

## **“THE PROSPECT OF THE CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST”**

### **MATTHEW 16:13-20**

**INTRO:** As **BORN-AGAIN BELIEVERS IN JESUS CHRIST** we belong to an entity that nothing else in the whole universe can compare. Down through the years it has often been, and still is, misunderstood, neglected, disrespected, embattled, forsaken, criticized, judged, maligned, and deserted, not just by those who do not know Christ, but even by **SOME BORN AGAIN BELIEVERS**. What entity am I speaking of? **THE CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!** In the scripture, the **CHURCH** is referred, among other things as: **1) The Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:23), 2) The Building of Christ (Ephesians 2:21,22), 3) The Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33), 4) The Church of God (1 Corinthians 1:2); 5) The House of God (1 Timothy 3:15a); 6) The Pillar and the Ground of the Truth (1 Timothy 3:15b), and the 7) Mystery of God (Ephesians 3:1-21)**. The very moment one receives Christ as Personal Savior, he or she is **placed by the Holy Spirit into the BODY OF CHRIST, which is THE CHURCH (1 Corinthians 12:13)**.

### **THE MEANING OF THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL**

- 1) The **WORD “CHURCH” (ECCLESIA): “A CALLED OUT GROUP OR ASSEMBLY”**
- 2) The **UNIVERSAL CHURCH: “THE SPIRITUAL ORGANISM OF WHICH CHRIST IS THE HEAD AND IS COMPOSED OF ALL REGENERATED PEOPLE FROM PENTECOST (ACTS 2) TO THE RAPTURE (1 THESSALONIANS 4).”**
- 3) The **LOCAL CHURCH: “A GROUP OF PROFESSING BELIEVERS IN CHRIST IN A CERTAIN LOCATION, WHO HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED AND ARE ORGANIZED FOR THE PURPOSE OF DOING GOD’S WILL IN EVANGELIZING THE LOST, EDIFYING BELIEVERS AND EXALTING GOD.”**
- 4) The **MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH: “THE FACT THAT BORN AGAIN JEWS AND GENTILES ARE A PART OF THE SAME BODY, THE BODY OF CHRIST, WHICH WAS NOT REVEALED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT BUT IS NOW REVEALED” (EPHESIANS 3:1-10; ROMANS 16:25,26; COLOSSIANS 1:24-27).**

### **THE COURSE OF THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL**

- 1) The **CHURCH PREDICTED: Matthew 16:18; Acts 1:5**
- 2) The **CHURCH BORN: Acts 2:41-47**
- 3) The **CHURCH ETERNAL: Ephesians 3:10,11, 21; 1 Thessalonians 4:17**

### **THE PROSPECT OF THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL**

#### **MATTHEW 16:13-20**

**NOTE:** In this context, Jesus Christ is confirming with His disciples **WHO HE IS** and **WHAT HE WILL DO WITH THE COMING CHURCH**.

**NOTE:** **The prospect of the Church is eternal because it is built upon the SOLID FOUNDATION OF JESUS CHRIST THE ROCK.**

### **THE DISTINGUISHING MEANING OF CERTAIN WORDS**

- 1) **“THOU ART PETER”:** “PETER” is **“PETROS” = “A LITTLE ROCK.”**
- 2) **“THIS ROCK”:** “ROCK” is **“PETRA” = “A MASS OF ROCK”**

**NOTE:** **CHRIST WILL BUILD HIS CHURCH UPON HIMSELF-THE MASS OF ROCK**

### **THE BASIS OF THE PROSPECT OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST**

**EXPLANATION:** **BY “PROSPECT” I MEAN WHAT JESUS CHRIST IS GOING TO DO IN, THROUGH AND FOR THE CHURCH ETERNALLY.**

#### ***I. PROSPECT BASED ON THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST***

**“I”**

- A. Jesus Christ is The Eternal Son of God – John 1:1,2,14; 10:30
- B. Jesus Christ is the Effective Savior of the World – John 14:6
- C. Jesus Christ is the Essential Head of the Church – Colossians 1:18

## **II. PROSPECT BASED ON THE PROMISE OF JESUS CHRIST**

### **“WILL BUILD”**

- A. Through the Redemptive Work of Christ – Acts 20:28
- B. Through the Reproving Work of the Holy Spirit – John 16:7-11
- C. Through the Reconciling Work of the Christian – 2 Corinthians 5:18,19

## **III. PROSPECT BASED ON THE POSSESSION OF JESUS CHRIST**

### **“MY CHURCH”**

**NOTE: The church DOES NOT BELONG to a denomination, a congregation, or a pastor. IT BELONGS TO CHRIST AS GOD – Acts 20:28**

- A. The Church Exists as the Body of Christ – Ephesians 1:23; 5:30
- B. The Church Submits to the Headship of Christ – Ephesians 1:22.  
Colossians 1:18

## **IV. PROSPECT BASED ON THE POWER OF CHRIST**

### **“THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT”**

**NOTE: “THE GATES OF HELL” speaks of the “POWER OF DEATH OR EVIL.”**

**THE POINT: NEITHER DEATH NOR EVIL WILL DESTROY THE CHURCH BECAUSE OF THE ETERNAL POWER OF JESUS CHRIST.**

- A. The Power of Death will not Destroy the Church
  - The Apostles who laid the foundation of the Church are dead, but the **CHURCH IS STILL ALIVE AND REMAINS.**
- B. The Power of Satan will not Destroy the Church
  - Satan continues to attempt to devour the Church, but the **CHURCH IS STILL ALIVE AND REMAINS.**
- C. The Power of Christ will Preserve the Church
  - Christ is the Eternal All-Powerful God by which **THE CHURCH WILL REMAIN ALIVE FOR EVERMORE!**

### **LESSON AND APPLICATION**

#### **HEBREWS 12:28**

**The PROSPECT OF THE CHURCH is that, as a part of the KINGDOM OF GOD, it WILL NOT BE SHAKEN AND IS ETERNALLY STABLE! THEREFORE, LET US, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, SERVE GOD WITH AWE AND REVERENCE. DON'T RUN. DON'T QUIT. DON'T FAIL. BY GOD'S GRACE KEEP PRESSING ON. AS A TRUE CHRISTIAN, YOU ARE A PART OF THE ETERNAL VICTORIOUS CHURCH OF CHRIST WHICH WILL PREVAIL FOREVER!**