

# Why Study About The Church?

**Introduction.** The church was important enough to Jesus that He promised to build it (Matthew 16:18), died for it (Acts 20:28), added those who He saved to it (Acts 2:47), and will deliver it up to His Heavenly Father (1 Corinthians 15:24).

The church was important enough that God used at least eight prophets to prophesy about it: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, Amos, Micah, and Zechariah. The church was important enough to the Holy Spirit that He guided New Testament evangelists to preach about it and New Testament authors to write about it.

An important question is how important is the Lord's church in your life? Is it important enough that you have sought to learn all that you can about it from the Bible? Is it important enough that you are thankful to be a member of it? Is it important enough that you attend its gatherings for worship? Is it important enough that you want to see its work succeed? Is it important enough that you want others to know about it? Is it important enough that you want to see it remain pure and faithful to God's plan for it? Is it important enough that you endeavor to remain faithful to it?

## ***I. There Are Two Extremes Regarding The Church***

- A. The first extreme: There is not enough teaching and preaching about the church.
  - 1. This extreme may give the impression that the church is not a necessary part of a godly life.
  - 2. This extreme may give the impression that the church has nothing to do with our soul's salvation.
  - 3. This extreme may give the impression that there is nothing distinctive about the church.
  - 4. This extreme may give the impression that all churches are scriptural and therefore acceptable to God.
  - 5. This extreme may give the impression that all the false teachings and misconceptions about the church are not all wrong.
- B. The second extreme: The church is taught about and preached about too much.
  - 1. This extreme may give the impression that being a member of the church is all there is to being a Christian.
  - 2. This extreme may give the impression that the subject of the church is more important than the subject of Christ.
  - 3. This extreme may give the impression that the church does the saving rather than Christ.
  - 4. This extreme may give the impression that one's relationship to the church is more important than one's relationship to Christ.
  - 5. This extreme may give the impression that the church is the most important subject in the Bible — especially in the New Testament.

## ***II. A Comparison Of New Testament Times To Our Day***

- A. The first century.
  - 1. The problem during the first century was in distinguishing the one and only true God from the false, man-made gods. Idols and idolatry were rampant (1 Thessalonians 1:9; 1 John 5:21).

- a) The Roman Empire had its diversity of gods including emperor worship (Revelation 13:1-9).
  - b) The Greeks had a large number of idolatrous deities (Acts 17:23).
  - c) All Asia, including Ephesus, worshipped the idolatrous goddess Diana (Acts 19:28, 34).
2. Paul preached about the one God because people taught and believed that there were many gods. Paul was right; the people were wrong.
- B. Our day and time.
- 1. Ours is not so much the problem of many gods, but of many churches.
    - a) There was not a multiplicity of churches from among which the Lord's church had to be distinguished. There were no man-made churches to confuse those who sought to be true followers of Jesus.
    - b) The early Christians knew that there was only one, and we should preach against the idea of many churches because there is only one church (Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18).
  - 2. People believe in the concept of many churches because:
    - a) They are not knowledgeable of the teaching that there is one church.
    - b) They are steeped in traditions that originated in the minds of uninspired men instead of divine revelation (Matthew 15:1-9).
  - 3. In Paul's day many would not accept the teaching that there is only one God, not many gods. By contrast, in our day great numbers will not accept the teaching that there is only one church rather than many churches.
  - 4. The truth about there being only one God was just as strange to the people of the first century as the truth that there is only one church today.

### **III. Why We Study About The Church**

- A. We study about the church because the church has a relationship to all who are saved from their sins (Acts 2:47).
- B. We study about the church in order to show proper respect for the bride of Christ (Revelation 22:17).
- C. We study about the church in order to distinguish it from man-made denominations men call churches (John 15:1-8).
- D. We study about the church in order to enlighten non-Christians who may not be knowledgeable of the Lord's church (Acts 8:12; 20:25; 28:31).
- E. We study about the church because the church is going to be delivered up to Heaven at the end of time (1 Corinthians 15:24).

**Conclusion.** The truth about the one God dispelled the ignorance about many gods. The truth about the one church can dispel the ignorance about many churches. Many want the Christ of the church, but do not want the church of the Christ. According to the Bible, that is not possible.