

I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH - LESSON 9

By Jon Quinn

Upon Peter's confession of faith that Jesus was the Christ Jesus replied that this fact was the rock upon which He would build His church

Matthew 16:16-18 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

As you read the passage, you get the idea that Jesus thought that He was announcing something of great importance: "I will build My church".

WHAT DID JESUS BUILD?

The word "church" in the Bible never refers to any kind of physical building, denomination or group of denominations or to any kind of human religious hierarchy. The church which Jesus built is a spiritual building made up of redeemed people. Its foundation is the fact of Jesus' identity as God's Son and the gospel is the tool used to build it

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

2 Thessalonians 2:14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The term "church" is a collective noun like the words "flock" or "crowd" and is made up of multiple parts. The church is made up of all people who have answered God's call. They have been redeemed from sin by the blood of Christ. The church consists of all people who are disciples of Jesus.

Acts 8:3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.

Acts 9:1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest

The word translated "church" simply means "called out". Those who make up the church have been "set apart" or "sanctified". All disciples are called "saints".

Acts 9:13 Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem.

1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

The answer to the age-old question "must one be a member of the church to be saved?" becomes obvious when one realizes that the church is the saved and the saved are the church; those who have been purchased by the blood of Christ.

Acts 20:28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Notice that the word "church" is used in both a local as well as general sense in the Bible. In the local sense it refers to the saved at a particular city or place who have joined together to work and worship

Romans 16:1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

Romans 16:5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who is the first fruits of Achaia to Christ.

Romans 16:16 ... The churches of Christ salute you.

The Bible shows that these groups of people are locally organized and independent of one another. But in the general sense there is only one church made up of faithful disciples everywhere. Most of the references that we will consider use the term in the general sense.

GOD DESCRIBES HIS CHURCH

We can see the high value God places on His church by the terms He has chosen to describe it. He refers to the church as His family or household

Ephesians 2:19-20 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,

Members of the church are part of Christ's Kingdom

Colossians 1:13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

They are referred to as members of Christ's body over which Jesus is the Head

Ephesians 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.

Since God dwells in His church it is also called His temple

1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

See how important the church is? If it is important to you to be a child in God's family, a citizen of His kingdom, a member of Christ's body and for God to dwell in you, then it will be equally important to be a member of the church of Christ!

JESUS AND HIS CHURCH

Jesus is the center of God's purpose. When we see His special relationship to His church, we will also learn more of the church's importance. Jesus gave Himself up for the church and loves His church

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.

The church has always been a part of God's plan to bring about eternal redemption through His Son. Far be it from us to dismiss it as not essential

Ephesians 3:9-11 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The purpose of the church is to bring glory to God. "To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations ..."

Ephesians 3:21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

The church sounds forth the word of the Lord ...

1 Thessalonians 1:8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.

When the local church assembles it is for the encouragement of its members

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

The church must not fail to uphold the truth

1 Timothy 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.

It seems today as if many churches are engaged in about whatever business you can imagine. It is time to get back to the basics!

UNITY AND THE CHURCH

Jesus prayed for His disciples' unity. However, it was not to be unity at any cost! It was to be based upon a mutual acceptance of His word. It was to be the kind of oneness that Jesus had with His Father

John 17:11; 17 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are ... 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

Did you know that religious division and the things which cause it are strongly spoken against in the Bible? Some think it is fine to have so many differing denominations with various creeds, organizations and leaders. The word "denomination" means "division" and while having so many offers us a greater selection it does not please God and that ought to be our foremost priority! What does God think about this division?

1 Corinthians 1:10-13 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

How many faiths, religious bodies and so forth can we have and still find God's approval? Only one!

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

The fact that men became religiously divided did not surprise God. He foresaw it

1 Timothy 4:1-3 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

THE LOCAL CHURCH

When the Bible speaks of a group of God's children in fellowship with one another as a church, it does so in a local sense. When they could, Christians in the first century joined or associated themselves with a local church

Acts 9:26 And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him and did not believe that he was a disciple.

This was and is God's will. But not every local church is pleasing to God. Even in the New Testament some churches were warned that if they did not return to the way of the Lord that He would refuse to recognize them any longer

Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place — unless you repent.

We must exercise care in identifying with a local church.

CONCLUSION

Of which church should you be a member? It is according to what your purpose is. If it is to please God, then you will insist upon a church that accepts Jesus' authority in all matters because it recognizes Him as its only Head. It will recognize no church law other than His. It will involve itself only in those works that the Lord has given to it. According to Jesus, anything less renders worship vain and separates one from God

Matthew 15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

2 John 9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

LESSON #10 is entitled "KEPT BY GOD'S POWER". It concludes this series by looking at how Jesus gives hope to His disciples. We will see the need for endurance and consider God's warnings about falling away. We will also discuss the wonderful security in Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON NINE

WHAT DID JESUS BUILD?

Describe the people out of which Jesus builds His church 1 Corinthians 1:2.

What does the word translated "church" mean? _____

What did God purchase and what was the price Acts 20:28? _____

In what two senses is the word "church" used in the Bible? _____
and _____

GOD DESCRIBES HIS CHURCH

What do "household of God", "kingdom of God's Son", "body of Christ" and "temple of God" all refer to? _____

Are being a part of these important to you? _____

Why or why not? _____

JESUS AND THE CHURCH

Read Ephesians 5:23-27 and list at least four aspects of Jesus' relationship with His church. _____

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Ephesians 3:21 says, *Unto him be _____ in the _____ by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

UNITY AND THE CHURCH

What does God think about division 1 Corinthians 1:10-13? _____

B. How many faiths and religious bodies ought men to have Ephesians 4:4-6? _____

THE LOCAL CHURCH

What warning did Jesus give the church at Ephesus Revelation 2:5? _____

What words of approval did Jesus give to the church at Philadelphia Revelation 3:8? _____

Does the doctrine taught in a church matter? 2 John 9 _____

What are important things to look for in a local church? _____