

Presenting the Study Sheet:

“What Does the Bible Say About the Church of Christ?”

The study sheet “What Does the Bible Say About the Church of Christ?” can logically be presented after either the “Jesus the Way” or the “Salvation” study sheets. Perhaps the best time to present this sheet is after the “Salvation” study sheet. The reason this is true is that it takes up where the “Salvation” study sheet ends.

Purpose

The purpose of the “Church” sheet is to explain that the saved are in the one body, the church of Christ, which is *not* a human institution, organization, or denomination. All who are in the one body of Christ are to work for the unity of that one body.

Lesson in Brief

This study sheet teaches that Christ’s followers, the Christians, are the church, the body of Christ. Jesus built only one body, which is the church of which He is the head, the foundation, and the Savior. His love led Him to die so that He could purchase the church with His blood and present it to Himself. He wants all those who are in His church to be united.

Introduction

This lesson can be introduced by briefly reviewing the “Salvation” study sheet and then pointing out that those who are saved are in the church. The “Salvation” study sheet presents what one does to be saved and how he becomes a member of Jesus’ body of people. This lesson can help one to know what the Bible says about the church of Christ.

I. Members of the Church

In this section we will study about the members of the church of Christ, who they are, and what they are called.

1. Who make up the church of Christ? [Read Acts 8:3.] *Whom* did Saul persecute? [Fill in the blank with “church.”] Notice that when Saul was seeking to destroy the church, he was not tearing down buildings. The church of Christ is *not* a building or buildings, or a hierarchical organization, but rather it is men and women who belong to Jesus. [On the back draw a square, and write in the square at the top “Church.” At the bottom write “members.” Above that write “men and women.” See page 7.]

2. When Saul was seeking to destroy the church, who was he seeking to destroy? Notice how Luke discusses the activity of Saul until Acts 8:3 and then begins to discuss the activities of Philip (Acts 8:5). In Acts 9:1 he again begins to discuss the activity of Saul by picking up where he left off in his discussion of Saul. When he left writing about Saul in Acts 8:3, Saul was seeking to stamp out the church. When Luke again takes up the narrative about Saul, Saul is still doing what he had been doing. Who is Saul still seeking to destroy? [Read Acts 9:1.] *What* are the members of the church called? [Fill in the blank with “disciples of the Lord.” On the back above “men and women” write “disciples.” See page 7.]

[At this time the teacher might need to explain the difference between a *disciple* and an *apostle*. The reason for this is that many people think that the disciples were the Twelve. Luke 6:12-14 helps explain that the *twelve apostles* were chosen from among the larger group of Jesus’ followers, His disciples. The *apostles* were the smaller group, the Twelve, who were chosen as His special representatives, and the *disciples* were *all* His followers.]

3. Members of the church were the *disciples* of the Lord, but what were the disciples called? [Read Acts 11:26.] *What* were the disciples, the members of the church, also called? [Fill in the blank with “Christians.” On the back above “disciples” write “Christians.” See page 7.]

4. The terms “disciples” and “Christians” refer to the individual members of the church. These members as a group, i.e., as a whole, were called the church. There is another term used to describe this group of people. [Read Eph. 1:22, 23.] *What* else is the church called? [Fill in the blank with “body.” *On the back* write in the square under “church” the word “body.” See page 7.] If the church is the body and the body is the church, then what is true concerning the church is true concerning the body, and what is said about the body can also be said about the church.

What have we learned in this section? We have learned that the “church” and the “body” are terms used to refer to the followers of Christ as a group. The terms “disciples” and “Christians” are used of the individual members. The Christians are those who make up the body (the church) of Christ.

II. How Many?

Does the Bible teach that the Christians formed many religious organizations? Of how many groups were Christians members? [Read Rom. 12:4, 5.] The Christians were members of *how* many bodies? [Fill in the blank with “one.”] Notice that the Bible says there is “one” body in Christ. In the “Salvation” study sheet we learned that “all spiritual blessings” are in Christ. Since this is true, it follows that the *one body* has the spiritual blessings that are in Christ. What is true about the *body* is also true concerning the *church*. Therefore, it follows that *one church* has the spiritual blessings that are in Christ.

The body is mentioned many times in the Bible. Is the Bible consistent concerning the number of bodies? [Read 1 Cor. 12:12, 20; Eph. 4:4; Col. 3:15.] *How* many bodies are there? [Fill in the blanks with “one.”] Is the Bible consistent in this matter? Does this not emphasize the fact that there is only one body? [*On the back* write in the square “one.” See page 7.]

What have we learned in this section? We have learned that there is only *one* true body, one true church, mentioned in the Bible.

III. Whose Church?

In this section we are going to try to determine to whom this body of Christians, the church, belongs.

Jesus promised He would build a church. Whose church was He going to build? [Read Matt. 16:18.] *Whose* church did Jesus say He would build? [Fill in the blank with “My,” and after that in parentheses write “Christ’s.”]

This body, the church, is later referred to by Paul.

How did Paul refer to it? [Read 1 Cor. 12:27.] Paul called it *whose* body? [Fill in the blank with “of Christ.”]

Meaning the same, what else does Paul say about the body? Whose body does he say that the body is? [Read Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:30; Col. 1:24.] *Whose* body does Paul call the one body? [Fill in the blank with “His” followed by “Christ’s” in parentheses. *On the back* write “of Christ” after “church” and “body.” See page 7.]

What have we learned in this section? We have learned that Jesus has only one body, only one church. This body is made up of all Christians.

[At this time the teacher will want to turn to the back of the study sheet and ask how one enters the one church, the one body. *On the back* draw an arrow from the “world” into the “church.” See page 7.] How does one enter the church? What did we learn in the “Salvation” study sheet one must do to enter Christ? Jesus taught that we must hear and learn, believe in Him, repent of our sins, and confess our faith in Him. If we will do this and then receive the one baptism of the Bible, we will enter Jesus (Gal. 3:27). There is only one body in Jesus. So it is evident, when we are baptized into Jesus, we enter the one body that is in Jesus. We, however, do not need to use deductive reasoning to conclude how we enter the one body. The Bible tells us when we enter the one body. [Read 1 Cor. 12:13.] When do we enter the one body? [*On the back* write in the arrow those things that put us into the one body. See page 7.]

What are we called if we are in the one body? As a group we are called the *body*, i.e., the *church* of Christ. As individuals we are *disciples* of the Lord, i.e., *Christians*.

V. Christ and the Church

Jesus has a relationship to the church that is unique. No one else sustains such a relationship.

The church has not always been on earth, so it must have had a beginning, and one who started it. What did Jesus say He would do? [Read Matt. 16:18.] If a person builds, what is he? Isn’t he the builder? *What* is Jesus to the church? [Fill in the blank with “builder.” *On the back* on the left side of the square write “builder,” and under that write “Jesus.” See page 7.]

Not only is Jesus the builder, He is also something else to the church. On whom is the church built? [Read 1 Cor. 3:11.] *What* else is Jesus to the church?

[Fill in the blank with “foundation.”] If Jesus built the church on Himself, is it all right for us to build on someone else, someone other than Jesus? [*On the back* write beneath the square “foundation,” and under that write “Jesus.” See page 7].

Jesus is something else to the church. What else is He to the church? [Read Eph. 1:22.] *What* is Jesus to the church? [Fill in the blank with “head.”] What is the function of the *head* to the body of any organization? Isn’t the head the one who guides and directs the organization? No man or group of men is to be head of the church. Jesus is the sole, the only, head of the church mentioned in the Bible. [*On the back* write “head” over the square, and underneath that write “Jesus.” See page 7.]

Jesus is also something else to the church. What else is He to the church? [Read Eph. 5:23.] *What* is Jesus to the church? [Fill in the blank with “Savior.”] Those who are in Jesus’ church, the one He built on Himself and over which He is the head, has Him as their Savior. [*On the back* draw an arrow from the square to heaven and a cross in the arrow. Underneath the cross write “Savior,” and under that write “Jesus.” See page 7.]

What have we learned in this section? We have learned that Jesus is the builder, the foundation, the head, and the Savior of the church. Inasmuch as Jesus is in these ways related to the church, men should respect Him as He relates to the church, and should not try to take from Him His relationship to the church. Men should not build other churches, should not seek to lay other foundations, should not obey other heads, and should not seek other Saviors. Jesus is all the church needs (Col. 2:10).

V. Jesus’ Death for the Church

Inasmuch as Jesus is the builder, the foundation, the head, and the Savior of the church, what has He done for the church and why? [Read Eph. 5:25.] *What* did Jesus give for the church and *why*? [Fill in the blank with “gave Himself for it” and “love.”] This is expressed in another way. [Read Acts 20:28.] With *what* did Jesus purchase the church? [Fill in the blank with “purchased with His own blood.”]

[At this time the teacher might write *on the back* Acts 20:28 and the following questions:

1. Who purchased the church?
2. To whom does the church belong?
3. Why does the church belong to Him?
4. What did He pay for it?
5. What should we call the church?

6. What was the assessed value of the church?
7. What was Jesus willing to pay for the church?
8. Is the church valuable to Jesus?
9. Where must one be to benefit from Jesus’ blood?
10. Who will Jesus take with Him to heaven?

After writing the questions, the teacher will help the learner answer the questions from Acts 20:28. The answers seem apparent and are as follows: 1. Jesus; 2. Jesus; 3. He bought it; 4. His blood; 5. His (Christ’s) church; 6. Jesus’ blood; 7. His blood; 8. Yes; 9. In His church; 10. His church.

In order to illustrate Question 10, the teacher might tell about a person who bought a bag of groceries and then left them in a room at the store while he ran some other errands. When he returned, there were a number of bags in the room along with his bag. Which bag would he take home with him? He would take the bag he had purchased. If he took any other bags, he would be taking bags that did not belong to him. In like manner, it seems that Jesus will take to heaven only those He has purchased. If He should take to heaven those who have *not* been purchased with His blood, He would invalidate the necessity of shedding His blood on the cross; for if He can take to heaven those who have *not* been purchased with His blood, then His blood was not necessary for their entrance into heaven. The church is those Jesus purchased with His blood; therefore, the church must be those He will take to heaven. Are you in His church?]

What have we learned in this section? We have learned that, because of His love, Jesus shed His blood for the church. If we want the benefits of the blood of Jesus, we must be in His church.

VI. Submissive Church

Who does the church that Jesus built obey? Does His church submit to the religious directives, ordinances, and traditions of men? [Read Eph. 5:24.] To *whom* is the church subject? [Fill in the blank with “Christ.”]

If Jesus is head of the church, and the church is subject to Him, is it right for churches to make up their own rules and regulations? Those in the church of Christ should obey Him in everything. Those who will not hear Him will be cut off from among the people (Acts 3:23).

What have we learned in this section? We have learned that the church, the body of Christ, does the will of Christ.

VII. Harmony

1. We have already learned that Jesus has only one body of people, the church. What kind of relationship does Jesus want the members of this one body to have with each other? Does He want them at odds with each other, or does He want them united? [Read John 17:22.] Jesus and the Father work in harmony with each other. *Does* Jesus want His followers to follow them as a pattern? [Fill in the blanks with "one."] Jesus wants His followers to be united as *one* even as He and the Father are *one*.

2. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church to encourage them to live as Jesus wanted them to live. They were having some internal strife. What did Paul ask them to do? [Read 1 Cor. 1:10.] *What* were they to do? [Fill in the blanks with "same" and "divisions." Because of the wording in some versions of the Bible, the teacher may have to alter the wording of the study sheet a little.] Division among them was not acceptable and was to be corrected.

3. What instruction did Paul give the Philippian brethren? [Read Phil. 1:27.] *What* attitude did he desire as they labored for the faith? [Fill in the blanks with "one" and "together."] How many faiths are there? There is only *one* faith (Eph. 4:5).

What have we learned in this section? We have learned that followers of Jesus, His church, are to be united. They are to work together in harmony, with one mind, without division, and without ill will toward each other.

If Jesus built only one church and as head over the church desires unity among His body of believers, why then are there so many churches? This is a question that many ask. The answer may not be all that simple, but the Bible does indicate that such would happen.

Notice what the apostle Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus. (Read Acts 20:17, 28-31.) What was going to happen to the church? Would not men preach distorted teaching and by so doing develop their own following? [*On the back* draw an arrow from the square that represents the church to a small square back in the world. In the arrow write "disciples," and *above* the new square, *beside* it, *beneath* it, and *in* it write "men." See page 7.]

Notice that the churches men have started have *men* as head over them and are built on the foundation of the teachings of *men*. These are in competition with the church Jesus built, the church of which Jesus is head, the foundation, and the Savior.

Jesus died for His church and is the Savior of

His church. Who died for the churches men have started, and who is the Savior of these churches? The churches of men have the wrong builder, foundation, and head. In this they differ from the church Jesus built. Can they possibly have a savior like the Savior of the church of Christ?

All people should leave the world and the churches started by men and become united in Christ, in the church Jesus has built. This is the only safe course. Men cannot save their churches, but Jesus can save His church. Are you a member of the church of Christ? If you are not a member, why not become one now and have Him as your Savior?

VIII. The Church's Destiny

Jesus' love motivated Him to die for His church (Eph. 5:25). But why would Jesus give Himself in such a way? Two reasons are given by the apostle Paul. [Read Eph. 5:26, 27.] The first of these reasons is given in Eph. 5:26. Jesus gave Himself so that He could do *what* for the church? [Fill in the blanks with "sanctify," "cleanse," and "present."]

The word "sanctify" is not frequently used today. What does it mean? It means to be set apart for a special purpose. A piece of cloth can be used for various purposes: One can scrub the floor with it, blow his nose on it, wash dishes with it, etc. If a country's flag is printed on a piece of cloth, it would be set apart from ordinary purposes and used *only* as a flag. Jesus died to "sanctify" His church, i.e., to set His people apart from the evil world about it so that it can serve His heavenly purposes.

Also He died to "cleanse" the church. Nothing that is filthy, contaminated, or defiled can enter heaven (Rev. 21:27). Jesus died so that He could make the church clean and spotless, not *just* so it could be clean, but so that He could take it to heaven. The one body is *in Christ* where it is cleansed by the blood of Jesus (Rom. 12:5; Eph. 1:7), the blood that purchased the church (Acts 20:28).

Notice also that Jesus gave Himself so that He could cleanse the church with the washing of water by the word. Neither the *water* nor the *word* in and of itself has the power to cleanse our sins. Jesus gave Himself so that He could cleanse with the washing of water by the word.

A check has no value if there is no money in the bank. The money in the bank is what gives value to a check. In like manner, Jesus' blood is what makes cleansing with *water* and the *word* possible. The word is necessary so that people can hear and learn, be-

lieve in Jesus (John 17:20; Acts 17:11, 12), repent, confess faith in Jesus and be baptized. The *word* without *water* will not cleanse us, and the *water* without the *word* will not cleanse us. Both the *water* and the *word* are necessary. Notice how Saul was told to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins (Acts 22:16). Jesus gave Himself so that He can cleanse those who respond to the word (Acts 2:41) and are baptized in water.

The second purpose of Jesus' giving Himself is found in Eph. 5:27. He gave Himself so that He could present the church to Himself without spot or defilement, a holy and blameless church.

A wealthy man while driving through a slum section of town might see a woman to whom he is attracted. If, after getting to know her, he decides he wants her to meet his mother so that he can receive his mother's approval of a marriage, he might find the woman not acceptable to his sophisticated mother. In order to make her presentable, he would prepare her in good, clean, and acceptable clothing. Then he would take her to his mother.

In the same way, in our sinful state, we would be out of place in the Father's house. Jesus has cleansed the church and clothed it with Himself (Gal. 3:27) so that He can present it to Himself as a pure virgin (2 Cor. 11:2). Are you in the church of Christ? Why should you be a member of the church of Christ? What is the destiny of the church of Christ?

How do you enter the church of Christ? Have you heard the word, believed in Jesus, repented of your sins, confessed your faith in Jesus, and been baptized? What is lacking in your response to the will of Jesus. Why not obey Him right now?

What have we learned in this section? We have learned that the love of Jesus for the church motivated Him to sanctify and cleanse the church through His death so that He could present it to Himself as a spotless and blameless church.

Summary

In this lesson we studied about the people who

belong to Jesus, His church.

I. *Who make up the church of Christ?* The church, the body of Christ, is made up of men and women who are His followers, His disciples, who are called Christians.

II. *How many bodies?* There is only one body.

III. *Whose church (body) is it?* The body of Christians belong to Jesus.

IV. *What is Christ to the church?* Christ is the builder, the foundation, the head, and the Savior.

V. *What has Christ done for the church?* Jesus gave Himself so that He could purchase the church with His blood.

VI. *The church is subject to Christ.*

VII. *What kind of harmony does Christ desire among the members?* He desires the harmony He has with the Father, for He prayed for His followers to be "one even as we are one."

VIII. *Jesus gave Himself for the church that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself.*

In this lesson we have learned that in becoming a Christian one becomes a member of Jesus' body of believers, i.e., members of His church. Jesus has only one such body, the body we enter when we receive the one baptism taught in the Bible. As a member of His body, we are a member of the church of which He is the builder, the only foundation, and of which He is the head and Savior. This is the church of which we all should be members, instead of churches of men. Jesus' love for His church is seen in the death He suffered so that He might sanctify and cleanse the church, in order that He might present it to Himself a spotless and blameless church. He desires unity among all His followers.

Are you a member of the church of Christ? Do you know why you should be a member of His church? Why not become a follower of Jesus, a Christian, right now so that you will be a member of that body of believers Jesus will present to Himself? Do you want to become a follower now?

[Arrange a study time for the next study.]

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

I. Who make up the church of Christ?

1. Saul persecuted the _____ . Acts 8:3
2. This was persecution of the _____ . Acts 9:1
3. These were also called _____ . Acts 11:26
4. The church is also known as the _____ . Eph. 1:22, 23

II. How many bodies?

_____ Rom. 12:4, 5
_____ 1 Cor. 12:12
_____ 1 Cor. 12:20
_____ Eph. 4:4
_____ Col. 3:15

III. Whose church (body) is it?

_____ Matt. 16:18
_____ 1 Cor. 12:27
_____ Eph. 1:22, 23
_____ Eph. 5:30
_____ Col. 1:24

IV. What is Christ to the church?

_____ Matt. 16:18
_____ 1 Cor. 3:11
_____ Eph. 1:22
_____ Eph. 5:23

V. What has Christ done for the church?

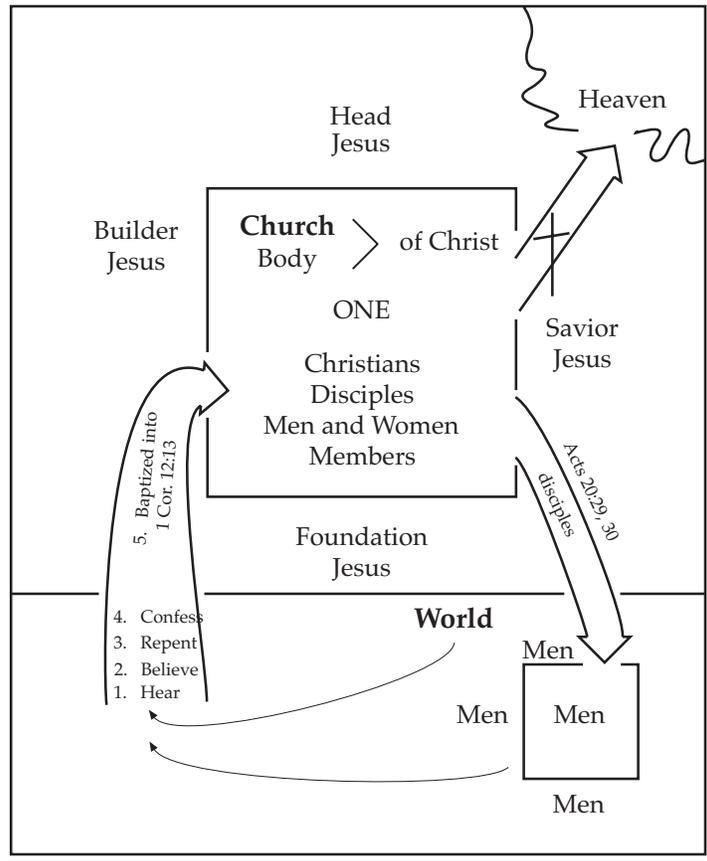
_____ Why? _____ Eph. 5:25
_____ Acts 20:28

VI. The church is subject to _____ . Eph. 5:24

VII. What kind of harmony does Christ desire among the members?

1. That they may be _____ , even as we are _____ . John 17:22
2. That ye all speak the _____ thing, and that there be no _____ among you. 1 Cor. 1:10
3. With _____ mind striving _____ . Phil. 1:27

VIII. Jesus gave Himself for the church that He might _____ and _____ it with the washing of water by the word, that He might _____ it to Himself. Eph. 5:26, 27



The Drawing for the Back of the "Church" Sheet.
 (See page 6.)