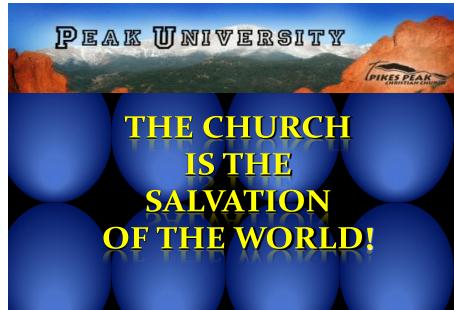




The Christian Church Family Tree

A Study on the History of the Church by Dr. Harley Ihm

Lesson 1:



Questions for Opening the Class:

- *How do we know that the church is the salvation of the world? (This is a great question because it either is or it is not. It cannot be ONE of the ways of salvation.)*
- *Does the Christian Church look like it is the salvation of the world?*
- *What in the world have we done to the body that Jesus built to love and save the world?*
- *Why do you think knowing the mistakes the church has made is so important to the future of the church?*

That is our journey. Let's go back to the promises, the first talk of this blueprint of God, to better understand what it was supposed to be when it came forth later in history.



- a. Genesis – (Moses 1500 B.C.) 3:1-15 – **Promise of Savior** – We know where pain, suffering and disease came from. But this promise is the first mention of the church. **How could this be a picture of God's promise of the church?** (Jesus, the seed of the woman, would overpower evil and He would build His body, to carry on His mission. The body of Christ is the church.)
- b. Isaiah (700 B.C.) – 62:1-7 – **Promise of a New Name** – **What was the name God's people were called by in the Old Testament days?** My people. The Hebrews. Israel. **When the Messiah came and fulfilled this promise, what was the new name we would where if we accepted His salvation?** Disciples of Christ, Christians, more simply “Jesus.”
- c. Habakkuk – (600 B.C.) 1:1-4; 2:1-4 – **Promise of Righteousness by Faith**; God gives a vision to Habakkuk 600 years before it begins to take place. **What is this promise that will arrive?** (The righteous will live by faith) Notice that those who live by faith wear a new name. See Revelation 2:17; 3:12 (A.D. 95)
- d. Malachi 2:17-3:4 (420 B.C.) – **Jesus' coming after 400 years of silence**
 - i. Roads – early highways by Romans
 - ii. Common language – Greek
 - iii. Trade routes - relationships needed
 - iv. Water ways – Wider outreach possibilities

What do you do to get if you buy a section of land, some field where you are getting ready to build a house?

God used Persia, Greece and Rome to prepare the way for the gospel of God's grace to be able to travel quickly and effectively. This was like preparing the site, bulldozing, digging, leveling, getting ready for the building of His church. Now let's go to the days of Jesus and see what God's Son tells us about the coming of His church.



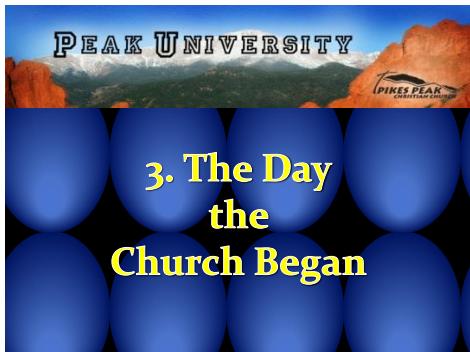
- a. Matthew 16:13-19 (**There would be a Key to the Kingdom**)

*Hades, the unseen world of the dead cannot overcome the church. The church is the open door to the Kingdom of Heaven and Peter is given the key to open that door. The church has been and still is constantly marching forward against the kingdom of darkness. Darkness loses. That is set in eternity by God. **When did the door to the church get unlocked by this key that Jesus is telling Peter he will possess?**
- b. Build my church – Greek = *Ekklēsia*, εκκλησια - **a called out assembly**

*citizens summoned to serve as one group united, like a jury or a political caucus or a

task force. A call has been issued for them to step out of what they are doing to accomplish a task. Jesus – “I will build MY assembly, the heaven on earth assembly.”

- c. **The Church is the Fulfillment of the Jewish Promise**
 - v. Jesus' perfect life – the unblemished Lamb of God
 - vi. Jesus' perfect sacrifice – the sacrificial Lamb provided by God
 - vii. Jesus' becomes the final High Priest – the Last High Priest who tore down the curtain to allow access directly to God for everyone.
 - viii. We are not another religion. We are grafted into the Jewish faith. Just as Jesus is the promised Messiah for the Jewish people, for Israel, all the rest of us have been given the right to become the people of God through Jesus.
 - ix. Romans 9:22-29 **Who were the 'Not My people?'** The church was God's plan through Israel from the beginning.
- d. Matthew 28:16-20 – **The Lifestyle Jesus Established – Where do you think the emphasis is placed?** It is actually on “make disciples.” The best translation of the Greek is “As you are going... (throughout your daily life) you MAKE DISCIPLES, students, apprentices of the Lord Jesus.
- e. Acts 1:1-8 – **Jesus' Instructions and Explanations Concerning the Church – What was Jesus' plan for the building of the church now that the foundation was poured?** Strategic witnessing that keeps moving outward to all ethnic groups.



- a. Acts 2:1-13 – **First day of the Church (A.D. 30)** – Sealed by the miraculous hand of God as he had prophesied through Joel. First Church of Christ, Christian Church, Jesus' Church, the Faithful of Christ, the Believers, Those Kingdom Guys, The Assembly of Heaven's Members on Earth, or just The First Assembly of the Saints. The name on the group is irrelevant. The new name promised is Jesus. We belong to Jesus and His Holy Spirit has written it on our foreheads.
- b. Acts 2:37-41 – **First Gospel Invitation – What were the components in the first call to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?** That wasn't questioned for the first 1200 years. In “A Catechism for Adults,” a training booklet on becoming a Catholic, William J. Cogan states that baptism is the pouring of water over a forehead. He goes on to say that it was only by immersion in the Catholic Church for 1200 years. It was first officially changed in 1311 by the Council of Ravenna. They decided it should just be up to the minister. Martin Luther, 1500 AD, and John Wesley, 1750 AD, were opposed to anything but immersion because both were Greek scholars who refused to change a word of Scripture simply because some council said it was okay.

Somewhere only in the last 250 years, the teaching in the church has decided to downplay baptism's role in the Scripture. There has been a shift in Jesus' blueprint for the church. It was as if someone believed there needed to be some upgrades and preachers, teachers and even theologians have followed this very recent change in the Jesus' design for His body.

www.bible-knowledge.com says that without question, the greatest and most powerful prayer that you can have in your arsenal is the Sinner's Prayer. The Sinner's Prayer is the type of prayer that you will use to lead someone who is not saved into eternal salvation by accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. It is the type of prayer that you will use to get someone saved and born again.

Even Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, states that the Sinner's Prayer is not found anywhere in the Bible but has become common in Evangelical churches. No one knows when it began. Some argue that it was during the reformation when everyone was trying to distance themselves from anything that looked like legalism. It just crept into the plan of salvation! How? Why? I believe the most effective way to follow Christ is to keep it simple. If Jesus said "Do it," then do it. If Jesus said, "Don't do it," then don't do it. None of us need councils, cultural shifts, or the latest seminar to teach us truth. All truth is found in honest handling of the Scripture. So a major division began somewhere in the last 250 years that creates extreme tension between people who deeply love Jesus and the Word of God! Should we not be more like Martin Luther who said, "Sola Scriptura," Scripture alone? ***If anything contradicts Scripture, then who should we follow?***

- c. Acts 2:42-47 – **The Church's Purpose, Commitments and Blessings**
 - x. What was the Church's purpose? First of all was devotion! ***To what were they devoted?***
 - xi. How did they accomplish it? ***What united them?***
 - xii. How were they blessed by God? ***Could God bless us like that today? What stands in the way of His blessing?***
- d. Acts 4:32-37 – **Complete Unity**
 - xiii. How is the Church's unity described?
 - xiv. Why isn't this happening today?
 - xv. What are some of the things that stand in the way of complete unity?
 - xvi. Where the Bible speaks, speak. Where it is silent, be silent.



- a. Acts 5:1-11 – Ananias and Sapphira – **Lying**
 - xvii. Do you think God over-reacted?

xviii. What can we learn from God's reaction to a lying spirit?

- b. Acts 6:1 – Hebrew Christians versus Greek Speaking Christians – **Selfishness**
 - xix. What was the problem? It's about AD 33 or 34 near the time of Paul's conversion. Estimates believe there were about 20,000 Christians in Jerusalem. This seems to be one of the first signs of a larger disunity developing.
 - xx. There were 2 classes of Jews at this time. Those Hebrews born in Palestine who spoke the Hebrew language and those Hellenist, the Hebrews born of Jewish parents outside of Palestine and spoke the Greek language and used the Septuagint in their synagogues. The Hellenists had adapted much of the Greek culture brought over by Alexander the Great when he conquered the country 300 years earlier. The Hebrews who kept their culture looked down on the Greek-speaking Jews as less spiritual. They were Jewish-light. A watered-down form of Judaism.
 - xxi. Explain the Widow's List.
- c. Acts 8:9-24 – Simon the Sorcerer who converted in Samaria – **Greed**
 - xxii. Notice Simon accepted Christ but greed was still in control of his heart. He saw the miraculous as something he couldn't obtain but wanted badly in his arsenal of miracles.
 - xxiii. How has greed divided churches?
 - xxiv. Although this doesn't immediately create a branch, it will down the road.
- d. Acts 13 – Spirit Medium tries to Interfere – Jewish **False Prophet**
 - xxv. Simon the Sorcerer or Magician. Mageia = Magic so he became known as Simon Magus, Simon the Magician, or the Magic one.
 - xxvi. He gained followers who were active for several centuries after his death. Some, like Irenaeus, claim he was the Father of Gnosticism, but that is debated.
 - xxvii. He was a convert to Christianity when he saw the power of God in Philip, power that he could not obtain, even from the occult connections he had made.
 - xxviii. He was called "that power of God which is called the Great." He is claiming that he is the great power or messenger of the Almighty God. Probably he was invoking God's power as a sorcerer like the other Greek and Egyptian magicians would do, like "By the power of Baal, or Zeus, or Apollos."
 - xxix. His followers became a thorn in Christian's side for some time.

- So, what have we learned tonight about the church and its early unity? What united it?
- Missionaries often all work together and believe alike when they only have the Bible as a guide.
- What have we learned tonight about the church and what caused disunity?

**Next month we look at how these troubles led to the drive for a universal, meaning a catholic, church that did not fix the problems.*