

# THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

*LESSON THREE = The Church in Jerusalem*  
*Bible Class Series by Ray Reynolds (12/15/10)*

Introduction: In our first two lessons we noticed the prophecies concerning the church, the environment into which the church was born, and the problems they would soon face. In this lesson we begin studying each of the congregations that were established in the New Testament. Let's study together . . . . .

Discussion:

## ***I. The Geography of Jerusalem***

Kidron Valley, Hinnon Valley (**Matthew 18:8**), Mt. Zion

There was poor water supply to the city of David, so large cisterns were used.

King Hezekiah's tunnel brought spring water around 700 BC (**II Kings 18:13-14**).

## ***II. The History of Jerusalem***

The region is known as the city of Salem (**Genesis 14:18**).

It was inhabited by the Jebusites (**Joshua 1:21, 19:11**).

The victory of David is legendary (**II Samuel 5:6-8**).

Solomon's temple was built and then destroyed in 586 BC (**II Kings 25**).

The second temple was built/repared by Nehemiah (**Ezra/Nehemiah**).

Herod's temple was then built and later destroyed in 70 AD.

The destruction of the temple put an end to the Jewish faith as prescribed by Moses.

The desolation of the temple and OT worship brought hostility between the Jews and Christians.

Nearly all of the prophets speak of this city's national significance.

Jerusalem is where the Lord chose to begin His church.

## ***III. The Beginning of the Church in Jerusalem***

Jesus had died, risen, and ascended (**Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts 1**).

The apostles remained in Jerusalem to receive the Holy Spirit (**Luke 24, Acts 1-2**).

The miraculous power of the Holy Spirit is poured out causing them to speak in tongues (**Acts 2**).

Peter promises the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to all who will be baptized (**Acts 2:38-39**).

Nearly three thousand followers were added to the church (**Acts 2:41, 47**).

The new kingdom, the spiritual Israel, is established (**Luke 23:45, Ephesians 2:18, Hebrews**).

The new kingdom is opened for all nations (**Matthew 16:17-19, Matthew 28:18-20, Galatians 3:23-29**).

## ***IV. The Work of the Church in Jerusalem***

The church is led by the apostles (**Acts 2:42**).

The church begins to study, fellowship, pray, and worship (**Acts 2:42**).

The church begins to use their spiritual gifts to teach (**Acts 2:43**).

The church begins to engage in ministry and benevolence (**Acts 2:44-45**).

The church begins to have love feasts/fellowship meals (**Acts 2:42, Jude 12, II Peter 2:13**).

The church begins to grow on a daily basis (**Acts 2:47**).

#### **V. *The Teachings of the Church in Jerusalem***

The church teaches the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (**Acts 2:14-39**).  
The church knew that Jesus commissioned them to preach the gospel (**Mark 16:15-16**).  
The church strongly advocated baptism (immersion) into Christ (**Acts 2:38, 41, 47**).  
The church incorporated the Lord's Supper into every worship service (**Acts 2:42, 20:7**).  
The church helps organize and fund mission efforts (**Acts 8, 10, 11, 16:24**, etc.).  
The church takes the initiative to add elders and deacons (**Acts 6:1-7, 11:30, 14:23**).  
The church had many teachers and prophets like Agabus (**Acts 11:28, 21:10**).

#### **VI. *The Dilemmas of the Church in Jerusalem***

The apostles begin teaching and healing which startles the Jews (**Acts 3**).  
The church suffers terrific persecution at the hands of the Jews (**Acts 4:1-23**).  
The apostles fear that the church would be weak (**Acts 4:23-31**).  
The benevolence of the church becomes a divisive issue (**Acts 4:32-5:11**).  
The miracles and teachings of the church cause the Jews to arrest the apostles (**Acts 5:12-42**).  
The ministry to the widows becomes an issue (**Acts 6:1-7**).  
The martyrdom of Stephen is a devastating blow to the church (**Acts 6:8-7:60**).  
The persecution of Saul forces the church to disperse (**Acts 8:1-3**).  
The church begins to send out missionaries (**Acts 8, 10**, etc.).  
The prejudices of the early Christians becomes more and more evident.  
The church faces the persecution of Herod (**Acts 12**).  
The Jerusalem church hosts the conference to deal with circumcision (**Acts 15**).  
The apostle Paul felt compelled to check in with the churches in Antioch and Jerusalem.

#### **VII. *The Maturity of the Church in Jerusalem***

The church in Jerusalem takes issue with the conversions of Samaritans (**Acts 8:14-25**).  
The church in Jerusalem takes issue with Saul of Tarsus (**Acts 9:26**).  
The church in Jerusalem takes issue with the conversions of the Gentiles (**Acts 11:1-18**).  
The church in Jerusalem takes issue with the liberal brethren in Antioch (**Acts 11, 13, 15**).  
The church in Jerusalem wants to add circumcision to the steps of salvation (**Acts 11:2-3, 15:5, 21:20**).  
The church in Jerusalem began to act superior in areas of doctrine and protocol, but found unity.  
The church in Jerusalem makes drastic changes from chapter 11 to chapter 21.

Conclusion: God clearly blessed the church in Jerusalem. We can see that history shows the wisdom and providence of God throughout the New Testament. We should trust Him to provide direction for the church today. It is my prayer that by studying about these wonderful congregations of the Lord's people that we will see our place in the kingdom. In our next lesson we will study about the church in Antioch.