

The Church Jesus Built

Lesson 4: When: When Did Jesus Build His Church

Jesus built His church by giving Himself as the Chief Cornerstone, the word of truth given to the apostles and prophets as the foundation, and then people responding in faith-filled obedience to that message being the church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 2:19-22). Still, we need to consider another question: When? That is, we need to consider when the church came into existence and the circumstances surrounding it. Namely, what we will discover is that Acts 2 marked a special day in human history that resulted in Jesus's church being in existence.

1) The preparation for the kingdom. The Old Testament contains various prophecies that pointed to a greater authority and kingdom that was going to be established. As we have already seen, God had foretold that He was going to establish a kingdom that would never end with a King from the lineage of King David (Isaiah 9:6-7). In Daniel 2, Daniel gives the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream concerning a colossal statue made up of four distinct sections (representative of four kingdoms – Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, Roman) that was struck and crushed by a stone (representative of God's kingdom) in the days of the fourth kingdom (Roman, v. 44). Isaiah 2:1-4 also adds prophecy concerning this kingdom that pictures God's rule as a mountain above all others that all people can flow to and identifies Jerusalem as the specific place where the word of God would flow from (Micah 4:1-8). Then, Joel 2:28-32 speaks of a time of judgment for the enemies of God and a time of deliverance for those who will submit to God's rule and call on Him.

In the New Testament, the preaching of John (the baptizer) declared the nearness of the kingdom (Matthew 3:1-3). Then, during Jesus's ministry on earth, He often spoke about the kingdom of heaven (i.e. in His parables, Matthew 13), including the fact

that some who were living would see the kingdom of God come with power (Mark 9:1). After Jesus's resurrection and prior to His ascension, He gave His apostles special instructions concerning the work of taking the gospel throughout the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Therefore, by Acts 1, something big was getting ready to happen – and it was going to begin in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4-8; Luke 24:44-49)! After giving these instructions to His apostles, Jesus ascended to Heaven – and was seated as King on His throne, at the Father's right hand (Acts 1:9-11; Daniel 7:13-14)!

2) The Father's promise. As the apostles were waiting in Jerusalem, Acts 2:1 then begins the record of the events on the day of Pentecost (festival of weeks occurring 50 days after Passover; requiring all males to appear before God, Deuteronomy 16:16). As many Jews were gathered for this occasion in Jerusalem, Jesus baptized the apostles with the Holy Spirit and enabled them to speak in different languages (tongues) miraculously (Acts 2:2-4). The crowd came together to see what was happening when they heard the sound (Acts 2:5-6) and were confused because they heard the apostles speak the magnificent acts of God in their own languages (Acts 2:6-11). Some were astounded and wondered what this all meant, while others mocked (Acts 2:12-13). However, Peter and the other apostles made it known that what was happening was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy concerning the last days, as God's enemies will be defeated and those who call on the name of the Lord will be saved (Acts 2:14-21)! Note this all happened during the Roman empire and in Jerusalem, according to prophecy.

3) Jesus is proclaimed as King. As Peter's sermon on Pentecost is recorded, he urged his fellow Israelites to listen to his words about Jesus of Nazareth, who God declared to be His Son (Acts 2:22-

23). Yet, the Jews had killed Him, according to God's eternal plan of redemption (Ephesians 3:8-11; 1 Peter 1:20-21). God raised this Jesus from the dead, according to the prophecy that God would seat one of David's descendants on his throne (Acts 2:24-31; Psalm 16:8-11). Now, Jesus (the Messiah) has been raised and the apostles and others were eyewitnesses to this (Acts 2:32; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8). The significance of this is that God has now exalted Jesus to His right hand and given Him the authority as King (Acts 2:33-35)! Then, Peter declares that God has made this Jesus (whom the Jews had killed but God has made King) to be both Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:36)! Therefore, Jesus's authority as King was now established and proclaimed! This is what was *established* on Pentecost in Acts 2!

4) The authority of Jesus is recognized.

Hearing this message of Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah, Lord, and King resulted in *some* seeking to know what they must now do (Acts 2:37). In response, Peter told them they must repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38-40). Then, those who submitted to Jesus's authority were now the "church" (Acts 2:41-47). All who continue to submit to the authority of Jesus from this day forward are also added to Jesus's church!

Jesus's church began in Acts 2, as people submitted themselves to the Lordship of Jesus Christ (the Messiah and King)! This was the fulfillment of numerous prophecies that had been made that pointed to this time. Today, Jesus's church is continuing to be built every time someone responds in submission to King Jesus and the gospel of the kingdom (as we see happening throughout the book of Acts). For, the message of Jesus as King that began in Jerusalem on this Pentecost would spread throughout the world until the end of time!

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?