

WHICH CHURCH?

A SERIES DESCRIBING THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH

*"There is one body, and one Spirit,
even as ye are called in one hope of your calling..."*

~ Ephesians 4:4

1. Why It Matters

- a. Opposition says "Dispensationalists can't agree on when it started!"
- b. The church today is filled with lost people beating the air – 2 Cor 4:3; 1 Cor 9:26
- c. Wrong tradition is removed by getting back to the original source.
- d. We learn our who we are by knowing when/where we began.
- e. Our mission is made clear by knowing how it was given.
- f. We can walk more confidently when we know we are on the right track.
- g. A building is built straight by looking at the blueprints.
- h. Our destiny is determined by knowing the hope of our calling – Eph 4:4

2. Church Confusion

- a. We can't talk about its beginning, until we define church. Which church?
- b. 'Church' only found in the NT – OT is 'congregation' see Heb 2:12 & Ps 22:22-23
- c. There is more than one – Acts 9:31, 15:41, 1 Cor 7:17, 2 Cor 11:28, Rev 1:4
- d. There were churches before Paul – Acts 8:1-3, 7:38, 2:44-47, Matt 16:18
- e. General assembly Heb 12:23, house 1Tim 3:15, body Col 1:18, called out to be 1Cor 1:2
- f. 'Church' is a generic word like 'children' – some say church is "all God's children"
 - i. But we must respect specific differences to know which child or which church.
- g. Spiritually, church is one → Eph 4:4; Physically, church is many → 1 Cor 12:27, Rom 12:5; Locally, the church is the assembly of many – Rom 16:1, 4, 5; 1 Cor 11:18, 14:23
- h. 'Church' may cause confusion, terms like 'body of Christ' or 'new creature' are specific

3. Finding Our Ministry

- a. Knowing the day and hour is less important than finding our ministry pattern
- b. The nature, operation, message are different among churches in scripture.
- c. What is the hope of our calling? - Eph 1:18, 4:4, Col 3:15, Phil 3:14, 2 Tim 1:9-11
- d. The nature of the church in wilderness (Israel) was a nation from Abe, Isaac, Jacob
 - i. The nature of the church today is a body – Col 3:11, Gal 3:28, 1 Cor 12:13
- e. The operation of the church in the wilderness was acc. to the covenant at Sinai.
 - i. The operation of the church today is acc. to the mystery fellowship – Eph 3:9
- f. The message of the church in the wilderness was God's law, righteousness, kingdom
 - i. The message our church is the gospel of grace of God – 2Co 5:19, Eph 3:10-11
- g. The doctrine, position, walk, destiny of the church of Paul's ministry differs from others
- h. Without one body where there is no Jew/Gentile we don't have a vehicle to hold us
- i. Without the gospel of grace (the dispensation of grace) we don't have our message
- j. Without the Spirit dwelling in us by grace through faith we don't have our pattern
- k. Til people called not under the law, not Israel, not by covenant, the church is not yet