

We Would See Jesus: The Son of God

“Upon This Rock”

Jim Day

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered 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 tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matt. 16:13-19) [All Scripture references are taken from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.]

INTRODUCTION

Frank Lloyd Wright was given the impossible task of building the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. A task of that magnitude had never been undertaken. He was to build in a place known for great earthquakes and tremors. After some studies, he found that eight feet below the surface there was a layer of soft mud sixty feet thick. His idea was to float that building on that soft mud, and it would absorb

the earthquakes and tremors. After four years of hard work, amid ridicule and jeers of skeptical people, the most difficult building in the world was complete.

It was not long after the completion of the hotel that it received its greatest test. The worst earthquake in fifty-two years came unexpectedly. Houses and buildings all around began to fall in ruins. But the Imperial Hotel stood, because it was able to adjust itself to the tremors of earth (Tan 355).

This story illustrates the need for a good foundation. All religions are founded upon some personality and their particular doctrine(s). The church of Christ is unique because it was founded, not by just any personality, but upon the deity of Jesus of Nazareth. Since the church is built on the deity of Jesus, there is salvation in no other name (Acts 4:12).

Our lesson is all about the church being built on a good foundation. The Psalmist said, "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psa. 11:3). Paul said,

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw – each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. (1 Cor. 3:10-13)

JESUS AT CAESAREA PHILIPPI WITH HIS DISCIPLES

Our lesson text begins with Jesus asking His disciples “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” (NKJV). His disciples told Him the general public thought He was either John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Then, Jesus turned to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon spoke up and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus told Peter he had not learned that from flesh and blood, but it had been revealed to him by the Father Who is in heaven. Jesus continued, “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” (NKJV).

When Jesus said, “On this rock,” was He speaking about Peter or the statement Peter made, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”? Some contend Jesus was speaking about Peter. They say the church was built on Peter. They cite John 1:42, “And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, ‘You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas’ (which is translated, A Stone)” (NKJV). From the original Greek language Peter is translated from *petros*, which means a piece of a rock or a small pebble. The word “rock” comes from *petra*, which means solid bed rock. The name Peter comes from the Greek word *petros*, which is masculine, but the word *petra* (used by Jesus in Matthew 16:18) is feminine. Therefore, one must conclude Jesus had reference to the statement Peter made, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” and not to Peter as being the foundation of the church.

AN ANALYSIS OF PETER'S GOOD CONFESSION

Now let us analyze the great foundational statement, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." The word "Christ" means the anointed one or the Messiah. When Peter preached to Cornelius and his family he said, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him" (Acts 10:38). From Matthew we learned this anointing took place when John baptized Jesus in the Jordan (Matt. 3:13-17). There is no one else who can make the claim they were anointed to be the Christ by the Holy Spirit, while being baptized by John the Baptist in the river of Jordan.

Now let us see the significance of "Son of the living God." This statement is the rock on which the church is built. Loraine Boettner said, "One of the most exalted titles applied to Jesus is that of 'The Son of God.' It is a divine title or name which calls attention to the dignity of His person, particularly to His deity, and indicated that He is fully qualified to speak to men concerning the things of God" (Boettner 152). The devil even recognized His divine side (Matt. 4:3-6). The demons knew He was the Son of God (Matt. 8:29). John said his purpose for writing his gospel was, "That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31, NKJV).

Often times when we think of terms like "son" or "father," we think of human beings, superiority, subordination and dependence. But in Jesus' day, when those terms were used it meant:

likeness or sameness of nature and equality of being...It signifies a unique relationship that

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cannot be predicated of nor shared with any creature...moreover, they are the terms used in Scripture, and besides expressing the ideas of sameness of nature they are found to be reciprocal, expressing ideas of love, affection, trust, honor, unity and harmony, ideas of endearment and preciousness. (Boettner 152)

Also, the people of Jesus' day perceived the terms "Son" and "Father" meant likeness and sameness. On one occasion they heard Jesus say, "I and My Father are one." After hearing that, they took up stones to stone Him (John 10:30-31). They thought He was blaspheming in saying He and the Father were one. As Jesus was being tried, Caiaphas said to Jesus, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" Jesus replied, "It is as you said." Matthew said the high priest tore his clothes saying, "He has spoken blasphemy!" (Matt. 26:63-65, NKJV). The above passages show they perceived the expression "Son of God" meant likeness. Christ is the Son of God by nature; we become the sons of God by grace. He is the Son of God in His own right; we become sons of God by adoption.

Christ was the Son of God to such an exact degree He could say, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). "He that has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9, NKJV). "Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father" (John 5:23). Paul said, "He is the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). Paul also said, "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9, NKJV). No other personality under heaven can claim that same exactness. A religion built upon a foundation without that same exactness must be a false religion.

The shamrock has been associated with "Saint" Patrick because he used it to show the likeness or

sameness of Jesus to the other persons in the Godhead. As one looks at the three leaf clover, he will notice the likeness in all three branches that make up the whole leaf. They are alike in all dimensions and substance. Yet, they have their own individual uniqueness. So it is with Jesus and the other two persons of the Godhead. They are equal in all respects but have their own individuality in regard to the plan of redemption, saving mankind.

There is no other person who has ever lived or will live that can claim to be the "Christ, the Son of the living God." Therefore, no one can be suitable for the foundation of the church other than Jesus of Nazareth. It is the firm foundation of the church that has made it such an enduring institution.

THE CHURCH THAT WAS BUILT ON THAT SOLID ROCK FOUNDATION

On the Day of Pentecost, the church had its glorious entrance into the world. Three thousand souls were saved by repenting and being baptized for the remission of sins. They continued in the apostles' teaching, had fellowship in worship and had all things in common. They went from house to house and ate their food with gladness and unity. And the church found favor with all the people (Acts 2:37-47). But not long after that great day, opposition to the bride of Christ began. The apostles were threatened, put into prison, beaten and even stoned to death (Acts 3-6). Then came the first great persecution and all the Christians were scattered except the apostles (Acts 8). But in spite of all the opposition, the church grew. R.C. Foster said,

The divine truth that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God is declared to be the solid rock on which the church is established. It is a rock. It is solid.

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Here are historic facts that have stood against all the attacks of unbelievers. The gates of Hades have not been able to prevail against the church to wrest it from its historical foundation in the sublime fact that Jesus is in truth the Christ the Son of God. (704)

PAUL'S WARNING ABOUT BUILDING ON THE FOUNDATION, JESUS CHRIST

In 1 Corinthians 3:10 Paul said, "But let each one take heed how he builds on it" (NKJV). He was talking about building the church on the foundation which is Jesus of Nazareth. It is sad to know how careless people have become building on that perfect foundation. Jesus is the head of the church, not some man (Eph. 1:22-23). He bought the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). He is the Savior of the church, which is His body (Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23). He is the builder of His church (Matt. 16:18). Paul warns against building the church with perishable materials. They will be put to the test of fire (1 Cor. 3:12-15). The fire will destroy all the innovations man has used in building the church.

CONCLUSION

Peter's great confession, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," has stood the test of time. That statement has become the foundation on which the church was built. Jesus was anointed as the Christ with the Holy Spirit. He possessed the likeness and sameness as the Father. His likeness with the Father spans eternity with love, mercy, grace, kindness, omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. There is no other person that can claim to be the Son of God in the same exactness as did Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, no man is suitable for the foundation

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of the church, nor to be head of the church. Therefore, all religions built on a foundation other than the deity of Jesus Christ will perish. Christians must maintain there is no salvation by any other name than Jesus the Christ, nor is there salvation in any other body than that which is built on the foundation of Jesus the Christ.

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