

# S. E. Anderson's "The First Church" – 27 Proofs

## Introduction

This answering of the proofs offered by S.E. Anderson is actually an addendum to other writings on the New Testament church and is written to respond to the predominate idea that circulates among Independent Baptists regarding the origin of the New Testament church. This addendum was brought about as an answer to materials I was presented with concerning the founding of the New Testament church and the baptism administered by John the Baptist. The materials given to me were written by S. E. Anderson and Davis W. Huckabee. I do not personally know either man. However, I have some of their writings in my possession and I do know them through their writings. *My issue in writing this addendum is not against either of them personally, rather **it is against the methods used to prove the points they make.*** The bulk of this addendum addresses a list of 27 points given by S. E. Anderson in his book "The First Church." I address some of Davis Huckabee's statements in the process of answering S. E. Anderson's proofs. There is a verse in Scripture that ought to be the guide for everyone in the gospel ministry. In I Thessalonians 5: 21, we find the following admonition:

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. (*I Thessalonians 5:21*)

However, there is an additional item to add to that:

*What does one consider to be the standard for proving something?*

It is a dodge to state "I don't have to prove anything. I have faith that it is right." The reason that it is a dodge is

because of I Thessalonians 5:21. To make any statement similar to the above is to deny the plain commandment of Scripture – we are to prove everything, including Scripture. Now I know that some will automatically jump to the conclusion that I am speaking of proving whether Scripture is right or not. That would be an assumption that is manifestly false as the entire body of my writings plainly demonstrate that I use the Scripture extensively, and rely on it exclusively to prove doctrine. No, the proving that is spoken here means to prove out the doctrines, and prove out the statements and assertions of everyone we encounter – by the standard of the Scripture. By the way, without faith, no one can truly know that the Scripture is correct anyway. All that being stated, let us begin with some of the assertions of S. E. Anderson concerning the origin of the New Testament church, and the point which he attempts to prove, which is that the New Testament church was in existence and functioning prior to Pentecost. There is one point to bear in mind before proceeding:

*The earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ began at His baptism by John the Baptist, and ended when He ascended bodily into Heaven.*

Thus the assertion that the New Testament church began during Christ's earthly ministry is indeed correct. However, that is not what is meant by S. E. Anderson and others when they use the phrase "the earthly ministry of Christ". What they mean is the time period prior to the Lord's Supper and His crucifixion. This is obvious by the context in which that phrase and similar phrases are used. Now, S. E. Anderson began the Preface to his book on the New Testament church with 27 points that he determined were proof of the church's existence while the Lord Jesus Christ was teaching, preaching and healing prior to the Lord's Supper. The points will be taken in order and briefly discussed and answered, beginning at point 1. **Method of addressing the proofs in question.** The method which I use in addressing the points that are given as

proofs, are as follows:

1. When the proof is prima facie in error, I will go no further than addressing the implicit logic of the statement made. Regardless of what verses are used in support of the proof, if the proof flies in the face of other Scripture and strongly inveighs against, or sets aside other valid doctrine, I will address the error in logic and ignore the verses in support. The reason for this should be self-evident.
2. When the proof is correct, but errs in the Scriptural support, I will address the error of the verses used to support the statement and acknowledge the validity of the statement.
3. When the proof is overly broad, I will address the attendant implications of the statement and demonstrate where it errs.
4. When the proof is correct and the Scriptural support is correct, I will readily acknowledge it as such.

Let me be express in this: I do not disagree with the central tenet of S. E. Anderson and many others concerning the fact that the New Testament church began before Pentecost. What I disagree with are the following things:

1. The excessively broad brush used to "prove" their point.
2. The use of other versions, particularly the modern versions when it suits them.
3. The disdaining of the King James Version as a poor translation.
4. The false logic that is employed to arrive at a point that could not be made to fit otherwise.
5. The use of sources outside the Scripture, particularly the "Greek".

In Christ, *Paul W. Davis*

**Answering the 27 "Proofs" that the New Testament Church Started with John's Baptism**

<u>1. Christian believers before Pentecost had the gospel</u>	<u>2. They were converted</u>
<u>3. They were baptized after conversion</u>	<u>4. They had Christ as Head</u>