

ON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH

A BIBLE STUDY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST – JASON E. RIDGEWAY

Key Verses: Isaiah 2:2-4; 28:16; Matthew 7:24-27; 16:13-20; Ephesians 1:4-14; 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5-8

(Monday's Lesson)

INTRODUCTION

1. Before one builds anything there must be plans made, a design. Could you imagine someone going out one day without any forethought and just start building? You would call that builder, foolish.
2. God planned the church even before the foundation of the world was set in order. Ephesians 1:4 – *"just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,"* (emp. mine).
3. Isaiah the prophet was directed by God to write, *"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of **the Lord's house** shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, **to the house of the God of Jacob**; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore"* (Isaiah 2:2-4).
4. But before the church was to be built Jesus had to convey His plan to the apostles. *"On this rock I will build My church"* (Matthew 16:18)
5. For Isaiah wrote, *"For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem"* (Isaiah 2:3). Isaiah proclaimed that the Lord's word would come from Jerusalem. This was done through Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

LESSON

- I. "ON THIS ROCK"
 - A. "Rock" – "a ledge or cliff of rock like that in Matthew 7:24 on which the wise man built his house." (A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures of the New Testament Vol. one Matthew and Mark*, p. 140-141)
 - B. The "rock" is not Peter but the rock-solid confession that he proclaimed. The confession that "Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God." Therefore, Christ is the "rock."

C. The Jewish world at the time seemed very confused as to whom Jesus really was. Jesus asked an important question to the apostles, *"Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"* (Matthew 16:13).

D. The answer was to show Jesus' disciples just how disorganized in thought the people were. Here are the answers that apostles gave: *"Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets"* (Matthew 16:14).

1. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry the disciples praised Him as the Messiah, *"He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated, the Christ)"* (John 1:41).
2. And many others believe at the beginning that Jesus was the Messiah (John 4:25-30).
3. Why did they now deny Him as Messiah?
4. Satan was doing a really good job using the Pharisees and Sadducees to put doubt in the people of Israel. These evil workers preach it enough that doubt started to emerge. Therefore, many started to change their minds as to the identity of Christ.

E. With so much doubt by the Jews, Jesus asks them a more personal question, *"But who do you say that I am?"* (Matthew 16:15).

1. The world was beginning to fall into disbelief of the Savior, but what about those closest disciples (apostles) to Christ?
2. Peter hits the mark with a solid statement, ***"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"*** (Matthew 16:16).

F. That is the rock-solid faith that Jesus wanted to hear from His disciples. And it was on that faith that Jesus pronounced the building of the church (Matthew 16:18)

II. "I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH"

A. Jesus now sets His disciples' focus on the greatest project yet, His church.

B. "Church" = the Greek word here is *ekklesia* which is defined "an assembly, a congregation." Ekklesia can be universal or local in the context. Here Jesus uses the word as a universal assembly or group.

C. Understand this, the church was not set up at that moment. Notice what Jesus says, ***"I WILL build my church."*** This is future tense. The church would not be set up until the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

D. Acts 2:47 is the first time the New Testament mentions anyone being added to the church; *"praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."*

III. THE FOUNDATION / CORNERSTONE OF THE CHURCH

A. Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would be the cornerstone of the church. *"Therefore thus says the Lord God: 'Behold, I lay in Zion **a stone for a foundation**, a tried stone, **a precious cornerstone**, a sure foundation'" (Isaiah 28:16).*

B. The Foundation, Christ

1. Any church that is not built on Jesus Christ has a very weak foundation.
2. Jesus says that we must hear and follow His sayings. Since Jesus is the Head of the body, the church, those that follow Him are characterized as wise in Matthew 7:24-25, *"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; **and it did not fall**, for it was **founded on the rock**."*
3. But those that don't follow Christ's words and don't build on Him are characterized as foolish in Matthew 7:26-27, *"But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man **who built his house on the sand**: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; **and it fell**. **And great was its fall**."*
4. There are many that build their church on someone or something other than Christ. That foundation has no firm foundations but is on sand and unstable.

C. The Cornerstone, Christ

1. "A stone usually at a corner, possibly as the first of the foundation stones, and it was a real support. Cornerstones symbolized "seeds" from which buildings would germinate and rise." (Encyclopedia Britannica.com)
2. This description of Jesus being the "cornerstone" fits perfectly. Everything revolves around the Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus is our support. He came to die on the cross and set up His church which is His body (Ephesians 1:22-23).
3. 1 Peter 2:6-8, *"Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.' Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone', and 'A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.'"*
4. Peter takes the focus off himself as being the "head" of the church. Peter says that the cornerstone is Christ.

CONCLUSION

1. The church of Christ was not an afterthought or last-minute idea by Christ. It is in fact an institution foreordained by God to be established on the earth after the ascension of Jesus.

2. Jesus Christ is the ROCK, the FOUNDATION and the CORNERSTONE of the church.
3. In order to become a part of this body, the church they must be added to it...
4. In our next lesson we will talk about being ADDED TO THE CHURCH...

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