

WHEN DID OUR LORD ESTABLISH HIS CHURCH?

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The first New Testament church was established during our Lord's ministry. Some deny this and try to justify their position by saying that our Lord said in His ministry: "I will build my church..." (Matthew 16:18). They then conclude that He began His first local church at Pentecost, Jesus did say, "I will build my church," that is: "I will be building, will go on building my church." He had already started and willed to go on, and praise His Name, He is still going on building His Church.

We see this truth clearly brought out in Matthew 18:15-19. Jesus here tells His disciples that if a brother trespasses against one of them that he should go to that brother and seek reconciliation. If this fails, he is to take it to the church, would not the disciples have asked about when one would be established? We certainly would have asked, and I believe that the disciples were as curious as we are. Jesus spoke of the church as already in existence and not once did He ever mention that His church would begin at Pentecost.

So, the church, and the first local church began in our Lord's ministry. The church age began with our Lord Jesus Christ! He took the disciples of John the Baptist and started a New Testament church. At Pentecost, those who had been born again and were a part of the church were for the first time baptized into one body. At Pentecost, they were also filled with the Holy Spirit, anointed by the Holy Spirit and given miraculous power to speak unlearned languages. they were already being permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This had been true since their meeting with Jesus, not long before His ascension, as recorded in John 20, where we read: "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them: and whose so ever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20: 22,23).

Our Lord did many wonderful things for those who were a part of the church at Pentecost. But the church and the first local church began in our Lord's ministry, not at Pentecost. If the church began at Pentecost, where is there any record of Jesus putting apostles in the church, giving the ordinances (baptism and the Lord's supper) to the church, and/or commissioning the church. If the church began at Pentecost, when did the apostles receive Christian Baptism? The ordinances belong to the local church not to individual believers, that is, unless the church did not begin until Pentecost. If she began then, this would be good interdenominationalism and/or /Protestantism.

Jesus called his apostles and gave them to the church in Luke 6:12-16, "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles: Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor." It is true that there is no record that our Lord ever said, "this is the beginning of My Church!" this is for the reasons best known to him. Had He done so, men might still be worshipping that place. We do know that He

established His Church in His ministry. He taught His first local church, indoctrinated her, gave her the ordinances, and discipline during His ministry.

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