

Discipleship Questions

What has formed many of the modern concepts people have about “church”?

What prophecies were given in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah and His kingdom?

What would begin in Jerusalem?

What was the significance of Jesus’s ascension to Heaven?

What did the Holy Spirit enable the apostles to do?

What would happen during the Messianic Kingdom period?

What declaration did the apostles make concerning Jesus?

Who were added to Jesus’s church and when were they added?

The Origin Of The New Testament Church

Whenever you think of “church” you likely think about whatever you have seen, experienced, or otherwise have come to know as “church.” The problem with that, however, is many modern concepts of “church” are the product of human innovations over the last 2,000 years. So, those who are truly interested in learning about the church as God created and designed it must go back to the New Testament. Allow everything you read to challenge your concepts and understandings of “church,” determining that you do not want to be part of any church that has its origin with any human – but with Jesus Christ alone (Matthew 21:23-27)! To begin this journey, let’s go back to the beginning of the church in the New Testament.

Acts 1:4-8

Old Testament prophets had spoken about the Messianic King who would come to set the captives free (Isaiah 61:1-3) and establish an everlasting kingdom during the days of a fourth successive kingdom (the Roman empire, Daniel 2:31-45). Furthermore, the Lord’s house would be established in Jerusalem in the last days, with God’s word going out from there (Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-8; Joel 2:28-32). Now, this Messiah had come, teaching about His kingdom (Matthew 4:23-25) and promising to build His church (Matthew 16:18). He suffered and died on the cross and rose from the dead (Matthew 27:32-61; 28:1-10). After Jesus’s resurrection, He appeared to His disciples for 40 days and spoke to them about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). Now, Jesus gives final instructions to His apostles before ascending to Heaven (Luke 24:44-49,

Matthew 28:18-20, and Mark 16:15-16). They were to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of being baptized with the Holy Spirit. Belief, repentance, baptism, and forgiveness of sins would be preached in the name of Jesus beginning at Jerusalem, before spreading throughout the world!

Acts 1:9-11

After giving these instructions, Jesus ascended to Heaven in the clouds, with the announcement that He would come again. This is a most significant event according to prophecy. Namely, Daniel 7:13-14 shows the Son of Man coming with the clouds, approaching the Ancient of Days (the Father), and being given an everlasting kingdom that would never be destroyed. Therefore, Jesus had now been exalted as King (Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Timothy 3:16)!

Acts 2:1-13

As the apostles waited in Jerusalem in obedience to Jesus, the Holy Spirit came on them on the day of Pentecost. This enabled the apostles to speak in different tongues (languages) they had never studied. The sound of what happened caused the people who were in Jerusalem for Pentecost to come together. Many were amazed that they heard the magnificent acts of God in their own languages (though others mocked them). Also, note that Jesus had promised the Holy Spirit to the apostles so they could know and teach all the truth (John 14:25-26; 16:12-15).

Acts 2:14-21

Peter and the apostles stood up and taught that Joel's prophecy was being fulfilled (Joel 2:28-32)! This was now the time of the last days (the time of the Messianic Kingdom) they had been waiting for (Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1), in the days of the Roman empire (fourth kingdom, Daniel 2:44)! During this time, everyone who would call on the name of the Lord would be saved! Thus, this is the beginning of salvation being preached to all people through the name of Jesus Christ, as both Jews and Gentiles would be given this opportunity (Ephesians 3:1-13)!

Acts 2:22-36

Now that Peter and the apostles demonstrated the historical nature of the events taking place, they proceeded to demonstrate that Jesus from Nazareth had fulfilled the prophecies and plan of God through His

death, burial, and resurrection! In fact, the apostles were announcing that they were all eyewitnesses that Jesus had risen from the dead. Furthermore, this Jesus had been exalted to the right hand of God! Therefore, the declaration by the apostles was that God has made this Jesus (who the Jews crucified about 7 weeks prior) both Lord and Christ – the Messianic King! This meant that the King was now reigning on His throne and people had the opportunity to be part of His kingdom!

Acts 2:37-47

This wonderful message called for a response from the people who heard it if they desired to be saved and be part of this kingdom. Having heard the message that Jesus is King and believed it, those who wanted their sins forgiven needed to call on the name of the Lord by repenting of their sins and being baptized (immersed in water) in Jesus's name! About 3,000 people were obedient to this message and were added by God to His church (which is Jesus's collection of saved people). These then continued to learn what God taught and lived in obedience to Him. Every day, more people would hear, believe, and obey the gospel of Jesus Christ and be added to the number of Jesus's saved people (His church)!

Conclusion

Jesus's church began on this day of Pentecost in Acts 2. This church began in the right place (Jerusalem) and at the right time (during the days of the Roman Empire), in fulfillment of prophecy. Any other church that began in a different place and at a different time cannot be the same as the New Testament church. From this starting point, Jesus's church would grow as the gospel of the kingdom of God was proclaimed throughout the world!

Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

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