

PATTERN FOR THE CHURCH

There is a pattern for the beginning of the church. As a matter of fact, the planning of the church was conceived in the mind of God before the foundation of the world. “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world...” [Eph. 1:4; see also 1 Peter 1:18-20].

The church of Christ (or kingdom as it was more commonly known in the Old Testament and spoken of in the New Testament) was prophesied to be established in 33 A.D. according to the pattern given by God. Isaiah 2:2 says, “*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*” (see also Micah 4:1-4 and Daniel 2:44-45).

Jesus promised, “...I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” [Matt. 16:18]. It would be established after the Lord’s death but during the lifetime of those who heard the Lord speak. In Mark 9:1 Jesus said, “...Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.” In

this setting, the church and the kingdom are one and the same. They are used interchangeably in Matthew 16:18-19.

When the apostle Peter, along with the other apostles, preached on the first Pentecost after the death of Jesus, he said “...this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” [Acts 2:16]. The events of that day were the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the kingdom of God. Pentecost was the day the church/kingdom was established according to Acts chapter 2.

The church of Christ (kingdom of Christ) is made up of “...fellow-citizens 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 corner stone” [Eph. 2:19-20].

Christians, the Lord’s people, have been called out of the world and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son [Col. 1:13]. This occurs when they are baptized “into Christ” [Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27].

As Christians, they continue living according to the word of God, the Bible [Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 3:9].

—Garland M. Robinson