

100 BIBLE LESSONS

These lessons were originally given at Manila, Philippines, in 1958 and 1959 by former missionary to China, Alban Douglas. Give these lessons to people you visit, youth groups, hospital patients, church visitors and new members. Use them in Sunday School, bus ministry, jail services, nursing homes, Christian schools, small discussion groups and many other places. God's Word will answer your questions and help solve your problems.

LESSON 70 – THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

The Bible does not recognize any one visible Church on earth as The Church.

The Church which is His body consists of all regenerated souls, each one redeemed by the Blood of Christ and transformed by the Holy Spirit.

Only a small part of the Church is on earth for a great part have already gone to be with the Lord.

The Church has no visible head on earth but an unseen Head (Christ) in heaven.

Christ gave His life that He might found the Church. Ephesians 5:25, "... As Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it."

The supreme work of God in this age is the gathering of the Church. Acts 15:14, "... God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name." These chosen people are baptized in Christ's body (Church).

I. DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH

The Christian Church is a New Testament institution beginning with Pentecost and ending probably with the rapture, the Second Coming of Christ.

The word "Church" comes from the Greek word "Ecclesia" meaning "to call out from." Christians are called out from the world system to be "in Christ."

I Corinthians 1:2, "Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth... called to be saints."

The word Church can refer to a local group of believers. Philemon 2, "... and to the church in thy house." Colossians 4:15, "... and the church which is in his house."

The word Church can also mean the Church universal. I Corinthians 15:9, "I... am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

1. Distinction between the Church and the Kingdom.

The kingdom, according to the parables in Matthew 13, is comprised of both good and bad. The Church is therefore a part of the Kingdom. The Kingdom which was once rejected by the Jews will be constituted when the Messiah comes.

2. Distinction between the visible Church and the invisible.

The visible Church consist of those whose names are on local Church roles, all earthly denominations and sects, good, bad and in different will be included in the visible Church.

The invisible Church is made up of those names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Revelation 21:27.

3. Distinction between the local Church and the universal Church.

By the local church is meant any local congregation in a given location.

The Church universal is a term which includes all Churches everywhere.

4. Distinction between the Church actual and ideal.

The actual Church includes those who are imperfect, yet striving after perfection through Christ.

The ideal Church is made up of those who have already gone to heaven and are perfect now.

5. Distinction between the Church militant and the Church triumphant.

The Church militant refers to the true Church on earth.

The Church triumphant refers to the section of the Church already in heaven.

II. THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

Matthew 16:16-18, "... upon this rock I will build My Church..."

The Church was founded by Jesus Christ on Peter's confession that Jesus Christ was (and is) the Son of God, the Messiah, the Christ, God incarnate in humanity.

Our Savior did not build the Church on Peter, but on Peter's words.

A study of Matthew 16:16-18; John 20:19-23; Matthew 18:8 will show one that Peter did not receive a higher position than the other disciples (all could bind).

Historically the Church was founded at Pentecost, Acts 2, when the Spirit descended.

Acts 2:47, "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." They had stated times of meeting Acts 1:13; Acts 5:12; 2:46; Acts 12:12. They had stated times of meeting— daily— Acts 2:46, each Lord's Day, Acts 20:7.

III. CONDITION OF THE MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

1. Repent, Acts 2:38, "Then he said unto them, Repent." at Pentecost.

2. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, Lord and Son of God, Matthew 16:16-18.

3. Salvation, regeneration, the new birth, Acts 2:47, the saved added to the Church.

They are not added to the Church in order to be saved but added to the church because they were saved already. (A member of the invisible Church becoming a member of the earthly visible church.)

4. Baptism into the Name, Acts 2:38, "...repent and be baptized..." Matthew 28:19; Acts 10:47, 48; Acts 22:16.

5. Continuance in the Apostles' doctrine. Acts 2:42, "And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine." They lived according to the Scripture.

IV. BIBLICAL SYMBOLS OF THE CHURCH

1. Body. Christ is the Head of the body and we are members of His body. Colossians 1:18, "And He is the Head of the body, the Church..." Ephesians 1:22, 23. Colossians

2:19, "... the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands have nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

2. A temple, building, habitation our dwelling place for God's Spirit. Ephesians 2:20, 21. Of this building, Christ is the chief cornerstone and we are different parts of the building.

3. Bride of Christ. II Corinthians 11:2, "For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Christ is the bridegroom, John 3:29.

The wedding will take place in Revelation 19:7, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready... she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white."

V. THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

1. Baptism, Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38-41; Acts 8:36-40; Acts 10:47, 48.

2. The Lord's Supper, Acts 2:42-46; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:20-34.

VI. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

1. To worship God and to glorify Him on the earth.

Ephesians 1:4-6, "...to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

2. To evangelize the world with the Gospel. Matthew 28:19, 20. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Mark 16:15. See also Ephesians 3:8.

3. To teach and instruct Christians. Ephesians 4:11-15, "... for the perfecting of the saints..." I Thessalonians 5:11; I Corinthians 12:1-31.

4. To witness constantly. Acts 1:8, "... witnesses of Jerusalem... Judea... Samaria..."

VII. UNITY IN THE EARTHLY CHURCH - Taken from Jesus' High Priestly Prayer.

1. Unity because we worship the same Father, John 17:1-5.

2. Unity because the saved all belong to the Son, John 17:6-10.

3. Unity because all indwelt by the same Spirit, John 17:11a; John 16:7; Romans 8:16.

4. Unity because the Father and Son are united and we ought to be, too, John 17:11b.

5. Unity because we live by the same Word, John 17:14-17.

6. Unity because unity will cause unbelievers to believe, John 17:21, 23.

7. Unity because we shall live together in heaven, John 17:24.

CONCLUSION

Why are there so many denominations? Each is probably like a variety of fruit and it takes many varieties to make an orchard. (Many spokes to make a wheel.)

Christ's desire is that the Church on earth should be clean, glorious and holy, Ephesians 5:27, "That He might present it (the Church) to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it (you and I) should be holy and without blemish."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which church is the one true Church?
2. On the basis of Acts 15:14, what is the Church?
3. Distinguish between the Church and the kingdom; between the visible and invisible Church.
4. When and on what was the Church founded?
5. List five conditions of membership in the Church.
6. Explain briefly the three biblical symbols of the Church.
7. Name the Church ordinances.
8. Enumerate four purposes of the Church.
9. On the basis of John 17:1-26, give seven reasons for unity in the earthly Church.
10. Is it right or wrong to have so many denominations? Why?