

# The Three Historical Phases of The Church

Acts 20:28-30

## Introduction:

- A. “Church/churches” in KJV 114 times — must be important to the Lord.
  - 1. He bought it with blood (Acts 20:28)
  - 2. He is the savior of it (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23).
- B. Church history key to understanding our relationship to the church today.
- C. Church history can be divided into three phases:

## Discussion:

### I. The Planning Phase.

- A. Eternally planned (Eph. 3:1-12).
- B. Divinely promised and prophesied.
  - 1. By Isaiah (2:1-5).
    - a. “Last days” (cf. Acts 2:16).
    - b. “Lord’s house” (cf. 1 Tim.3:15).
    - c. “All nations” (cf. Matt. 28:18-20)
  - 2. By Daniel (2:36-44.)
    - a. Babylonian Empire (606-536 BC)
    - b. Persian Empire (536-330 BC)
    - c. Greek Empire (330-146 BC)
    - d. Roman Empire (146-476 BC)
  - 3. By Jesus (Matt. 16:18; Mk. 9:1)

### II. The Perfected Phase.

- A. Established at Jerusalem on Pentecost (Acts 2:40, 41, 47).
- B. Spreads though out the world. (Acts 8:3,4; 9:31; 13:1; 14:23, etc.)
- C. Continued in apostles’ doctrine (Acts 2:42).
  - 1. Early by personal direction.
  - 2. Later by personal direction and written word. (Cf. 1 Cor. 14:26).
  - 3. Finally and until present by written word. (Cf. 2 Tim. 3:16,17).

### III. The Perverted Phase.

- A. Paul’s warning to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:28-30).
  - 1. Apostasy from within.
  - 2. Perverse (perverted) things to produce division.
- B. The progression of perversion.
  - 1. Subtle leadership and organizational changes.
  - 2. Evolution into universal organization and control.
  - 3. Two faces of Catholicism — east and west. (1054)
  - 4. Proliferation of Protestantism.
    - a. Lutheran — 1517
    - b. Episcopal — 1551
    - c. Methodist — 1791
    - d. Baptist — 1608

## Conclusion:

- A. Let be a part of the church purchased by His blood.
- B. Let us remain true to the word of His grace (v. 32).