Wrong Views Of The Church

Introduction: Jesus stated He would build His church (Mat. 16:18 “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”). Yet there is great confusion and false doctrines in the religious world; contrary to God’s Will (1 Cor. 14:33 “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints”; John 17:20-21 “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me”; 1 Cor. 1:10-13 “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?”; Mat. 15:13 “But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.”) These conditions have contributed greatly to the misunderstandings prevalent about the church, even among some who are Christians. Let us consider a few wrong views of the church.

I. IT EXISTED DURING JESUS’ PERSONAL MINISTRY

A. Jesus taught that the church was in the future.

1. Mat. 16:18 “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

2. “Will build” is future tense.

B. Notice some consequences of teaching such:

1. It would have existed before the foundation was tried.
   a. Jesus is the foundation; 1 Cor. 3:11 “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”
   b. Isa. 28:16 “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”
   c. 1 Pet. 2:6-7 “Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,”

2. Would have only been subject to the limited commission.
   a. Mat. 10:5-7 “These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
   b. Not the great commission; Mark 16:15 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

3. It would exist prior to the cleansing blood of Christ was presented to God.
   a. Mat. 26:28 “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”
   b. Heb. 9:23-28 “It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 28For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but
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into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

4. It would have been under the Law of Moses.
   a. Mat. 17:5 “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”
   b. John 1:17 “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”
   c. Heb. 9:15-17 “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. 16For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.”

5. It would have existed without a head.
   a. Eph. 1:19-23 “And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”
   b. Col. 1:18 “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

6. It would not have a mediator.
   a. Heb. 8:6 “But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.”
   b. Heb. 9:15 “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”
   c. Yet, He is the only mediator; 1 Tim. 2:5-6 “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

7. Before its members could have the forgiveness of sins.
   a. Mat. 26:28 “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”
   b. Heb. 9:22 “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”
   c. 1 Pet. 1:18-19 “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;”

8. Before its members could preach Jesus as the Christ.
   a. Mat. 16:20 “Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.”
b. After the vision on the mount of Transfiguration; Mat. 17:9 “And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.”

c. The resurrection proved Him to be the Christ; Rom. 1:4 “And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:”

9. Before its members could preach the Gospel.
   a. 1 Cor. 15:1-4 “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”
   b. 1 Cor 1:17-24 “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. 20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. 22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

10. It existed before Christ was crowned king.
   a. Dan. 7:13-14 “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”
   b. Acts 2:34-36 “For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool. 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

II. IT WAS AN EMERGENCY MEASURE BECAUSE THE JEWISH REJECTION OF JESUS.
   A. The Premillennial system:
      1. Because of the Jewish rejection of Jesus, the church was given as a substitute until the Jews get ready.
      2. “From the moment Christ bowed His head and yielded up His Spirit to the Father, all the glories of the kingdom spoken by the Old Testament seers and prophets have held in abeyance...The prophetic clock stopped at Calvary. Not one tick has been heard since.” (H. A. Ironside, The Mysteries Of God, 1946, p. 54)
      3. “He, Jesus, would have set up the kingdom but they, the Jews, rejected and crucified Him. The kingdom did come nigh when Christ came and had they received Him, it would have been manifested but now it is in abeyance.” (Wm. E. Blackstone, Jesus Is Coming, 1908, p. 87f).
4. “In its doctrine of the Church dispensationalism holds that the Jewish rejection of the kingdom caused Jesus to postpone the kingdom until the Second Advent and to establish the church as an interlude between the two advents and that the church was in no sense a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies but something entirely new...” (Loraine Boettner *The Millennium*, 1974, p. 115)

5. “The church is a mere parenthesis, an afterthought in God's program of redemption, a valley invisible to Old Testament prophets...in dealing with the church, history has left the main highway and is making a detour; and God ignores the flight of time until he deals again with the Jews. Israel is like a scheduled train that has been put on a side tract temporarily but will be put on the main tract, the main line again, as soon as the unscheduled Gentile-Special has passed though.” (Wm. Hendrickson, *And So All Israel Shall Be Saved*, 1945, p. 7)

B. Christ's death was planned before the creation of the world.
   1. Acts 2:23 “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:”
   2. 1 Pet. 1:18-20 “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,”
   3. Rev. 13:8 “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

C. Likewise the church was in God's eternal plan.
   1. Since Christ's death was planned and His blood bought the church, the church was in God's eternal plan; Acts 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
   2. Eph. 3:8-12 “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: 10To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. 11According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: 12In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.”

III. It Is A Social—Political Organization.
   A. The church is a benevolent organization.
      1. Gal. 6:10 “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”
      2. Jam. 1:27 “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”
      3. We see this carried out; Acts 11:29-30 “Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: 30Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”
      4. We will be judged by whether we do good or not; Mat. 25:31-46 “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:
And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 

Then shall the King say unto them from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

B. Some have turned the church into a social—political organization.

1. They would have the church appeal only to the social ills of our society.
2. They would have the church become involved in the politics of the day.
3. One stated: “God cares about injustice, discrimination, war, poverty, and oppression. You do not know God if you do not know this.”
4. Bobby Duncan defined it as: “The philosophy of those professed Christians whose conception of Christianity is that the major significance of the gospel is related to the needs of this present world; and that ‘gospel’ preaching should be designed to correct the ills of this present life, with only a passing reference to life beyond the grave—if there be any such life.”

C. The church has a higher calling.

1. During the first century, there were numerous social and political problems.
2. Yet, Jesus or the apostles did not protest or call for demonstrations against those evils.

D. The function of the church is spiritual.

1. John 18:36 “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”
2. It is to save souls.
   a. Luke 19:10 “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
   b. The Great Commission is the marching orders of the church.
      (1) Mat. 28:19-20 “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
      (2) Mark 16:15-16 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
3. 1 Tim. 3:15 “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”
   a. Pillar is a column that upholds the building or supports the roof structure.
   b. Ground is that which would support the pillar, a foundation, a steadfast or firm force.

4. Many have forgotten the true function of the church; Rom. 14:17 “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

IV. IT IS A MATERIAL BUILDING
   A. Many place a great emphasis upon the physical location of the building.
      1. Some emphasize the building’s size and beauty.
      2. How many times do we refer to the building as the church?
   B. God’s dwelling place is not some “special” spot.
      1. This was the discussion with the Samaritan woman; John 4:19-24 “The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
      2. Acts 7:48-50 “Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?”
      3. Acts 17:24 “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;”
   C. The church and Christians are the house or temple of God.
      1. 1 Tim. 3:15 “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”
      2. Eph. 2:19-22 “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”
      3. 1 Pet. 2:5 “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

V. IT IS NOT ESSENTIAL
   A. Most today think that the church is not essential as long as one believes in Jesus as being our Savior.
   B. Christ died for the church.
      1. Acts 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
      2. Eph. 5:25-27 “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,”
present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

C. **Christ is going to save the church.**
   1. Eph. 5:23 “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.
   2. The body is the church; Eph. 1:22-23 “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

D. **All the saved are in the church.**
   1. Acts 2:41, 47 “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls…. Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”
   2. 1 Cor. 12:13 “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

E. **Thus, all those names who are enrolled in heaven are in the church.**
   1. Heb. 12:23 “To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,”
   2. Rev. 20:15 “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

Conclusion: The church is unique—it is unlike any other organization ever known. The only way into it is through baptism for the remission of sins based upon one’s faith, repentance, and confession of that faith.