Divine Nature Of The Church

Intro: In the latter part of Acts, Paul had been arrested and had to appeal to Rome for his personal safety. After arriving in Rome, Paul immediately called the Jews together. He wanted them to know certain things about his arrest. Acts 28:17 “And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.” He also wanted them to know why he was in bonds; Acts 28:20 “For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.” The Jews were interested in knowing about the Cause he represented; Acts 28:22 “But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.” They thought of the Lord’s church as simply a sect of Judaism. Likewise, many today are uninformed as to the New Testament church. Thus, let us consider the true nature of the church.

I. Originated In The Divine Mind
   A. The church was in the eternal purpose of God; Eph. 3:10-11 “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
   B. It was prophesied by God:
      1. Isa. 2:2-4 “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”
      2. Dan. 2:44 “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”
   C. It was prefigured by types:
      1. Israel
         a. Their bondage
         b. Their deliverance including being baptized unto Moses
         c. God’s guiding them and sustaining them
         d. The Promised Land
      2. Tabernacle and temple
         a. The Holy Place represented the church.
         b. To go from the court (representing the world) to the Holy of Holies (representing heaven) you must go through the Holy Place (representing the church).

II. Planned By A Divine Architect
   A. Being Omniscient:
      1. He knew what was needed to meet the spiritual needs of man.
      2. It is always up to date.
B. It needs no revisions:
   1. It is perfect or sufficient in every aspect.
      a. Col. 2:9-10 “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”
      b. Eph. 1:22-23 “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”
   2. No changes are needed:
      a. Gal. 1:6-9 “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”
      b. 2 John 9 “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”
      c. Rev. 22:18-19 “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

III. BUILT BY DIVINE GUIDANCE
   A. Jesus is the builder of the church.
      1. Mat. 16:18 “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
      2. He is the good foundation:
         a. No building is studier than its foundation.
         b. Isa. 28:16 “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”
         c. Mat. 7:24-25 “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.”
         d. 1 Cor. 3:11 “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”
         e. This foundation is indestructible; Heb. 13:8 “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”
         f. The more man seeks to destroy the Christ, the more He is magnified.
   B. The apostles were selected to build it—the construction crew:
      1. Eph. 2:20-22 “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. 22In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”
      2. Mat. 16:18-19 “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”
         a. Bound and loosed are both perfect tense in the Greek.
         b. Thus the meaning is: “whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall have already been bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall have already been loosed in heaven.”
3. They were given the divine blueprint.
   a. John 14:25-26 “These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 26But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”
   b. John 16:12-13 “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”

4. They did build according to the pattern given by God; Heb. 8:5 “Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.”

IV. HAS A DIVINE HEAD
A. Christ is the head of the church:
   1. Eph. 1:22-23 “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”
   2. Col. 1:18 “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

B. He is the one with absolute power:
   1. Mat. 28:18 “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”
   2. 1 Pet. 3:22 “Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.”

C. He is the only one who has the right to establish its laws.

V. COMPOSED OF DIVINE MATERIAL
A. Man is the material making up the church:
   1. Eph. 2:20-22 “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; 22In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”
   2. 1 Pet. 2:5 “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

B. Man must be cleansed by the Divine process:
   1. A change of mind brought about by faith; Heb. 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”
   2. A change of life brought about by repentance; Acts 17:30 “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:”
   3. A change in relationship brought about by baptism:
      a. Mat. 28:19-20 “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
      b. Gal. 3:26-27 “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”
VI. HAS A DIVINE MISSION

A. Its mission is the saving of souls

1. A spiritual mission; John 18:36 “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”

2. Like our Builder’s; Luke 19:10 “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

B. Accomplished in three ways:

1. Preaching the Gospel to the whole world:
   a. Mat. 28:18-20 “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
   b. Mark 16:15-16 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

2. Edifying or the perfecting of the saints; Eph. 4:11-16 “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

3. Benevolent activities; Gal. 6:10 “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

C. The church is sufficient in carrying out its Divine mission.

Conclusion: The church is Divine in its very nature. We must respect the church that the Lord built and not man.