

**Lakeland Hills Blvd
church of Christ**

2510 Lakeland Hills Blvd
Lakeland, FL 33805
(863) 688-4336

Schedule of Services

Sunday
9:00 AM Bible Study
9:50 AM Worship
5:00 PM Worship

Wednesday
7:00 PM Bible Study

Visit our Website:

www.lakelandhillschurchofchrist.com
For Sermon & Class outlines,
Bible Study Materials and
Other Information.

Visit our Facebook Page:

www.facebook.com/LakelandHillschurchofchrist for events,
information, and links to our
YouTube Archives

Visit us on YouTube:

www.youtube.com/channel/UCu7AG_3jUtpBDIr2NPqB3iw for
Live Streams and Video
Archives.

Elders

Bob Marschall
Leon Miller
Larry Wisdom

Deacons

Bucky Day
Sherman Johnson
Michael Sadler
David Williams

Evangelist

Kent Heaton

It Does Not Matter What Church I Belong To?

By Kent Heaton

Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:17-19)

Jesus was a controversial subject against the Jewish leadership's influence over the people. He was in constant conflict with their hypocrisy and the demands they put on the people because He exposed them for who and what they were. They never denied His miracles, but they attacked His teaching. At every turn, they sought to discredit Jesus as a teacher to dissuade the multitudes from following Him. Jesus claimed to be the Son of God with power, the Son of Man, and the long-promised Messiah. His miracles proved His word, but many still could not accept that a carpenter's son from Nazareth was the Christ.

Arriving in Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked His disciples who the people thought He was. Some people thought Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead. Herod had beheaded John at the behest of his wife, who hated John for condemning their marriage. The prophet Malachi had prophesied four hundred years earlier that Elijah would herald the coming of the Christ. He did not suggest Elijah or one of the prophets would bodily rise from the dead, but that someone in striking resemblance would appear to announce the coming of the Christ. John the Baptist had been the fulfillment of the promise to show that Jesus was the Lamb of God.

Peter declared to the Lord that he believed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the Living God. This was a bold and declarative statement revealing the nature of the establishment of the divine kingdom. Jesus commends Peter's answer and declares that on the foundation that He was the Son of God, He would build His church. Nothing would prevent the establishment of His church. Peter would be given the keys of the kingdom (the church) to open the way of salvation for the Jews first, and also for the Gentiles. This would be accomplished by Peter when he, along with the eleven, preached the good news of Christ on the Day of Pentecost, where three thousand Jews obeyed the gospel. Later, Peter would teach Cornelius and his household that God had brought the gospel to the Gentile world.

Jesus declared the church's importance by calling it His church. He said the church would be built on the confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Jesus did not promise to build many churches but to build His church, the one true church, the church promised before time began. The church represents the wisdom of God and the eternal purpose which God purposed in His Son, Jesus Christ. Luke records the Acts of the Apostles, which describe the early church's beginnings and growth. The Lord added to the church those who were saved. Paul and many disciples went throughout the Roman Empire, establishing churches in every city. The early writings of the Christians were letters to churches in places like Ephesus, Galatia, Philippi, Colosse, and Thessalonica, to name a few.'

Jesus promised to build His church. Human wisdom has built untold numbers of

churches. Jesus built one church of which He is head. The wisdom of man created churches that exalt that wisdom. Many in the world do not believe the church is important. They believe that when they get to Heaven, it will not matter what church they belong to, but whether they know Jesus Christ. Any church will do. Every church is right. If a man accepts Christ as his personal Savior, it does not matter which church he belongs to. All of this contradicts and countermands everything Jesus taught His disciples. If it does not matter what church one belongs to, why did Jesus say He would build His church, and the gates of Hades would not prevail against it? God added the saved to the church, so where are the saved if the church is not important? The New Testament is the doctrine of the church, and if it does not matter which church one belongs to, then the New Testament is void.

When the final day of judgment comes, and every knee will bow before the Almighty, the King of kings and Lord of lords will ask the question, "Did you belong to My church?" It may not matter in the minds of human wisdom which church one belongs to now, but there is coming a day when that will matter for eternity. There is one church. The Son of God built that church.