
“Come, Let Us Reason Together” About the Bible
What Is the Church of the New Testament?
Bible Study Series

“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 16:18)

LESSON TWO — When Was the Church Established?

Estimated Reading Time: 8–10 minutes

Have you ever wondered when the church that Jesus promised actually came into existence? In the religious world today, there are so many churches, each with its own origin story. But if you're seeking the *church of the New Testament*—the one that belongs to Christ—you need to go back to the Bible itself. Let's explore both the Old and New Testaments and see when this church was established, just as God planned.

The Church Was in the Mind of God Before Time Began

Before you even step into the pages of history, you should understand that the church was not an afterthought. It was part of God's eternal plan.

*“to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, **according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord**” (Ephesians 3:10–11)*

This passage plainly states that the church was part of God's *eternal purpose*. That means it was in His plan before the world was even created. The church wasn't a backup plan—it was always part of God's design for saving mankind through Christ.

Prophecies from the Old Testament Point to the Church

God, through His prophets, gave glimpses of this coming kingdom, or church, centuries before it was ever established. Let's look at a few key prophecies that pointed ahead to its arrival.

Isaiah's Prophecy – The House of the Lord - Isaiah 2:2–3

“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.

***Many people shall come and say,
'Come, and let us go up to the mountain 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."***

This passage is rich with meaning. Isaiah foresaw a time in the "latter days" when the *Lord's house* would be established. In the New Testament, the "house of the Lord" is referred to as the church (1 Timothy 3:15). Notice where it would begin—in *Jerusalem*. And who would be invited? *All nations*. That's a big clue!

Daniel's Vision – A Kingdom That Shall Never Be Destroyed -

"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 break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." (Daniel 2:44)

In this prophecy, Daniel was interpreting King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. He said that *during the days of the Roman kings*, God would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed. That kingdom is spiritual—it's the church, the kingdom of Christ.

So we know from the prophets:

- It would happen in the "last days."
- It would begin in Jerusalem.
- It would involve all nations.
- It would be established during the Roman Empire.

Let's now see when all those pieces come together.

The Church Was Established on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2

The New Testament shows the exact moment when the church came into being. All the prophecies line up perfectly in **Acts 2**. Let's set the scene.

After Jesus was crucified, buried, and resurrected, He spent 40 days with His apostles, preparing them for what was to come. Before ascending into heaven, He told them:

"and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47)

And in the book of Acts, Jesus told His apostles:

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

Then, in **Acts 2**, it all unfolds.

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1–4)

This moment marked the beginning of something new. Peter, standing with the other apostles, boldly preached the first gospel sermon. He told the gathered crowd that they had crucified the Son of God, and he proclaimed Jesus as both Lord and Christ.

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36)

The people were cut to the heart and asked what they should do. Peter gave them the gospel's invitation:

"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)

On that day, 3,000 souls responded in faith and obedience.

"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them." (Acts 2:41)

Added to what? Keep reading:

"...praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47)

That's the beginning of the church. The church of Christ was born on the Day of Pentecost, in Jerusalem, just as Isaiah and Jesus said. It was established during the days of the Roman Empire, just as Daniel prophesied. And it welcomed people from *every nation under heaven* (Acts 2:5).

A Church You Can Read About in the Bible

From this moment on, we read throughout the New Testament about the church—not churches, plural, as in different kinds—but the one body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:4

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling"

And what is that body?

"And He is the head of the body, the church..." (Colossians 1:18)

So you see that the church:

- Was in God's eternal plan.
- Was foretold by the prophets.
- Was established in Acts 2, on the Day of Pentecost.
- Was called the body of Christ.

When we talk about the *church of the New Testament*, we're not talking about a denomination or a modern movement. We're talking about the very body that Jesus established—His church.

Conclusion: Why This Matters

Why is it important to know when the church was established? Because the church that belongs to Christ is not man-made. It didn't begin with a creed, a council, or a charismatic leader in the 1500s or 1800s or 2000s. It began in Jerusalem in the first century, and the Lord Himself added people to it. If you want to be part of *that* church—the one we read about in the Bible—then you must go back to the beginning.

In the next lesson, you will better understand *why* the church was established. But for now, remember: the church began when the gospel was preached for the first time, and people responded in faith and obedience to Christ.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to be part of *that* same church today?

Questions to Confirm Understanding

Estimated Time to complete: 12–15 minutes

Read and answer the following set of questions about this lesson, and circle your answer: **"True | False"** or **"Yes | No"**. Look up the scriptures provided to confirm your answers. Then compare your answers with the Answer Key provided after these questions.

1. The church of the New Testament was part of God's eternal plan before the world began.
True | False
 2. The phrase "the house of the Lord" in the Old Testament can refer to the New Testament church.
True | False
 3. The prophet Isaiah foretold that the Lord's house would be established in the latter days and that all nations would flow to it. (Isaiah 2:2–3)
True | False
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4. Isaiah said the word of the Lord would go forth from Rome. (Isaiah 2:3)
True | False
5. Daniel prophesied that God would set up a kingdom during the days of the Roman kings. (Daniel 2:44)
True | False
6. The church was not a backup plan but part of God's eternal purpose accomplished in Christ. (Ephesians 3:10–11)
True | False
7. Jesus told His apostles that repentance and remission of sins would be preached beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:47)
True | False
8. According to Acts 1:8, Jesus told His apostles they would be His witnesses starting in Jerusalem.
True | False
9. The apostles received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:1–4)
True | False
10. Peter preached the first gospel sermon on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. (Acts 2)
True | False
11. Peter preached that Jesus, whom the people had crucified, was made both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:36)
True | False
12. On the Day of Pentecost, the people responded by asking what they must do. (Acts 2:37)
True | False
13. Peter instructed the people to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38)
True | False
14. About 3,000 people were baptized on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:41)
True | False
15. According to Acts 2:47, people were added to the church daily by the apostles.
True | False
16. The Lord added the saved to the church daily. (Acts 2:47)
True | False
17. The New Testament teaches that there are many bodies (churches) approved by Christ. (Ephesians 4:4)
True | False

18. There is one body, and that body is the church. (Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18)

True | False

19. Can the church that began in Acts 2 still exist today, according to the pattern found in the New Testament?

Yes | No

20. Is the church that Jesus built the same as modern denominations founded centuries later?

Yes | No

Answer Key

Estimated Time to Read the Answer Key: 12–15 minutes

1. The church of the New Testament was part of God's eternal plan before the world began.

Answer: True

“According to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ephesians 3:11)

Explanation: Paul teaches that the church was not accidental, but central to God's eternal purpose through Christ.

2. The phrase “the house of the Lord” in the Old Testament can refer to the New Testament church.

Answer: True

Explanation: Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 2:2–3) speaks of "the mountain of the Lord's house," which is understood in the New Testament to be the church, called the "house of God" in 1 Timothy 3:15.

3. The prophet Isaiah foretold that the Lord's house would be established in the latter days and that all nations would flow to it. (Isaiah 2:2–3)

Answer: True

“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 all nations shall flow to it.” (Isaiah 2:2)

Explanation: This prophecy foretold the universal nature of the church, beginning in Jerusalem in the last days.

4. Isaiah said the word of the Lord would go forth from Rome. (Isaiah 2:3)

Answer: False

“For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 2:3)

Explanation: Isaiah clearly identifies Jerusalem—not Rome—as the starting point for the proclamation of God's word.

5. Daniel prophesied that God would set up a kingdom during the days of the Roman kings. (Daniel 2:44)

Answer: True

“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.” (Daniel 2:44)

Explanation: Daniel identified the Roman Empire as the era when God's eternal kingdom—the church—would be established.

6. The church was not a backup plan but part of God's eternal purpose accomplished in Christ. (Ephesians 3:10–11)

Answer: True

“...according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ephesians 3:11)

Explanation: The church was always part of God’s redemptive plan, not a reaction to human sin.

7. Jesus told His apostles that repentance and remission of sins would be preached beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:47)

Answer: True

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:47,)

Explanation: Jesus affirmed Jerusalem as the launch point for the gospel message.

8. According to Acts 1:8, Jesus told His apostles they would be His witnesses starting in Jerusalem.

Answer: True

“You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Explanation: Jesus gave this directive to His apostles before His ascension.

9. The apostles received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:1–4)

Answer: True

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4)

Explanation: This miraculous event marked the beginning of their gospel ministry.

10. Peter preached the first gospel sermon on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. (Acts 2)

Answer: True

Explanation: Acts 2 records Peter addressing the multitudes in Jerusalem, preaching Jesus as Lord and Christ—the first full gospel sermon following the resurrection.

11. Peter preached that Jesus, whom the people had crucified, was made both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:36)

Answer: True

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (Acts 2:36)

Explanation: This was the climax of Peter’s sermon, emphasizing Jesus’ divine authority.

12. On the Day of Pentecost, the people responded by asking what they must do. (Acts 2:37)

Answer: True

“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’” (Acts 2:37)

Explanation: The people were convicted and sought guidance for salvation.

13. Peter instructed the people to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38)

Answer: True

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” (Acts 2:38)

Explanation: This is the biblical response to the gospel for receiving forgiveness.

14. About 3,000 people were baptized on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:41)

Answer: True

“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.” (Acts 2:41)

Explanation: This marks the numerical beginning of the church.

15. According to Acts 2:47, people were added to the church daily by the apostles.

Answer: False

“And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47)

Explanation: It was the Lord—not the apostles—who added the saved to the church.

16. The Lord added the saved to the church daily. (Acts 2:47)

Answer: True

“And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47)

Explanation: This shows that salvation and church membership were simultaneous, directed by the Lord.

17. The New Testament teaches that there are many bodies (churches) approved by Christ. (Ephesians 4:4)

Answer: False

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling.” (Ephesians 4:4)

Explanation: The "one body" refers to the one true church of Christ.

18. There is one body, and that body is the church. (Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18)

Answer: True

“And He is the head of the body, the church...” (Colossians 1:18)

Explanation: Paul clearly identifies the church as the body of Christ, and there is only one.

19. Can the church that began in Acts 2 still exist today, according to the pattern found in the New Testament?

Answer: Yes

Explanation: The New Testament provides a clear, reproducible pattern for the church’s doctrine, worship, and organization—making its continuation possible today.

20. Is the church that Jesus built the same as modern denominations founded centuries later?

Answer: No

Explanation: The church of the New Testament was founded in the first century by Christ, while modern denominations originated much later and often teach different doctrines.