

THE ROLE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH IN REDEMPTION

INTRODUCTION

In studying the church of the New Testament, we previously talked about the **origin** of the church (in that it originated with God in His eternal plan). We also noted that it was the object of Old Testament prophecy, and revealed by New Testament revelations by inspired writers. We also observed that the word “church” is from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means “the called out.” We pointed out that the English word “church” describes the WHOLE (or universal) family of God on earth, and the PART (each local congregation) when it assembles for worship.

In today's lesson, we want to look at the **role** of the whole church relating to our salvation, or God's overall scheme of redemption as revealed in the New Testament. We will look at a definition of the church in this role.

DISCUSSION

I. Ist, the role of the church as a BODY.

A. The word “body” is used interchangeably with the word “church.”

1. The body is the “church.” Col. 1:18
2. The church is the “body.” Eph. 1:22-23

B. The church is compared to a “physical body. 1 Cor. 12:12-32

1. We note that the church has only **one head**, and He is the head of the church of the New Testament **only**.
 - a. A physical body has only one head, and a physical head and one body—otherwise it would be a monstrosity.
 - b. The spiritual body of the church has only one head, who is Christ (and not the Pope or the Queen of England or some president of a denomination in America), and He is the head of only one church, and not one of or all of the 35,000 denominations in the world, which in reality already have their own heads.
2. We observe that the **church** of Christ is ONLY involved with Jesus' blood, which blood had absolutely nothing to do with the purchase of any political or social or civic organization, OR with any human denomination, or the Muslim religion.
 - a. His blood **purchased** the “church.” Acts 20:28
 - b. His blood is **contacted** when one is “baptized” INTO the church by His authority. Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3; John

19:34-35; 1 Cor. 12:13

- c. His blood is **available** for pardon for “Christians” who sin and confess their sins. 1 John 1:7-9
 - d. Just as blood **keeps the physical body alive**, the blood of Jesus sustains His spiritual body, as “life is in the blood.” cf Lev.17:11
3. Now, just as each member of one's physical body cares for and protects other members of the body, so each member of the spiritual body is to do the same. 1 Cor. 12:14-27....
- a. The **FEET** of the spiritual body are to be used to go and preach the gospel and do good.
 - b. The **EARS** of the spiritual body is to listen to the cries of those lost in sin, or in physical distress.
 - c. The **HANDS** of the spiritual body are to be used in helping others in need.
 - d. The **NOSE** of the spiritual body is to be used to “smell a rat” (so to speak) when false teachers attempt to find their way into the church to change it for evil.

II. 2nd, let's look at the role of the church as a KINGDOM.

A. The words “church” and kingdom are used interchangeably in scripture.

- 1, Isaiah prophesied of the coming of the “house” of the Lord (which is the church. Isa. 2:2-3; 1 Tim. 3:15
2. Daniel prophesied of the coming of the “kingdom”, which is also the church. Dan. 2:44; Heb, 12:23, 28
3. Jesus built the “church”, and as a builder, He gave the “keys” to the “kingdom” TO THE APOSTLES. Matt. 16:18-19...
4. John wrote to the 7 “churches” (congregations) in Asia, and said he was with them in the “kingdom.” Rev. 1:4, 9
5. Jesus, when instituting the Lord's Supper, stated that it would be in the kingdom, yet it was observed in the church. 1 Cor. 1:2; 11:23-26
6. The words “church” and “kingdom” refer the **same people**, but under different relationships, just as man may be a husband and a father, but he is the same person.

B. A kingdom “denotes sovereignty, royal power, dominion”, and “is used especially of the 'kingdom of God and of Christ.” (VINE'S DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS, P. 344)

1. The term “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven” are used interchangeably in scripture, while one refers to the ruler, and the other refers to the place of His throne, in heaven.
2. There are 4 things that make up any kind of a kingdom.

- a. 1st, a KING or ruler is necessary—which is the Lord. Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:37
- b. 2nd, a TERRITORY, which is all the world. Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15
- c. 3rd, SUBJECTS—those **in** the world who subject themselves to the Lord as obedient servants. Mark 16:16; Rom. 6:17-18
- d. 4th, a LAW, or rule which is the New Testament, or doctrine of Christ, or the gospel. Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:16; 2 John 9

III. 3Rd, let's look at the role of the church as the BRIDE OF CHRIST.

- A. The relationship of Adam and Eve pictures the relationship of Christ and the church. Eph.5:23-33 (Discuss fully)
 - 1. The Jews in the first century are described as widows who had been subjects of Moses and the Law of Moses, were then free to be married to Christ. Rom. 7:1-3 (Discuss fully)
 - 2. ALL who obey Christ are described as virgins who became the bride of Christ. 2 Cor. 11:2
- B. The church is awaiting the final appearance of the bridegroom to be taken into heaven for a blessed eternity. Matt. 25:1-10; Eph. 5:25-27

CONCLUSION

- I. Thus, the church is central in the scheme of redemption.
 - A. The church does not save, but it IS the saved, consisting of all who have obeyed the gospel and have washed their robes in the saving blood of the Lord. Act. 2:38,47; cf Rev. 22:14
 - B. The faithful will enter into the joys of heaven.
- II. Exhortation.

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