

Christ's Church

By Rosco Brong D.D., 1938

OUR LORD BUILT HIS OWN CHURCH, AND IT IS STILL DOING BUSINESS FOR HIM

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18.)

Christ's church was built upon Himself. **"That Rock was Christ."** (1 Cor. 10:4.) "In the Lord Jehovah is the Rock of ages." (Isa. 26:4, margin.) **"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."** (1 Cor. 3:11.) "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. 2:19-20.)

BUILT UPON CHRIST

The word Peter means a stone. **It means a little stone, not a big rock.** The Catholic church, which did not exist until hundreds of years after Peter's death, falsely claims to be built upon Peter, **and by that very claim denies that it is Christ's church,** because the Bible teaches that Christ's church is built upon Himself.

Peter never suggested that God's people or God's churches were built upon Peter. He preached that men should turn to Christ. He knew that Christ was not only the foundation but also the corner stone of His church:

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, **Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.** Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, **the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence,** even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed." (1 Pet. 2:2-8.)

BUILT IN CHRIST

Christ's church was built upon Christ as the foundation Rock; and it is built in Christ as the chief corner stone: **"Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;** in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." (Eph. 2:20-21.)

No organization is Christ's church, no matter what it calls itself, if it depends upon or owes its existence to the life, work, and teachings of any mere human being or any number of human beings. Christ's church was built upon Christ Himself; not upon popes, or Luther, or King Henry VIII, or Calvin, or Wesley, or Campbell, or Smith, or Russell, or any other men who thought they could do a better job of teaching and organizing than the Son of God.

BUILT BY CHRIST

Christ's church was built by Himself. **"I will build my church." False churches teach that the church was not organized until Pentecost, but there is no such teaching in the Bible.** On the contrary, in Acts 1:15 we are told that before Pentecost "the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty." This plainly means that the church had 120 members. **Christ built His church during His earthly ministry in the flesh, before His crucifixion.** In Matthew 18:17 we read, "If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." It is ridiculous to suppose that Christ was talking about a church that didn't exist. He was plainly teaching His disciples that if they could not settle the matter of trespasses against one another as individuals, they should take their trouble to the church. What church? The church of which they were members, of course. Christ promised to build His church, and here we find it in existence before He was crucified. Why call Him a liar by saying the church was not organized until Pentecost?

Christ's church was built by Christ Himself, before His crucifixion. **No organization is Christ's church, no matter what it calls itself, if its origin is more recent than the personal ministry of Christ on earth.** Christ's church in the world today is the same in organization, in doctrine, and in practice as it was 1900 years ago.

HIS ONE AND ONLY CHURCH

Christ built only one kind of church: "I will build MY church." It is His church because He created the members. (Col. 1:16.) It is His church because He purchased it with His own blood. (Acts 20:28.) It is His church because He is its Head and it is His body. (Eph. 1:22-23.) It is His church because He is its Bridegroom and it is His bride. (Eph. 5:22-32.)

"There is one body." (Eph. 4:4.) "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." (1 Cor. 14:33.) Christ built only one kind of church; **He has only one body, and that is the "local" church,** the church that has a definite membership, a definite time and place of meeting, a definite organization with elected officers (bishops, elders, or pastors, and sometimes deacons), and a definite program **of carrying on the Lord's work**—"the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the **truth**." (1 Tim. 3:15.)

NO "INVISIBLE" CHURCH

The devil has persuaded many people that the church is some kind of an 'invisible' thing that all Christians belong to, and if he could make enough people believe this he would soon destroy Christ's church. But Christians who get their doctrines from the Bible instead of from the devil

will not be misled. **The Bible does not say one word about an "invisible" or "universal" church. There isn't any such thing.**

In Matt. 16:18, in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, in Col. 1:18,24, 1 Tim. 3:5, 15; 5:16, Heb. 12:23, Jas. 5:14, and possibly a few other passages, the word "church" is used **abstractly**, as I have frequently used it above, not referring to any particular organization at any definite place, but to **the church as an institution**. When we make a concrete application of the word we must have in mind a **particular organization of baptized disciples** that meets somewhere and is engaged in the Lord's work, because **this is the only kind of church that the Bible tells us anything about.**

ABSTRACT AND CONCRETE

To illustrate what is meant by the **abstract** and **concrete** uses of words, I might say, "The horse is a useful animal." I have here used the word "horse" abstractly. I have no particular horse in mind. Now, if I were to use the word concretely, I might say, "Farmer Brown's horse is a good puller," or "The horse on this side seems balky." I am talking about particular horses. But **if I knew as little about horses as some religious teachers seem to know about churches, I might try to make you believe that there is only one horse in the world, a big invisible horse—and a lot of work you would get out of it!**

Again, I might say, abstractly, "The public school is a great democratic institution." No **sane** person would suppose that there is only one public school in the world, [*Editor: No sane person would suppose that it is great either.*] a kind of invisible something without any form of organization, without any responsibility or authority, a school to which all students the world over belong, but without any official teachers or classrooms, a school that nobody needs to attend—boy, what a school!

People generally are not quite foolish enough to entertain such ideas about horses or schools, but when we come to religion many persons seem to forsake all reason and are **ready to believe the silliest nonsense if it will give them an excuse for laziness or sin.**

HIS CHURCH STILL HERE

Finally, Christ's church is still in the world. **It is not here again, it is here yet—and will be here until Christ comes for His bride. His promise is "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." All Protestant churches are built upon the assumption that Christ lied**, that His promise failed, that His church perished, and that it was necessary for man to bring success out of God's failure. Only Baptists and Catholics claim to trace their history to the time of Christ. But the Catholics, **by their own testimony**, are built not upon Christ but upon their popes, and they are further from the truth than any other so-called Christian church. Moreover, **many so-called Baptist churches are not Christ's**; more and more of them, in these latter days, are forsaking unpopular truths. **We need to know more than the name of a church to know whether it is Christ's; only those churches are His which believe and teach His word.**

Christ gave to His church "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 16:19), with the promise that "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 18:18.) **Christ's church is "the pillar and ground of the truth."** (1 Tim. 3:15.) Others have selected portions of truth to mix with their errors, but the faithful ministers of Christ's true churches "have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." (Acts 20:27.)

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Unsaved sinners ought not to belong to any church. If you have been saved by God's grace, then you ought to follow Paul's example (Acts 9:26) and join yourself to that church nearest your present, temporary home which shows evidence that it is of Christ's building, **a church whose only Head is Christ, whose only message is His Word.**

REFERENCES

Below is a list of scripture verses containing the word "church" or "churches." Read and study them for yourself to be sure of the Bible teachings about the church.

Matthew 16:18; 18:17.

Acts 2:47; 5:11; 7:38; 8:1, 3; 9:31; 11:22,26; 12:1,5; 13:1; 14:23,27; 15:3, 4, 22, 41; 16:5; 18:22; 20:17, 28.

Romans 16:1, 4, 5, 16, 23.

First Corinthians 1:2; 4:17; 6:4; 7:17; 10:32; 11:16, 18, 22; 12:28; 14:4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 33, 34, 35; 15:9; 16:1, 19.

Second Corinthians 1:1; 8:1, 18, 19, 23, 24; 11:8, 28; 12:13.

Galatians 1:2, 13, 22.

Ephesians 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32.

Philippians 3:6; 4:15.

Colossians 1:18, 24; 4:15, 16.

First Thessalonians 1:1; 2:14.

Second Thessalonians 1:1, 4.

First Timothy 3:5, 15; 5:16.

Philemon 2.

Hebrews 2:12; 12:23.

James 5:14.

Third John 6, 9, 10.

Revelation 1:4, 11, 20; 2:1, 7,8,11,12,17,18, 23, 29; 3:1, 6, 7,13, 14, 22; 22:16.

[Return to Gallery Writings](#)