

Redwater Restorer

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness..." (Matthew 3:3)

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The Establishment Of The New Testament Church

In our previous articles we have determined that the New Testament is the pattern given by God which Christians must follow in order to be pleasing to God. It is the character of the church in accordance with God's pattern that makes the church divine. With this in mind we now intend to set forth from God's Word various characteristics which will identify the Lord's true church. We will begin with "The Establishment Of The New Testament Church." It should be noted that the time and place of the Lord's church, the kingdom, is noted both in prophesy and fulfillment. The Lord's church was established in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost following the Lord's resurrection. Let's note what God's word says.

I. This is a Divine Prophecy of the Church. *"It shall come to pass in the last days (the Christian Dispensation), that the mountain of the Lord's house (the church) shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."* (Isaiah 2:2-3)

II. This is the Preparatory Work of the Church. *"And Jesus answered and said*

unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock (the fact He is Jesus Christ) I will build my church (the New Testament Church); and the gates of hell (the power of Satan) shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:13-18)

III. This is the Place of The Church's Establishment. *"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"* (Luke 24:45-47).

IV. This is the Establishment of the Church. *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that the Lord God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in this heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhorts, saying,*

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The Establishment Of The New Testament Church (Cont.)

Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:36-47)

V. This is the Existence of the Church. *"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom (the Kingdom and the Church are used interchangeably in the scriptures) which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire"* (Hebrews 12:28-29).

VI. This is the Final Destination of the Church. *"Then cometh the end (the end of this world), when He (Christ) shall have delivered up the kingdom (the Church) to God, even the Father; when He (Christ) shall have put down all rule and all authority and power (of Satan). For He (Christ) must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"* (1 Corinthians 15:24-26).

Thus we see, according to the pattern set forth in the New Testament, the time and place of the church's establishment. The Lord's church was established in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost following the Lord's resurrection. Any church, which by character, cannot identify itself as having begun in Jerusalem on that Day of Pentecost is not part of the New Testament church prophesied of in the Old Testament, built by the Lord, recorded in

the New Testament, and which will one day be delivered to the Father.

This is one of the problems with the Catholic church and churches established during the Protestant movement. The character of the Catholic church was not established until the 6th century. The character of Protestant churches was not established until the 14th century and beyond, not the 1st century as was the New Testament church. The Catholic church was established in Rome. Protestant churches were established in Scotland, England, America and other places, not in Jerusalem as was the New Testament church.

The Redwater church of Christ does not have this problem. If you examine the character of this congregation you will find it identical to that of the New Testament church. Thus our establishment in character took place in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of the Lord. It is with this knowledge that we can know assuredly that we are God's divine church and that we will be "delivered up" at the end of time (1 Corinthians 15:24).

However, these are not the only characteristics set forth in God's pattern. In our future articles we will note more identifying characteristics found within God's word that a church must attain in order to be considered divine.

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