

THE CHURCH JESUS BUILT

The church we read about in the New Testament is alive and well. Jesus promised to build His church (Mat. 16:18) and recorded in Acts 2, we read of that promise being fulfilled. “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). Those being saved and thus added to the church were they who “heard” the Word of God, “were pricked in their heart” (Acts 2:37), repented of their past sins and were baptized (Acts 2:38). The Bible teaches that salvation is “in Christ” (2 Tim. 2:10) and that there is only one way to get “*into Christ*.” “For as many of you as have been baptized *into Christ* have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). The Bible also teaches that being in Christ, or in His body, is the same as being in the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Since there is only one body (Eph. 4:4), then there is only one church. Therefore, salvation is found only in the church of which we read about in the New Testament – Christ’s church. With this knowledge, it is imperative that we be able to recognize that one church today and know how God adds individuals to that body.

The church Jesus built is easily recognizable. First, the church Jesus built wears His name. “The *churches of Christ* salute you” (Rom. 16:16). Second, the church Jesus built can be recognized by Scriptural worship. God authorizes five acts of worship: singing (Eph. 5:19), praying (Acts 16:25), teaching/preaching (2 Tim. 4:2), partaking the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7), and giving (1 Cor. 16:2). In addition, the church Jesus built does not use mechanical instruments of music in worship (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) and partakes of the Lord’s supper every Sunday (Acts 20:7). A church which uses mechanical instruments of music in worship or partakes of the Lord’s supper on days other than Sunday (or only on “special” Sundays) is therefore **NOT** the church Jesus built. Third, the church Jesus built teaches the Scriptural plan of salvation. The Bible teaches that one is saved by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), believing (Heb. 11:6), repenting of past sins (Luke 13:3), confessing that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 8:37), being baptized into Christ to have past sins forgiven (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21), and living faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10; 1 John 1:6-10). A church which teaches some other plan is therefore **NOT** the church Jesus built. The church Jesus built does not teach that one is saved by faith only (Jam. 2:24), that one can do nothing whatsoever to save himself (Acts 2:40), nor that one can say a “sinner’s prayer” in order to be saved (John 9:31). A church teaching any of these false doctrines is therefore **NOT** the church Jesus built.

Since salvation is only in the church of Christ, it is important to make sure that we are members of that one body. God reveals to us, in His Word, how to recognize His church and how to be added to that body. Thanks be to God for giving “us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3).

- *Brad Green*