

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER NEEDS: **Health**, Revena, & David Lundy, Kenny & Linda Mitchell, Joann & John Johnson, Lisa Maxwell, Bill Treadway, Alan Johnson, Dennis & Jean Rhodes. **Other:** We need to pray that God will raise up men to aspire to serve as deacons. We need to pray for the leaders of our country, and for those serving in the military. Pray for those saints who are weak and those going through difficult times.

GOSPEL MEETINGS:
The Somerville church will be holding their fall meeting Sunday September 19 to Tuesday September 21.

SINGING EVENING: This song service will be on Sunday evening September 12, at 5:00 pm.

EVANGELISM: For those of the Somerville family who would like to participate in the Bible correspondence course work, we will meet on Sunday September 12 & 26 at 6:00 pm

THE SOMERVILLE SOWER
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Schedule of Services
Sunday
Bible class 9:45 a.m.
Morning worship 10:45 a.m.
Evening worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday
Bible class 7.00 p.m.

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If you would be interested in a **free** Bible correspondence course, or if you would like a **free** Bible study in your home, or if you have a request for Bible information, please write to the above address or phone one of the above numbers for prompt service.

THE SOMERVILLE SOWER

"The seed is the word of God." (Luke 8:11)

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The Church Was Founded at the Scriptural Place - Jerusalem

Leroy Brownlow

I. A church not founded at the scriptural place is not the scriptural church.

If a person should be a member of some church first founded in London or New York, he could not claim membership in the church of Christ; for Christ's church did not have its origin in London or New York. Man just cannot be a member of the scriptural church unless he is a member of the church founded at the scriptural place.

II. Some passages which point to its establishment.

1. We shall first read Isaiah's prophecy: *"And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem"* (Isa. 2:2,3). From this prophecy we learn, first, that Jehovah's house was to be established in Jerusalem. Second, Jehovah's house would be exalted and all nations would flow into it. Third, the time of fulfillment would be in the latter days. We must now learn the meaning of Jehovah's house. Paul speaks of *"the house of God, which is the church of the living God..."* (1 Tim. 3:15). So Jehovah's house is the church, and from this passage we learn when and where it was to be established - viz. in the latter days at Jerusalem.

2. In Micah, 4:1,2 we find the same prophecy almost verbatim.

3. Zechariah, also prophesied that the Lord's house or church, was to be founded in Jerusalem. *"Therefore thus saith Jehovah: I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: My house shall be built in it, says Jehovah of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth over Jerusalem"* (Zech.1:16). So once again the Holy Spirit taught that the church was to have its origin in Jerusalem.

4. In giving the worldwide commission, Jesus taught that Jerusalem was the starting place: *"Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things, and behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you: but wait in the city, until you be clothed with power from on high"* (Lk.24:46-49). We would note: (1) Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead before repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name. (2) The proclamation of this message was to begin in Jerusalem. (3) They were

to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. Jesus had previously promised the apostles this power which they were to receive from on high. It is evident from John 14:26; 15:26,27; 16:7,8 that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, would not come until Jesus went away, and that when the Holy Spirit should come He would do a number of things - viz. teach the apostles all things, bring to their remembrance what Jesus had said and convict the world of sin. This is the power for which the apostles were commanded to tarry in Jerusalem.

III. The fulfillment of these passages.

1. The Holy Spirit was not to come until Jesus had gone away (John 16:7). The apostles saw Him ascend out of their sight (Acts 1:9).

2. The apostles were commanded to wait in Jerusalem (Lk.24:49). After the apostles watched the Lord's ascension they returned unto Jerusalem (Acts 1:12), the appointed place; there they waited.

3. The apostles were to be clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49). In Acts 2:1-4 we read of the fulfillment of this promise: "And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The Holy Spirit was to come and we see that He did come in Jerusalem on Pentecost.

4. The word of the Lord was to go forth from Jerusalem in the latter days (Isa. 2:2,3; Micah 4:1,2). We have the fulfillment of this prophecy in Acts 2:14-42, in which a stirring sermon was preached in Jerusalem. This occurred in the latter days; for Peter quoted Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32) as proof of that which was to come to pass in the latter days. Hence, this was the right place and the right time.

5. Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in the Lord's name, beginning at Jerusalem (Lk. 24:47). Peter proclaimed such a message, saying, "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins ...*" (Acts 2:38).

6. The Lord's house (the church) was to be established in Jerusalem in the last days (Isa. 2:2,3 ; Mic. 4:1,2; Zech. 1:16). And that is when and where it was established. Those who heard the gospel on Pentecost in Jerusalem, who believed, repented and who were baptized were added to it: "*They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls*" (Acts 2:41). In verse forty-seven of the chapter we read that the Lord added to the church. This occurred in the last days for Peter quoted Joel's prophecy in proof of a thing that was to occur in the last days (Acts 2:17 -21). Beginning with this occasion in Acts 2 we find the church spoken of as a reality while prior to this it is spoken of as a future institution. So, according to prophecies and their fulfillment, the church of Christ had its origin in Jerusalem. This is the church of which we must be a member.

IV. Planting the same church in any community and age is dependent upon sowing the same seed instead of church succession.

1. There is nothing to gain in church succession. Even if a man could trace an institution, year by year, back to its establishment, he would have no assurance that it was the identical institution that existed in the beginning. Over a period of years, a church could so apostatize that it could no longer be the true church. Paul said that an apostasy, or falling away, would come. Let us read a few passages, (1) "*I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them*" (Acts 20:29,30). (2) "*Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord*

Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him; to the end that you be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand; let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he sits in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God" (2 Thess. 2:1-4). (3) "*But the Spirit says expressly, that in latter times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats"* (1 Tim. 4:1-3). The above quotations make it clear that an apostate church would grow out of the true church; therefore, any church which can be traced back to Jerusalem and Pentecost might be an apostate church. Thus those who attempt to prove church succession - if they should succeed - might only prove themselves members of an apostate church.

2. We had better be interested in seeing if we are sowing the same seed sown by the apostles. We are told in the parable of the sower that the word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Lk. 8:11). If we sow the same seed the apostles sowed, the same church will spring forth: "*For whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap...*" (Gal. 6:7). Every seed produces after its kind. Sow oats and you will reap oats; sow wheat and you may harvest wheat; plant cotton and it will produce cotton; sow the pure seed of the kingdom and the true church will result. When the seed of the kingdom was planted back in the first century it did not produce a crop of "tists," "dists" and "ites." Neither will the seed of the kingdom produce such crops today. Therefore we must admit that such crops exist today because some seeds other than the seed of the kingdom have been sown. The word of God, the seed of the kingdom, produces Christians only; all other crops have been produced by other seeds.

3. We now illustrate: If all the growing wheat throughout the world should be destroyed, wheat would not be destroyed as long as it exists in the seed. The seed may be planted and another crop which is in all respects identical with the original will spring forth. In like manner, permit me to suggest that if all growing congregations of the true church should be destroyed by apostasy or persecution and should become extinct for a thousand years, the church of the Lord would not be destroyed as long as the word of God, the seed of the kingdom lasts - and this seed will last forever, for Jesus said, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away*" (Lk. 13:31). By sowing this identical seed in any community we may plant a congregation of disciples, identical in every respect with the original. The church of Christ had its origin in Jerusalem, but the same church can be founded in any city or community by preaching the same gospel. A few years after the Lord's church had its origin in Jerusalem, Paul went to Corinth and planted it there. He said, "*I planted; Apollos watered; but God gave the increase*" (1 Cor. 3:6). The same institution that was planted in Corinth can be planted in any section of the earth at any time, provided man is careful to plant the same seed. This is where our chief interest should lie.