

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Establishment of the church

By John C. Robertson

The church, by way of shadows, is spoken of as early as Genesis 2:20-25 (compare to Ephesians 5:31-32). The land and seed promise, through Abraham, also provides a shadow of the church (Genesis 12:1-3). The promised land of Canaan is the shadow of the holy and heavenly realm of the church (compare to Ephesians 2:6 and Hebrews 3-4). Further details of the Lord's future church are given at Exodus 25:8-9 where we see the Mosaic tabernacle as a shadow of the church or house of God (see 1 Timothy 3:15).

The prophets give us time and place of God's house being established. One must make the connection between the church and God's kingdom to see this fact (see Colossians 1:13 and 1 Thessalonians 2:12). Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Jesus explain that the law would go forth from Jerusalem at the time that the church was established (see Isaiah 2:1-4; Jeremiah 31:31ff; Luke 24:45-49 and Acts 2:1, 37-39 as Peter preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ). The Old Testament tells of God's kingdom being established in the city of Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:1-4) and it was so as recorded at Acts 1:12 and 2:1ff.

The prophets said that God's kingdom would be established in the “*latter days*” and Peter refers to the Day of Pentecost as that time (see Isaiah 2:2-3; Daniel 2:28 and Acts 2:16-17 and 3:24). Daniel tells us that the eternal kingdom of God would be established during the days of the Roman Empire and Luke gives the historical record (see Daniel 2:44 and Luke 3:1-2).

Jesus said that his kingdom, or church, would be established during the lifetime of many of those who heard him speak (Mark 9:1). The Lord also told his disciples that they would know when the kingdom was established because it would come with power (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:6-8 and fulfilled at Acts 2:1-4).

The Bible is clear regarding the establishment of the Lord's church. The church was established on the Day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts chapter 2. Every prophecy, regarding the coming of the kingdom of God, points to this day. Jesus currently reigns supreme as the King upon the throne of David. The church is spoken of as already existing and more and more people were being “*added unto them*” after Acts chapter 2 (see Acts 4:4; 5:11, 14; 6:1, 7; 8:1, 11-13 etc.). ■

The Inference of Baptism

By John C. Robertson

Acts chapters 2 and 3 are significant for obvious and not so obvious reasons. First, the obvious reason is that the church is established, and the law of forgiveness has been preached (see Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Luke 24:47). Again, it is obvious that a miracle has been performed and the compassion of God is on display.

There is also the not so obvious, yet significant, reason these two chapters are significant. The astute Bible student will notice the similarities and differences between Peter's two sermons from these two chapters. The similarities are that in each event there was a miracle performed that presented an audience to preach to. Another similarity is that Peter convicts his audience of killing the Christ and that he has been resurrected from the dead. Still yet another similarity, between the two sermons, is that Peter shames his audience for not only what they did but also because they did it in ignorance. They are the sons of the prophets and God's promises

(Acts 3:25)! They should have known that Jesus was the Christ based on all that is said about him in the scriptures.

The difference between the two written sermons is what we want to focus on. At Acts chapter 2, Peter drives his audience to guilt inasmuch that they ask what they are to do to remedy their situation. Peter responds by saying, **“38 Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”** (Acts 2:38). At Acts chapter 3, Peter drives his audience to guilt and gives them the remedy saying, **“19 Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord”** (Acts 3:19).

The obvious difference between the two chapters, verses, and or answer to the problem of sin is the subject of baptism. Peter commands baptism at Acts 2:38 yet says nothing about baptism at Acts 3:19. Should our conclusion be that baptism is not necessary because it is not mentioned at chapter 3:19? One could equally say that baptism is necessary because it’s mentioned at Acts 2:38. The examination of this issue is significant in relationship to how the Bible is put together.

The Bible is not a book wherein one finds an exhaustive chapter on any one given subject. Readers do not have a Bible book titled, “The Church,” where one can see its establishment, work, worship, and organization. Likewise, there is not a Bible book titled, “Salvation,” where one can read of everything one must do to be saved. The Bible is put together in such a way that one must examine multiple contexts for the full picture. It is written this way on purpose. God gives his gift of knowledge and forgiveness to those that seek it out. These things remain elusive and mysterious to those that do not put in the work to know (see Matthew 13:10ff).

Baptism is not mentioned at Acts 3:19 yet it is necessarily inferred. The first ever sermon by an apostle, regarding salvation, lays the foundation (Acts 2:38). To be forgiven of sins one must be baptized. Peter is the spokesman in each of these chapters. He is also the one that said, **“baptism saves”** (1 Peter 3:21). If one infers that baptism is not necessary, then it stands that God is the author of confusion. It would mean that the inspired word contradicts itself. We know that this is not the case (see 1 Corinthians 14:34). ■

HOW A CHRISTIAN IS LIKE A TREE

John Edwards

The Bible likens Christians to many things. This writing is a look at how we are like a *tree*. It is written, **“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither”** (Psa. 1:3).

A TREE IS PLANTED. The Psalmist declared, **“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water”** (Psa. 1:3). Christians have also been planted. Paul wrote, **“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection”** (Rom. 6:5).

A TREE IS ROOTED. A tree is anchored by its roots. Christians are **“Rooted and built up in him (Christ)”** (Col. 2:7). The Christian who is not rooted properly will fall away when the storms of life beat upon him (Lk. 8:13).

A TREE GROWS. Nature demands that a tree *grow* and God demands that a Christian *grow* (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18).

A TREE IS FRUITFUL. The tree **“bringeth for his fruit in his season”** (Psa. 1:3). The Christian must bear fruit to the glory of God (Jn. 15:1-8). ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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