

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH?

7/6/2025 AM

INTRODUCTION:

A. A question often asked when visiting some areas:

1. Areas where the church was once active and strong.
2. What happened to that church?

B. Note:

1. **Daniel 2:44.**
2. **Matthew 16:18; Heb 12:28.**
3. Since the kingdom cannot be moved, since it is an eternal kingdom, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH IN CERTAIN AREAS AND CITIES?

C. What happened to the strong, sound, growing, and faithful congregations that we read about in the New Testament?

I. THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM --- WHAT HAPPENED?

A. It had its beginning in **Acts 2**. (great and glorious)

1. Jerusalem, the birthplace of the Church of Christ.
 - 1) **Luke 24:47-49; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:5-8.**
 - 2) **Acts 2.**
2. Some 3,000 souls became members of the church.

B. The church grew and became strong here (**Acts 4:4, 32**).

C. What about now?

1. As late as the 1980s, fewer than 25 members existed in this birthplace of the church. ---WHAT HAPPENED?
2. Hard to believe!

II. THE CHURCH IN CORINTH --- WHAT HAPPENED?

A. **Acts 18:8.**

1. Paul preached the gospel, and the congregation began to gather.
2. Today, no church of Christ exists in Corinth.

B. Problems arose soon after the church was established.

1. **1 Corinthians 1:10-13** (Division --- following men)
2. Paul warned them repeatedly in the letter.
 - 1) **1 Corinthians 10:12** (do not follow men).
 - 2) **1 Corinthians 15:58** "Be ye steadfast..."
 - 3) **1 Corinthians 16:13-14.**

C. Some things that may have lead to their apostasy:

1. **1 Corinthians 3.** Carnally minded.
2. **1 Corinthians 5.** Tolerated sins in the members. No discipline.
3. **1 Corinthians 7.** Home and marriage problems.
4. **1 Corinthians 8.** Became stumbling blocks, no love for lost souls.
5. **1 Corinthians 11:2-16** --- Liberal thinking concerning the woman's work in the church.
6. **1 Corinthians 11:17-34** --- Liberalism in worship and the lack of respect for holy things.

D. What happened to the church in Corinth?

1. Basically, they stopped loving the church.
2. Do we ever stop to think about our congregation?

III. THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS --- WHAT HAPPENED?

A. In **Acts 20:17-38**, Paul warns them of approaching dangers.

B. Revelation 2:4 They had left their first love!

1. Lives not right, attitudes wrong, misplaced motives!
2. Notice these earlier passages: Instructions and warnings.
 - 1) **Ephesians 4:1.**
 - 2) **Ephesians 5:1-2.**
 - 3) **Ephesians 5:16.**
 - 4) **Ephesians 6:6.** "...doing the will of God from the heart."
 - 5) **Ephesians 6:11.** "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."
3. Did they listen? No! Because now the church is no longer to be found in this city (**Revelation 2:5**)

IV. CONCLUSION:

A. Consider also the early beginning of N/T Christianity in this country.

B. When studying the history of the church in America, we can document the apostasy.

1. Places like Midway, Kentucky.
 - 1) Unauthorized innovations: The melodeon was introduced. First used to get the pitch of a song, then it became a part of worship.
 - 2) Today, that congregation is not the Lord's church, but a Christian church.
2. In all of the apostasies, we see apathy and relaxed Bible standards.
 - 1) Preachers: L. L. Pinkerton, Issac Errett, and W. K. Pendleton all approved of the mechanical instrument in worship.
 - 2) Elders: Did not stand and oppose errors and innovations.
 - 3) Members: They did not demand a "thus saith the Lord" for all that was done and taught.
3. There was a general LACK OF BIBLE KNOWLEDGE.
 - 1) Error then swiftly came into the church.
 - 2) **Hosea 4:1.**

V. QUESTION:

A. Will there come a time, perhaps in a few years, when someone may come by here and ask, "What happened to the church at Rendon?"

B. Someone said, "We are always one generation away from apostasy." Every generation must be taught to love and hold on to truth (Eph. 6:4**).**