

I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH

Isaiah 2:2-3; Daniel 2:26-45

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** There is a great deal of confusion among people claiming to be Christians concerning the establishment of “the church.”
 - A. Some claim the church was established in the Old Testament, even as far back as the days of Abraham.
 - B. Others, especially many in the Baptist Church, claim John the Baptist established the church during his brief time as “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.” (Matt. 3:3)
2. These two claims are clearly false, because when Jesus was on earth and after John the Baptist had been martyred, Jesus said, “...I will build My church” (Matt. 16:18).
 - A. Jesus only promised to build only one church, “...I will build My church” (Matt. 16:18; “My” and “church” are both singular!).
 - B. Paul confirms the singularity of the church when through inspiration he said, “And He [Christ] is the head of the body, the church,” (Col. 1:18) and “There is one body...” (Eph. 4:4).
3. It is absolutely critical we understand the truth about the establishment of the one true church Jesus promised to build! Why?
 - A. Recall earlier we established there are over 33,000 different “Christian” denominations.
 - B. Yet the Bible clearly teaches there is only one true church (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23); no clearer doctrine is taught in God’s word!
 - (1) Whether we (church of Christ) are indeed the church Jesus promised to build is an entirely separate issue!
 - (2) No exclusive franchise on the truth, anyone can lay claim to being the one true church **IF** they follow the New Testament pattern (but the doctrine of one true church is crystal clear!)
 - C. Therefore, understanding the truth concerning the establishment of Christ’s one true church helps us determine which church is the one true church (or if it even exists) and which churches are imposters.
 - D. Christ’s church as seen in the New Testament is unique, distinctive, and singular; it is not a denomination! The details of its establishment (e.g., when, where, how, who) are very unique and help us identify it and help us eliminate imposters **IF** we are willing to use only the Scriptures in our search for it (1 Pet. 4:11).
4. **3** Let’s study what the Bible teaches concerning the establishment of the one true church Jesus built.

II. DISCUSSION:

I. **4** The Church: Plan A, Not Plan B

- A. Dispensationalists (e.g., premillennialists) claim the Jews rejected Jesus and His kingdom (Plan A).
- B. According to this theory, God responded by initiating Plan B, the church; then at some point in the future Jesus will return and establish His kingdom and reign on the earth for a thousand years.
- C. One problem: It’s just not true! The church is not Plan B, it is Plan A! (downright blasphemous!)

- (1) The church is “*the fullness*” of Christ: **Eph. 1:22-23**: “*And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*”
- (2) The church completes Christ, Christ completes the church; Christ and His church are inseparable:
 - (a) To be “*in Christ*” is to be in His church; to be in His church is to be “*in Christ*.”
 - (b) Redemption is found only “*in Christ*” (**Rom. 3:24**: “*being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*”); salvation is only “*in Christ*” (**2 Tim. 2:10**: “*Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*”).
 - (c) But Jesus “*is the Savior of the body,*” the church (Eph. 5:23; 1:22-23), and there is but **ONE** (“*one body,*” Eph. 4:4); church are those “*who follow the Lamb...redeemed from among men*” (Rev. 14:4).
- (3) ** Thus, to be “*in Christ*” and to be in His church are synonymous; whatever the Bible says about one is perfectly applicable to the other.
- (4) **5** That being true, note what Paul says concerning our salvation “*in Christ*”:
 - (a) Salvation “*in Christ*” was planned/determined by God before creation: **Eph. 1:3-12**
 - (b) But, Paul also tells us the church is “*according to the eternal purpose*” of God “*which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Eph. 3:10-12).

D. Hence, the church is not some sort of “afterthought”:

- (1) The church is not a Plan B because the Jew’s rejected Christ.
- (2) The church is descriptive of salvation “*in Christ*” and was part of God’s plan “*before the foundation of the world*” (Eph. 1:4); it was “*according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Eph. 3:12).
- (3) But, salvation “*in Christ*”; salvation in His church; was also something that was hidden by God until He revealed it: **Gen. 3:15**; **Eph. 1:9-10**: “*...made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ,*”; **Col. 1:26**: “*the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.*”

E. **6** Thus, let us turn to the Scriptures and study God’s revelation of this “mystery” concerning “the church.” When, where, and how did Christ build/establish His church?

2. The Church: It’s Establishment

- A. It is obvious from Jesus’ statement in Matthew 16:18 that “the church” was not yet in existence when Jesus was on earth: **Matt. 16:18**: “*...on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*”
 - (1) Jesus statement makes it impossible for the church to have been established in the Old Testament, whether by Abraham, Moses or someone other noteworthy OT saint.
 - (2) Jesus statement also makes it equally clear John the Baptist did not establish the church, for John the Baptist was already dead when Jesus said, “*I will [future] build My church.*”
- B. Recall “the church” was a “mystery” planned by God before creation (Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:10-12); therefore, God had to “reveal” it as His grand plan of redemption unfolded over the centuries (Gen. 3:15; **Gal. 4:4**: “*But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a*”

woman, born under the law,”; **subject of prophecy: Mk. 1:15:** “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”; **Lk. 24:44:** “Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’”). Let’s notice some of the Old Testament prophecies which sheds light on the establishment of “the church”:

(I) ** Let’s begin by reading Isaiah’s prophecy about “the church”:

Isa. 2:2-3: “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. 3 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.” (Micah 4:1-2 is a parallel passage).

(a) House of God/Church: Isaiah’s prophecy, over 700 years before the times and events of the first century, is in perfect agreement with the New Testament description of “the church.”

(i) Isaiah prophetically foresaw the “mountain of the Lord’s house...established” in “the top of the mountains,” a reference to the exaltation of God’s rule over His people; God’s government.

(ii) Isaiah saw “all nations” flowing into “the house of the God of Jacob,” which is in perfect agreement with the description of “the church” in the New Testament:

I Tim. 3:15: “but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

I Pet. 2:5: “you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

Eph. 2:19: “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”

(iii) “all nations”: **Eph. 2:14-19** Salvation “in Christ,” in His church is for people of every race! **Gal 3:28:** “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

(iv) Isaiah also saw God’s rule; “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. Also see: **Psa. 2:6-9**→**Acts 2:25; 13:33**: Christ raised up to sit on David’s throne; **Psa. 110:1-5**→**Acts 2:32-33**: “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.”

(b) **7 Last Days**: Isaiah foresaw these events coming “to pass in the last days,” a time period which is very precisely defined in the New Testament.

(i) Peter associated the “last days” with the events taking place on the first Pentecost following the death, burial and resurrection of Christ: **Acts 2:16-17:** “But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God...’” (cf. Joel 2:28-29).

(ii) By “last days” Peter is not exclusively referring to the final few days before the Lord’s second coming in judgment.

- (iii) For example, in another passage (Acts 11:15), Peter refers to the events in Acts 2, occurring mind you in the “*last days*,” as the “*beginning*.” Why?
- ✓ The “*last days*” describes an age, not a few years or days.
 - ✓ The “*last days*” are the “age,” or the dispensation, of the Messiah; it began at Pentecost and will end at Christ’s second coming in judgment.
 - ✓ The time of the patriarchs, the days of Moses and Israel, are done and gone by the time of the “*last days*” which Peter applies to Acts 2.
 - ✓ The law that separated Jew and Gentile and served as a “*tutor to bring us to Christ*” (Gal. 3:24) is now abolished, having been “*nailed to the cross*” (Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 2:14).
 - ✓ At Pentecost, the “*beginning*” of “*the church*” signaled the coming of the new covenant, the covenant dedicated by the blood of Christ and ushering in the Messianic age, the “*beginning*” of a new age which is the “*last*” age (Matt. 26:26-28; Heb. 8:6-13; 9:14-15; 12:24)(“*beginning*” consistent w/the purpose of “Pentecost”).
- (iv) **8** When the Messiah returns a second time to judge the world, it will be the “*last day*,” of the “*last days*” (**Jn. 6:44**: “*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.*”; **Acts 17:31**: “*because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.*”).
- ✓ On the “*last day*” all the dead, both the righteous and the wicked, will be raised (**Jn. 5:28-29**: “*Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*”), given an immortal body (1 Cor. 15:22, 51-55) and judged (Acts 17:31).
 - ✓ On the “*last day*” the heavens and the earth will be dissolved and melt with a fervent heat—time will be no more (2 Pet. 3:9-10); the saints will meet the Lord in the air and Jesus will deliver the kingdom up to the Father and “*then cometh the end*” (1 Thess. 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:24); “*days*” or “*time*” will end and all of mankind will be ushered into eternity: the wicked “*into everlasting punishment*,” and “*the righteous into eternal life.*” (Matt. 25:41)
- (v) **9** The present age of the Messiah is, therefore, the “*last days*,” and is so defined by New Testament revelation.
- ✓ The first century marked the time God began to speak to mankind by His Son: **Heb. 1:1-2**: “*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son...*” (Jn. 12:48).
 - ✓ Peter, who identified the events of Pentecost as occurring in the “*last days*” (Acts 2:16-17), also wrote: **1 Pet. 1:18-20**: “*knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot, (even the blood) of Christ: 20 who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of times for your sake,*” (ASV). The “*last days*” are “*the end of times.*” (**Palca**)

- ✓ The Hebrew writer tells us the Messiah appeared “...at the end of the ages...to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26). The “last days” are the final “age” in God’s scheme of redemption!
- (vi) ** The “last days” are the days Isaiah announced—the days when Christ would arrive, offer Himself as a perfect sacrifice, and purchase the church with His blood (Acts 20:28).
- (c) **10** The days of the Roman Empire: Daniel also foresaw events that would come to pass “in the latter days” (**Dan. 2:28**).
 - (i) Instead of speaking of “the church” as a “house,” Daniel spoke of it as a “kingdom,” but it’s the same body of people purchased with Christ’s blood (Rev. 5:9-10: Lamb “*madest them (to be) unto God a kingdom and priests; and they reign on the earth*”; recall Col. 1:13: it is in the kingdom “*we have redemption through His blood*”).
 - (ii) Daniel’s vision came as he interpreted a dream seen by the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar (**Dan. 2:26-45**).
 - (iii) The king had seen an image of a man with a golden head, arms and breasts of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, and legs and feet of iron mixed with clay.
 - (iv) The king also saw a stone cut out of the mountain, “*cut out without hands*,” (2:34; i.e., not of human origin; **Heb. 8:2**: “...*the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man*.”); this stone struck the image of the man and destroyed it.
- (d) **11** The interpretation of the dream follows a strict time sequence and identifies the “latter days” as the days of the Roman Empire: **12**
 - ✓ “you [Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon] *are this head of gold*” (v. 38),
 - ✓ ** “*after you [Babylon] shall arise another [kingdom]...then another*,” (v. 39),
 - ✓ So after Babylon three more world kingdoms would arise in succession: **13** Medo-Persian (Cyrus, Artaxerxes), **Greek (Alexander the Great and successors), **Roman (various emperors),
 - ✓ ** It was “*in the days of these kings*,” the last world empire in this series, the Roman Empire, that “...*the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever*.” (v. 44).

STOP
- (e) **14** So, what is the proof that these prophecies were fulfilled in the New Testament?
 - ✓ The times of the New Testament fit this time sequence perfectly: New Testament events occurred in the times “*of these kings*” (i.e., Roman):

Luke 3:1-3: “*Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch [ruler of a fourth part] of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, 2 while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. 3 And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,*”
 - ✓ The time also agrees with the preaching of both John the Baptist and Jesus:

Matt. 3:1-2: “*In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!’”*

Matt. 4:17: “From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

- ✓ So both Jesus and John said this “kingdom” was “at hand” (Thayer: *to draw or come near, to approach*); just how “at hand” was it? Just how close was its approach?

Mark 9:1: “And he said unto them, ‘Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.’” (KJV)

- ✓ So some people living when Jesus preached would see “*the kingdom come with power*.”
- ✓ **I5** Notice also “how” the kingdom was to come? Jesus said it was to come... “with power.” Thus, if we can find when this “power” came, we can determine when the kingdom came.

Lk. 24:47-49: “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And ye are witnesses of these things. 49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” (KJV)

- ✓ So the apostles were to receive “*the promise of my Father*,” in Jerusalem when they were “*endued with power from on high*”; recall that the “*the kingdom*” was to also to come “with power.” So when the apostles were “*endued with power from on high*” is the same thing as the kingdom coming “with power.”
- ✓ **I6** As we open the book of Acts we see Isa. 2, Lk. 24 and Mk. 9:1 coming together:

Acts 1:4-8: “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which, He said, ‘you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’ 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ 7 And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’”

- ✓ So what did Jesus identify as the “power”? “*you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*”; it’s one and the same as “*the Promise of the Father*” (Jn. 14, 15, 16)
- ✓ Therefore, when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles was when they “*receive[d] power*”; when they received “*the Promise of the Father*” and when “*the kingdom of God come with power*.” (Mk. 9:1)
- ✓ **I7** When did the Holy Spirit come upon the apostles? This takes place in Acts 2:1-4

Acts 2:1-4: “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

- ✓ So now the prophecies of Isaiah 2, Daniel 2, Luke 24 and Mark 9:1 are fulfilled; the kingdom/church has come!
- ✓ Notice: **I8**

Luke 24	Isaiah 2/Daniel 2
<i>“repentance and remission of sins should be preached...among all nations”</i>	<i>“all nations shall flow to it”</i>
<i>“beginning at Jerusalem”</i>	<i>“For out of Zion...from Jerusalem”</i>
<i>“preached in His name”</i>	<i>“shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD”</i>
<i>“I send the promise of My Father...tarry ye in...Jerusalem”</i>	The right place for establishment of “the Lord’s house”; and reception of “the Promise of My Father” (cf. Jn. 14, 15, 16)
19 Right time! Still in the days of the Roman empire (Lk. 3:1-3)	<i>“in the days of these kings” when “the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed”</i>
Apostles to receive “power from on high”	Kingdom of God would come before “some standing here...will not taste of death” and would come “with power”
<p>✓ ** When the apostles received “power from on high” (i.e., the Holy Spirit) THEN the kingdom of God would come “with power”! **cf. Matt. 16:19; 18:18</p> <p>✓ 20 Notice some important points from Acts 1:4-8 as it connects to Isaiah 2 and Luke 24:</p>	
Apostles are in the right place: “not to depart from Jerusalem” (v. 4)	<i>“out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3) “tarry in the city of Jerusalem” (Lk. 24:49)</i>
Apostles: “you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (v. 5)	<i>“I send the Promise of My Father upon you” (Lk. 24:49); “He will teach us His ways...out of Zion shall go forth the law” (Isa. 2:3; Jn. 14-16)</i>
Apostles: “you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (v. 9)	<i>“tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Lk. 24:49)</i>
<p>✓ 21 All of these events converge at one point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ Rome rules, ☛ “in the days of these kings,” ☛ “the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed,” 	

- ☛ Some still alive: “not taste of death...till...see kingdom of God...come with power,”
 - ☛ Events to take place in Jerusalem in the “last days,”
 - ☛ “power from on high” or the “promise of the Father” was the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles,
 - ☛ Kingdom of God or house of God, the church, to be established!
- ✓ **22** The focal point of all of these prophecies is the second chapter of the book of Acts!

Right time in history	Rome rules the world
Apostles are in the right place	Jerusalem
Apostles receive the “promise of the Father” with “power,” the baptism of the Holy Spirit	vv. 1-4: “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit”
Peter identifies the time of these events	“This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days’ (vv. 16-17)
Right message	“whoever calls upon the name of the LORD shall be saved” (v. 21)
23 Jesus is sitting on God’s throne, ruling His kingdom	“This Jesus...being exalted to the right hand of God...has made this Jesus...both Lord and Christ” (v. 29-33; cf. Acts 1:9-11; Dan. 7:13-14)
Church Jesus promised to build now in existence (Matt. 16:18)	“the Lord added to the church...those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47)
Those obeying Christ enter His kingdom; His church	“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Col. 1:13; Acts 2:47)

III. CONCLUSION: **24**

- I. Before Pentecost Jesus anticipated the kingdom and promised to build His church (Mk. 1:14-15; Matt. 16:18).
 - A. After Pentecost Scripture speaks of the reality of the kingdom and the church (Acts 2:47; Col. 1:13).
 - B. Acts 2 was the “beginning” (cf. Acts 11:15); on that great day 2,000 years ago over 3,000 men and women obeyed the gospel and “the Lord added [them] to the church” (Acts 2:47); they were also “delivered...from the power of darkness and conveyed...into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Col. 1:13).
2. Furthermore, the Bible clearly teaches Jesus established only one church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4).

3. These facts have very serious ramifications!
4. Recall the 33,000+ denominations: are any of them the church Jesus promised to build? This is no trivial matter!
 - A. The church is “*the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.*” (Heb. 8:2)
 - B. The “churches” established by men are doomed to fail, they cannot save! **Psa. 127:1:** “*Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it*”; **Matt. 15:13:** “*Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.*”
5. **25** We can determine whether any of these “churches” are the one true church by applying some simple scriptural tests: were they established by the right person, at the right time, and at the right place?

Church	Time	Place	Founder
Roman Catholic	606 AD	Rome	Boniface III
Episcopal	1520 AD	England	Henry VIII
Presbyterian	1536 AD	Switzerland	John Calvin
Congregational	1550 AD	England	Robert Browne
Baptist	1607 AD	Holland	John Smythe
Methodist	1739 AD	England	John Wesley
Mormon	1830 AD	America	Joseph Smith
7 th Day Adventist	1830 AD	America	William Miller
Christian Scientist	1866 AD	America	Mary Baker Eddy
Jehovah’s Witness	1872 AD	America	Charles T. Russell

6. ****** Which church would you chose to be a member?

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