

Jerusalem, the Model Church

Dub McClish

Jerusalem is where the church began. It was no accident that the first Gospel sermon was preached there, resulting in its establishment (Isa. 2:2-4; Luke 24:47). The early chapters of Acts tell us most of what we know about the first church of Christ.

1. It was a church **without distinctions**. It was composed of people of all spiritual levels, from Jesus' murderers to His apostles. There were wealthy land-owners and widows in abject poverty. There were Palestinian Jews and Hellenistic Jews. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), neither must we be (Jam. 2:1-4). We are out of step with Christ if we let race, wealth, education, et al. effect our treatment of others.
2. It was a church of manifold **unity**. They were united in spirit. When a complaint arose, it was immediately dealt with and not allowed to cause schism (Acts 6:1-6). They were of one accord, one heart and soul. They were united in one place (Acts 2:44, 46). They were united in prayer (2:42; 4:24). They were united in their doctrine and practice (2:42). They had all been saved and added to the church alike (2:38, 41). They all worshiped alike (2:42). Jesus' church can always be recognized by its worship.
3. It was a **compassionate** church. Many members sold their possessions to help others (Acts 2:44; 4:34). Widows received daily help (Acts 6:1). Jesus' church will not be indifferent to the needs of others.
4. It was a **tried** church. The Sanhedrin Court arrested various apostles three times, forbidding them to preach. Stephen was stoned to death for preaching, then a great persecution arose, driving all but the apostles from Jerusalem. Later Herod killed James and imprisoned Peter. The church was made stronger by it.
5. It was a **large** church. The first day it had about 3,000 members (Acts 2:41), then the number of men grew to about 5,000 (4:4). It was called a multitude next, which first multiplied (v.32), then multiplied exceedingly (5:14; 6:7).
6. It was an **evangelistic** church (Acts 5:28), which at least partly explains why it was so large. A church will always grow when it fills its city with the Gospel. It cannot do so without it.

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