

**The  
Church  
That  
Jesus  
Built**

By Buddy J. Duncan

## **Introduction**

In the world today there are many so called churches, in fact there are over two thousands different churches today and the number grows almost each day. The purpose of this writing is to discuss “the church that Jesus built”. We all want to be a part and members of the glorious church that was established on the day of Pentecost.

The only way that we can be a part of that church is to be members of a church that is established the same way as the church that was built the very same way as the first church was.

If your church does not teach or preach the same doctrine as the early church did you are not a member of “the church that Jesus built”. So our discussion will be based upon what the inspired writers of the New Testament have recorded about “the church that Jesus built”.

### **Jesus Tells Disciples Of The Forth Coming Church**

On one specific occasion when Jesus had gone into the coast of Caesarea Philippi he asked his apostles who men were saying that he was: (*Matthew 16:13*) “*When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples saying, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”*” The reply that they made is recorded in the next verse: (*Matthew 16:14*) “*And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.*” So we can see that there was confusion at that time about who Jesus really was. But Jesus then asked them what concerned him most; he wanted to know who they thought he was: (*Matthew 16:15*) “*He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?”* Peter who was often times the spokesman for the twelve replied: (*Matthew 16:16*) “*And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” This answer that Peter gave is what we would call the good confession today.

Jesus told the group then what turned out to be a prophecy concerning the church that would soon be fulfilled: (*Matthew 16:17-19*) “*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. (18)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. (19) And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

There is a lot to be learned from these passages; it seems as though some have never read these words that Jesus spoke to his apostles. I would encourage you to read what Jesus said about building his church; how many churches did Jesus say he was going to build? My Bible reads “church” [singular] my Bible does not say churches [plural]. Did Jesus mean what he said? Yes, Jesus said exactly what he meant to say! If Jesus said what he meant to say and he did build his church [singular] why is it that we have so many churches today? The answer to this question is simple; many have been misled by the teaching of men. But this is nothing new; disciples stopped following Jesus while he was still alive: *(John 6:66) “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”* We should not be surprised that some stop following the pattern that Jesus gave for the church that he built. Some are not content with the church that Jesus built, they want to have it their way and as a result we now have churches that Jesus did not build and as already stated they are numbered in the thousands.

## **The Corner Stone**

Any good builder knows if the building is to stand it must have a good foundation. In order to have a solid foundation you must have a good corner stone; Jesus is that corner stone: *(Ephesians 2:20) “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;”* The apostles built upon the foundation but they were very careful to built upon a sound corner stone, I.e. Jesus Christ. The corner stone is the stone that holds the structure together; if you stray from the foundation that the apostles laid you are not building upon the true foundation. No other foundation can be laid: *(1) Corinthians 3:11) “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”* The wonderful thing about this is that the foundation can still be built upon today by the teaching and preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ!

## **“Upon This Rock”**

After Peter made the good confession Jesus stated “upon this rock I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18). There are those who claim that Peter was the rock that Jesus was going to build his church, however, this is not what Jesus meant. What Jesus was telling Peter and all who would ever read his words was that upon Peter’s true confession that Jesus was the messiah, the Son of God; he I.e. Jesus would build his church upon this confession. Jesus came to this world to reveal the Living God so that the world that was dying in sin might be saved.

## **Jesus Is The Corner Stone**

Jesus was telling them that the prophecy of the Psalmist was about to be fulfilled: (*Psalms 118:22*) “*The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.*” Not only did they reject Jesus they crucified him. The words of the Lord God found in Isaiah cannot be overlooked either: (*Isaiah 28:16*) “*Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.*” The temptations that Jesus safely resisted proved him to be the “precious stone, a sure foundation. If anyone tries to build upon another foundation they are not going to have “the church that Jesus built”.

## **The Church Belongs To God**

Even though Jesus built the church Paul informs us that the church belongs to God: (*1 Timothy 3:15*) “*But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*” When Paul wrote this he had in mind the tabernacle in which God dwelt; today the church is the house of God and every Christian is a member or a living stone, as such they are the pillar and ground of the truth. Paul reminds Timothy that the church belongs to God to stress upon him the importance of his work, we too should be reminded that the church is God’s and remember how important it is to work and worship as God has directed through His Holy Word.

We should also remember that the church is the object of God’s grace: (*2 Corinthians 8:1*) “*Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God be-*

*stowed on the churches of Macedonia; Here Paul uses the good example of the churches of Macedonia, that is, of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and others in the region of Macedonia to remind the Corinthians that the blessings they received were really blessings from God. God has promised to keep and provide for His: (Isaiah 27:2-3) “In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. (3) I the LORD does keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” The Lord remains true to His word yet today!*

## **Jesus Is The Head**

God gave Jesus “all power” (*Matthew 28:18*) “*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*” Jesus tells his apostles that “all power” [or authority] is given to him both “in heaven and in earth”. Jesus is the creator: (*John 1:3*) “*All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*” (*Colossians 1:16*) *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: (17) And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*” As the creator Jesus has the right to be given all authority. His authority extends over the material world, angels, devils and the church he built. If the church that you belong to has any other head it is not the church that Jesus built; another head would serve to rob Jesus of his authority.

## **The Church Is The Body of Christ**

In writing to the Ephesians Paul tells them that Jesus is “head of all things to the church; so that they have no misunderstanding about what the church is he wrote that the church “is his body”: (*Ephesians 1:22-23*) “*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, (23) Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*” As you look at a human body you will see that it has many members; you will see hands, fingers, feet, toes; eyes, ears mouth and nose. All of these different members make up the body. Not unlike the human body the church also has many members. The human body has only one head; why do people think that the church can have more than one head? Doesn’t it seem odd to you that anyone would try to add another head to the church and thus take away the authority of Jesus? In writing to the Colossians

Paul said he rejoiced in the afflictions he was suffering and that in his sufferings he was doing so for Jesus' body sake. Paul knew that some might not know that he was suffering for the sake of Christ's church; therefore, he tells them plainly that the body he made reference to is the church: *(Colossians 1:24) "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:"* When Paul wrote that he "suffered for his body's sake, which is the church he is not saying that he was suffering for the church building's sake; he is talking about the Christians that make up the church. These sisters and brothers in Christ is what Paul was suffering for, he knew that through such suffering that the gospel of Christ would be made known and more people would be added to the Lord's church.

## **Jesus Loved The Church**

Paul used an illustration that everyone should understand. He told them and us how much Christ loved the church by comparing Christ's love of the church to the love that a husband has for his wife. Not all, but most husbands would gladly sacrifice their own lives to save the life of their wives and this is exactly what our Lord and Savior did: *(Ephesians 5:25) "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"* A husband's love shows a strong and cordial affection for their wives. Jesus demonstrated that same love for you and I when he gave himself for the church [remember that you and I make up the church]. A good husband will provide all that his wife needs; Jesus has provided everything we need to have forgiveness of our sins. As a husband don't you forgive the faults of your wife; Jesus forgives our sins when we obey the gospel's plan of salvation.

## **Purchased By Blood**

Jesus paid an awful price to purchase his church, he purchased it with his own blood: *(Acts 20:28) "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."* In giving instruction to the elders of the church that Jesus purchased with his own blood they were told "to feed the church; to place emphasis upon this command they were reminded that Jesus paid a terrible price. These elders were to feed the flock as good shepherds

and not themselves. They were to feed them with wisdom and knowledge which comes from the Word of God. They were to seek that which was lost.

The blood that was shed was from a pure and innocent man who did no sin: (1 Peter 2:22) *“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:”* This was the only ransom that was sufficient to redeem the people of God from their sins. This church that Christ purchased is dear and precious to both God and Jesus because of the price paid.

## **Sanctified And Cleansed**

As noted by Paul everyone who has reached the age of accountability are guilty of sin: (Romans 3:23) *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”* In his epistle to the Corinthians he names some of the sins that they were guilty of: (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) *“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, (10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”* But notice the good news of verse eleven; he wrote that they had been washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

What did Paul mean by this statement? Let us first understand that he wrote, “such were some of you” which means that not everyone was guilty of any of these sins. Furthermore, those who were guilty were not guilty of committing all of the mentioned sins. Even if they were only guilty of one of the named sins that would be enough to condemn them on the Day of Judgment. First, he wrote that they were washed. When were they washed? Again I think Paul could answer this question because he, himself had been washed: (Acts 22:16) *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”* So Paul is telling them that they had their sins washed away when they were baptized, the same as his sins were washed away. It should be noted that this washing is not an external washing; rather it is the washing away of their sins by the blood of Jesus Christ. Finally Paul reminds them that they have been “justified”. To be “justified” simply means to be made right with

God. Of course this is done through faith in Jesus Christ: *(Romans 1:17) "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."* I would remind those who are attempting to live by the law that they are not "justified" by the works of the law; rather they are "justified" by the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The wonderful news that Paul relays here is that our sins have been blotted out and we should have no fear of the coming judgment. When you are added to the church [Acts 2:47] according to Paul you have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus, therefore, Jesus has cleansed the church. They are "justified" by the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

The wonderful news that Paul relays here is that our sins have been blotted out and we should have no fear of the coming judgment. When you are added to the church [Acts 2:47] according to Paul you have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus, therefore, Jesus has cleansed the church.

## **The Church Is Subject To Christ**

Once again referring to the apostle Paul he makes it very clear that the church is subject to Christ: *(Ephesians 5:24) "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."* Although I may have already covered this I feel that it is important to mention that the church is "subject to Christ. Everything that we do whether it is preaching, teaching or anything that we do when we are assembled as a congregation we are "subject to Christ". I cannot understand why there are those in the religious world who insist that they have any right to vote or make their own by-laws; in doing so they are no longer "subject to Christ", instead they have made themselves subject to someone or something that is entirely foreign to Jesus Christ. The church should be wholly dependant and entirely resigned to Him. After all we receive our salvation, our comfort, our joy and our happiness from him. The church is to have respect to all of the commandments of Jesus Christ; when a decision is made to make your own by-laws what has happened to that respect?

## **The Church Is To Make Known The Manifold Wisdom Of God**

Although I am incapable of fully describing the wisdom of God I will give you some of my thoughts concerning the wisdom of God. God's wisdom can be seen when He formed the gospel plan of salvation, in His selection of our Redeemer, the incarnation, the atonement, the various dispensations; in fact everything about God's plan of salvation is wise and beautiful! This being the case it should be a pleasure for you and I to do the work that we are charged to do, I.e. to make His manifold wisdom known to the entire world. Jesus commissioned his apostles to go into all the world and teach: *(Matthew 28:19-20) "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."* They were not to teach part of what Jesus commanded; no they were to "all that Jesus had commanded". Paul tells us that they did exactly that: *(Colossians 1:5-6) "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; (6) Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:"* If they who did not have the means of travel and communication that we have today were able to take the gospel into all the world we can too.

## **God Provided For The Early Church**

When the church was young and before the Bible was written and compiled God provided for the church that which was needed: *(Ephesians 4:11-12) "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"*

The apostles were special messengers who were sent out by Jesus [the word apostle means "one sent"]. Prophets foretold things that would come to pass. The pastors are what we call elders today. From time to time I am called "pastor" by those who are uninformed. At one time I was an elder and could properly be

called “pastor”; since I am no longer an elder I am now a minister or an evangelist. We have many teachers in the church that Jesus; we have both men and women teachers, the women teach the children which is a work that they can do better than anyone.

Of course in the early church these prophets, evangelist and pastors received special knowledge and powers by the laying on of the apostles hands. We are not so empowered today; one reason being that we don’t have apostles to lay their hands on anybody. Another reason was stated by the apostle Paul: (*1 Corinthians 13:10*) “*But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*” Contrary to what some believe “that which is perfect” is not referring to Jesus; he has already come. Paul is referring to the completed Word of God. When the completed Word of God comes there will be no need for speaking in tongues or for miraculous gifts. Our teachers and workers for the Lord only have to go to their Bibles to gain knowledge to carry out their work.

Ephesians chapter four verse twelve tells of the work that is to be done by the church that Jesus built: (*Ephesians 4:12*) “*For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*” I sometimes think that we are more interested in numbers than we are of doing the work of the church.

## **The Church Is To Glorify God**

It should come as no surprise that Jesus would desire that the church he built should glorify his Father in heaven: (*Ephesians 3:21*) “*Unto him is glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*”

Paul through inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote the above scripture. We know that the Holy Spirit often inspired writers of the New Testament the desires and words of Christ: (*John 16:13*) “*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.*” Not only did the Holy Spirit guide the apostle into “all truth” he also spoke the things of Jesus and God. So what Paul wrote to the Ephesians is the very thoughts and desires of our Lord. Jesus wants us to glorify God in the church!

God is to be commended for His work of creation and for the salvation He has provided for us who are sinners and for His gift of grace; this is only a scant mentioning of what God is worthy to be glorified. Let us not forget to glorify God for answered prayers. How many times have our prayers been answered and we even fail to thank God for His blessings. Let us not forget to glorify God in the church that Jesus built.

The reference I used from Ephesians chapter three is a prayer that Paul offers; notice how in verse twenty Paul gives glory to God: (*Ephesians 3:20*) “*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,*” So you see from the example of Paul it is proper to glorify God in closing our prayers.

On one occasion a disciple of Jesus came up to him and asked Jesus to teach them to pray as John’s disciples prayed: (*Luke 11:1-4*) *And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. <sup>2</sup>And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. <sup>3</sup>Give us day by day our daily bread. <sup>4</sup>And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.*

Notice how Jesus glorified God in this model prayer: First he glorified God by stating where God is. We need to approach God in prayer as children; a child looks up to his or her father for protection and for provision. Jesus further glorified God when he used the word “hallowed”; Strong says this word means “to be holy”. This is perhaps the highest praise that can be made to God.

This model prayer is virtually the same as Jesus taught in Matthew chapter six, verse nine through fourteen. The two model prayers are not identical which shows that we are not to repeat them word for word; rather they are models for us to use when we pray to God and in doing so we too will be glorifying God.

## **There Should Be Unity In The Church**

In the church that Jesus built there must be unity! The apostle Paul compares the church to the human body: (*1 Corinthians 12:12*) “*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. (13) For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (14) For the body is not one member, but many. (15) If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? (16) And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? (17) If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? (18) But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. (19) And if they were all one member, where were the body? (20) But now are they many members, yet but one body. (21) And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. (22) Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: (23) And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. (24) For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: (25) That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. (26) And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*”

Although this is a lengthy reading there is a lot of information concerning unity in the church. Paul starts out by stating that “the body is one”. Look at your own body; there are many different and varied parts; put them all together and you have a human body. The church has many different and varied members but it is one body. Let us realize that we were all baptized into one body; it makes no difference whether we are Jew or Gentile and the color of our skin does not matter either.

Our hands, feet and legs; in fact our entire body work together to make up a workable unit. Sometimes your nose may smell smoke before your eyes see the

fire to warn you of danger. The church is to function as the human body does; that is working together to perform the work of the Lord. We have a need for each member of our body and the Lord has a need and a work for every member of the church.

Verse twenty five is a verse that must not be overlooked: (*1 Corinthians 12:25*) “*That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.*” Paul warns that “there should be no schism in the body”. A good paraphrase for the word “schism” is division. I think we all know what division brings; it brings disharmony and often causes splits, or in some cases division has completely destroyed churches and they no longer exist. I have pity for anyone who deliberately destroys a church as they will be held accountable for their actions in the Judgment. The idea here is, that the body might be united, and be one harmonious whole; that there should be no separate interests; and that all the parts should be equally necessary, and truly dependent on each other; and that no member should be regarded as separated from the others.

Paul adds that “the members should have the “same care one for another”. Have you ever hit your thumb with a hammer? If you are like me I am sure you did the same thing that I have done; you go around holding it up from the rest of your fingers in an effort to protect it. If a member of the church is hurt we should have the same care for that person as we would if it was our self that was hurt. If we would only love one another as Jesus would have us to do we would never have a problem with unity! As Paul wrote in verse twenty if one member suffer let all members suffer also.

## **Elders Are To Feed The Church**

Although it is not in the context here I would like to compare the church to the human body; if you don't feed your body with good nutritious food what will happen? We know that we cannot live without eating; neither can the church survive without being properly fed! (*Acts 20:28*) “*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*” From time to time we see pictures of starving children and I have a hard time to even look at

them. I wonder if this is not how God feels about churches who do not receive a steady diet of God's Word.

It appears to me as if the finger is first pointed at the one who is charged to feed the church when they are told to "take heed unto yourselves". I believe this is our first responsibility. This is what Paul told Timothy: *(1 Timothy 4:13-16) "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. (14) Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. (15) Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. (16) Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."* Is Timothy not told to "take heed unto thyself"? He was to do this by reading and meditating. Wouldn't it be a shame if Timothy saved others by preaching the gospel and yet lost his own soul? But if he read and taught others what he learned he would save himself and others.

## **The Church Is To Edify Itself In Love**

There is a song that says "Love makes the world go around". Love certainly makes every place and every situation pleasant and it is no less true of the church. But according to Paul there is an added benefit; the church is edified or built up: *(Ephesians 4:16) "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."* When there is love in the body that body will grow. If there is hate and disharmony there will be no growth, if this is the case there will more than likely be a decrease in the body. Love will bind the body together; hate will separate the church that Jesus built. We should harbor love in our heart and not hate!

Here again Paul is alluding to the human body and he is comparing the human body to the church. Just as the human body has a head so does the church; Jesus Christ is the head of the church and he wants us to build up the church with love. Do we even dare to do otherwise?

## The Wicked Persecute

If we are not careful we can get a false sense of security as members of the church. But even the most faithful and strongest Christians are persecuted by others. This persecution can come when we least expect it and from those who we least suspect.

I cannot explain why Christians who are to be filled with love so often attack other Christians; but it happens. It happened in the early church: *(Acts 8:1) "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. (2) And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. (3) As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison."* Here we find Paul a man of God consenting to the death of a man who was a Christian; not only that but we are told in verse three that Saul made havoc of the church. Fathers, mothers nor children were safe; we must thank God for the freedom we have to worship in our nation.

Paul recorded another instance when he was not a guilty party: *(1 Thessalonians 2:14) "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: (15) Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:"* Here members of the churches of Judea were persecuted by their own countrymen. Friends, this can and does happen to us today; Christians are often persecuted by their very own neighbors and even worse by their brothers and sisters in Christ. Does anyone believe that this pleases God? If you should happen to believe that you are pleasing God by attacking your fellow Christian you had better read verse fifteen again. God is never pleased when we persecute one another.

Several years ago I labored with one good brother who was concerned because he did not feel that he had any persecution in his life. He knew what the Bible teaches concerning persecution: *(2 Timothy 3:12) "Yea, and all that will live*

*godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*” I explained although he was not persecuted in the same manner as the early church was persecuted he was still persecuted; no doubt some of his old friends no longer joined him [they wouldn’t worship with nor live the life that he live] and he was probably ridiculed for being a Christian. So even though his life was not threatened he was being persecuted. Now if your worldly friends of the past have no trouble of still being your friend; then that is a time to be worried!

## **Conclusion**

Not only does the Bible informs us that the church Jesus built was established on the Day of Pentecost history records also record the beginning of the church. In closing there is a final point that should be made. Isaiah foretold of the establishment of the church: *(Isaiah 2:2) “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.”* It has been correctly stated by Bible scholars that whenever “the last days” are mentioned it is referring to the days of the Messiah. “The last are not to be understood as the last days of the natural world but as the last days of the Jewish state and it alludes to the days of the messiah. Since Jesus has come to this earth in the form of a man we are presently living in the last days. The writer of the Hebrew epistle was aware that we are presently in “the last days: *(Hebrews 1:2) “Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”* “The last days” refers to the end of the Jewish dispensation when a new dispensation was begun. In these last days the old dispensation will never be restored; the gospel has been given and we shall have no further revelation from God.

The phrase “the last days” does not imply that the world is soon coming to an end; but that it is the last dispensation. There had been the patriarchal period, the period under the Law, the prophets, etc., and this was the period during which God’s “last” method of communication would be enjoyed, and under which the world would close. When the world will come to an end no one knows; this a day that God has set, even Jesus does not know when that day will be. I conclude that the gospel dispensation is called the last days and the last time, because not to be followed by any other dispensation.

When you consider that we are living in “the last days” does it make you wonder how long will the church be in existence? I know that there are those who say there was a period of time when the church did not exist. This was during the time called the “dark ages”. I do not believe that there has ever been a time when the church did not exist since it was established in about 33A.D. The reason I believe this is because of something that Jesus said: *(Matthew 16:18) “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.”* In ancient times fortified cities had gates and they were usually very strong. So the statement that Jesus made here means that we can trust that the plots of Satan and his angels shall ever be able to destroy the church that Jesus would build.

Implied here is that the church does have enemies [represented by “the gates of hell] who will try to destroy her, but Jesus has promised to strengthen and protect the church. Try as he may Satan shall never be able to root out the name of Christianity. History from the Old Testament tells us that an attempt was made to destroy the nation of Israel: *(Psalms 83:4) “They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.”* But we know that their effort failed. Satan’s attempt to destroy the name of Christianity shall also fail.

The time will come when Satan and his angels will be destroyed: *(Revelation 12:9) “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”*

I firmly believe that the church Christ built will be here as long as I live, my children, my grandchildren and my great grandchildren and their children if Christ does not come first.

**Written and published by**

**Buddy J. Duncan**

**September, 2008**

**This publication is not copyrighted.**

**You may use it for the glory of God.**

**We only ask that you do not change  
anything without permission.**

**My email address is: [dunk@iland.net](mailto:dunk@iland.net)**