

When Did The Church Begin?

I. Views As To When The Church Began

A. John 20

B. Acts 1

C. Acts 9 (Hyperdispensationalist, e.g. C. R. Stam)

The body of Christ began with Paul, and we have Paul's conversion in Acts 9. (see Stam)

Use 1 Timothy 1:16 in which Paul says he is the first one of a pattern of believers to follow.

D. Acts 13 (Hyperdispensationalist, J. C. O'Hare)

Beginning of Paul's first missionary journey.

E. Acts 28 (Ultra-Hyperdispensationalist, e.g. E. W. Bullinger)

This comes from Acts 28:23ff, specifically Acts 28:28, where it seems that the Jews were given one last shot at the Kingdom. Since the Jews rejected this final offer, the Kingdom offer was withdrawn and the message of salvation then was given first to the Gentiles.

II. Peculiar Beliefs of the Hyperdispensationalist

A. Two Bodies, e.g. Jewish and Gentile.

1. Some obtain this notion from Acts 15 and Galatian 2 where we have two groups of believers. The Jewish believers still kept the law, the Gentile believers were not put under the yoke of the law.
2. Another verse on this is Acts 21:18ff. The Jewish believers still keep the law. Some accused Paul of telling the Jewish believers to punt totally the ceremonial law, and therefore Paul was guilty of forsaking the OT Scriptures. As a result, James recommended that Paul take part in some public ceremonial law to show that he had not totally forsaken Moses.

B. Only the NT books written after the beginning of the Church are relevant, and then only those writing addressed to one of the two bodies.

1. For example, the General Epistles are relevant to Jewish believers, the Pauline epistles are relevant to the Gentile believers.
2. Gentile believers do not need to obey anything in the General Epistles, Jewish believers do not need to obey anything in the Pauline Epistles.
3. One must be careful to only take what Paul wrote after the beginning of the church as being applicable to the church today.

C. Water Baptism is part of the ceremonial law.

III. Refutation

A. Scriptural Rebuttals

Romans 16:7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Galatians 1:13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

Galatians 1:21-23 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

1 Thessalonians 2:14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:

B. Problems regarding the NT books and the two bodies

1. Why would John have written to only Jews, when he was the only Apostle still living?
2. In any case, all believe there was one body after Acts 28, which occurred in A.D. 60-62. Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter, The Epistles of John, Jude, and Revelation were all written after that time to a non-existent group of believers. Some will say that this will apply to believers during the Tribulation (come on!).