

Christ – The Sure Foundation

By David Phillips

In Matt 16: 18 Jesus said "...and on this rock I will build My church." The "rock" that Jesus was referring to was the confession that Peter made in verse 16 of this same passage, saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." This truth is one that is immovable and unchangeable. It states the authority of Jesus Christ as the Son of God—the very basis upon which the Lord is building His church. This is the founding principle by which all men are saved. In this lesson we are going to search the Scriptures in order to see just how important it is for us to acknowledge the authority of Christ and how important it is that we make His authority the ruling force in our lives.

The True Foundation

The supreme authority of Jesus Christ was perfected when He was raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of God. Thus, Peter proclaimed in Acts 2:32-36, "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God...Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." This is the essential truth that all of us must come to believe, acknowledge, and to base our lives upon if we desire salvation. As Jesus said "...for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). The Hebrew writer said of Jesus, "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Heb. 5:9).

Throughout the Scriptures the necessity of acknowledging and submitting to the authority of Christ is stressed. Even before His death Jesus showed that His words would be the standard by which we will be judged on the last day. "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." Thus, if we desire salvation we must receive and obey His words; we must respect His authority.

In the Great Commission Jesus emphasized His authority as being the governing factor in man's salvation. In Matt 28:18-19, He said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore..." It is by His authority that His disciples preach the gospel and it is salvation by that authority that is preached. Only by believing in Him and submitting to Him in baptism are men able to become His disciples. As His disciples, Jesus said that all must be taught "to observe all things that I have commanded you..." (vs. 20). Why? Because He is Lord and Christ!

In studies of the conversions in Acts we often observe the pattern that is established for what men must do to be saved. It is important that we do this, but equally important is our need to observe the gospel message that is preached in those conversions and the fact that the authority of Jesus Christ is always proclaimed.

In the climax of his gospel sermon in Acts chapter two, Peter proclaimed in vs. 36, "...God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." In Acts 8:12 when Philip preached to the Samaritans it says that they "believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ..." In Acts 8:37 the Ethiopian eunuch confessed, based on Philip's preaching, that "Jesus is the Christ Son of God." When Peter was sent to preach to the household of Cornelius, Peter's entire sermon emphasized the authority of Jesus Christ, as he spoke to them saying, "But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ — He is Lord of all... And He

commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:34-43). This same message is echoed throughout the book of Acts as men from every nation are taught to cast off their former ways and to submit to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Throughout the New Testament epistles the apostles and prophets continued to reiterate this eternal truth. The book of Revelation emphasized the fact that Jesus Christ has been glorified and that through Him there is victory over sin and death. In Revelation chapter five, a scene is described where elders and angels surround the throne of God. Then Jesus, the Lamb, enters the scene and all who are present proclaim praises to Him, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!...Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever" (Rev. 5:11-14).

The apostle Paul summarizes these things in Phil. 2:5-11 where he describes the humility of Jesus as He set aside the form of God in order to dwell in the form of a man and to die on the cross. He goes on to describe how God raised Jesus up from the dead and "has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Building on the True Foundation

Dear reader, we cannot emphasize these things enough, for our salvation depends on them. In our culture there is a strong influence pressuring men to reject all authority and to pursue one's personal desires at all times. Yet, if we are going to build our lives on the sure foundation of Jesus Christ, we must shed the influence of the world and learn to embrace the authority of Christ in our lives.

If our lives are not founded upon the eternal principles of Christ's divine nature and authority then we will fall! This was the lesson that Jesus taught in the story of the wise and foolish builders in Mat. 7:24-27. "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

The wise man, and also the faithful Christian, does more than acknowledge or talk about the foundation. He actively builds his life upon that foundation. "Whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock." "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Mat. 7:21). Is your life built upon that one true foundation?

While every Christian will acknowledge the need to have faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, few actually see the need to submit to His authority. But, as Paul said in Phil. 2, "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow..." We will learn to respect His authority eventually. We can learn now, when we have the opportunity to also be saved by His authority, or we can wait until the last day where, by His authority, we will be judged.

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