

The Church Jesus Built

Lesson 3: How: How Has Jesus Build His Church

Jesus is the Master Builder who has built His church (Matthew 16:18). This church is a special group of people who belong to God and fulfill a special purpose God has designed for them. Still, we need to consider another question: How? That is, we need to consider the way in which Jesus has built His church and how He continues to build His church today. Namely, what we will discover is that Jesus uses the imagery of the church as a living temple building, consisting of a Cornerstone, a foundation, and a building (Ephesians 2:19-22).

1) The Cornerstone: Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6-8). First, Jesus is the Messiah. The Old Testament is focused on God fulfilling the promises He made to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3, 7). The Jewish people were taught to expect the coming of the Anointed One (Messiah) God would send (Isaiah 42:1; 61:1-3; Luke 2:25-26; John 4:25). When Jesus came, He came as the Messiah (translated in Greek as “Christ,” John 4:25-26). Jesus of Nazareth was God living in the flesh (Matthew 1:23), anointed, chosen, and sent by the Father (Galatians 3:16). This was the bedrock truth Jesus would build His church upon (Matthew 16:13-18).

Second, Jesus is the Savior. The Old Testament had prophesied that the Messiah would be a great Savior/Deliverer (Isaiah 9:6-7). Though many were looking for the Messiah to save the physical nation of Israel, God had a plan for a much greater deliverance in mind (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:7-9)! This was deliverance from sin (Romans 3:9-18)! Jesus’s mission on this earth was focused on doing His Father’s will so as to seek and to save those lost in sin (John 3:16; Luke 19:10). For, this salvation required Jesus’s sacrifice (John 1:29; Matthew 26:26-29; John 19:30). Through His blood sacrifice, Jesus has purchased His church by

redeeming (ransoming) those who were enslaved to sin (Acts 20:28; Colossians 1:13-14; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

Third, Jesus is the King. The Old Testament gave clear expectations that God would establish a kingdom that would never end with a King from the lineage of King David (2 Samuel 7:16; Psalm 2:1-12; Isaiah 9:1-7; Daniel 2:44). So, people lived with the expectation of a coming King (Isaiah 62:11; Zechariah 9:9). Yet, rather than establishing an earthly kingdom, God had in His mind a superior kingdom that was spiritual and eternal! Jesus was the One who would fulfill all the prophecies and be installed as this King (John 18:36; Matthew 21:1-11). This King’s glory, though, would only come through suffering and dying on the cross (Philippians 2:5-11)! Now, God has forever declared Jesus as His Son, the Lord, and King by raising Him from the dead and His ascension to Heaven (Daniel 7:13-14; Acts 1:9-11; 2:22-36; Acts 13:16-41; Romans 1:1-6; Ephesians 1:20-23)!

2) The foundation: The apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20). Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to His apostles (John 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:12-15). Prior to Jesus’s ascension to Heaven, He told His apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:4-5). Then, they were to help spread this message throughout the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:8). In spreading this God-inspired message of salvation from Jesus, they would bind on earth what God had bound as His kingdom laws in Heaven (Matthew 16:18-19)! To aid in this work of making God’s message known, God would also use some who would be called “prophets” (Ephesians 3:3-6). Through their work, “the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27) has now been fully delivered to God’s people (Jude 1:3). This is the perfect and single

revelation of truth God expects all who are part of His church/kingdom to be united in (Ephesians 4:1-6). This revelation is now contained in the pages of the Bible (particularly, the New Testament – which is Christ’s new law, Hebrews 8:7-13).

3) The building: Saints (Ephesians 2:19-22). Jesus’s church (God’s temple) is built on no other Cornerstone besides Jesus (Acts 4:12) and no other foundation besides the apostles and prophets who delivered God’s word of truth (Galatians 1:6-10). In the Old Testament, the temple (and tabernacle before it) was constructed as a place to worship God and offer the required sacrifices. It was a place where God’s glory was on display. However, it was made of lifeless objects and could never bring God the kind of glory He deserves (as its builder, King Solomon, recognized, 1 Kings 8:27). Now, rather than a temple of lifeless quarried stones (1 Kings 6:7), Jesus’s church is a temple of living spiritual stones (1 Peter 2:4-5). Every person who is cut by the Spirit’s message of truth so as to believe and obey the gospel of the kingdom, submitting to King Jesus, is now made into God’s dwelling in the Spirit (as He lives in His people through His word). Through the spiritual sacrifices of the lives of these people (called “saints,” “Christians,” etc.), God is glorified (Romans 12:1-2). And, all those in the church are to be equipped to do their individual parts in God’s service (Ephesians 4:11-16)!

Jesus has built (and continues to build) His church in the way that will accomplish the mission of glorifying God! This involves Jesus Christ as the Cornerstone, the word of truth through the apostles and prophets as the foundation, and the saints as living stones in this temple of God. So, while the imagery depicts the concept of a building (temple), the reality is not a lifeless structure; but a people who are dedicated to bringing glory to God and their King!

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?