

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

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This past week, a brother called. He was excited about the message on Sunday and he also had a question – more of a clarifying question – with respect to what was said regarding *the foundation of the Church*.

We know what makes the church '*the Church*' is that we've been *called out* of the world and maybe even from the religious world. As the songs we just heard, we are *Saved by Grace*. It's the redemptive work of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We know our Lord Jesus was subject to the death of the cross. And really, I don't believe any of us can understand the pain, the physical pain, but it goes *beyond that* because for three-and-a-half years, Jesus poured out his heart to the people. He healed the sick, he raised the dead, and he preached to them the good news that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Nonetheless at the end of his ministry, they were crying out: *crucify him*. [Luke 23:21]

He had never done them any wrong but as the people in general were motivated by the spirit of the enemy, that was their call: *crucify him*.

So it was extreme physical and emotional pain as well. His mind was, no doubt, very troubled. But he was *willing* to suffer, to shed his blood, and to die.

And we who believe on him and the work that he did, if we go *in the door* according to Scripture, then *we receive the Holy Spirit*. It is *by the Holy Spirit* that the Word of God is *revealed to our heart*.

If we look at the religious man – the one who never receives the Holy Ghost – he still has a mental idea, he has an intellectual understanding. And from that intellectual side, there are many things he is able to understand. But at the end of the day, it's still not a revelation unless it is *shown by the Holy Ghost*.

So this brother was asking as a clarification: what is the foundation of the Church? And what we're going to see – I can say it, anybody can say it – but eventually we have to find it *in the Word*.

I have told you my pathway, my own personal walk, how, first of all, I saw this as I was just thinking about: *what it is that makes us who we are?*

There are thousands of churches around the world. And there are probably thousands of teachings. But when I was in college, first of all, I came to a conclusion that what we're believing *is the truth*.

You might say: well Brother, everybody believes that. Well, everybody might *think that*, especially those who haven't really done a serious search.

But I began to pray and I said: Lord, if there is something wrong with this, *show me*: there has to be a contradiction, a spiritual contradiction with the Word of God.

I prayed, I read the Bible, and I read the Contenders because at that time Brother Jackson was alive and he was the one I was following spiritually. And it just became more and more solid as I struggled and looked – not that it was my desire to find an error – but *if there was an error*, I wanted to find it.

I searched for about a month and during that entire time I just saw, in a spiritual sense, the picture get stronger and more solid. Praise the Lord.

Apart from that – again as I was thinking on: *what is it that makes us who we are?* – one day I was actually at the fellowship hall in Indiana when *the lightbulb came on*, if I can say it like that. I think it was convention time. We were eating, I was getting my food. I still remember: I was in the line to get my food and I had *that* on my mind, and *the lightbulb came on*: it's *the Godhead!* That's what makes us who we are. It's who we understand Jesus Christ and God to be.

Then apart from that, one morning – I don't know if I had just read the scripture or if I was thinking about it but again – I remember: I was home, I had my coffee in my hand and as I came out of my bedroom, it hit me: *upon this rock, I will build my church*. [Matthew 16:18]

Those are not my words, those are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord.

Upon this rock.

A lot of people today, they think: well, what makes *the Church*? If we look at least at this Age of Laodicea, they think: oh it's the message of Brother Branham.

But it *can't* be the message of Brother Branham because Brother Branham didn't even come on the scene until the Seventh Church Age. What about the *first six*? So, it's *not* Brother Branham.

Now I will say: there's no way somebody can be a part of the Bride Church *today* if they have not received the revelation that God brought to the Church through Brother Branham.

Again, it's *not the man* but it's *what God has taught the Church through the man*. And that man showed us how to *get back in the Word*.

That man said: if you're going to believe a revelation, or if you think you have a revelation, it has to line up with this Word from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. It cannot deviate from that. Praise the Lord.

So it's not the man Brother Branham himself, it's *the rock* that Jesus spoke about. [Matthew 16:18]

But yes, *in our Age*, it's because of him that we can see *that rock*. And it's also because of what Brother Jackson brought. Praise the Lord.

So I think I'll start in First Timothy. We're not going to go deep into the Godhead tonight but I do want to look at a couple of things if we can go to First Timothy chapter 2.

I'm going to read these scriptures because we know the traditional idea is that Jesus is God.

I remember one time when Brother Jackson said something to make it very clear. And when I first heard it, I almost thought: he shouldn't say something like that because this is *Jesus* we're talking about!

What he said was: if he went a few days without taking a bath, he began to smell a little different. Now that's a statement we know is true for every one of us, right? [Laugh] Amen. But that was something that helped really clarify: *Jesus was a man*.

If for some reason he bumped into a cactus, it would've hurt. He felt pain that same way you and I feel pain. If he went too long without eating, he was hungry. We know *he fasted forty days*. [Matthew 4:2] Let's *not* think: well *because it was Jesus*, that was easy for him. Believe me: he was just as hungry as you and I would be if we went forty days without eating.

The only difference is – I'm not going to include others but – I would've had a really hard time *not turning those rocks into bread*. Now I say: that would've been a great temptation to me, *it was a great temptation to him*. But he was stronger. He resisted the temptation.

What he *did not have* was that *nature to sin* and to *disobey God*, which really are the same thing.

But let's go ahead and read this scripture: First Timothy chapter 2 verse 5.

1 Timothy 2:5

For there is one God,

Now, who wrote this? This was *Paul*.

Paul was a Jew. He was a Pharisee. The Jews knew: *God is a Spirit*. He's not a man. He doesn't have the form of a man.

Remember, this was the same Paul who said: *in Him* – that's God – *we* – he was even including the pagan Greeks he was speaking to – *we live, and move, and we have our being*. [Acts 17:28] Who is that? Paul was saying: *in God, the Eternal Spirit, the Creator of this beautiful universe*.

He said: *there is One God*, praise the Lord, because the Greeks thought there were many. They had a god of the rain, a god of the thunder, a god of the lightning, a god of the wind, a god of the water, a god of the earth, a god of fire, and on and on.

Paul said: there is *One*. And he was right.

1 Timothy 2:5

and one mediator between God and men,

Praise the Lord.

That mediator is *not* Brother Branham.

I've heard people say: God thought it, the prophet spoke it – they mean Brother Branham when they say this – and that settles it. If that's the way it works, they're making Brother Branham the mediator between God and man.

There is *one mediator*. And before we read any further, the fact that there is a *mediator* means: that is *not God Himself*. Amen

Then he says who it is. He says:

1 Timothy 2:5

the man Christ Jesus;

So Paul clearly shows us here: *Jesus Christ is a man*.

And I have to say: yes.

The difference between Jesus Christ and you and me is: number one, he had *no serpent seed*. His nature was *truth and righteousness*. Praise the Lord.

Our nature is *to lie*. We do that naturally. As soon as we learn to talk, *we're lying*. But the nature of Jesus was to tell the truth from the beginning.

We know that Adam also did *not* have that *serpent nature* but Adam still disobeyed God.

So the difference there is that Jesus Christ was the only one who came into the world – we can say – of a birth that was perfect as far as his conception, *and he never disobeyed God*.

Yes, there were others who came into the world without the nature of sin. The sons of God – the line of Adam – *didn't* have that *serpent seed* but they still fell under that shadow of sin.

That was not the case with the Lord Jesus Christ. As Jesus was tested, he resisted the temptation of the enemy and he was found *worthy*. *Worthy of life*. Praise the Lord.

1 Timothy 2:5
the man Christ Jesus;

We can go all the way back to his birth. Let's go to Luke chapter 2 and we'll just read a couple of verses related to the Lord Jesus.

Luke 2:40
And the child grew,

It doesn't say: the God-child grew. It says: *the child grew*.

Luke 2:40
and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom:

In Spanish it says: *and he was filled with wisdom*. In other words: *over time, he obtained more and more wisdom*.

Now this should help us to see *according to scripture* that Jesus Christ did *not* have a pre-existence with God.

Let's jump down to verse 52.

Luke 2:52
And Jesus increased

This was his childhood. In fact, I'll say: all the way from childhood up to thirty years.

Luke 2:52

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature,

Again it says: *his wisdom increased.*

If he had already been existing in heaven for thousands of years, do we not think that he would've already been full of wisdom when he came down to this earth?

And if that's not enough, it says here:

Luke 2:52

and in favour with God and man.

Do we know what it means to *grow in favour*? It means that *the feeling of satisfaction* toward that person *grows*.

When Jesus *grew in favour with men*, the people thought more and more: he's really a good person. As long as he was not preaching the Word of God and exercising the Power of God, they thought: oh, he's a really good man.

But it also says that *he grew in favour with God*.

If Jesus had already lived for thousands of years of pre-existence – let's be honest – we would think that God's favour with the Lord Jesus Christ would already have been established.

If he had lived thousands of years in heaven and had been willing to come down and suffer, I don't see how *during ten, twenty, or thirty years here on earth* he would have grown in favour with God.

But if we can understand: *Jesus was a man*.

He read the Bible – well, he read the Law and the Prophets, the New Testament hadn't been written yet – he prayed, and his desire was to do the will of his Heavenly Father. Then as time went on, as God Himself saw him growing, as He saw his obedience and his character being refined, it brought joy to our Heavenly Father.

So Jesus grew in favour with God.

I read this just to show: there is no other way except that Jesus was actually *a man*.

Again, the only difference is that Jesus was *the only begotten Son of God*. [1John 4:9]
Praise the Lord.

Now let's go to Matthew 16.

This is where we actually read it, in verse 13.

Matthew 16:13

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

Notice it's not written: *when Jesus Christ came* because that's part of what is being brought out in this passage. It simply says: *Jesus came*. Amen.

In other words: *what revelation or what understanding do people have as to who I am?*

Matthew 16:14

they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

So they could see that he was a man of God. In fact, they could see – we might say – that *a very high anointing was on him*. They even thought: maybe one of the prophets came back from the dead, or maybe Elijah came down from heaven.

Matthew 16:15

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

Matthew 16:16

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

As I have said before, the safe thing would've been for Peter to say: we say you're the Christ. And that would've been true. They *did* say that. They said: *we have found the Christ*. [John 1:41]

But when it came down to Jesus asking them, now the only one speaking was Peter. And we see *the boldness*. He didn't even say: I believe. He said: *you are the Christ*, in other words, *the Messiah, the Son of the Living God*.

If we understand what the word *Christ* means, it means: *the one who is anointed*. Anointed of whom? *Anointed of God*.

Thou art the anointed one of God. That means: Jesus was a *man*. He was *the Son of the Living God*, not God the Son but *the Son of God*.

Now:

Matthew 16:17

Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 16:18

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock

What is *this rock*? It's the question that has been the subject since verse 13, *who is Jesus of Nazareth*? Is he John the Baptist? Is he Jeremiah? Is he just a really good man? No, *he is the Christ, the Son of the Living God*. [Matthew 16:16] Praise the Lord.

He said: *Upon this rock*. What is that? It's that *solid revelation*.

He even said:

Matthew 16:17

flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee,

What is this *'it'*? It's that *revelation*. He said: *flesh and blood hath not revealed it*. So it's this revelation that *Jesus is the Christ*.

He said:

Matthew 16:18

I will build my church;

Praise the Lord.

As I mentioned, over time I was able to hear Brother Jackson say that, and then I was able to read where Brother Branham had said that as well.

Now I have a couple of slides here.

I copied the text from The Contender and from the Spoken Word books where both of them said that *the foundation of the Church – the rock – is the revelation of who Jesus is*.

Bro Branham:

109 He was talking to His disciples. "And some said You're 'Elias,' and 'Moses,' or 'One of the prophets,' and 'Jeremiah.'" He said, "But who do you say?" He said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Now, the Roman Catholic Church says, "He was speaking to Peter, 'Upon this rock I'll build My Church.'" The Protestants said, "He was building It upon Himself." Now, they could be right. But, to me, both of them's wrong. It was upon the spiritual revelation of who He was. "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, Peter. But my Father, which is in Heaven, has revealed this to you. And upon this rock," the revelation of who He is; upon the revelation:

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So this is Brother Branham speaking. He was citing the scripture *upon this rock*. [Matthew 16:18]

Just to save time I won't read it all, but here when he says *upon this rock*, he says: it was upon the spiritual revelation of *who he was*. And again, he says: the revelation of *who he is*.

Praise the Lord.

Bro. Jackson

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock (this rock of revelation) I will build my Church... It was not Peter himself that the New Testament Church was built upon it was built upon the revelation Peter had. That revelation (that can only come by the Spirit of God) **of who Jesus the Christ really is**, is the rock the Church is built upon.

Here Brother Jackson says: it was not Peter himself that the New Testament Church was built upon. It was built upon *the revelation Peter had*. That revelation *that can only come by the Spirit of God* – I'm going to talk a little bit about that – *the revelation of who Jesus the Christ really is*, is the rock the Church is built on.

Praise the Lord.

Now, since Brother Jackson has left the scene, we know there are men who have followed his teachings and who *claim* to believe this as well. *They say they believe it.* Nonetheless, when they know a man preaches differently, they will let that man preach to the congregation.

That shows me: they don't really see *the value of it*. Because *this is beautiful!*

This is what has blinded – or how can I put it? – this revelation had been hidden in darkness for hundreds of years. And now, it has been *brought back to light!* I'm not going to play around with that.

They can say: we believe it. Well, intellectually: yes. They can preach a message very similar to the one I'm preaching tonight, or maybe even better. But that's not really the point.

The question is: do you believe it because *God has revealed it to you?* Or is it something you have learned *intellectually* because you believe that Brother Jackson was an apostle?

If it truly was the Spirit of God that has revealed it to an individual, then the Spirit of God *will continue to reveal the Word* as the Lord Jesus Christ shines light on the Word.

Jesus said: *where I am, there will my servant be.* [John 12:26] In other words: *where he is in the Word.*

Somebody may say: oh yes, I believe this. But then: they *reject* that the Two Days is the Gentile Age. [Hosea 6:2] They *reject* that we're living in the Third Watch. [Luke 12:38] They *reject* the Judgement Seat of Christ. [2Corinthians 5:10] They *reject* that it will be *an archangel* coming down representing Christ. [Revelation 10:1] And there are many other things we could mention.

So they are *rejecting the Word that the Lord has sent in our time.*

Bro. Jackson

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock (this rock of revelation) I will build my Church... It was not Peter himself that the New Testament Church was built upon it was built upon the revelation Peter had. That revelation (that can only come by the Spirit of God) **of who Jesus the Christ really is,** is the rock the Church is built upon.

We have to remember: *that can only come by the Spirit of God.*

If the Holy Ghost has revealed to you who Jesus Christ really is, the Holy Ghost *will continue to reveal the truth.*

If you have the Holy Ghost and you've received revelation by the Holy Ghost, then when God's servant dies, you're not going to reject everything else that the Lord continues to reveal but you will *rejoice* that the Lord continues to feed the Church.

So yes, there are men today who can claim: oh I believe this 100%, the Lord revealed it to me.

Well, they may have an *intellectual understanding*. They can tell you the verses. They can tell you the arguments. But as far as: did the Holy Ghost reveal it? If it's truly a revelation that they have, then: *they will continue to see the light of truth beyond that and beyond the man the Lord used to bring it.*

In other words: they will be able to *see the truth that the Lord has brought since Brother Jackson passed.*

So I'll go ahead and close with that tonight.