

# The Church of the Bible—No. 3

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The church/kingdom Jesus promised to build (Mat. 16:18-19) became a reality in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost day after His resurrection and ascension (Acts 2:22-47). Although we can pinpoint the time of its historical beginning, it was in the mind of the Godhead from eternity (Eph. 3: 10-11).

Nothing is built without cost, whether a house in which to live, a barn for one's livestock, a business, or office and warehouse space to house a business. The church Jesus built is no exception.

No human being can fully describe or appreciate this cost, for it is unlikely that any of us has the ability to comprehend it fully. However, the Bible provides some descriptions of the cost that are helpful.

To the elders of the Ephesian church, Paul stated: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

Jesus both built and bought the church. The purchase price was the blood of Jesus. Blood is precious, even in physical circumstances. Blood centers are constantly urging us to donate our blood in order to save or extend the lives of others.

The blood of Jesus was especially precious—more precious than any other. It was not merely the blood of a good man, although Jesus was indeed a good man. It was not merely the blood of a martyr for a good cause, although He was a martyr, and His cause was more than "good." His blood was from the only human being Who ever lived without ever once violating the Divine will in thought, in word, or in deed. The Bible describes Jesus as "holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26). Peter said He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:22). John wrote, "in him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). The church is so valuable and precious to Christ that only His perfect blood could purchase it.

Paul tells us the church is so beloved by Jesus that "he gave himself up for it" (Eph. 5:25). To say that He bought the church with His blood is to say that those who are in His church have been cleansed/saved through His blood (Rev. 1: 5). This cleansing occurs when one obeys God's Word (1 Pet. 1:22), at which time the Lord adds one to His church (Acts 2:47). This initial

cleansing occurs at one's baptism unto the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38, 41; 22:16). All who are in Jesus' church (thus the church) have been purchased by His blood. Jesus loved His church supremely, and so must we.

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