

The Church Jesus Built

Lesson 2: Why: Why Did Jesus Build His Church

During Jesus's earthly ministry, He promised He would build His church (Matthew 16:18). As we explore the church from a Biblical perspective, we need to consider another critical question: Why? That is, we need to consider the purpose behind why God has built His church. Namely, what we will discover is that God has always had a purpose for the people He has created in His image and has always desired to have a special people who will be committed to glorifying Him.

1) God has always had a purpose for humankind. God has created all people as spiritual beings (Genesis 1:26-27; John 4:24). God's desire has always been for those He created in this special way to choose to glorify Him (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Acts 17:26-28). Sadly, people often choose to glorify something/someone created rather than the Creator (Romans 1:21-23). In fact, all people who reach a point of spiritual accountability choose this way of sin that fails to glorify God (Romans 3:10-18, 23). Sin is a big problem because it separates (creates hostility between) the sinner and God (Isaiah 59:1-2; James 4:4), which is spiritual death (Romans 6:23). Thankfully, God had a plan so we could be forgiven of our sins and fulfill our purpose of glorifying Him through Jesus (John 3:16; 1 Peter 1:18-21)!

2) Physical Israel in God's purpose. God used a man named Abraham in a special way to fulfill His plan (Genesis 12:1-3, 7): To make a great nation of his descendants (the nation of Israel), to give that nation a special land (the land of Canaan), and to bless all people on earth through his Seed (Jesus Christ). Later, God entered a covenant (agreement) with the physical nation descended from Abraham (Israel, Exodus 19:3-8; 34:10-14). This agreement involved two parts. First, God would bless His special people. Second, these people were to honor God by keeping His commandments. Therefore, God wanted a

people in Israel who were truly devoted to glorifying Him (Deuteronomy 10:12-18; Isaiah 43:7; 44:23; 49:3). Through them, He would demonstrate His glory even to other people and nations so His name would be glorified (Deuteronomy 4:4-8; Psalm 115:1-8). So, God wanted Israel to be a people for His own special possession who would have hearts that desired to seek and glorify Him by keeping His commandments.

However, they often failed to live according to this great purpose. For example, they often failed to heed God's warnings and would worship and serve the gods of other nations (Judges 2:11-13; 2 Kings 17:7-20). Then, they would often pollute themselves with the things of this world contrary to the covenant they had made with God (Isaiah 1:2-4). In addition, they would often go through the motions of being God's special people without having hearts truly devoted to Him (Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:7-9). So, rather than Israel glorifying God's holy name, His name was often despised and blasphemed among the Gentiles (Malachi 1:6-14; Romans 2:17-24). Because of this, God would punish them for not keeping their covenant with Him (only a remnant would be saved, Isaiah 10:20-23).

3) Spiritual Israel in God's purpose. God's plan for Israel involved using them to bring the Messiah into the world (Genesis 12:1-3, who is Jesus Christ; Galatians 3:8, 16). Unfortunately, some Jewish people seemed view themselves as being righteous just because they were children of Abraham (Matthew 3:7-10). However, although God used physical Israel to bring Jesus into the world, being God's special people was never about physical ancestry – and was always about people who would devote themselves to honoring Him (Matthew 22:36-40; Romans 9:6-8, 22-33). So, it is not about being from physical Israel (or being physically circumcised)

but about being part of spiritual Israel (and being spiritually circumcised, Romans 2:25-29). For, spiritual Israel simply consists of all those whose hearts are loyal to God by being faithfully obedient to Him – whether physically Jews or Gentiles (Romans 11:11-32).

Today, we can call spiritual Israel Jesus's church. For, these are those who come to truly know God and devote their lives to Him (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:7-13). These have entered a covenant relationship with God, received His blessings (i.e. forgiveness of sins, Acts 2:38) and committed themselves to glorifying Him (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1)! And, God has blessed spiritual Israel so that others will also come to know and glorify Him (Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; 3:8-11, 20-21). Today, Jesus desires His special people to live to the glory of God in all things (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 10:31), which includes setting a godly example (Matthew 5:14-16) and sharing His good news of salvation (Colossians 1:25-28). Those who do this will both glorify Jesus and be glorified when Jesus comes again (2 Thessalonians 1:5-12)!

Jesus built His church so that God would be glorified! His church is not based on physical ancestry or any other physical factor. Rather, these are people who are in a covenant relationship with God. So, as God has made His rich blessings available through Jesus, Jesus's church has responded by giving their hearts and lives in faith-filled obedience to Him. This all works to glorify God – and makes God's great glory known to others!

Thought Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Teaching: What are some key lessons learned from this lesson?

Rebuking: What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

Correcting: How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

Training & Equipping: How can you apply this teaching to be trained in righteousness and equipped for every good work?