

The Church of the Bible – No. 2

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Jesus promised to build His church (Mat. 16:18). He also promised it would be established in the lifetime of His apostles (16:28; Mark 9:1). Various Old Testament prophecies foretold the coming kingdom/church, but none is more detailed than Isaiah 2:2-3, uttered seven centuries before Christ:

And 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.

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

The prophet gave a time element: *the last days*. Something was to be built: *the mountain of the Lord's house*. It was to be built in a certain place: *in the top of the mountains*. Those affected by the "building" are described: *all nations shall flow unto it*. A message from God at a specific location would accompany its establishment: *out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem*.

All of these specifics pointed to and were fulfilled in the events of the Pentecost day, described in Acts 2. The apostles identified the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them (vv. 1-4) as occurring in "the last days," fulfilling Joel 2:28-32 (Acts 3:14-21). Therefore, the time element was also right for the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. The events occurred in Jerusalem, the highest point in Judea ("the top of the mountains"). Jesus had commanded the apostles to go and make disciples of "all the nations" (Mat. 28:18). They were to do so by preaching His Gospel ("the word of the Lord," His new "law"), and again Jerusalem ("Zion") was the designated place from which they would first proclaim it (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).

Their preaching convicted many listeners that Jesus, for Whose death they had cried fifty days earlier, was the Christ. In the agony of guilt, they asked, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). They were told to repent and be baptized to be forgiven of their sins (v. 38), which about 3,000 of them did (v. 41). These were thereupon saved and added to the church (v. 47). Prior to that statement, the church/kingdom was always in

anticipation. From that point, it has been in existence with people being added to it as they obeyed the Gospel. The church/kingdom began in the apostles' lifetime.

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