

THE CHURCH JESUS DIDN'T BUILD

By Keith Greer

“Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” {Matthew 16:16-18} Jesus promised to build HIS church of which He would be the foundation and the head. There are thousands of churches in America; did Jesus build them all? Let us examine some facts about the churches He didn't build:

Did not begin in Jerusalem. *“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” {Isaiah 2:2,3}* The prophet said the church would start in Jerusalem. According to Acts 1 and 2, on the first Pentecost after Jesus' ascension, the church began in Jerusalem. Jesus did not build any church that originated at any other time, or in any other place.

Has a humanly devised name. *“Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.” {Romans 16:16}* *“To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.” {1 Corinthians 1:2}* Jesus is the chief cornerstone of His church {Acts 4:11,12}. Any church that does not wear the name of Jesus—the one who died for it and who is its head, or the name of the Father, was not built by Jesus!

Has headquarters on earth. *“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” {Philippians 3:20}* I'm often asked where our headquarters are located. I always give the same answer—the church's headquarters are located with its Head. *“See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven.” {Hebrews 12:28}* He sits at God's right hand, ruling and reigning in His kingdom {Acts 2:29-35}. Any church that is headquartered on earth, and not in heaven, was not built by Jesus!

Emphasizes the social gospel. *“To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” {Ephesians 3:10,11}* The church is a spiritual kingdom with a spiritual work. All of its work is carried out in three areas—evangelism, edification, and caring for needy saints. Any church that has a social agenda—baseball teams, bowling teams, fellowship halls, pizza parties, and a host of other social activities—is a church that was not built by Jesus!

Has a human creed. *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be*

complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” {2 Timothy 3:16,17} The Bible is the only standard of authority for what the Lord’s church practices; it has no other creed. Any church that has a creed or guide book in addition to, or instead of, the Bible is a church that Jesus did not build!

Sadly, there are thousands of churches in our nation alone. I’m sure there are good people in them and they do some of the things according to Christ’s instructions. Jesus will return to redeem His own out of the church that He built—not those churches that were built by men! ***