

Four Historical Phases of the Church

Matt. 16:18

Introduction:

- A. The popular concepts of the church that Jesus promised to build are vague and varied.
- B. When you say the word “church” it conjures up wide variety of things in the mind of the hearer.
 - 1. Anything from building to ecclesiastical hierarchy.
 - 2. Anything from a denomination to all denominations.
 - 3. Anything from a definite group to a vague abstract (cf. Church, state, home)
- C. The proper concept of “the church” can only be learned from the Bible.
 - 1. Bible is a sufficient guide in religion (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Pet. 1:3).
 - 2. Bible not to be tampered with (Gal. 1:8-9; 2 John 9). In this study we want to look at the church that Jesus built both Biblically and Historically
 - 3. Our source for this study will be Biblical History with a few references to secular history.
- D. We will call this study: **Four Historical Phases of the Church:**

Discussion:

I. The Church in its Planning Phase.

- A. Planned to bring all together in one before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4-10).
- B. Planned to bring all together in one body -- the church (Eph. 2:16; 1:22-23; 4:4)
- C. Church is according God’s eternal purpose (Eph. 3:9-11).

II. The Church in its Preparatory Phase.

- A. Old Testament types, providence and prophecy (cf. Isa. 2:2-3; Dan. 2:44).
- B. The personal ministry of Christ.
 - 1. He promised to build the church (Matt. 16:18-19).
 - a. He and John had been that the kingdom was at hand (Matt. 3:1-3; 4:17).
 - b. Church and kingdom used interchangeably.
 - c. Kingdom to come with power soon (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8)
 - 2. He paid the price for the church (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25).

III. The Church in its Perfected (Or Fulfilled) Phase.

- A. Established on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).
 - 1. Before this day spoken of in future, after it spoken in present.
 - 2. After that day people were added to the church (Acts 2:47).
- B. Spoken of in three senses:
 - 1. Universal (Eph. 1:22-23)
 - 2. Local (1 Cor. 1:2)
 - 3. Assembly (1 Cor. 11:18).
- C. Had same doctrine (Apostles Doctrine -- Acts 2:42) and practice everywhere.
 - 1. Same thing taught everywhere (1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17).
 - 2. Same organization local organization everywhere (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5).
- D. Warned against a major departure or falling away (Acts 20:28-31; 2 Thess. 2:3-12;

1 Tim. 4:1-3).

IV. The Church in its Progressive Phase.

A. The rise of Catholicism (606 AD).

B. The development of denominationalism.

1. Martin Luther (Germany) and the Lutheran church (1517).
2. Henry VIII and Church of England (American Episcopalian) (1534).
3. John Calvin (in Geneva) and John Knox (in Scotland) and the Presbyterian Church (1560)
4. John Smyth (Holland) and the Baptist church (1607).
5. John and Charles Wesley (England) and the Methodist Church (1729).
6. William Booth (London) and the Salvation Army (1878).
7. Joe Smith (New York) and the Mormons (1830).
8. Holiness groups from Methodists from 1890 on.

Conclusion:

- A. We must go back of the perverted phase to the perfected phase of the New Testament
- B. If we preach the same gospel that the apostles preached, it will produce the same church.