

Origin

Acts 2

Isaiah 2:2-3 and Micah 4:1-2 both teach the kingdom (church) would be established “in the last days” in Jerusalem and the law would go forth from Jerusalem. The “last days” is a reference to the New Testament age (Hebrews 1:1-2; Acts 2:16-17). We additionally see the church spoken of in prophecy in Daniel 2:31-35 where Daniel interprets a dream of king Nebruchadnezzar. The kingdom (church) would be established “in the days of these kings”, which we recognize as a reference to the kings of the Roman Empire.

During Jesus’ ministry He spoke of the kingdom (church) as being “at hand” (Mark 1:15), and not yet built (Matthew 16:18). He promised some of His audience they would “not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power” (Mark 9:1). Even at the time of His ascension it had not yet come (Acts 1:6).

What law went forth from Jerusalem in accordance with Isaiah and Micah (Acts 2:37-38)?

How did the Kingdom come with power in accordance with Mark 9:1 (Acts 2:1-4)?

The events of Acts 2:1-4 are later referred to as “the beginning” (Acts 11:15). They marked the beginning of the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. After the events of Acts 2 the kingdom (church) is always spoken of as being in existence (Acts 5:11; 11:22; 14:27; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9).

Organization

Acts 14:23

In the first century, the apostles worked to establish order “in every church” (Acts 14:23) and instructed men to “set in order the things that are lacking” (Titus 1:5). Thus we can see a pattern was followed in every congregation. There was only one church and every congregation followed the same pattern established by the apostles.

Every congregation was independent and self-governing. We read nothing of any organization beyond the local level. There was no world headquarters. There was no individual over multiple congregations. We do read of the “churches of Galatia” (Galatians 1:22) which in fact speaks of several independent congregations working within the Roman province of Galatia. Jesus is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23) and as such has all authority to govern and create law. No man can usurp this authority and no man can create law in the Lord’s church else He makes Himself equal with Christ.

What was Paul doing in every church (Acts 14:23)?

Those who would serve as elders must meet the qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Every elder must possess each qualification to some degree, such as in being temperate, gentle and ruling his house well. Some qualifications are without quantitative aspects such as being a husband, being a father, and not being a new convert.

What is the work of an elder?

Acts 20:28-31

1 Peter 5:2-3

Hebrews 13:17

What other office (or role) is mentioned with qualifications which must be met (1 Timothy 3:8-13)?

The Church Jesus died to establish has a spiritual mission and work. Please read the following passages and indicate what is the work of the church in each area:

Evangelism

Ephesians 3:10

1 Timothy 3:14-15

Edification

Hebrews 3:12-14; 10:24-25

Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:15-16

Ministry To The Needy Saints

2 Corinthians 8:18-21; Acts 11:29-30

Helping all the needy in the world is taught as an individual responsibility (James 1:27 ; Acts 9:36-43), yet that responsibility is not seen in Scripture as being fulfilled by the church.

United

“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:20-21). Jesus prays for the apostles and also for you and I who believe because of their word. He prays that we would be one, just as the different persons of Deity are united. Jesus says the world will know we are His disciples if we are united. This strongly implies that the religious divisions which exist in the world today are not what Jesus or God intended.

What did Paul demand of the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 1:10-12)?

What argument does Paul use to demonstrate we are not to be divided (1 Corinthians 1:13-14)?

“Dissensions and factions” are called deeds of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-20). God never desired denominations or various religious doctrines over which men are divided. He wanted us to be “one”.

To “speak the same thing” (1 Corinthians 1:10) what must be used as a standard of teaching (Galatians 1:6-10)?

If this standard is used, what do these passages indicate we must do to avoid divisions:

Titus 2:7

1 Peter 4:11

2 Timothy 2:14

Many misconceptions about the church of Jesus Christ exist in the world. This brief study does not touch on all the pertinent Scriptures, nor does it address the full scope of teaching and implications for us. This is intended to be an introductory lesson to the topic. If you desire more depth to this study, please contact someone at the New Caney Church Of Christ.