

LESSON #4
"WHO IS THE FOUNDER OF THE CHURCH?"

TEXTS: Matt. 16:18

INTRODUCTION:

We want to forget all we have known about church and churches and study this subject purely on a New Testament basis. If I were ever disturbed about this subject, I would let Jesus be the Teacher and see what He had to say.

We need to ask four simple scriptural questions and give four simple scriptural answers.

- 1. Who built the church?**
- 2. When was it built?**
- 3. How many were built?**
- 4. How does man get into it?**

It is a recognized fact that no building or institution can be stronger than the foundation on which it rests (**Matthew 7:24-27**). No house on a weak foundation can stand for long. The very same can be said for the church.

For the church to be scriptural, it must have a scriptural foundation. Thus, no man can claim membership in the scriptural church unless he is a member of the church founded upon the scriptural foundation in God's Word.

The fact that a religious body exists is proof that someone founded it. In the world today there are many churches different in origin, doctrine and practice.

Each had its beginning and had a builder who was scriptural or unscriptural - the work of man or God.

1. Christ promised to build His church (**Matthew 16:18**). Therefore, it is certain that no church can be scriptural unless Christ founded it. If Henry VII founded a church; John Calvin, John Wesley, Joseph Smith or any other human being, it is not the church that Christ said He would build.

2. Many religionists assume that John the Baptist established the church. This is impossible. In **Matthew 14:10** we read of the execution of John. Two chapters later we read of the promise of Christ to build His church.

3. **Matthew 15:13** This warning is too plain and the penalty is too severe for me to be a member of some church not planted by the Maker of us all.

4. Christ has no connections with denominational churches. He did not establish any of them (if so, proof is upon you). Denominational churches are modern institutions mostly gotten up in the last few hundred years by men such as you and me.

5. The church belongs to Christ (**Acts 20:28**).

Christ is the Builder of His church (**Matthew 16:18**).

Christ is the only Head of the church (**Colossians 1:18, 24**).

The church is the Body of Christ (**Ephesians 1:22, 23**).

6. **Ephesians 4:4-6** - if the Body is the church, how many are there?

When all is said and our study is over, we can look at the world and see hundreds of churches of all kinds.

When all is said and our study is over, we can look upon the pages of the Bible and see only one church with only one Founder.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

*And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; (Eph 2:20)*

Organization.....Elders...Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17,28; 1 Peter 5:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:8-13

Deacons...Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13

Members...Acts 2:41-47; Romans 12:4-5

Name (collectively).....Church of God...1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 20:28

Church of Christ...Romans 16:18; Matt. 16:18

Church of Firstborn...Hebrews 12:23

House of God.....1 Timothy 3:15

Name (individually).....Brethren...Galatians 6:1; 1 Corinthians 15:1-3,22,36

Worship.....In Spirit and Truth....John 4:24

Sing...Ephesians 5:19

Pray...1 Thessalonians 5:17

Teach...Acts 20:7

Communion....Acts 20:7

Contribution.....1 Corinthians 16:2

Rule of Faith.....Word of God...2 Timothy 3:16-17; Romans 1:16; 2 Peter 1:3