

The Church's One Foundation

There's a wonderful hymn that begins with the rock-solid truth, "The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord." That Christ was to be and then became the founder of His church is evident in God's Word. Prophecy of the establishment of the church, Isaiah wrote,

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. 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).

Notice that this institution was to be the Lord's. It would not be Peter's. It would not belong to John the Immerser. It would be the Lord's and His only.

Jesus told the apostles that He would build His church upon the rock (Matthew 16:18). Though some fancy that Peter was that rock, harking back to the original language of this passage we find that Peter was a mere stone. Although his value was immeasurable and his contribution to the spreading of the Gospel immense, Peter was nonetheless an imperfect man (Galatians 2:11), wholly unworthy of being the foundation of the church to which Paul later referred as "the pillar and ground of the truth." (I Timothy 3:15).

The apostle Paul actually put to rest any questions regarding the identity of the founder of the Lord's church. In I Corinthians 3:11 we read, "For other foundation can no man lay that that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Ephesians 2:19-20 says, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone." The foundation laid by Paul and the other apostles was the truth of the Gospel, namely, that Jesus is the Christ and that He came in the flesh, died and rose victorious from the grave (I Corinthians 15:1-4).

Go back to Paul's words in the third chapter of I Corinthians. In verse 10 we find the exhortation, "But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." With Christ as the foundation, the very source of salvation, to try to build on what He founded with man-made creeds and doctrines is pure folly. Why would we start with the solid foundation of Christ, try to add our weak words of worldly wisdom and then expect to come out with a scripturally sound structure? It simply cannot be done. The foundation is pure. That which the Lord gave to build on that foundation (His inspired Word, the Bible) is pure. To bring in denominational doctrines, human traditions and so-called latter-day revelations is to add "materials" that are inferior in every way to the foundation. Those who do so will not stand in judgment.

Countless numbers of religious groups today claim to be the church of which Jesus is the foundation. In spite of their claims, they practice principles and teach doctrines that are not sanctioned by the New Testament. Sadly, their foundations are weak and crumbling. They have built their churches on the desires of the world and the traditions of men. Some have even built their churches on their own selves as monuments to their selfish ambitions and inflated egos.

THE church's one foundation is indeed Jesus Christ her Lord. Look for this church. Its identifying marks are clearly seen within the pages of the New Testament. That church exists today and, as you would expect of an institution founded on Christ Himself, it bears His precious name (Romans 16:16).

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