

“THE REALITY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST”

ACTS 2:38-47

INTRO: One event that is common to all humanity world-wide is the CELEBRATION OF BIRTHDAYS. The YOUNGER we are the MORE we enjoy our birthdays. But, the OLDER we are, the MORE we resist our birthdays. Today is a special day in the life of the CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST as it is **PENTECOST SUNDAY – THE HISTORIC BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH.** As students of the Bible, we recognize that the birth of the CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST was ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST as recorded in Acts chapter 2, when Peter and the other disciples preached that GREAT SERMON OF REDEMPTION. Most legitimate Bible scholars trace that back to MAY 25, 33 AD which, if accurate, makes the church 1992 years old. Now, we know that certain dates on the calendar like THE PASSOVER, EASTER, PENTECOST, ETC. change yearly because they are not based on the GREGORIAN CALENDAR that we commonly use, but rather, the LUNAR-BASED HEBREW CALENDAR, and thus the change of dates. **BUT THE FACT REMAINS** that on PENTECOST WE CELEBRATE THE BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH, WHICH IS TODAY! **HOW WE ALL SHOULD THANK GOD FOR THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST, AND NEVER TAKE IT FOR GRANTED, BUT BE INVOLVED WITH IT ON EVERY LEVEL POSSIBLE, ACCORDING TO BIBLICAL TRUTH AND THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. TODAY, FOR A FEW MINUTES, LET’S FOCUS ON THE REALITY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST** and by doing so give it the HONOR AND RESPECT THAT IS DUE.

FACTS ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST

- 1) **PENTECOST** is a **JEWISH FEAST** that is celebrated 50 days after the PASSOVER that dates back to 1490 BC according to Leviticus 23:15-17. Keep in mind that THE PASSOVER is when our JEWISH FRIENDS celebrate how God spared the lives of the firstborn male of each family from the Egyptians prior to them leaving Egypt.
- 2) **PENTECOST** is a **JEWISH FEAST** in which the Jews traditionally thank God for the INGATHERING OF THE FIRST FRUITS OF THE HARVEST through a THANKSGIVING FESTIVAL in which they express their DEPENDENCE UPON GOD for His DAILY PROVISION.
- 3) **PENTECOST**, for our **JEWISH FRIENDS**, is also the ANNIVERSARY of GOD GIVING THE LAW TO MOSES on Mt. Sinai as recorded in Exodus chapters 19 and 20 that took place in 1491 BC and is the **BIRTHDAY OF JUDAISM.**
- 4) **PENTECOST**, as recorded in Acts chapter 2 is also the **BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST.**
IN HONOR OF THE BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH, TODAY LET’S FOCUS A BIT ON WHAT GOD’S WORD SAYS ABOUT THE CHURCH SO THAT WE MIGHT RESPECT THE CHURCH MORE AND GIVE GOD THE GLORY FOR WHAT HE IS DOING IN AND THROUGH THE CHURCH!

THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CHURCH IN SCRIPTURE

- 1) **THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH – THE WORLD-WIDE SPIRITUAL ORGANISM, OF WHICH CHRIST IS THE HEAD, AND IS COMPOSED OF ALL BORN-AGAIN BELIEVERS FROM THE DAY OF PENTECOST IN ACTS 2 UNTIL THE RAPTURE THAT WILL EXIST FOR ALL OF ETERNITY.**
- 2) **THE LOCAL CHURCH – THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY OF PROFESSING BAPTIZED BELIEVERS IN JESUS CHRIST WHO HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED TO DO THE WORK OF GOD IN A CERTAIN COMMUNITY.**

I. THE PROPHECY OF THE CHURCH – PREDICTED BY JESUS CHRIST

MATTHEW 16:18

- A. An indication that the Church did not exist in O. T. times.
- B. An indication that the Church is based on the work of Christ.
 1. Christ shed His blood for the Church – Acts 20:28
 2. Christ Gifted the Church for Ministry – Ephesians 4:7-16

II. THE POWER OF THE CHURCH – EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. The Promise of the Holy Spirit – Acts 1:8
- B. The Presentation of the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:1-6;22-24; 37-41.

III. THE PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH – A PATTERN TO FOLLOW

- A. A Continued Community – Acts 2:42
- B. A Continued Care – Acts 2:43-36
- C. A Continued Conversion – Acts 2:47

IV. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH – TO UPHOLD GOD’S TRUTH

1 TIMOTHY 3:15

- A. The Truth of Salvation
- B. The Truth of Sound Doctrine

V. THE PROSPECT OF THE CHURCH – TO SPEND ETERNITY WITH CHRIST

- A. In Eternal Fellowship – 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- B. In Eternal Worship – Revelation 4:1-5; 10,11

LESSONS AND APPLICATION

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IS NOT JUST ANOTHER ORGANIZATION OF MANKIND ON EARTH. IT IS THE ETERNAL GROWING ORGANISM OF GOD OF WHICH ALL BELIEVERS IN CHRIST BELONG THAT IS TO BE RESPECTED, SERVED AND EXPANDED THROUGH THE SERVICE OF EACH TRUE BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIAN THROUGHOUT THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE UNTIL THE RAPTURE.

QUESTION: WHAT ARE YOU DOING THESE DAYS TO ADVANCE AND STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST?

- 1) Learn about it.
- 2) Pray for it.
- 3) Financially support it.
- 4) Serve in it.
- 5) Expand it.