

BITH307 CHURCH HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

This course explores the development of the Christian church from Pentecost through the 20th century. Upon completion of the course, student should be able to do the following:

- Outline a timetable of events that are most pertinent to the major phases of church history.
- Examine how various theologians have influenced the ways in which many contemporary Christian thinkers understand various doctrinal topics today.
- Explain how Christianity evolved into multiple denominations and theological traditions.
- Display a basic familiarity with the major contributions that prominent Christian leaders have made in preserving and perpetuating the Christian faith.
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of historical church leaders as well as the positive and negative implications of various events in church history.
- Discuss the significance of church history in a clear and accessible manner.

Definition of the First Church

The Christian Church, which includes the past, present and the Church to come, consists of all who believe in Jesus of Nazareth as the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God; who have accepted Him as their personal Savior from sin, and who obey Him as the Christ, the Head of the Kingdom of God on this earth.

Beginning

The Christian Church began on the Day of Pentecost, in the late spring of 30 A.D. This was fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus and ten days after His Ascension from the Mount of Olives.

Endowment

You all remember the Day of Pentecost as recorded in the Book of Acts. This is where the 120 were all gathered in the upper room and they were all praying and in one accord and the Holy Spirit came upon them in such a manner that they could see tongues of flames upon their heads. Now the effect of this experience served three purposes:

Location

The Christian Church began in the city of Jerusalem and its immediate surrounding areas. That is not to say that there were no other believers throughout the land, because there were

other groups of believers, especially in Northern Galilee, but there are no records of organization or recognition as branches of the Church. You would find the headquarters of the Church in the upper room in Mount Zion or Solomon's Porch in the Temple. Later, the other most prominent headquarters (church), when the Church moved beyond the Jewish community, was at Antioch.

Membership

All the members of the Pentecostal Church were Jews. There is no evidence among the members, or even the Apostles, that Gentiles would be admitted into the Church. They may have thought that the heathen nations would become Jewish first, and then accept Jesus as their Savior, but they had no idea that Gentiles would become part of the Church. At that particular time there were three classes of Jews and each class was represented in the Church at Jerusalem.

Leaders

The leader of the Church during this particular time was the Apostle Peter. He was the planner, the preacher, the wonderworker, and the defender of the new Church. This was not because he was divinely appointed ruler over the Church but because he took charge because of his spirit of leadership, his outspoken personality, and his quickness to make decisions. Alongside Peter we see the Apostle John. Peter was more practical, but John was more spiritual. John rarely spoke but he was held in high esteem by the believers.

Learn more by purchasing the entire course that covers the following topics:

Lesson 1 - First General Period - The Apostolic Church

Lesson 2 - Second General Period - The Persecuted Church

Lesson 3 - Third General Period - The Imperial Church

Lesson 4 - Fourth General Period - The Medieval Church

Lesson 5 - Fifth General Period - The Reformed Church

Lesson 6 - Sixth General Period - The Modern Church