

These and other Scriptures compare the spiritual relationship of Christ and His church to the human marriage relationship. That **the “wedding” is still future** is shown by Matt. 22:1-13; 25:1-13; and Rev. 21;2.

Was our Lord at any time betrothed to a dead bride? After He gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her by the washing of water in the Word, that He might present her to Himself in glory – after all this, was there ever a time when nowhere on earth could be found a church that could be truly called His bride? Was there ever a time when the only “Christianity” on earth was the religion of spiritual harlots? Perish the thought! But if it be so, what are all the churches today, but harlots and offspring of harlots?

8. “I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS”

“Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 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 always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:18-20).

Practically all Christians recognize that Jesus was speaking here to His church. The only real question is: what kind of church was it?

Of course, an imaginary, “invisible” church cannot go anywhere, it cannot disciple any nations, it cannot baptize anybody in any way, it cannot teach anybody anything, and being non-existent, it would not know the difference whether the Lord were with it or not.

But an organized assembly of baptized believers, such as Jesus had constituted His disciples, can do what He commanded and in doing so can claim the promise of His continuing presence – and it **is the only organization on earth that can do so.**

Jesus promised this kind of church that He would always be with it, even to the end of the age. But He could not be with it unless it existed to be with. Therefore, if Jesus spoke the truth, **He has had His churches in the world ever since and He has been with them all the time** – and so it will be to the end of the age.

9. GLORY IN THE CHURCH

“Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end” (Eph. 3:21). More literally translated: “To him the glory in the church in Christ Jesus, unto all the generations of the eon of the eons.”

We have here a Spirit-inspired declaration or prayer. If it was a prayer, as the KJ Version indicates, it nevertheless declares an assured fulfillment, for the Holy Spirit does not inspire vain prayers. “He

maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:27).

Therefore, we understand that **God gets glory in the church in Christ Jesus. This was true in Paul’s day and it was to continue “unto all the generations of the eon of the eons,” an expression of eternity beyond our comprehension.** But He could not get glory in the church unless the church continued to exist. And of course, He is far from getting glory in an imaginary, “invisible” church whose advocates reject and deny the plain, simple, straightforward teachings and promises of His Word.

10. PILLAR AND GROUND

“These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 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” (1 Tim. 3:14-15).

Speaking of the church as an organized assembly, as the context clearly shows, Paul here calls it **“the pillar and ground of the truth.”** That is, the church not only, as a pillar or column, upholds the truth, but it is the foundational support of the truth.

Here we have the explanation for the wholesale loss of Bible truth by false churches and unattached Christians. It has pleased God that His church should be the pillar and ground of the truth, and so it has been through the centuries.

.

A SOLEMN WARNING!

WHEN MEN REJECT BIBLE TRUTH ABOUT THE CHURCH, and refuse to recognize its rightful place as the body and bride of Christ, the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth, THEY QUICKLY LOSE OTHER TRUTH AS WELL.

The truth of God’s Word is still upheld in the world today because of the faithfulness and the martyr’s blood of the true churches of God through the Dark Ages, and this truth will still be upheld to the end of the age because there will still be some churches, the true churches of our Lord, to serve as the pillar and ground of the truth. – By Rosco Brong.

TEN BIBLE PROOFS OF

BAPTIST PERPETUITY

By Rosco Brong

If God’s Word is True, The Church That Jesus Started Still Stands, Has Endured

“The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” - 1 Tim. 3:15

Recorded history often reveals more of historians’ prejudices than of actual events,, and the history of Christianity has been written mostly by the enemies of Baptists. Even so, there is historical evidence for the continued existence of what would now be called Baptist churches from the days when Jesus was on earth in the flesh down to the present time. This evidence is not beyond dispute, but it is more than sufficient if we are willing to believe the promises of God’s word.

My purpose here is to show from the Bible, **APART FROM ALL HISTORICAL EVIDENCE,** that we must believe in Baptist church perpetuity if we believe that God’s Word is true.

1. THE GATES OF HADES

His Promise of Perpetuity

“Upon this Rock,” said Jesus, referring to Himself, “I will build my church; and the gates of hell (Hades) shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18).

We may find various interpretations of this statement of Jesus, but despite a great variety of ideas in detailed interpretation, it is fairly clear to all that we have here a **PROMISE** of our Lord that His church would not be overcome by the power of evil. Whatever this church was, it could not fail if Jesus spoke the truth. **We believe that this church was what would now be called a Baptist church**, and anyone who will honestly examine the organization and doctrines of this New Testament institution in comparison with the organization and doctrines of Baptist churches today will reach the same conclusion.

If the church that Jesus built was not a Baptist church, then we need to find out what kind of church it was, and join that church, if we want our service to be pleasing to Him. One thing we can be sure of: if Jesus spoke the truth – and what real Christian would deny this? – **the church that Jesus built has been in the world ever since and will be here till He comes again.**

The popular Protestant dogma in this connection speaks of an “invisible” church to which all Christians belong. More on this as we go along, but for the present note a few simple facts:

a. **Neither the expression “invisible church” nor the idea of such an expression can be found in the New Testament.**

b. The whole purpose of the “invisible church” dogma is to justify Protestant splits from Roman Catholicism. But since **Baptists are not Protestants** and were never a part of the heretical Catholic system, we have no need of any such dogma to justify our existence.

c. Most Protestants and many ignorant Baptists suppose that Christ built two churches; that is, two kinds of churches: the “invisible church” of their own vain imagining and the organized assemblies that they cannot help recognizing in the New Testament. Then, to add insult to injury, they call their imaginary monstrosity the “true” church! But **the Bible says that there is only one body (church), that is, one kind of body, just as there is only one baptism, that is, one kind of baptism (Eph. 4:4-5).**

d. Since there is no just reason to do otherwise, we must understand that Jesus used the word “church” (Greek “*ekklesia*”) in Matt. 16:18 in the same general sense that it has everywhere else in the New Testament: that is, an assembly, almost always an organized assembly. **The word here is used abstractly; that is, it expresses an idea whose realization is to be found in a particular organized assembly.**

2. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

“If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 18:17-18).

This text suggests three simple questions that believers in an “invisible” church might try to answer:

a. How can a wronged brother tell his grievance to an “invisible” church?

b. How can an “invisible” church decide an issue, make known its judgment to a trespassing brother, or execute that judgment “if he neglect to hear”?

c. Is not the authority to “bind and loose,” whatever this means, in verse 18 given to the same church that is in view in verse 17?

Obviously, the reference here is to an organized assembly; and obviously, such organized assemblies must always have existed from that time to this in order that faithful followers of Jesus might obey His instructions here given.

3. BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY

“For by one Spirit are we all were baptized into one body...now ye are a body of Christ, and members in particular” (1 Cor. 12:13, 27).

Verse 27 of this quotation tells what kind of body is meant in verse 13: the kind of which the church at Corinth was an example. 1 Cor. 12:13-17 shows what kind of baptism is meant: namely, baptism in water. In fact, there is only one kind of baptism recognized in the New Testament as an ordinance of Christ: all other so-called baptisms are figurative or symbolic, deriving their significance from this baptizing in water to declare the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and all that this means to us.

Almost all Christians recognize baptism, or some substitute for it that they call baptism, as sprinkling or pouring, as a church ordinance.

But **if it is a church ordinance, then there must always have been churches to administer the ordinance.** If the church to which Jesus entrusted the ordinance passed out of existence as an institution, then the ordinance lapsed with the church and nowhere in the Bible is anyone authorized to start it up again.

4. “TILL HE COME”

“As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:26).

Again, practically all Christians recognize the Lord’s Supper as a church ordinance. But how could the ordinance be continued if at any time there were no true churches to observe it? Note that the Scriptures

give no hint of any possible lapse or failure of our Lord’s churches to declare or show forth His death by eating this bread and drinking this cup “till He come.”

5. CHURCH OFFICERS

“If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work...They that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree” (1 Tim. 3:1, 13).

The context of these two verses shows that **bishops and deacons are church officers**, and to this fact practically all Christians agree, however far they may depart from Scriptural ideas of the duties of these offices. Even believers in an imaginary “invisible” church become at least temporarily realistic and operate in some kind of organized assembly in naming bishops and deacons. But if bishops and deacons were officers in the kind of church that Jesus built, and if this kind of church passed out of existence, as Protestants allege and as ignorant Baptists admit, then by whose authority are such officers named today?

6. A HOLY TEMPLE

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens 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 (or, better, every building) fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:19-22).

Paul was writing to the church at Ephesus, and he reveals here the glorious fact that a **true New Testament church is a holy temple in the Lord, and that one purpose for which the Lord built His church at Ephesus, and, we believe, every other true New Testament church, is that God in the Spirit might dwell therein.**

Can anyone believe that God, having chosen to manifest His presence in a special way in the churches of the Lord Jesus, allowed His purpose to be frustrated, so that for centuries He had no such habitation on earth? But Protestants do so declare and countless Baptists, ignorant of or indifferent to their blood-bought heritage, are deceived by or are silent in the face of this monstrous lie!

7. A DEAD BRIDE?

“Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead” (Rom. 7:4).

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:25 – read on through verse 32.).