

## CHURCH: "According To The Word of The Lord"

### INTRODUCTION

The expression, "thus saith the Lord" is said to be found in the Bible over 1900 times. It is difficult to learn how many times the term "*according to the word of the Lord*" is found, but is seen quite a lot in the Old Testament of the Bible. Our study at this time is on what "the word of the Lord" teaches about what is called the **church** in the New Testament. The word "church" in the N.T. Is associated with those who have been **saved by Christ** when they obeyed His authority to **believe, confess** their faith, **repent** of sins, and were **immersed** in water. The denominational and popular use of the word "church" is quite different than this. In this lesson, we want to explore it's use "*according to the word of the Lord*" as set forth in the Bible.

### DISCUSSION

#### **I. 1<sup>st</sup>, we shall explore the PROPHECIES made about the CHURCH.**

- A. Prophets of the Old Testament foretold the "**HOUSE**" of God, where His presence would be (as was His presence in the O. T. was in the "house" or "temple" in Jerusalem). Cf 2 Sam. 7:12-13
1. The "house" of the Lord is identified in the New Testament AS the "**church.**"
    - a. Prophecies referred to it as the "house of God," and the same language is employed in the N. T. when reference is made to it. Heb. 10:21; 1 Tim. 3:15
    - b. The "house" was **built by** Jesus Christ and not some mortal man. Psa. 127:1; Heb. 3:1-6; Matt. 16:18. (Explain fully)
  2. His house was **ONE** in the universal sense, with local congregations in various places. 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:13
    - a. We can understand this when we speak of DILLARD'S store, as it is ONE store, but has multiple locations throughout the nation.
    - b. Just so the church is ONE meeting in many locations, for it is not possible for all it's members to meet in one place every Sunday to worship God.
- B. The **church** of the Lord was to originate at the beginning of the "**last days.**" Isa. 2:2-3; Acts 2:1-15 (Summarize); vs. 15-17; cf Heb. 1:1-2
- C. The **church** was to begin at **Jerusalem**, the city where the O. T. temple had existed, as it was to take the place OF the O. T. house of God.
1. The word was to "go forth from" Jerusalem, SO, it had to **begin** there in order for the word to go forth **from** there.
    - a. Some might say, "Oh well, a place is a place, so pick the place of your choice, it really doesn't matter."
    - b. It did matter with the Lord, for He did not say, "the house will begin some place, or the place of your choosing, so just choose a place and it can begin there."
  2. ANY religious institution, or so-called "church" (better known as a denomination) that did **not begin** IN JERUSALEM, is not the "house" the prophets foretold, or the one "*according to the word of the Lord.*"
- D. The **church** was to admit **all nations**, and not just Jews only. Isa. 2:3
1. The church was to endure till the end of time. Matt. 28:18-20
  2. The church will exist, (apart from denominationalism or systems of man) **TILL** the Lord returns, or else He could not deliver it up to God. 1 Cor. 15:23-24

## II. 2<sup>nd</sup>, we shall explore the plan of SALVATION regarding the church.

- A. Since God purposed or planned for the church to exist (Eph. 3:11), He surely had a plan for an **entrance INTO** that church.
1. All people are to be saved the same way, for God is no respecter of persons.
    - a. Those who repented and were immersed in water were saved in the first century, and were added **to** that church.
    - b. The example of what they did should be a pattern for us today.
      - 1) The Lord revealed His plan of salvation when He was on earth. Mark 16:15-16
      - 2) That plan was carried out the day the church began in Jerusalem. Acts 2:38, 47
  2. Christ did not and does not offer a “choice” as to HOW to be saved, as is the custom in various religions today.
    - a. The offer of salvation by “faith only” is popular, for it doesn’t require all that takes place in being baptized in water.
    - b. A more recent offer of salvation by men is that of just saying “a sinners’ prayer” and being saved instantly with that prayer.
- B. The **ONLY** right and safe PLAN OF SALVATION, is that which is *“According to the word of the Lord.”*

### CONCLUSION

- I. A good and detailed description is necessary when trying to find or locate anything that is of importance.
- A. If a child is lost in a city of a million people, searchers need the race of the child, color of hair, the way he is dressed, and anything that will help the searchers.
1. Searchers would be helpless if they were told, “A child is a child, so go out and find a good child, and his parents will be happy.”
  2. Neither would parents were to find a child and say that their opinion is that this child is the one that was lost.
- B. To identify God’s church, we have the identifying marks as set forth in this lesson, that all things must be understood *“according to the word of the Lord.”*
1. What better description could we have than that which the Lord has given in His word?
  2. Any church that does not have it’s origin **in Jerusalem, in the “last days”** (beginning on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2), and does not admit **all nations**, is **NOT** the church Jesus built, even though it may have a few resemblances, but it must FULLY be *“according to the word of the Lord.”*
- II. The Lord’s house or church exists today, and you can be a part of it if you are willing to confess your faith in it’s builder, Jesus Christ, genuinely repent of all sins and be immersed for the remission of sins.