

Jesus' Church & Hebrews

Jesus, "I Will Build My Church"

Scripture

Jesus asked his apostles, "...who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered, "... and on this rock I will build my church..." — **Matthew 16:15,16,18**

Introduction

Does it matter what religion or faith we follow? There are certainly many religious and secular ideas out there for us to believe. Does it matter which one we believe? Can all the various ideas COEXIST. You've seen the "Coexist" bumper stickers haven't you? The world is telling us that one faith is as good as another and that there is no true exclusive faith. Is that true?

Tom in his sermon on "Working out you own salvation" two Sundays ago asked the question, are we saved by works or are we saved by faith or are we saved by a faith that works? He noted that faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17) and that faith is a work of God, quoting Jesus in the book of John,

John 6:28-29 (ESV)

28 Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered them, "This is **the work of God**, that you **believe in him (Jesus)** whom he has sent."

Kevin mentioned in his invitation last Wednesday that there is one faith, quoting Paul from the book of Ephesians,

Ephesians 4:4-6 (NKJV)

4 There is one body (that would be one church) and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Christianity, through Jesus Christ, claims to be exclusive, that it is the only way to salvation,

John 14:6 (NKJV)

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Is the world right? And one belief is as good as another and cannot be championed above another. Or is Jesus right? And He is the only way to the Father.

If we hear the word of God and He works His work, we will believe in Him. Because His word produces faith with His powerful arguments and evidence and, as He has said,

Isaiah 55:10,11 (NKJV)

10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth,
And make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower
And bread to the eater,
11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Therefore, since Jesus IS the only way to the Father and there is only one body (the church) and only one faith... (Eph 4:4-6)

How do we know we are in the "right" church?

Isn't that THE question?

We can KNOW. Jesus said,

John 8:31-32 (NKJV)

31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And **you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**"

So, How can we know we are in the right church?

Jesus tells us He would build his church,

Matthew 16:15,16,18

Jesus asked his apostles, "...who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**" Jesus answered, "... and **on this rock I will build my church...**"

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews tells us Jesus BUILT His house.

Hebrews Hebrews 3 (NKJV):: 3 For this One (Jesus) has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house.

We looked at Peter's confession before and then at the building metaphor suggested from Jesus' statement that He would build His church upon the **rock** that He is the **Christ, the Son of God.**

I would like to look at this building metaphor again, but this time, instead of trying to discover the metaphor on our own, we can view it from the perspective of the writer of Hebrews. In addition to giving us a spiritual curriculum of "milk" and "solid food," the Hebrew writer also shows us how Jesus built His church. We will learn that **we** are builders, that we have been given the bedrock and foundation upon which to build His house and by learning how Jesus built His house we can learn to reconstruct the house that Jesus built. "[W]hose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end." — Hebrews 3:6b

So, Let's see what the writer of Hebrews has to say.

Message

- I. **Let's revisit the building metaphor** by looking at the building blocks of Building construction.
1. The 1st building block: The Bedrock — When building a sky scraper or any LARGE structure you must find bedrock below the surface of the earth to lay your foundation on.
 2. The 2nd building block: The Cornerstone — Next you lay your cornerstone, which is a reference point for building the rest of your structure, on the bedrock.
 3. The 3rd building block: The Foundation — You lay your foundation on the bedrock aligned to your cornerstone, so you can build a true & square structure.
 4. Now, once the cornerstone and foundation are laid out on the bedrock you can finally build your "house."

This method of construction is not used for small structures like an ordinary house, you don't need to find the bedrock for a small house.

NOTE

This method of construction is used for LARGE structures like tall building, sky scrapers! The implication of this is: *The house that Jesus built is meant to be A LARGE HOUSE, A CHURCH that can be built to an immense size.*

YOU CANNOT BUILD A LARGE STRUCTURE WITHOUT FIRST LAYING A PROPER FOUNDATION ALIGNED TO YOUR CORNERSTONE ON FIRM BEDROCK

II. Building Block Construction applied to Jesus building His church

1. **The Bedrock:** Peter's (and our) confession, Jesus is the Son of God, Matthew 16:15,16,18.
2. **The Cornerstone:** Jesus is the "stone which the builders rejected, which has become the chief cornerstone."

Acts 4:5-12 (NKJV)

5 And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, 6 as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that **by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. 11 **This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'** 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

3. **The Foundation:** The elementary teaching & the Apostles' doctrine

1. Hebrews 6:1,2 — The foundation of 1) Repentance, 2) Faith, 3) Instruction about baptisms, 4) the Laying on of hands, 5) the resurrection of the dead, 6) and Eternal Judgement.
2. The Apostles' Doctrine
 1. Acts 2:42 (NKJV) 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.
 2. 1 Corinthians 3:10 (NKJV) 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me (Paul), as a wise master builder **I have laid the foundation**, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

4. **The Building/House/Church:**

Ephesians 2:19-22 (NKJV)

19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom **the whole building**, being fitted together, **grows into a holy temple** in the Lord, 22 in whom **you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.**

III. **Now the Building Metaphor from the Writer of Hebrews Perspective**

1. **The Bedrock: God Has A Son, His Son is ALSO God AND the Son IS the Christ**, Hebrews 1:5-14, quoting,
 1. Psalm 2:7 (NKJV) — "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"
 2. 2 Samuel 7:14 (NKJV) — "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"?
 3. The Son can accept worship, God commands his angels to worship His Son, therefore, the Son IS God

Psalm 97:7 (NKJV)

"Let all the angels of God worship Him."

4. In Psalm 45, God calls His Son God & **He anointed His Son** above all others

Psalm 45:6,7 (NKJV)

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; **Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You** With the oil of gladness **more than Your companions.**"

5. The Son IS THE CREATOR

Psalm 102:25-27 (NKJV)

"You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.

6. The Son sits at the right hand of God

Psalms 110:1 (NKJV)

1 The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

2. **The Cornerstone:** Hebrews 3:1 (NKJV) — Therefore,... consider the... High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,

1. The High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus

1. Our confession is: Jesus is the Son of God, so the writer says: Consider the High Priest of [Jesus the Son of God], Christ Jesus.
2. A distinction is being made between Jesus the Son of God (our confession) AND Jesus our High Priest. Why?
3. The **Bedrock** of Christ's church is: Jesus IS the Son of God, But THAT'S NOT EXACTLY WHAT PETER SAID! I didn't realize this until VERY recently. Peter says "You (Jesus) are THE CHRIST..."
4. Peter MAKES A CONNECTION between JESUS and THE CHRIST! The Christ IS THE ANOINTED ONE prophesied in the old testament.
5. The writer is emphasizing in the whole 1st chapter of Hebrews FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT that The Son of God IS God and by implication (Psalm 45:6,7 the Son anointed ABOVE ALL OTHERS) the Son IS THE CHRIST (the anointed one.)
6. So Peter in his confession is MAKING THE CONNECTION that Jesus IS → the Christ, → (who is) the Son of God.
7. The **Bedrock** IS THE CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD and Jesus IS the Christ.

2. The **Cornerstone** IS Jesus our High Priest!

1. The reference point which is laid on the **Bedrock** that the Christ is the Son of God is Jesus is our High Priest. Therefore, what kind of house will be laid on a foundation aligned to the cornerstone, Jesus, our High Priest? A SPIRITUAL HOUSE!
2. Therefore we are building a house of priests to perform spiritual services

3. **The Foundation** (*See above II. C.*) — *This is the only book that tells us the six elementary teachings and that they are foundational*

4. **The House**

1. We are being built up into a spiritual house

1 Peter 2:1-10 (NKJV)

1 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, 2 as **newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word**, that you may grow thereby, 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 4 Coming to Him as to a **living stone**, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, **are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

"Behold, I lay in Zion
A **chief cornerstone**, elect, precious,
And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." *Isaiah 28:16*

7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient,

"The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone," *Psalms 118:22*

8 and

"A stone of stumbling
And a rock of offense." *Isaiah 8:14*

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. 9 But you are a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, His own special people, that **you may proclaim the praises of Him** who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

2. There's more... and more and more... but like the Hebrews writer says... "... we cannot discuss these things in detail **now**." Hebrews 9:5, when the writer too, was overwhelming his audience with information.
 1. Hebrews 7, tells us more about Jesus our High Priest
 2. Hebrews 8, WE HAVE A MODEL OF GOD'S HOUSE! Moses was given a plan. Moses was given a physical representation (a type), in the form of a tent (tabernacle), of God's spiritual house.
 3. Hebrews 9, Wills/Testaments and sacrifices (ones that don't work and one that does)
 4. Hebrews 10, We learn Jesus offered Himself ONE TIME for ALL (those that preceded Him on earth, His contemporaries, and those of us who came after Him)

Conclusion

By learning there is such a thing in scripture as "milk" and "solid food" and that Christians are at different levels of maturity, some able to digest solid food, others only able to handle milk, we can rightly divide the word (between milk & solid food) so that each Christian can gain the nourishment they need to partake of the word of God and gain faith and grow.

By learning how Jesus constructed His house we can gain a firm understanding of the bedrock and foundation of milk and move on to the solid food of the Apostles' doctrine and reconstruct the church of our Lord. And we can KNOW that WE ARE HIS HOUSE, not just that we are in the "right" church, but again that WE ARE HIS HOUSE, a **spiritual house**, a **holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.