

WHEN DID THE CHURCH BEGIN?

Matthew 16:18

Introduction

In our recent Gospel Meeting with Micky Galloway, he presented 3 lessons about the church..

One was entitled, "What the Angels Saw in the Church". Based on **Ephesians 3:10-11 & 1 Peter 1:12.**

One point in that lesson mentioned that they saw the beginning of the church on Pentecost.

WHEN DID THE CHURCH BEGIN?

Matthew 16:18

The Church in Prophecy

Establishing the eternal plans of God is seen in various prophecies in scripture.

True prophecy is only attributable to one who can foresee and control the future – Deity!

True prophecy is not vague

– cf. Isaiah 41:21-23

The Church in Prophecy

Isaiah 2:1-3

Written around 725 BC and challenging their idolatry, Isaiah calls for repentance. BUT he also offers a future time when God would establish His kingdom.

The Church in Prophecy

Isaiah 2:1-3

WHEN – “In the latter days” (“last days” – NASB)

WHAT – “The mountain of the LORD’s house” would be established.

WHO – “all nations” and “many people” (not exclusive to Israel)

The Church in Prophecy

Isaiah 2:1-3

WHERE – “Out of Zion” Jerusalem

Zion was a name for Jerusalem, primarily where the temple was built.

Mostly found in prophecy and the psalms, it typically had a spiritual component – the place where God would meet with His people.

The Church in Prophecy

Isaiah 2:1-3

WHAT would happen out of Zion? “The law” and “the word of the LORD” would go forth.

Note: **Micah 4:1-2** also records this prophecy.

The Church in Prophecy

Daniel 2:44

Written around 600 BC. Daniel and others taken captive from Jerusalem to Babylon, where he is prepared to serve the king.

Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and challenges his magicians, wise men, etc. to tell the dream and its interpretation. **Dan. 2:1-13**

The Church in Prophecy

Daniel 2:44

Daniel is able to interpret the dream, but attributes it to God.

Daniel 2:19-23, 28



The Church in Prophecy

Daniel 2:44

A statue made of 4 different elements representing 4 kingdoms.

- > The head - Babylon (626-539 BC)
- > The chest - Medo-Persia (539-331 BC)
- > The belly & thigh - Macedonia (~331ff)
- > Legs & feet - Rome (~63 BC - 100+AD)

A stone crushes the statue



The Church in Prophecy

Daniel 2:44, *And in the days of these kings (4th kingdom – TT) 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.*



The Church in Prophecy

Daniel 2:44

Daniel establishes a timeframe that God INTENDED to set up His kingdom.

Later, Daniel has more visions about the events of some of these kingdoms.

The Church in Prophecy

Joel 2:28-32

Timing unknown, but likely early (~800 BC).

Joel addresses a “day of the Lord” (judgment)

He calls for Israel to repent and notes future plans of the LORD.

The Church in Prophecy

Joel 2:28-32

WHEN – it would happen “afterward” (later)

WHAT – the Spirit of the LORD poured out

WHO – all flesh (not just the Jews). A time of miracles and judgment.

WHAT – the ultimate result would be salvation for “whoever calls on the name of the LORD.”

WHERE – Mt. Zion and in Jerusalem.

The Church in the Plans of Jesus

While Jesus was on earth, the church was not yet established.

Matthew 3:1-2, John preached “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (**cf. Isaiah 40:3, Malachi 3:1, 4:5-6**)

Matthew 4:17, Jesus taught the same thing.

Matthew 6:9-10, “...Your kingdom come...”

The Church in the Plans of Jesus

While Jesus was on earth, the church was not yet established.

Matthew 10:7, apostles sent to preach, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand”

Matthew 16:18-19, “I will build My church… keys to the kingdom…”

Matthew 16:28, Mark 9:1- during their lifetime.

Acts 1:4-8, still future. Go to Jerusalem

The Church Established

Acts 2 records the beginning of the church/kingdom

The apostles are filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to speak in tongues.

WHAT – spoken by Joel (**Acts 2:16ff**) – **Joel 2:28-32**

WHEN – **2:17**, “last days” (**Isa. 2:1-3, Micah 4:1, Dan. 2:44**)

WHERE – Jerusalem (**1:12, 2:5**). **Isa, Micah, & Joel**

WHEN – Rome – **Dan. 2:44.**

The Church Established

Acts 2 records the beginning of the church/kingdom

WHAT – a time of great signs.

Acts 2:31-36, Jesus is made both Lord and Christ.
Reigning with God.

CONSIDERING the prophecies and events of **Acts 2**, the NECESSARY CONCLUSION we reach is that this WAS the day the church/kingdom began.

The Church In Existence

Following **Acts 2** the church/kingdom when addressed are spoken of as being in existence.

Acts 2:47, added daily to the church (“their number” – NASB)

Acts 20:28, the church was purchased with His own blood

Various letters addressed to churches in existence

The Church In Existence

Colossians 1:13, “conveyed into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”

Hebrews 12:28, since we are receiving (present tense) a kingdom… “NOTE: “Cannot be shaken”

– **cf. Daniel 2:44**

The Church In Existence

Matthew 26:26-29, consider the Lord's Supper instituted.

Jesus declares He would not drink with them UNTIL in His Father's kingdom.

1 Corinthians 10:16, "communion" is with Christ as we partake

1 Corinthians 11:17ff, it was the church partaking of the Lord's Supper

The Church In Existence

Matthew 26:26-29, the Lord's Supper instituted
1 Cor. 11:26, "till he comes".

Which is it? Is His kingdom (& church) NOW or
will we CEASE to partake when He returns?

Conclusion: We ARE in His kingdom/church

WHY is this lesson important?

Understanding when the church began helps us understand why we are not under the Old Law anymore (**cf. Colossians 2:14**)

Many churches (denominations) trace their origins to dates other than Pentecost. IF a church is established later, it CANNOT be the ONE true church (**cf. Matthew 16:18**)

WHY is this lesson important?

Premillennialism advocates that the church and kingdom are distinct (some even advocate that the church was an afterthought).

Understanding when they both began renders this doctrine false.

We know when the church/kingdom began. It remains until the Lord returns and delivers it to the Father
(1 CORINTHIANS 15:24-26)

**Have you been added to
that number?**

Let us Pray!