

SUNDAY SCHOOL PRESENTED BY EVANG. NWORIE OGOBUCHI

TOPIC: CHURCH OF CHRIST. DATE 08-12-2019

TEXT: MATT. 16:16-18

PURPOSE:

1. To reveal the owner of church of Christ.
2. To showcase the mission of the church.
3. To explain basis for membership.
4. To state her peculiar nature.

OUTLINE

- INTRODUCTION
- DEFINITION
- THE CHURCH IN PROPHECY.
- THE CHURCH IN PREPARATION.
- THE CHURCH IN REALITY.
- THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH (MATT. 28:18-20).
- THE BASIS FOR MEMBERSHIP.
- **THE CHARACTERISTICS**
 1. Fellowship with one another.
 2. Studying the word of God.
 3. Praising God everywhere, they never danced.
 4. Giving to support the church.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ's statement in Matthew 16:18, validates the existence of the New Testament church. Then Jesus say's "And I also say to you that you are, and on this rock. I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"

The death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ marked the beginning of the Church. The truth of the church does not rest upon its philosophical aspects; but rather upon the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28) and these facts are open to public investigation. Her message is Christ only.

The Church is one and peculiar (Eph. 4:4-7, 1pt 2:9). The Church is not only conscious of a great difference between members and others, but also stands against all other religions and false teaching in the name of Christianity (2Cor. 10:4-6; Gal. 1:6-10) with an uncompromising opposition.

DEFINITION

CHURCH: The term Church in the New Testament translates a Greek word that literally means "called out". This is the compound Greek word "ekklesia". The term carries the idea of separation or being set apart for a given purpose. This word is first used in the New Testament in Matthew 16:18.

The word "Church" signifies the "called out" aspect of the nature of God's people, is only one of the several terms to designate it. In Matthew 16:18, after using the word Church, Jesus Christ uses the expressions, "kingdom of heaven" to refer to the same group (v. 19). This expressions "kingdom of heaven" and kingdom of God" are used interchangeably and refer to the sovereignty of God, generally meaning the same as the word Church.

THE CHURCH IN PROPHECY

Apostle Paul says that the mystery of Christ was not made known to other generation (Eph.3:5), but rather, it was hidden in God and was to be revealed according to his eternal purpose (Eph. 3:10-11). In the prophecies, revelation were given about the coming kingdom (church: the New Testament). Daniel in his prophecy shows that the kingdom (the church of Christ) would be set up in the days of the kings of Roman Empire (Dan.2:44-45). Prophet Isaiah states that when the word of the Lord would forth from Jerusalem the house of the Lord would be established and all nations would flow into it (Isa.2:2-3)

THE CHURCH IN PREPARATION

Matthew states that John the Baptist came in fulfilment of God's plan to "make ready the way of the Lord", (Matth.3:3). His message was designed to prepare the Jews in heart and mind to receive the Christ as Son of God. Mattox observed that, "As he convinced the multitudes of their sins, preaching, 'repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'. It was so effective that the people came enmass to be baptize in the river Jordan, confessing their sins (Matt.3:5-6). It is clear that John's work was only preparatory (Acts 19:4)

Like John the Baptist, Jesus Christ also came and began to preach in all cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and the gospel of the kingdom (Matt.9:35). This expression “gospel of the kingdom” means good news of the coming kingdom.

THE CHURCH IN REALITY.

The first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the city of Jerusalem was the birthday of the church of Christ. Jesus had earlier told his apostles, after his resurrection, to remain in Jerusalem and waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49) Jesus had promised that, the Holy Spirit would come upon them and would bring all things that Jesus had taught them to their remembrance (John 14:26). He would also guide them into all truth, revealing the message that He would receive from heaven and in doing so would also reveal things that were to come (John 16:13).

The promise of Christ that the apostles would be filled with the Holy Spirit was fulfilled on the Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles that day. Under His guidance, the apostles began to preach in language they had never studied. This miraculous sign had a varying effect on the people watching them. Some mocked and accused them of being drunk, but Apostle Peter stood and explained that they were not drunk. He preached that, the Christ whom they crucified was God’s plan for the salvation of mankind. God attested to this fact by raising Him from the dead. Jerusalem had been chosen as the birth place for the Church. Here was the centre of the Jewish world and the only logical place for the establishment of the Church as prophesied by Isaiah(Isa.2:14).

THE BASIS OF MEMBERSHIP

The effects of Peter’s sermon were momentous. The Jews were also conscious of the truth of Peter’s sermon and being convinced of their lost state, convicted of crucifying the only Son of God and yearning for conversion into the God’s scheme of redemption, they cried out, “men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Jesus Christ had prepared the apostle for their answer to such a question in His last instruction to them after His resurrection from death. Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16 and Luke 24:47 each refers to Jesus’ statement and with Jesus commission that everybody must repent and be baptized in Peter’s memory, through the Holy Spirit, Peter gave instruction for the first time on how to become a Christian. His reply to their question of “what shall we do? Was, repent and be baptized, everyone of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”, (Acts 2:38)

The size of the audience Peter addressed is still unknown, but the book of Acts 2:40 says “about 3000” people responded to Peter’s sermon and were baptized that day. The baptism of believers in the New Testament is clearly immersion, it is burial in water (Rom. 6:3-5). In baptism, a sinner relates in the likeness of His resurrection (Col. 2:12).baptism is the basis for admission into the Church of Jesus Christ. Anyone who teaches otherwise should be avoided (Rom.16:17). Those who were baptized were added to the Church (Acts 2:40).

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH: Evangelism, Jesus was preaching from cities to villages. He has commanded the Church to do same (Matt.28:18-20;Luk.24:47;Mark 16:15-16)

CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

The New Testament Church has a particular features and characteristics in organization and government, worship, collection, music and manner of life

1. **Organization and government:** as long as the apostles lived, the leadership of the Church rested on the apostles as they spoke under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The one and only head of the Church is Jesus Christ (Eph.1:21-23). The apostle, however, soon appointed elders and deacons in each congregation of the New Testament.Each local congregation employs the services of an evangelist who appoints the leaders (Eph.4:11-15). The leadership is always in plurality (Acts 11:30), in Ephesus, Paul admonished a group of elders. Men with one wife each. Note, women are not to be ordained as elders and deacons in each congregation (1Tim.3:1-2, 12). The elders are also called Bishops, pastors, presbyters, overseers, shepherds referring to the same position or office (phil.1:1, Acts 20:28,1Pet.5:1-2, Eph.4:11)
2. **Worship in the New Testament Church:** the New Testament Church meets on the first day of the week for public worship. The worship is always characterized by great devotion, oral songs,(Heb.2:12) prayers, reading of the scriptures and partaking of the Lords supper to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ every first day of the week (Acts 20:7). The members of the New Testament church give collection according to how God prospers them not by levying or tithing according to the Old Testament (Cor. 9:6-7).

3. Manner of life in the New Testament is that of imitating the examples of Jesus Christ under the New Testament is to share the faith and hope and also their possession in Love. The members are evangelism driven (Acts 2:42-44, 4:34-37). The early Church devoted herself to the teaching of the apostles. The undiluted word of God, which is the light of God, was an important aspect of each member. Each member taps the light inside and shines outside. The poor and needy among them were cared for. The sick among them were healed. One of their early customs grew what some people "call the Lords feast." The members answer the name of the owner (Rom. 16:16) because He is the Founder(Eph.1:21-23).

CONCLUSION

The New Testament Church is the New covenant God promised through Jeremiah (Jer.31:31-35, Heb. 8:7-13) to establish. Jesus Christ is the founder and sole head. Admission into it is through baptism. Stacy observed that, "Baptism is the final step to salvation." Here in the New Testament, you work out your salvation (Phil.2:12). Only believers in the New Testament Church that are called and known as Christians. It is the Church of the first born (Jesus) Heb.12:21.