

# THE MESSENGER



"... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:15

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## There was no Church Before the Cross of Christ

*by Dan Goddard*

The church (or kingdom) and the Gospel system have, in a sense, existed from the very beginning. They have existed in at least five successive stages: first, in purpose, in the mind of God; second, in promise; third, in prophecy; fourth, in preparation during the life of John the Baptist and the earthly ministry of Christ; and fifth, in perfection. Consequently, the church has "began" in several different senses.

"Beginning" is used in this article in reference to the time the church, or kingdom of Christ began to exist in perfection; as a fact or reality on earth. It is affirmed by many that the church existed as a fact in the garden of Eden. Others believe that the church had its actual beginning in Judaism: that the church of Christ is just a renovated Mosaic religion. Still others believe strongly that the church was established in Galilee, called and named by His apostles. But, there was no church before the cross!

Following, are a few Scriptural observations that make the beginning of the church before the death of Christ impossible; particularly, during His earthly life. On the other hand, the same observations will reveal that the Pentecost of Acts 2 affords a Scriptural setting for all God's requirements regarding the beginning or establishing of the church.

Check for yourself, and see how the references that are given converge in the teaching of Acts 2.

### **BEFORE THE DEATH OF CHRIST:**

1. The New Testament was not in force (Heb. 9:16-17).
2. Christ was not the head of the church (Eph. 1:19-23). Who was the head of the church while Christ was in the grave?

3. The apostles were not set in the church (I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:8-11).
4. The church had no Spirit in it (John 7:39).
5. Christ was not yet glorified (John 7:39; I Peter 1:11; Luke 24:26).
6. The apostles were not filled with the power of the Spirit (John 14:16-17).
7. The church had no blood in it (Heb. 10:1-4; 9:22-23).
8. People of God were under the law of Moses (Matt. 23:3; Rom. 7:1-4). If the church were in existence, God caused spiritual adultery or obedience to two spiritual laws at the same time.
9. The church would have been without atonement (Matt. 20:28; Heb. 9:12-15).
10. Christ had not become our High Priest (Heb. 7:28; 8:4). Church members would not therefore have been able to approach the Father.
11. The Gospel "in fact" could not be preached (I Cor. 15:1-4; Gal. 1:8-9).
12. The church would have no cross in it (I Cor. 15:1-4).
13. Joseph of Arimathaea, an honorable counselor, waited for kingdom (Mark 15:43).
14. The cornerstone had not been rejected.
  - a. The church could not be built till the cornerstone was laid.
  - b. The cornerstone could not be laid till it was rejected (Psalm 118:22; Acts 4:11).
  - c. The rejection of Christ was consummated in His death at Jewish hands (Mark 8:31).
  - d. Therefore, the church could not have been built before His Death; hence, not during the personal ministry of Jesus.
15. The church was not purchased (I Cor. 6:20; Acts 20:28). A thing is not bought until the price is accepted.
16. Many Scriptures indicate the church was yet future (Matt. 4:17; 6:10; 10:7; 16:18; Mark 1:15; Luke 10:9; 22:18, 29; 23:42; Acts 1:6).
17. Daniel's prophecy would have been contradicted (Dan. 7:13-14).
  - a. Christ came to (not from) the Ancient of days (God).
  - b. He was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom.
  - c. Christ went from earth to the Father when He ascended (Acts 1:9-10).
  - d. Therefore, Christ received His kingdom when He went to the Father; hence, He did not and could not receive it while on earth.

Conclusion: The church was not established before the cross of Christ.

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## News & Notes:

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

*"...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*

James 5:16