

IDENTIFYING THE CHURCH

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THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

The apostle Paul declared that the gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:1-5). The word "gospel" is a transiteration of the Greek word euangelion denoting good news concerning the kingdom of God and of the salvation for all that are in Christ Jesus. Therefore, in the New Testament, the basic facts of the gospel begins and ends with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The gospel of Christ was given to, and preached by the apostles (I Peter 1:12; Ephesians 1:12-13; I aThess. 2:13-14; II Thess. 1:7-9; II Cor. 4:1-7). It was revealed and protected by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:3-5; I Cor. 2:6-10; John 15:26-27). Some of those who heard the apostles preach the gospel obeyed it (I Thess. 2:13), others did not (Romans 10:16-17). Those who obeyed the word were saved from the consequences of their sins (spiritual death), and slavery (Romans 6:15-18). The "form of doctrine" of Romans 10:17 is the gospel of Christ, obedience to it is demonstrated in Acts chapter 2; commanded in Romans chapter 6, verses 1-4; following the hearing of the message a person either believes or not. It is impossible for a person to please God if they do not believe the basic principles of the gospel. That is called faith. Faith is not simply ascertaining to the facts of the gospel, but acting according to what is believed: "A firm conviction producing a full acknowledgement of God's revelation of truth; 2/, a personal surrender to Him, John 1:12." (Vines Expository Dictionary of The New Testament). In other words a person who believes in something will act accordingly. There is no such thing as "religion of the heart" and not of the head. If you believe that Jesus is who the Scriptures declare Him to be you obey Him. He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." So, hearing, and believing is absolutely necessary to salvation (Romans 10:14). Next, the person must repent. That is, they must change mind about the way they are living for better. They must turn from sin and turn to God. Peter commanded it is Acts chapter 2. Confession is next, to be followed by baptism for the forgiveness of sin (Romans 10:10; 6:1-4). When this is done the Lord adds to the church. Acts 2:1-47).

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