**Identifying the One Church – Establishment**

**Introduction**

1. With so many churches in existence, one might be pleased with the plethora of choices – Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, Baptist, Christian Church, Seventh-Day Adventist, Mormon, Jehovah’s Witness.
2. However, when one discovers that the New Testament speaks of only ONE church, the plethora of churches may no longer seem to be a good thing.
3. Does the one church of the NT still exist? Can we identify that one church? Can we be a part of that one church? 🡪
4. One Church
5. One Body
   1. **Ephesians 1:22-23** – God placed Christ as head of the church.
      1. **His body** – the church and Christ’s body are the same.
      2. **Head controls body** – ONE of each. (*Same in literal form – human body – any exception is not natural, but an abnormality.)*
   2. **Ephesians 4:4** – There is but one – body – church. (**v. 5** – Lord – authority – head).
   3. **NT explicitly states the church in its pages is ONE.**
6. Division Condemned
   1. **1 Corinthians 1:10-13** – NO divisions.
      1. These denominations together do not constitute the ONE church – they speak different things – **Is Christ divided?** (*In ANY way? – physically, mentally, spiritually) (One body of Christ.)*
      2. **Division of locality** – **Romans 16:16** – all Christ’s churches (speaking same thing – have the SAME HEAD) (*same Divine institution found in local places – EX: Target, different locations, same company*)
   2. **John 17:20-21** – Jesus’ will is for all believers to be ONE. (*As Father and Son – oneness of will, mind, doctrine, belief, etc.*)
7. **If there is but ONE church, how would we discover such? 🡪**
8. Establishment of the One Church
9. Prophecy of Establishment
   1. **Time – When will it be established?**
      1. Latter days – **Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1**
         1. **Latter days** – reference to a decisive change at a future time. (One day, or someday – future reference)
         2. **Mountain of the Lord’s house** – described as a mountain – Lord’s house – ***“house of God, which is the church of the living God” (1 Timothy 3:15).***
      2. **Nebuchadnezzar’s dream – Daniel 2**
         1. Nebuchadnezzar – king of Babylon **(1:1)** – has dreams which trouble him **(2:1).**
         2. None can tell him his dream **(2:10-11).**
         3. **Daniel can** (**READ – 2:27-28** – *God revealed to Neb. Things to occur in the* ***“latter days.”*)**
         4. **Dream** – **2:31-35**
         5. **Interpretation – kingdoms represented** – **2:36-45**
            1. *Head of Gold* – **vv. 37-38** – Nebuchadnezzar – **Babylonian** – World Dominant.
            2. *Chest and Arms of Silver* – **v. 39** – **Medo-Persian** – World Dominant.
            3. *Belly and Thighs of Bronze* – **v. 39** – **Grecian** – World Dominant.
            4. *Legs of Iron, Feet of Iron and Clay* – **vv. 40-43** – **Roman** – World Dominant.
            5. **NOTE: (1)** Each is a world empire. **(2)** Each succeeds the other. **(3)** In the dream, the image represents them all at once, as well as their destruction together.
            6. **TIME (v. 44)** – *Stone cut out without hands, became a mountain filling the earth* – **vv. 44-45** – **Kingdom of God/church** – World Dominant.

**V. 44** – Consumed all kingdoms (*Image still standing, all world empires represented in Roman empire.*).

***“The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.” (v. 45b)***

* + 1. **Mark 9:1** – People alive during Jesus’ life – during Roman rule – see the kingdom – WITH POWER.
    2. **The church/kingdom will be established in *“the latter days,” “in the days of these kings”* represented in the Roman empire, and during the lifetime of those Jesus spoke to in Mark 9:1 when the *“power”* comes.**
  1. **Place – Where will it be established? – Jerusalem**
     1. **Isaiah 2:2-3; Micah 4:1-2** – Mountain of Lord’s house – Jerusalem.
     2. **Luke 24:49** – Jesus to His chosen disciples.
        1. Promise of Father – ***“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth” (John 14:17*** – Promise of Father = HS).
        2. **Tarry in Jerusalem** – endued with power.
        3. **Acts 1:4, 8** – Stay in Jerusalem, receive power – Holy Spirit come upon you. **(When HS comes, Power comes – in Jerusalem)**
        4. **NOTE: Promised to apostles** – when the apostles receive Spirit/power in Jerusalem – kingdom has arrived.
  2. **Foundation (word of the Lord – truth of the Christ preached) – On what, and by whom will it be established?**
     1. **Matthew 16:13-18** – confession of Jesus as the Christ.
     2. *Focus?* – **vv. 13, 15, 16** – Who is Jesus?
     3. **(v. 17)** – *Revelation from the Father?* – Truth of Peter’s confession **(v. 16)**.
     4. **(v. 18)** – *Foundation?* – NOT Peter, but the truth of his confession **(v. 16).**
     5. **NOTE:** Who will build it? JESUS SAID, ***“on this rock I will build MY church” (v. 18).***
  3. **People – Who is part of the establishment?** (**Joel 2:28-32**)
     1. **(vv. 28-31)** – ***“pour out My Spirit”*** – HS comes with power… (when kingdom comes) (**in Jerusalem** – **v. 32b**)
     2. **(v. 32b)** – Mount Zion in Jerusalem – ***“mountain of the Lord’s house”*** **(Isaiah 2:2)** – deliverance, or salvation.
     3. **(v. 32a)** – those who are saved, those who ***“call on the name of the Lord.”***

1. Establishment – first Pentecost after Lord’s Resurrection. **(Acts 2)**
   1. **Time** – latter days, days of these kings (Daniel’s prophecy – Roman empire), when the power comes with the HS.
      1. **(v. 1)** – **Day of Pentecost** – the first after the resurrection and ascension of Christ. (This was in ***“the days of these kings” – Daniel 2:44*** – all represented in the Roman rule.)
      2. **(vv. 2-4)** – The HS came upon them. **Who are** ***“they?”***
         1. **Promise of HS** – given to the apostles **(1:4).**
         2. **Closest antecedent** to ***“they”*** – (**1:26** – 11 apostles + Matthias – Judas’ replacement).
      3. **(vv. 4-8, 12, 13)** – Tongue speaking amazed the crowd (**Power – HS**), and they did not understand what was occurring.
         1. (**vv. 14-16**) – This was explained by Peter – this is what Joel prophesied about. (**cf. Joel 2:28-32**).
         2. (**v. 21)** – These are the latter days that Joel prophesied about. (*As did Isaiah, Micah, and Daniel with Nebuchadnezzar’s dream*.)
      4. **The events recorded in Acts 2 took place in *“the latter days,” “the days of these kings,”* and when the apostles received power with the HS.**
   2. **Place** – Jerusalem.
      1. **(v. 5-6)** – These men in Jerusalem heard ***“this sound”*** – in Jerusalem.
         1. Command from Jesus – (**1:4).**
         2. Obedience of Disciples – (**1:12)**
      2. **Pentecost observed in Jerusalem** – hence **v. 5.**
   3. **Foundation** – Christ (The truth of Peter’s confession – ***“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”***).
      1. Peter preached – **vv. 14-39**
      2. They put to death ***“Jesus of Nazareth”*** – **vv. 22-23**
      3. God raised Jesus up from the dead to set Him on the throne (*fulfillment of David’s prophecy concerning the Christ)* – **vv. 24-35**
      4. **(v. 36)** – Conclusion of Peter’s sermon.
         1. ***“this Jesus”*** – ***“of Nazareth, a Man” (v. 22)***
         2. ***“This Jesus God has raised up” (v. 32)*** – ***“declared to be the Son of God with power…by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4).***
         3. God made Him Lord and Christ.
         4. Peter’s confession, the foundation upon which Christ would build His church – ***“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16).***
   4. **People** – Those who are saved by calling on the name of the Lord.
      1. **(vv. 16, 21)** – Peter said this day the prophecy of Joel is fulfilled – those who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.
      2. ***“calls on”*** – *epikaleō*; by implication, to invoke — appeal. (*Appeal to the Lord for salvation.*)
      3. **(vv. 37-38)** – Asked Peter, who spoke by inspiration, what to do to receive salvation. Peter said be baptized.
      4. **(vv. 40-41, 47)** – Those baptized were saved, those were added to the church.
      5. ***“calls on the name of the Lord”*** – same as what Paul did – ***“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).***
2. Establishment of Other Churches – NOT the ONE NT church.
   1. The ONE church of the NT that is the ONE church that was built by Jesus had very specific details concerning its establishment. Any church today that does not match such is NOT THE ONE TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST. 🡪

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| **Name** | **Time Established** | **Place Established** | **Foundation/Founder** |
| **Church of Christ (cf. Romans 16:16)** | **“latter days;” “days of these kings;” when HS came to Apostles, and they received power** | **Jerusalem** | **Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:20)** |
| Catholic | Gradual apostasy. 2nd Century (No specific date.) | No specific place. | Rebellion against God’s word (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). (Numerous doctrines that contradict scripture.) |
| Lutheran | October 31, 1517 | Wittenberg, Germany | Martin Luther |
| Presbyterian | Result of Calvin’s teachings – 1509-1564 | Geneva | John Calvin |
| Episcopal | 1789 (Descendant of Church of England – 16th century) | America | Parliament in Act of Supremacy in 1534 |
| Methodist | 1739 | America | John Wesley |
| Baptist | 1607 | London | John Smyth |
| Christian Church | 1850-1890 (Gradual apostasy from Lord’s church.) | America | Rebellion against God’s word. |
| Seventh-Day Adventist | 1831 | America | William Miller, Ellen G. White |
| Mormon | 1830 | America | Joseph Smith |
| Jehovah’s Witness | 1884 | America | Charles T. Russell |

**Conclusion**

1. The Bible only speaks of ONE church.
2. It is a ***“kingdom which shall never be destroyed” (Daniel 2:44)***, set up by God – thus, it still exists.
3. All one needs to do is look to the NT to identify that ONE CHURCH.
4. **To become a part of that one church, the only place of the redeemed, one must simply obey that which the NT says.**