

Establishment of the Church

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There are many different theories about the establishment of the church, the kingdom of God. This study takes a spiritual look at *when*, *where*, *who*, and *how* the church built by Christ was established.

When. The Bible is specific as to when the church was established.

In the last days. Isaiah prophesied, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established...” (Isaiah 2:2). The Lord’s house is the Lord’s church (1 Timothy 3:15). The time period in Acts 2, when the church is first spoken of as being in existence (verse 47), is “in the last days” (Acts 2:16-17).

In the days of the Roman kings. Daniel chapter two finds king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon having a dream and God through Daniel revealing the king’s dream and the interpretation. In the dream, the king sees a great image. Different parts of the image represent different world empires. The head of gold represented Babylon as Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, “....Thou art this head of gold” (verse 38). History reveals the Medo-Persian empire was represented by the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass stood for the Grecian empire, and the legs and feet of iron symbolized Rome. Daniel 2:44 states, “And in the days of these kings shall

the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed...” “The days of these kings” refers to the days of the Roman kings. The kingdom of God is the church of the firstborn (Matthew 16:18-19; Colossians 1:13, 22, 24; Hebrews 12:23, 28). When Jesus came into Galilee preaching, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand...” (Mark 1:15), the Caesars, the Roman kings, ruled the world (Luke 3:1-2).

When the Son of Man came to the Ancient of Days. Daniel “...saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom...” (Daniel 7:13-14). The Son of man came with the clouds of heaven “...when he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9). After the ascension, He came to the Ancient of days, God the Father, and the kingdom was given to Him as Peter preached Jesus “being by the right hand of God,” seated on David’s “throne,” in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (Acts 2:22-36).

In the lifetime of some of Jesus’ disciples. Jesus said, “...That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come...” (Mark 9:1). Either the kingdom, the church, was established in their lifetime, or Jesus was wrong about it, or

there are people about 2,000 years old roaming the earth today still waiting for the kingdom of God to come!

After the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles. The Lord told His disciples that some of them would see “the kingdom of God come with power” (Mark 9:1). If we can put our finger on when the power came, we will know when the church was established. The Lord informed His apostles, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you...” (Acts 1:8). Now we need to find out when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles. This took place on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2 when the apostles “...were all filled with the Holy Ghost...” (verse 4). Thus, the kingdom came with power on Pentecost.

Where. Isaiah announced, “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” (Isaiah 2:3). The “mountain of the Lord” is a reference to the city of Jerusalem (Zechariah 8:3), where the Lord’s house would be built (Zechariah 1:16) and the foundation laid (Isaiah 28:16). Jerusalem is the place where the church was established (Acts 2:5).

Who. The prophecy of Isaiah continues, “...and all nations shall flow unto it” (Isaiah 2:2). Notice who was present on the day of Pentecost when the church was established: “...Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5).

How. The church came into existence through the planting of seed. In the Parable of the Sower the seed represented the word of the kingdom (Matthew 13:19; Luke 8:11). This seed was first planted among all nations in Jerusalem as the apostles preached the word and men heard it, believed it and obeyed it (Luke 24:47; Acts 2). Thus, the church was planted as “...the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). Since seed produces “after his kind” (Genesis 1:11-12), when we plant the same gospel seed today in good soil which was planted in the first century, it will produce the church identical in every respect with the original.

Everything points to Pentecost in Acts 2 about AD 30 as the beginning. Jesus looked forward to it in Luke 24:47 and Peter looked back to it in Acts 11:15 as “...the beginning.” This distinguishes the church built by Christ from “churches” of modern, human origin. When, where, with whom, and how did the church of which you are a member begin?

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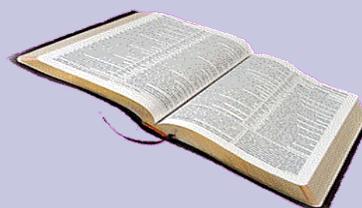
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