



Sunday – Aug 27, 2023

The Lakeland Hills Leader

Lakeland Hills church of Christ

2510 Lakeland Hills Blvd
Lakeland, FL 33805
(863) 688-4336

Schedule of Services

Sunday

9:00 AM Bible Study
9:50 AM Worship
6:00 PM Worship

Wednesday

7:00 PM Bible Study

Visit our Website:

www.lakelandhillschurchofchrist.com

For Sermon & Class outlines,
Bible Study Materials and
Other Information.

Visit our Facebook Page:

www.facebook.com/LakelandHillschurchofchrist for events,
information, and links to our
YouTube Archives

Visit us on YouTube:

www.youtube.com/channel/UCu7AG_3jUtpBDlr2NPqB3iw for
Live Streams and Video
Archives.

Elders

Bob Marschall
Leon Miller
Larry Wisdom

Deacons

Bucky Day
Sherman Johnson
Michael Sadler
David Williams

Evangelist

Chuck Kozens

The New Testament Church

Man's Salvation was promised and planned by God from the beginning (*Titus 1:2*). We see that plan unfold on the pages of the Old Testament thru the writing of Moses and the Prophets and it was fulfilled in the coming of Christ Jesus, the Son of God.

The Prophet Daniel prophesied that in the last days of the great kings, a kingdom would be established which would never be destroyed (*Dan.2:44*). That kingdom would be a spiritual kingdom. Christ would be the King and would purchase it by the shedding of his own blood (*Eph.1:22-23; Acts 20:28*). Members would be believers in Christ. That kingdom is the "Church" which God planned from the beginning, promised by Jesus Christ (*Matt.16:18*), and instituted and established by the Apostles on the day of Pentecost following Jesus' death, by and with the direction of the Holy Spirit (*Acts 2*). Those who believed in Christ as the Son of God and were baptized into obedience to the will of God were added to that body (*Acts 2:47*).

In the beginning, God planned and designed one church. It was the *Ecclesia (the body of the saved)*. He has given laws and commandments regarding it. Any deviation from it is sin (*2 John 1:9*). So, how did there get to be so many different denominations with different beliefs and practices, all claiming to be Christians and all claiming to be members of that Church for which Christ died?

God has always had a pattern for man to live, work, and worship by. Cain and Abel were given a pattern of worship (*Gen.4:1-8*). Noah had a pattern to build the ark (*Gen.6:13-22*). Moses had a pattern to build the Tabernacle (*Ex.25:9*). The Jews had a pattern of living both morally and spiritually (*Ex.20-24; Book of Leviticus*). David had a pattern for building the Temple (*1 Chron.28:11-12*). Just so, God has given us a pattern for his church outlined on the pages of the New Testament.

Since the beginning there have been those who were not content to abide by God's Laws and design. Man thinks he is able to do a better job of planning and organization than the Lord. Cain was not content to abide by the pattern of worship God had given. The nation of Israel had a long history of falling away. We see this during the days of Joshua (*Judges 2:7-10*). During the days of the Judges there was a cycle of digression, oppression, repentance, and deliverance. During the days of the Divided Kingdom, both kingdoms were taken into captivity because of unfaithfulness (*1 Kings 15:4; 22:43; 2 Kings 12:3; 14:4; 15:35; 17:11*). In the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi shows us that God has had enough.

By the time Christ came, different sects had developed, each teaching their own doctrine. The church of the first century had those who were not content to abide by the pattern. There were the Judaizers, the Gnostics, the Nicolaitans, and those who denied the resurrection and the eternal life to name a few. Paul told the Thessalonians that apostasy was already at work and would manifest itself when those who were holding it back were gone (*2 Thess. 2:7*).

Digression continued down thru the ages even to our time. By early in the third century, the church had digressed to the point that the Roman Catholic church had

fully formed. The digression started with small, seemingly innocent steps away from the Truth. The end result was an institution that had no resemblance to the Lord's church. Because of corruption, in the thirteenth thru the fifteenth centuries, there was an effort to reform the Roman Catholic church by various men during a period called the Reformation period. Out of this Reformation, various denominations came into existence.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries brought about a period of restoration. It was a time when men began to call for a turning from sectarianism and division and a turning to the restoration of the New Testament church based on the word of God. However, digression continued into the end of the nineteenth century over the issues of the missionary society and instrumental music. It arose again in the mid-twentieth century over institutionalism

God has always had his own special people. He promised that his church would stand forever and even the gates of Hades would not prevail against it (*Matt. 16:18*). The Roman Catholic church and all those who have digressed from the pattern with their differing practices and beliefs are a result of man's ideas, not God's. God told us, through the inspired writings of the Apostles that those who are not content to abide by His laws and design are not His children and will be lost (*Matt. 7:21*). We must understand the church for which Jesus Christ died and do not become confused by all the denominations and differing doctrines that have arisen thru the years. Let us hold fast to the Truth of God's Word and abide in the pattern he has given for us to live, work, and worship in.

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