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THE SURE WORD by Jonnie Hutchison

DID JESUS BUILD “HIS CHURCH”?

When Jesus and His disciples were in the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked them who men were saying He was. The disciples said that some were saying Jesus was John the Baptist, others Elijah and Jeremiah or one of the other Old Testament prophets. Jesus then ask His disciples, “who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, ““You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” It was upon the basis of this confession that Jesus said, “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:13-18). Did Jesus fulfill His promise to build HIS CHURCH?

Before Acts chapter two the church is always spoken of in the future tense. When Jesus said “I will build My church” it is obvious that the church did not then exist. However, from Acts 2 forward, the New Testament speaks of the church in the present tense. The statement of Acts 2:47 that “the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” indicates that the church Jesus promised to build came into existence on the first Pentecost following the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The events in Acts 2 took place in the city of Jerusalem. Jesus had promised in Matthew 16:18-19 not only to build His church but also to give to His apostles “the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” These “keys” were the terms of entrance into the kingdom which is the church of Christ and are found in the words, “Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). The Bible tells us that those who “gladly received his word were baptized” and were added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:41, 47).

Yes, Jesus did build His church as He promised. Jesus never promised to build many different kinds of churches (plural) but only His church (singular). Any “church” established at another place than Jerusalem or any other time than the church we read about in Acts 2 cannot be the church that Jesus built. In addition, any other “keys” of entering the church than those given in Acts 2 will not result in one being added by the Lord to His church. Use the keys Jesus gave by doing exactly what those in Acts 2 did and the Lord will add you to His church. greenplainchurchofchrist.org.