

# The Establishment of the Church

## Acts 2

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### INTRODUCTION:

- A. In a world of so much religious confusion, we must be interested in finding out just when and where the church of the New Testament was established.
1. I believe there at least four reasons why we ought to be concerned about the beginning point of the church.
    1. 1<sup>st</sup> – As a matter of historical truth.
    2. 2<sup>nd</sup> – As a matter of Bible/Biblical fact.
    3. 3<sup>rd</sup> – As a mark of identity of the Lord’s Church today.
    4. 4<sup>th</sup> – For a study of the church as it was originally.
  2. It shall be our aim in this study to examine what the Bible teaches about the establishment of the Church we can read about in the Bible.
- B. As a beginning place, it is important that we first understand something about the Holy Book of God . . . The Bible.
1. The Bible is a library of **66** books.
    - a. **39** Books make up the Old Testament.
    - b. **27** Books make up the New Testament.
  2. There are **1189** chapters in the Bible.
    - a. **929** chapters in the Old Testament.
    - b. **260** chapters in the New Testament.
  3. There are **31,101** verses in the Bible.
    - a. **23,144** verses in the Old Testament.
    - b. **7,957** verses in the New Testament.
  4. Every verse of every chapter of every book in the Bible is equally inspired of God. **1 Timothy 3:16-17** – “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,  
that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
- C. Now please observe:
1. Concerning the **BOOKS** of the Bible:
    - a. When **39** books of the Bible have been read, the word “church” has not been mentioned.
    - b. It is mentioned in the **40<sup>th</sup>** book of the Bible . . . The Book of Matthew.
    - c. When **43** books of the Bible have been read, the church has not been established.
    - d. That takes place in the **2<sup>nd</sup>** chapter of the **44<sup>th</sup>** book . . . The Book of Acts.
  2. Concerning the **CHAPTERS** of the Bible:

- a. When **944** chapters have been read, the word “church” has not been mentioned.
- b. That takes place in the **945<sup>th</sup>** chapter . . . Matthew 16.
- c. When **1,019** chapters have been read, the word “church” has not been established.
- d. That takes place in the **1020<sup>th</sup>** chapter . . . Acts 2.

3. Concerning the **VERSES** of the Bible.

- a. When **23,689** verses have been read, the word “church” has not been mentioned.
- b. That takes place in the **23,690<sup>th</sup>** verse . . . **Matthew 16:18** – “. . . On this rock I will build my church . . .”
- c. When **26,889** verses have been read, the church has not been established.
- d. That takes place beginning with the **23,690<sup>st</sup>** verse . . . Acts 2 and following.

D. From reading the Bible, we know:

1. The church was in the mind of God before the world was ever created. Speaking to the church at Ephesus, Paul wrote in **Ephesians 1:4** – “Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world . . .”
2. Preparation was made in the Old Testament.
  - a. God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees and positioned him in Palestine.
    1. Jesus was promised through his lineage.
    2. David was a part of that lineage.
  - b. The work of the prophets.
    1. Isaiah
    2. Micah
    3. Daniel
    4. Zechariah
  - c. The preservation of the tribe of Judah and their return to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity.
3. New Testament preparation is seen in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts 1
  - a. The work of John the Baptist preparing the way for Christ.
  - b. We see Christ, the Messiah, the anointed One coming into the world.
  - c. His promise to build His church. **Matthew 16:18**
  - d. His teaching about the kingdom of God.
  - e. His training of the 12 apostles to carry out the work in the kingdom, the church.
  - f. His reassurance that the coming kingdom (church) was close. **Mark 9:1** – “. . . Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”

- g. The promise to send the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles. John 16:26-27
- h. His death as the purchases price of the church. Acts 20:28
- i. His resurrection and the giving of the great commission. Matthew 28:19-20
- j. The actual sending of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. Acts 2:1-4

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LORD’S CHURCH.

### A. Pinpointing the time of its establishment.

1. **Matthew 16:18** – “. . . On this rock I will build my church . . .”
  - a. The future tense, “will build” shows that the church was not yet in existence at the time Jesus made that statement.
  - b. Jesus spoke this promise at Caesarea Philippi about one year before His death.
2. **Acts 2:47** – “. . . And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.
  - a. The church was in existence in Acts 2:47.
  - b. Since it was yet future in Matthew 16:18, and in existence in Acts 2:47. we cannot help but conclude that somewhere between Matthew 16:18 and Acts 2:47, the church was established.
  - c. Somewhere between these two events the church was established.

### B. The Bible reveals the **WHAT**, **WHERE**, and **WHEN** of the establishing of the church.

1. The Bible will show the serious reader that the church was established:
  - a. On the Day of Pentecost.
  - b. In the city of Jerusalem
  - c. Recorded in Acts 2
2. Our corresponding day in our calendar would be May 28, A. D. 30

## THE **WHAT**, **WHERE**, & **WHEN** OF THE ESTABLISHING OF THE CHURCH.

Please observe the **WHAT**, **WHEN** and **WHERE**.

- The **WHAT** is revealed in Joel 2
- The **WHERE** is revealed in Isaiah 2, Micah 4, and Zechariah 1
- The **WHEN** is revealed in Daniel 2

### A. The **WHAT** of the establishing of the church is revealed in **Joel 2:28-32** -

“And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.

29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

30 "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire

and pillars of smoke.

31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.

32 And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls.

1. Joel is talking about the coming of the church.
  2. In Acts 2, Peter affirms that WHAT was taking place that day was prophesied by Joel. **Acts 2:16** – “But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:
  3. These five verses first penned in Joel 2:28-32 are repeated by Peter in Acts 2:17-21
  4. The spirit that Joel spoke of began to be poured out in Acts 2:1-2
  5. Joel said it would take place in Jerusalem . . . And Acts 2 was taking place in Jerusalem
  6. What Joel was talking about in about 845 B.C., Peter said was being fulfilled on the very day of Pentecost in Acts in Jerusalem.
- B. The **WHERE** of the church being established is revealed by Isaiah, Micah, and Zechariah.
1. **Isaiah 2:2-3** - 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.
 

3 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.
  2. Micah and Zechariah say the same thing.
  3. To understand what Isaiah is saying, it becomes necessary to understand his terminology.
    - a. The “**last days**” refers to the last period of Bible history . . . The Christian Age.
    - b. “**Jerusalem**” refers to the city of Jerusalem in Judea . . . The very place Peter was preaching that day in Acts 2.
    - c. “**Jerusalem**” and “**Zion**” are used interchangeably in that Mount Zion is in Jerusalem. **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.
    - d. The term “**house of God**” refers to the church.
    - e. The law that would go forth from Jerusalem would be the gospel of Christ. Jesus said in **Luke 24:47** – “And that repentance and remission

of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

- C. The **WHEN** of the church being established is revealed by Daniel.
1. Daniel concludes the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream with these words that foretell of the establishing of the Lord’s New Testament church.
  2. **Daniel 2:44-45** – “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.  
45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold — the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”
  3. The image in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream:
    - a. Head of gold . . . Babylonian Empire (Then)
    - b. Breast & arms of silver . . . Medo-Persian Empire
    - c. Belly & thighs of brass . . . Grecian-Macedonian Empire
    - d. Legs of iron. Feet part of iron and part clay . . . The Roman Empire
  4. In the days of the last of the four kingdoms would be during the Roman Empire.
    - a. The Roman Empire was the 4<sup>th</sup> great empire dating from the time that Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.
    - b. Acts 2 took place during the time of the Roman Empire.
  5. The Kingdom that would never be destroyed would be the church.
    - a. Jesus said in **Matthew 16:18** – “. . . On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”
    - b. The “gates of hell” could not prevent it from being established then . . . and the “gates of hell” cannot stop or destroy it now.

## THE MESSAGE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, JESUS CHRIST, & THE APOSTLES.

- A. John the Baptist. **Matthew 3:1-2** – “In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,  
2 and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!’”
- B. Jesus Christ. **Matthew 4:17** – “From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’” **Note:** “is at hand” means close but still future.
- C. The apostles.
  1. Early in Matthew 10 Jesus calls twelve men to become His apostles.
  2. As part of the instruction Jesus gave them, He said in **Matthew 10:7** – “And

as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’” **Note:** “is at hand” means close but still future.

D. John the Baptist . . . Christ . . . And the Apostles all preached that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

1. **Note again:** “Is at hand” means close but still future.
2. “At hand” meant that it was almost here.
3. It was close to the time of their preaching it.

### PREPARATIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHING OF THE CHURCH.

A. **John 16:7** – “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.”

1. Jesus did go away. **Acts 1:9** – “Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”
2. Therefore, all preparations had been made for the sending of the comforter, the Holy Spirit of God.

B. **Mark 9:1** – “And He said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.’”

1. The establishing of the kingdom, the church, was so close in time that Jesus said some of the very people listening to Him would still be alive on the earth to see it happen.
2. The church was established in Acts 2, just ten days after Jesus ascended back into Heaven.

C. **Luke 24:47-49** – “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And you are witnesses of these things.

49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

1. Jerusalem is designated as the city where:
  - a. “Repentance and remission of sins” would begin to be preached.
    1. Had not been, would begin to be preached.
    2. This corresponds to Isaiah’s prophecy of the Word of the Lord going forth from Jerusalem.
  - b. The Holy Spirit would be given to the Apostles.
2. After the ascension of Christ into Heaven, we read about the eleven apostles returning to Jerusalem. **Acts 1:12** – “Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey.”

3. As promised by Christ, the Holy Spirit did come upon the Apostles ten days later. **Acts 2:1-4** – “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

## ACTS 2 IS THE FOCAL POINT FOR THE ESTABLISHING OF THE CHURCH.

A. On the day of Pentecost, the Apostles and disciples were together in Jerusalem.

1. The right **MEN**. Mark 9:1 Acts 1:8
2. The right **PLACE** . . . Jerusalem. Isaiah 2:2-3 Micah 4:1-2
3. The right **TIME** . . . “In the last days” during the Roman Empire. Acts 2:16-17 Joel 2:28-29
4. The right **POWER** . . . The Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8
5. The right **MESSAGE** . . . “Repentance and remission of sins.” Acts 24:47-49
  - a. **Acts 2:37-38** – “Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’
 

38 Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”
  - b. This is a part of the “word of the Lord” Isaiah spoke of.
6. The right **NAME** . . . The name of Christ
  - a. **Luke 24:47** – ““And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached **in His name** to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
  - b. **Acts 2:38** – “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized **in the name of Jesus Christ** for the remission of sins . . .”
7. The right **AUDIENCE**. 15 nations mentioned as being present in Acts 2:9-11
  - Parthians
  - Medes
  - Elamites
  - Dwellers in Mesopotamia
  - Dwellers in Judea
  - Dwellers in Cappadocia
  - Dwellers in Pontus
  - Dwellers in Asia

- Dwellers in Phrygia
  - Dwellers in Pamphylia
  - Dwellers in Egypt
  - Dwellers in Lybia about Cyrene
  - Strangers of Rome
  - Cretes
  - Arabians
- a. Fulfillment of **Isaiah 2:2** – “. . . And all nations shall flow to it.”
  - b. Some years later at Caesarea in Acts 11:15, Peter would refer to the day of Pentecost as the beginning . . . the beginning of the church.
- B. Listening friends, if this is not the beginning of the church, then what is it the beginning of?
- C. Acts 2 records the establishing of the Lord’s New Testament church.

**CONCLUSION:**

- A. Every Christian and every person interested in going to Heaven, should be familiar with Acts 2
- B. The Book of Acts records:
1. The record of the beginning of the church.
  2. Its growth.
  3. Its spread throughout the world.
- C. In looking for the church of the New Testament, look for these earmarks:
1. Built by Christ.
  2. Built on Christ.
  3. Established in Jerusalem.
  4. Established on the day of Pentecost in A. D. 30.
  5. Teaches repentance and baptism for the remission of sins.
- D. Any so-called church that does not bear these marks is not the church that Jesus built.
1. Any church established before Acts 2 is too old to be the Lord’s church.
  2. Any church that was established after Acts 2 is too young to be the Lord’s church.
- E. Have you obeyed the Gospel of Christ so as to enable the Lord to:
1. Forgive you of your sins. Acts 2:38
  2. Add you to His church. Acts 2:47
- F. The church described in the New Testament began on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Its doors are still open for all who will obey the Lord.
- G. **God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation**