

# Bedford Bulletin

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BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE  
FAITH  
1 Corinthians 3:9-11

## Appointed for the Defense of the Gospel (Part 11)

### Identifying the Church through the Inspired Scriptures – Part 1 of 3

More times than I like to admit, with intention, I've walked into a room to get something only to find myself asking, "What am I looking for?" Truth is that you can't find something unless you know what it is. Have you ever been looking for something and in your mind you thought it was blue, only to overlook it time and time again till you're spouse says, no it's red, then, suddenly, there it is, right under your nose. So many good, honest, and sincere people who genuinely love the Lord go out looking for the church, and never really find it. Why? Because they're not looking for the church based upon God's description. Many find what they believe is the church the Lord purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28), but the criteria for finding a church leads them to something else. For example, many look for, "a place they feel comfortable in", "a place that agrees with me", "a place that has plenty of programs for my family", or "a place with schools, daycare, Zumba and a gymnasium". Whatever you're looking for, you'll find. If you're looking for the right thing, or the wrong thing, you'll find it.

Therefore, it is right to say one must know what the church is descriptively if one expects to find it. In this and subsequent articles we'll let the scripture reveal the identifying characteristics of the Lord's church. Know assuredly, that only by learning these marks can you know it's the right church when you see it. Also, know that it is of the utmost importance to you because, no other church will Jesus one day deliver to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24). Thus, it is vital that we learn the identifying characteristics of His church that we will be in it when He comes.

To begin, we'll lay a little foundation by way of prophecy fulfilled. We need to understand that the Lord's church was not an afterthought, it was not a response to the will of the Jews overpowering the Lord's plan in the first century. God didn't fall back and revise anything. We know via the book of Acts, history of the church, that the Lord's church was established in the city of Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost in 33 A.D. But what is truly amazing is the Lord's church was foretold by divine prophecy. Isaiah a prophet of God said, "*Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. 3 Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain*

TODAY WE CHOOSE TO REJOICE



Hebrews 4:3

*"For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: 'So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest,' although the works were finished from the foundation of the world"*

*of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we*

*shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning [a]hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."* (Isa. 2:2-4). What did Isaiah say? (1) "*in the latter days*" which are the days following the cross. In that time; (2) "*all nations shall flow to it*", that is not only the Jews, but gentiles also. (3) "*the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*" signifying a

# Knowing & Doing God's Will

Proverbs 11:14

new law. And (4), *“neither shall they learn war anymore”*; This kingdom will be a kingdom winning souls by the way of peace and not military might.

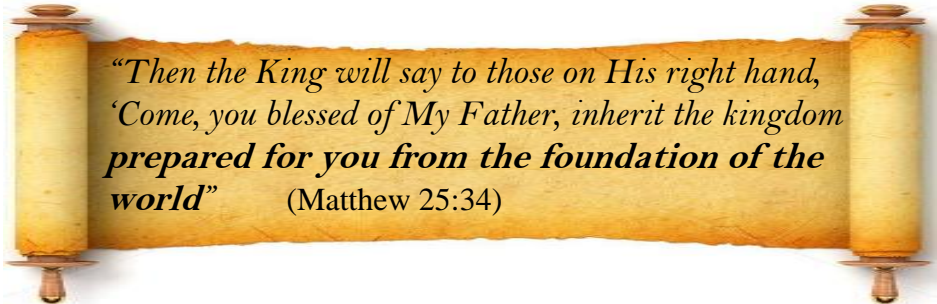
As for the prophecy, Daniel the prophet, (Matt. 24:15) had a vision of four coming kingdoms, the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman. His vision described events that would come to pass saying, *“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall [a]break in pieces and [b]consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”* (Dan. 2:44). After this Daniel had another vision: *“I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.”* (Dan. 7:13-14). In this vision, Daniel sees the kingdom established when *“one like the Son of man”* comes *“with the clouds of heaven”* *“to the Ancient of days.”*

Now to the time of Christ. We're not surprised to see divine prophecy fulfilled in the establishment of the kingdom, because every other prophecy has come to pass. *“Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel [a]of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God [b]is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel’”* (Mark 1:14-15). The first century was the right time, in the days of Tiberius Caesar, the Roman king (Luke 3:1). Note that the gospels speak of the *“impending establishment”* of the kingdom. Jesus said, repent for the *“kingdom is at hand”* (Matt. 3:2; 4:17) and we see it was to be established during the lifetime of those who then lived. Jesus said, *“Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God [a]present with power”* (Mark 9:1). The word in the NKJV *“present”* [ἐρχομαι] ERCHOMAI, means *“to come from one place into another”* Thayer's. After His resurrection the apostles were told, *“you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be [c]witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”* (Acts 1:8). Recorded in Luke 24:49 Jesus told them where they had to wait for it—in Jerusalem.

Note it was after His death and resurrection, and before He ascended to heaven that the apostles asked, *“Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”* (Acts 1:6). Daniel's prophecy was fulfilled as Jesus then ascended into heaven—one like the son of man came in the clouds to the Ancient of Days and was given dominion, in the language of Daniel (7:13-14). And just as Jesus promised, it is recorded in Acts 2 that the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles, they were endued with power from on high, and by the Holy Spirit Peter preached the first gospel sermon announcing salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ. In his sermon, Peter proclaimed the last days finally came (Acts 2:17). Three thousand obeyed the gospel that day and of great significance, Luke wrote, *“...the Lord added [a]to the church daily those who were being saved”* (Acts 2:47).

Summing it up is easy. The first and cardinal point about the church is that we know it was planned by God, *“before the foundation of the world”* (Eph. 1:4). As foretold by prophecy it was established in the city of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ. That this is important because any *“religious groups”* that cannot trace their origin to 33 A.D. and to Jerusalem, cannot claim to be the Lord's church.

Remember that from the day of Pentecost forward the kingdom was no longer coming, but present (Acts 8:12-13; 28:23, 31; Col. 1:13-14; Rev. 1:9). This is the church Jesus promised to build (Matt. 16:18), this is the household of God (1 Tim. 3:15). Most important, this is the only church Jesus will deliver up to the Father when the end comes (1 Cor. 15:24).



*“Then the King will say to those on His right hand,  
‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom  
prepared for you from the foundation of the  
world”* (Matthew 25:34)

If the Lord wills, in our next issue we'll discuss the name of the church and how the church is to worship God according to spirit and truth. Then in the third issue we'll address the organization of the church, the mission of the church, and the conditions for membership.

May the Lord bless you and be the light that guides you in all truth (John 16:13).

As always, in Love

Dave Scarpino

### **Times of Our Services**

Sunday Morning Bible Study	9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship	9:50 AM
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:30 PM

### **What Must I Do to Be Saved?**

Hear the gospel	-----	John 6:45; Romans 10:17
Believe the gospel	-----	John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6
Repent of sins	-----	Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30
Confess Christ	-----	Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10
Be baptized	-----	Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38
Remain faithful unto and until death	-----	Revelation 2:10; Matthew 10:22