

## I Will Build My Church

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Jesus' avowed purpose was to **"build my Church"** (Mt16:18). This would be accomplished by **"human agents"** through the power of the **Holy Spirit** (At1:8). The New Testament Church began on the Day of Pentecost with the indwelling of Holy Spirit's being distributed to 120 persons (At2:2-4a). Just before the Ascension, **Jesus informed the Apostles** of the purpose of their calling: **"feed my flock"** (Jh21:15b,16b,17b).

**Jesus Christ is The Rock:** Matthew 16:18 contains the famous play on words: "And I tell you, you are **Peter**, and on **this rock I will build my church**": "Peter": Πέτρος - **Petros**, a proper noun meaning **"stone"**; "rock": πέτρα - **petra**, **a rock such as a tomb** (Mt27:59-60a). **Jesus Christ** is **"The Rock"** upon which the Church is built (1Cr3:11,10:4b, Eph2:19-22). The Divine Being known as **"YHWH"** in the Old Testament is **"The Rock"**, **Jesus Christ** (Dt32:3-4,15,18,30-31, Ps18:2, Is30:29, Hbk1:12). **The objective of the Church is to abolish "death"** (Mt16:18, Ps49:13a,14a,14b, 1Cr15:26,54-56a, Rv21:3-4).

**The Concept of "Resurrection":** The **full understanding** of the "resurrection of the dead" was **not available** until the New Testament documents were written; however, there was clearly **some understanding available in Old Testament times** (1Sm2:6,8a, Mk14:28, At2:32, 13:36-37, Is57:15). The **disciples did NOT understand** when Jesus first told them about his impending resurrection (Mr9:31-32, Jh20:8-9). A "resurrection" is a **transformation** from a physical mortal body into an immortal spiritual body (1Cr15:35,42,50-53). Jesus, the **"firstborn"**, is the **objective proof** of God's ability to transform a physical human being, dead or alive, into an eternal spirit being (Cl1:15, Rv1:5a, 1Cr15:12,16-17a,20). There were **many eyewitnesses** to the death of Jesus Christ. Jesus made a point of appearing alive to them after the resurrection.

**You Will be My Witnesses:** Jesus' death made possible the propitiation of sin, before that the **Holy Spirit** was **NOT generally available as an indwelling presence** to human beings (Jh7:37-39, 16:12-13, Lk24:48-49). At the Ascension, Jesus reiterated the promise of power and informed the Apostles of the **purpose of the power** (At1:4-5,8). At the Day of Pentecost, the assembled 120 persons received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (At2:1-4a). The power of the Holy Spirit combined with eyewitness knowledge of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ empowered the Apostles and other disciples to become the **witnesses Jesus required to build his Church** (At2:32, 3:15, 5:30a,32a, 10:39b-43a). The Church quickly grew, starting in Jerusalem (At1:8b, 2:14,41, 6:7); but, quickly spread throughout **Judea** and **Samaria** (At8:1b,25); and, to the **Gentiles** (At10:1a,34-35, 11:18b). The Book of Acts traces the growth of the Church from Jerusalem to **Rome**, the center of the world (At28:16-17a,20,24-25a,28).

**The Great Commission:** **Mark** reports Jesus' speaking a few days after the resurrection in Jerusalem (Mk16:14-18); **Matthew**, reports Jesus speaking several days later in Galilee (Mt28:16-20). Jesus' commission to the Apostles included, **"proclaim the gospel"**, **"teaching to observe all that I have commanded"**, and **"all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me"** – these phrases explain what Jesus meant many days before when he identified himself as **"The Rock"** (Mt16:18-19, 1Cr3:11,Rm5:10, Hb8:1, 7:25, Rv3:7b). The **understanding of Jesus' teaching** is only available through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which combined with **Jesus' intercession** are **"the keys of the kingdom"**.

**The Good Shepherd:** The context of John chapter ten is a disputation with some Pharisees who were very familiar with **the prophecy** (Ez34:11-12,14a,15). The Pharisees recognized that **Jesus was saying that he was YHWH**, and that **salvation was only available through himself** (Jh10:7-9,11-12a,14-15). They also recognized that he called them **"thieves and robbers"**.

**The Rest of the Great Commission:** Jesus is clear and specific that **"Christians"** comprise his **"flock"** (Jh10:27-28, Lk12:32). Jesus' last instructions to the Apostles informed them of the most important part of their work with Jesus' flock (Jh21:15-17). Jesus ties **"love for him"** with **"tending his flock"**. The external work of the Church is to "preach the gospel", to reach out into the world with Jesus' message; but **the internal work** is to "feed the flock", to ensure that **Christians are being fed on the words of Jesus Christ**, the Bible. Today, we cannot teach the world; we can only fulfill the Olivet Prophecy (Mk13:10, Mt24:14). **Jesus' sacrifice was for all humanity** – in the World Tomorrow the **"flock"** will extend to **all human beings** (Jh3:16-17, 1Jh4:14). **Our calling is to prepare to feed that flock!**

**Jesus Christ is "The Rock"**, the foundation of the New Testament Church. The objective of the Church is the **eradication of "death"** through the **"resurrection of the dead"**: a transformation of perishable physical flesh into an immortal spiritual body. **Jesus' resurrection is the objective proof of God's ability to accomplish this**. After his resurrection, Jesus was careful to ensure **many people were eyewitness to his death and resurrection**; this knowledge combine with the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit empowered these people to be **"Jesus' witnesses"** to **build the New Testament Church**. The Church has a two-fold commission: **preach the gospel** and **feed the flock**. **Jesus affirms that loving him is demonstrated by feeding his flock**. Jesus, himself, is the **"Good Shepherd"**; our calling is to prepare to feed all humanity: Jesus' growing flock in the World Tomorrow.

The material is based on the paper **"True Worship of the True God"** available at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/>.

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