

WHAT IS “THE CHURCH”?

Acts 2:43-47

INTRODUCTION

- A. Communication Challenges.
 - 1. Ziva David – NCIS.
 - a. You are a broken tape, Gibbs.
 - b. Look who’s calling the pot black.
 - c. Sometimes it’s hard to see the jungle through the ferns.
 - 2. Other English idioms.
 - 1. To be up in the air – undecided.
 - 2. To sit tight – wait patiently.
 - 3. Pop, soda or coke – where in the U.S.?
- B. The Study of the Bible.
 - 1. To understand the Bible.
 - 2. Must understand word meanings, illustrations, thought forms.
- C. What is “the church”?
 - 1. The word is used 114 times in the N.T.
 - 2. It is used in 17 of the 27 books.
 - 3. What is being communicated to us?
 - 4. When Jesus established the church, what did He build?

I. A SPIRITUAL BODY.

- A. It Is Not a Physical Building.
 - 1. It represents the body of those who have yielded to the gospel of Christ – and redeemed by the blood of Christ.
 - 2. The body as they assemble, 1 Cor. 11:18.
 - 3. The body in a definite locale [Crossett, Rison, Monticello], 1 Corinthians 1:2.
 - 4. The totality of the redeemed ones where Christ is the head, Ephesians 5:23.
- B. Applied in Acts 2.
 - 1. Preaching on Pentecost to the multitude.
 - a. Convinced that Jesus was Lord and Christ, v. 36.
 - b. Questioned, “What shall we do?” vs. 37.
 - c. Instructed to repent and be baptized, vs. 38.
 - d. Three thousand souls saved, vs. 41.
 - 2. Described in terms of what they had become, Acts 2:41, 47.
 - a. A part of a fellowship or group.
 - b. *[Perhaps reference to Acts 1:15, the 120.]*
 - 3. Described in terms of their new behavior:
 - a. Toward God in worship, vs. 42.
 - b. Toward each other, vss. 44-45.
 - 4. They were later referred to as the church, Acts 5:11.

II. A LIVING ORGANISM.

- A. It Is Not a Human Organization.
 - 1. The church is living and vibrant with God’s life and blessings.

2. 1 Corinthians 3:16 – the temple, sanctuary, dwelling place of God (the collective church).
 3. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 – the Christian (personal, individual) is the temple of God.
 4. God dwelt in tabernacle (O.T.) – now in His church, in His people.
- B. The Church – A Living Building.
1. Ephesians 2:21-22, building made up of Christians – constant stage of growth.
 2. Ephesians 2:19-20, resting on the foundation of the apostles and prophets – Christ Jesus the cornerstone.

III. AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP.

- A. It Is a Relationship Centered on Jesus.
1. It is a relationship described as a body / head relationship.
 - a. Jesus is the head.
 - b. Christians [*the church*] are the body, Ephesians 1:21-22; 5:23.
 - i. We are the visible part of the invisible Christ on earth.
 - ii. A spiritual body to do His redemptive work today.
 2. Those obedient to Christ.
 - a. Function as Christ's spiritual body on earth, led by the head [Christ].
 - b. Baptized *into Christ, into His body*, Romans 6:3; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27.
- B. Incomplete Without Christ, the Head.
1. We are the fulness of Christ, Ephesians 1:23.
 - a. The head without the body is incomplete, Colossians 1:18.
 - b. The body without the head is incomplete.
 2. As in marriage, it is a daily, continual partnership with Christ.
- C. This relationship is shown in Ephesians 5.
1. Relationship in principle – Christ the head, vs. 23.
 2. Relationship in practice or function – in subjection to, vs. 24.
 3. Relationship in purpose – preparing to live eternally with Christ, vss. 25-27.

CLOSING

- A. What is the church?
1. It is a spiritual body made up of those who have obeyed the gospel of Christ.
 2. It is a living organism in which dwells the Spirit of the living God.
 3. It is an intimate and ongoing relationship with Jesus.
- B. And it can only be entered into by faith involving:
1. Repentance, Acts 17:30-31.
 2. Confession, Romans 10:10.
 3. Baptism into Christ, Galatians 3:27.