

THE PLANNING AND BUILDING OF THE CHURCH (Matthew 16:13-20)

I. Christ's church was purposed by God.

- A. Since before time, God had purposed the church to be built (Ephesians 3:9-11).
 - 1. In other words, God always had the church in mind.
 - 2. There has never been a time when the church was not intended by God.
 - 3. Men are to see God's wisdom through the church.
- B. Sadly, a lot of people misunderstand this and misunderstand the kingdom.
 - 1. The Jews did during the days of Jesus.
 - a. They tried to take Jesus and make Him king (John 6:14-15).
 - b. The apostles didn't get it either (Acts 1:6).
 - 2. People still do today as well.
 - a. Dispensational Premillennialism got much of its traction from the Bible Schofield published.
 - (1) His comments fueled the flames.
 - (2) He believed the church was a "plan B."
 - (3) He would write, "The kingdom being thus postponed, what is revealed as filling and occupying this age? The church!"
 - b. Others teach this as well.
 - 3. What we see is a great misunderstanding about what God purposed, or planned, about the church.
- C. What these people do is question the omniscience of God by saying God did not foresee the stubbornness of the Jews
- D. There is no doubt that the prophets did not understand everything about which they prophesied (1 Peter 1:10-12).
 - 1. They did know something different was coming.
 - 2. Even though they may not have understood everything, that is not important.
 - 3. What is important is that the writers of the New Testament revealed what those prophecies meant.
 - 4. For instance, the apostles let us know exactly what Joel was prophesying about (Joel 2:28f; Acts 2:16f).
- E. Jesus knew His kingdom was not physical (John 18:36).
 - 1. It was always intended to be spiritual in nature.
 - 2. We can't let ourselves be blinded by preconceived ideas.
- F. God always intended for there to be a church.
- G. As Garland Elkins wrote, "Far from being a parenthesis of any kind, the church is at the heart of the timeless, ageless purpose of God."

II. Christ's church was prepared for by John and Jesus.

- A. Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6; Matthew 11:7, 10.
- B. Isaiah 40:3; Mark 1:3-4.
- C. John preached a simple message (Matthew 3:2).

1. John let his hearers know that the kingdom was close to being established.
 2. These people needed to be ready for it.
- D. When Jesus began His earthly ministry, it was with the same message (Matthew 4:17).
1. The kingdom was close to being built.
 2. Notice what He told His apostles (Mark 9:1).
- E. Jesus helped prepare people for the kingdom through His preaching.
1. The Sermon on the Mount is full of preparatory remarks.
 2. Jesus was letting them know that the spiritual status quo would not be accepted in this new kingdom.
 3. You would have to be willing to sacrifice, do more and go farther than what the Jews were currently doing.
- F. This was stated in the beginning of the sermon (Matthew 5:20).
1. We can't really imagine the impact of this statement.
 2. These were the super-religious people of the day that Jesus referenced.
 3. Everyone thought the Pharisees were the righteous of the righteous.
- G. The audience was told that the kingdom had to be put above all else (Matthew 6:33).
1. The Jews weren't putting God above all else in that day.
 2. The Pharisees definitely weren't as can be seen by the comments of Jesus about them in Matthew 23.
 3. They were hypocrites who put themselves above all others.
- H. Jesus prepared people for the kingdom through His parables.
1. He taught about the value of the kingdom (field, pearl).
 - a. The church is priceless and worth giving up everything in order to obtain it, or be a part of it.
 - b. We need to view it that way today.
 2. Jesus taught that the church would grow.
 - a. It would start small but grow great.
 - b. This is what Daniel said about the kingdom hundreds of years before (Daniel 2:35).
 3. He even taught that not all the citizens of the kingdom would be saved.
 - a. Sadly, not all would remain faithful to the King.
 - b. Some would rebel or simply fall away.
 - c. Jesus did not want there to be any surprises on the judgment day.
- I. Everything Jesus and John taught was to prepare people.
- J. Even with all of this teaching one thing was lacking and that was a cornerstone for the building.
1. The cornerstone, in that time, was the first stone laid.
 2. It was the most costly and largest of the stone pieces.
 3. The Psalmist long ago mentioned this stone (118:22).

- 4. Isaiah did as well (28:16).
- K. Jesus was and is that cornerstone (Acts 4:10-11; 1 Peter 2:7).
- L. The Jews most certainly rejected Jesus as He had said they would (Mark 8:31).
- M. The ones who held Jesus as a King at the beginning of the week (Matthew 21:1-9) cried for His death at the end of the week (Matthew 27:22).
- N. With His death, all the materials needed were present and even the purchase price had been paid (Acts 20:28).

III. **Christ's church was presented by the apostles.**

- A. Generally, when something is built, there is some type of presentation ceremony.
 - 1. New buildings have ribbon cutting ceremonies.
 - 2. New homes have the keys presented to the new owners.
- B. The same is true for the church of Christ.
 - 1. Everything was ready for the church to be presented for the first time.
 - 2. All preparation had been made and the church had been purchased.
- C. When Jesus told the apostles some would see the kingdom come, He said it would be with power.
 - 1. Just before His ascension He told the apostles they would receive power from on high and it would take place in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:49).
 - 2. This is what had been shown the prophets as well.
- D. Isaiah and Micah both said...(2:2-3).
 - 1. All nations would flow into this kingdom, which took place on the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2:5.
 - 2. It would take place in the last days, as Joel had said, and the apostles attested to this fact (Acts 2:16).
 - 3. The Spirit came with power on this great day (Acts 2:1-4).
- E. What then came was a presentation of the church by the preaching of the gospel.
 - 1. These men preached that this was a fulfillment of prophecy.
 - 2. These men preached the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.
 - a. They taught these very people had crucified Jesus (vs. 22).
 - b. That it had been done by the foreknowledge of God, destroying Premillennialism.
 - c. Jesus was raised from the dead (vs. 23).
 - d.

The apostles laid out the case for His resurrection by using the Psalms.

- F. The use of the Psalms, which were beloved by the Jews, caused numerous ones to be pricked in their heart.
- G. Peter and the other apostles then used the keys to the kingdom given them by the Lord to open up the kingdom to those that were pricked.
 - 1. They were told to repent and be baptized.
 - 2. Salvation was now possible for those who had killed God's Son.

- H. By being baptized, the Lord they crucified, added them to His church (Acts 2:47).
- I. As you read through Acts, you see this church growing just as Daniel and Jesus foretold