In the church and by Jesus Christ, God will be glorified forever!
6. **"Christ is the head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body" - [Ep 5:23](#)**
 - a. His authority over the church is again emphasized; also that it is His body
 - b. But here we note that Christ is the Savior, not of all men, but of His body, the church!
 - c. Again the implication is clear; to be saved, we must be in His body, the church!
7. **Christ "loved the church and gave Himself for it" - [Ep 5:25](#)**
 - a. Jesus loves His church, even as husband is to love his wife
 - b. His death on the cross had His church in view; He was dying for the church!
8. **Jesus' design is to present it as "a glorious church" - [Ep 5:26-27](#)**
 - a. He seeks to "sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word"
 - b. He desires for it to not have spot or wrinkle, but to "be holy and without blemish"!
9. **Jesus nourishes and cherishes the church - [Ep 5:29-30](#)**
 - a. Even as you care for your own body
 - b. So Jesus has the same concern for His body, the church!
 - c. All because "we are members of His body"!

B. OTHER PLACES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ALSO...

1. The church was purchased with the blood of Christ - [Ac 20:28](#)
2. The church is His body - [Col 1:18,24](#)
3. The church is the family of God, the pillar and ground of the truth - [1Ti 3:15](#)

[Whatever the Lord's church is, I want to a part of it, don't you? If you love Jesus, and the church is His church, His body, how can you not love the church? How can you not desire to learn more about the church, its nature, its purpose, its design?

Unfortunately, misdirected if not careless men have sought to change the church from what we see it in the Bible. Such efforts should not go on unnoticed or unanswered. This leads me to my second reason why we need to study the church...]

II. EFFORTS TO CHANGE THE CHURCH IN THE BIBLE

A. AS REPRESENTED BY "THE DENOMINATIONAL VIEW"...

1. In seeking to describe the Lord's church today, some suggest that it is **made up of all the different denominations**
 - a. Despite their doctrinal differences, their creedal affirmations
 - b. Despite their competing ecclesiastical authorities, all claiming to be led by the Spirit of God today
2. But is this the "glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle"?
 - a. A church with hundreds of differing creeds, names, and doctrines?
 - b. Teaching a multitude of contradictory doctrines, adding a plethora of man-made traditions?
 - c. Presenting a divided picture to the world, one that breeds doubt and skepticism in those that see it?
3. Such confusion comes not from God! - [1Co 14:33](#)
 - a. God is the source of peace in His churches
 - b. Where confusion dwells, Satan is the author! - cf. [Mt 13:24-30](#); [36-43](#)
4. When people no longer abide in the doctrine of Christ, they have not God! - [2Jn 9](#)
 - a. When they stop abiding in Christ Himself, they are cut off - [Jn 15:2,6](#); cf. [Ro 11:22](#)
 - b. They may believe they are still His disciples, doing things for Him; but unless they continue to do the Father's will, they are sadly mistaken! - cf. [Mt 7:21-23](#)

-- This view of the Lord's church is too "broad"!

B. AS REPRESENTED BY "THE SECTARIAN VIEW"...

1. Some understand the Lord's church as **made up of a particular group of churches**
 - a. All wearing just one "official" name
 - b. All listed in some church directory
 2. This view fails to take into consideration some important principles
 - a. There is no one "official" name for the Lord's church
 - b. The Lord's church is a body made of individual members, not individual congregations
 - c. One might be a member of the Lord's body, but not yet associated with a local congregation (e.g., the Ethiopian eunuch)
- I will have more to say on this, but this view of the Lord's church is too "narrow"!**

CONCLUSION

1. Again, we are talking about "**The Church Jesus Built**"...
 - a. One that is highly esteemed in the Scriptures
 - b. One that should be highly esteemed in our own hearts!
2. It is easy to be influenced by erroneous views which permeate the religious world...
 - a. Perhaps your view of the church has been a **denominational** one
 - b. Perhaps your view of the church has been a **sectarian** one
3. I hope that in this lesson I have...
 - a. Reminded you of the great estimation the Lord has placed on His church
 - b. Stimulated you to consider whether your understanding of the church may need some major overhauling or fine-tuning!

In any case, "**The Church Jesus Built**" is always worthy of our prayerful consideration 