

THE CHURCH BUILT BY CHRIST

by John Isaac Edwards

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus pledged and promised, “...I will build my church...” This brief study brings to our attention several facts about the church built by Christ:

1) **GOD PLANNED.** The church built by Christ was not conceived in the mind of any man, but is “According to the *eternal purpose* which he [God] purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:10-11). Thus, the church is not here as a result of some afterthought or accident!

2) **PROPHET PREDICTED.** The prophets of the Old Testament predicted the establishment of the church built by Christ. One classic example is when the prophet Isaiah said, “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. And 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*” (Is. 2:2-3). The prophet speaks of the establishment of the Lord’s

house. The Lord’s house is identified as the Lord’s church (1 Tim. 3:15). Notice some details concerning its establishment: the period when it will be established (*in the last days*); the people who will be present (*all nations*); and the place of its establishment (*Jerusalem*).

3) **SPIRIT REVEALED.** The church built by Christ is revealed by the Holy Spirit as being established in fulfillment of Old Testament promise and prophecy. Take your Bible to Acts 2, where “...there were dwelling at *Jerusalem* Jews, devout men, out of *every nation* under heaven” (v. 5). Thus, we have the right place and the right time when the Lord’s house, the church, would be established! On this occasion, the apostles had been waiting for the promise of the Father, that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5; Lk. 24:47-49). “...they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance” (v. 4). Some of the Jerusalem dwellers mistook new tongues for new wine (v. 13). Peter put to rest this false supposition saying, “For these are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which

was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass *in the last days*...” (vv. 15-17). Thus, when the apostle quotes an Old Testament prophet and says, “...this is that...”, we can know for certain that the events of Acts 2 occurred in the last days, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy! Thus, we have the right time period! For the first time, the Spirit reveals the church as being in existence: “...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (v. 47).

4) **SEED PLANTED.** In the Parable of the Sower, “...The seed is the word of God” (Lk. 8:11). The church built by Christ was produced through the planting of divine seed as the word of God was preached. Jesus commissioned the apostles, “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Lk. 24:47). This is exactly what took place, on the day of Pentecost, in Acts 2. When the audience asked, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”, Peter answered, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (v. 38). Thus, repentance and remission of sins

was preached in the name of Christ among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem! This good seed mixed with good soil as “...they that gladly received his word were baptized...” (v. 41). This is how the church came into existence — as a result of the word of God being preached, and folks hearing, believing and obeying it! As the apostles and others went forth and preached the word of God in other places, carrying this same seed, the church was planted in other locations. At the creation, this seed principle was established: “...yielding seed after his kind...” (Gen. 1:11-12). That’s why if you were to plant tomato seed, should you live to be as old as Methuselah, you would never reap an ear of corn from that seed! If you were to take the same tomato seed you planted in your garden this spring, preserve it, and plant it somewhere else, provided the soil conditions are right, what would it produce? The same kind of tomatoes you are enjoying this summer! Now, apply that seed principle to the word of God. If we take the same seed that was planted in Acts 2, and plant it today, what will it produce? The same thing produced in the first century —

after his kind! Now, someone asks — how did all these other churches spring up? Over the years, men made changes to the original seed, by perverting the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6-9). This perverted seed planted has produced corrupt and deviant plants (churches). We plead with you to accept only the pure, unadulterated gospel of Christ (the original seed) and be added to the original church (the indigenous plant)!

5) CHRIST HEADED. The Scriptures feature Jesus Christ, God’s Son, as the head of the church. God “...put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body...” (Eph. 1:22-23). As your head has but one body and your body has but one head, so it is with Christ and the church! “*And he is the head of the body, the church...*” (Col. 1:18). Christ has “...all power in heaven and in earth” (Mt. 28:18). Thus, the church has no human head on earth! This head and body relationship necessitates “...the church is subject unto Christ...in every thing” (Eph. 5:24). Therefore, “...whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the

Lord Jesus...” (Col. 3:17). That is, by His authority!

6) BLOOD PURCHASED. The church of Christ was purchased with the blood of Christ. Paul reminded the Ephesian elders, “...to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Paul appealed to the Corinthians to glorify God in their body and in their spirit with the fact that “...ye are bought with a price” (1 Cor. 6:20). This price is the blood of the Son of God! Peter penned, “...ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, ...But with the precious blood of Christ...” (1 Pet. 1:18-19). This highlights the value of the Christ-built church!

7) BIBLE GUIDED. While other churches subscribe to man-made creeds, the church built by Christ is guided and governed solely by “All scripture...” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

8) HEAVEN BOUND. Jesus taught, “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Mt. 15:13). The church of Christ will be “...delivered up...to God...” when the end comes (1 Cor. 15:24)!

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