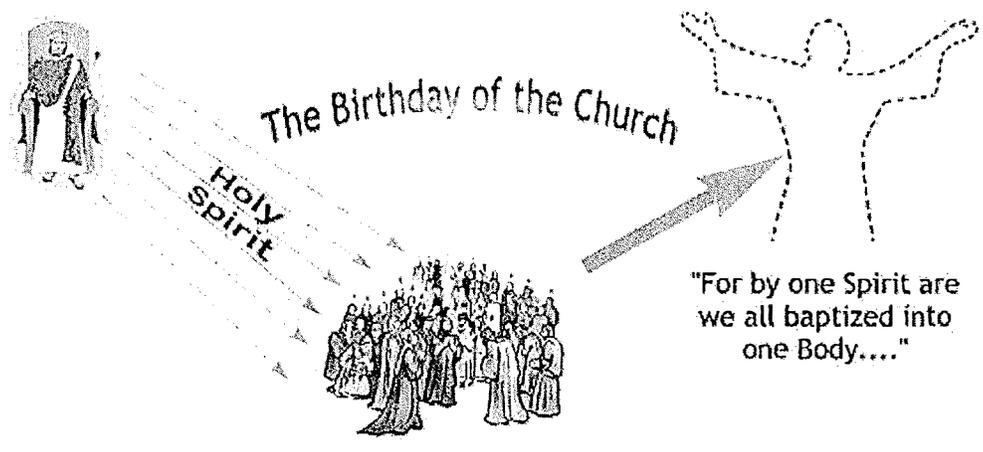


CHAPTER 9

The Birth of the Church



The building of the Church, the body of Christ, is an incredibly great event for both time and eternity.

In Matthew 16:18 the Lord Jesus Christ said: "Upon this **Rock** I will _____ My _____." From this important verse we learn at least three things:

1. CHRIST IS THE BUILDER!!

2. THE BUILDING IS UPON A ROCK!!

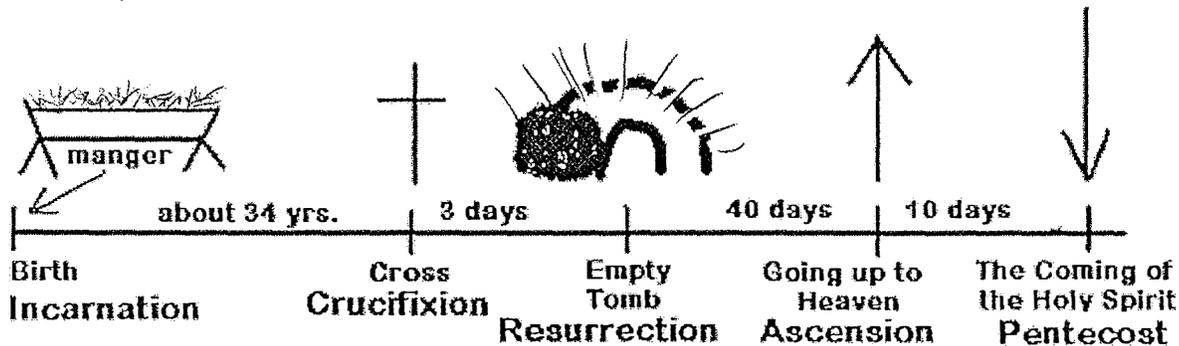
3. THE CHURCH IS THE BUILDING!!

This **building** is not made of lifeless bricks or cement or steel or wood. This **building** is made of **living stones** (see 1 Peter 2:5) and these "stones" are those people who have believed on Christ (the crucified and risen One) and have received Him as their personal Lord and Saviour! Who lives in this building (Ephesians 2:21-22; 1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Timothy 3:15)?

On the night before He died, the Lord Jesus Christ promised His disciples that **Someone** would be sent to **comfort** them (John 14:16), to **abide** with them (John 14:16), to **live** in them (John 14:17), to **teach** them (John 14:26), to **testify** (bear witness) of Christ to them (John 15:26) and to **guide** them (John 16:13). Who was this **Person** that the Lord referred to?

The coming of the Holy Spirit was one of the most important events of history! Christmas reminds us of the time when God left heaven and came to live in a human body, as the **GOD-MAN**. This is called the **INCARNATION**, God **in** human **flesh**, or in a human body – see John 1:14 and 1 Timothy 3:16). In Acts chapter 2 we learn about the day of Pentecost. **Pentecost** should remind us of the time when God the Holy Spirit came to live in a **BODY** (the **BODY OF CHRIST** which is the Church).

The following chart shows **when** the Holy Spirit came (this great event took place on the Day of Pentecost):



We learn about the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. It was on this day that the Holy Spirit came and the **Church was born!** God began to **live** in His believers in a very special way!

As you read Acts 2:1-11, what are some of the things which happened that made it quite clear that God was doing something very special on this day?

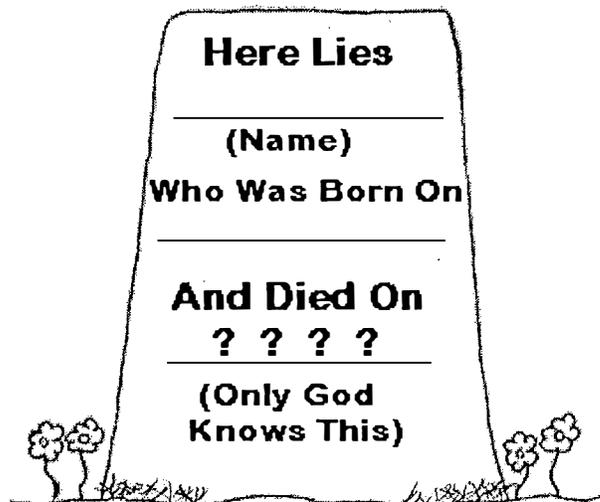
Yes, the day of Pentecost (which took place less than two months after Christ died), was the birthday of the church. On this day the Lord Jesus Christ began **building His building**. On the Day of Pentecost the **Body of Christ** was first formed.

People are born and people die. Every person has a date of birth (a **birthday**) and every person has a date of death. [See Chapter 1 in this set of notes to see how death entered the world.] Go to any cemetery and you will see birth dates and death dates on the gravestones!

We will now look at your own **gravestone!** Please fill out your own **tombstone** below:

"All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again"

(Ecclesiastes 3:20)



"It is appointed unto men once to die"

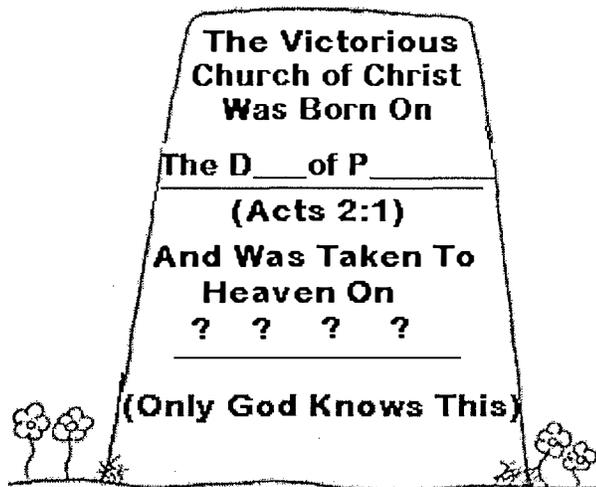
(Hebrews 9:27)

The **Church** is different than a person. The Church had a **birthday** (the Day of Pentecost – about 30 A.D.) but it will never have a "**death-day**." Today the Church is almost 2000 years old, and it has not died yet! The Church has many enemies, and men and (evil) angels have tried to destroy it, but **the Church lives on**. Members of the Church have been persecuted and tortured and burned and stoned and executed, but **the Church lives on**. Jesus said, "I will build My Church; and the gates of Hell (Hades) shall _____ prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). No church-age believer will ever enter Hades. When a believer dies, where does he go (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8)? _____

Where does the Church get its life from (Colossians 3:4)? _____ Therefore, to kill the Church, you must kill the **HEAD** of the Church! Who is the Head of the Church (Colossians 1:18 and Ephesians 1:22-23)? _____ Is it possible to kill Him (see Revelation 1:18 and Romans 6:9)? _____ The Church will never die, but someday Christ will come to take His Church to heaven (John 14:3; Philippians 3:20-21; Titus 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Therefore, **the victory stone** of the Church reads like this:

The Church is in the world but not of the world.

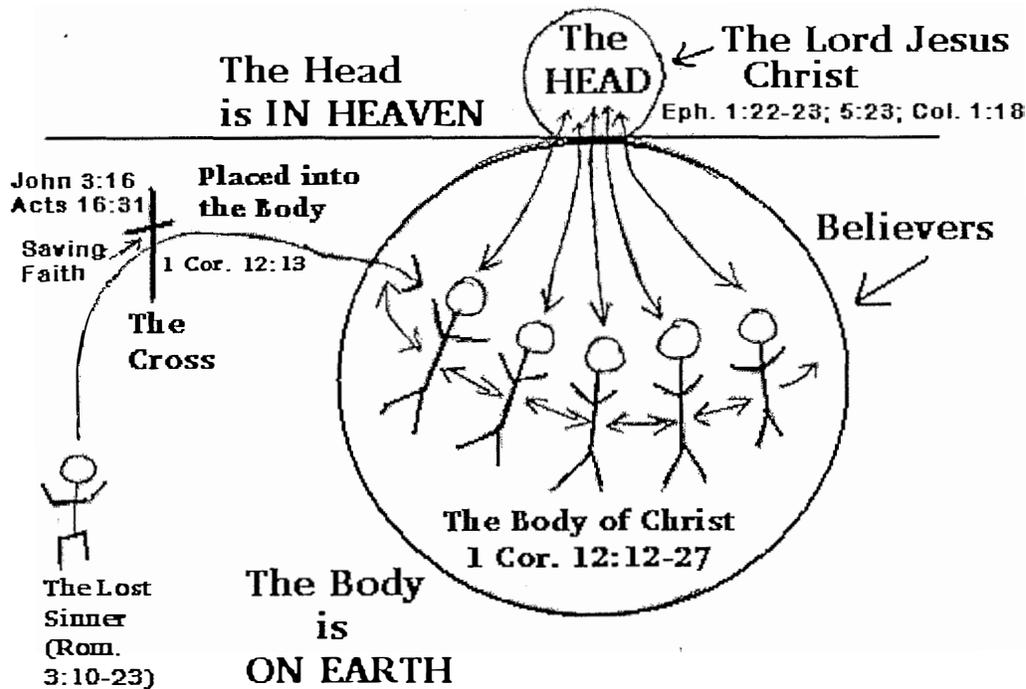
(John 17:11-15;
Philippians 2:15)



The Church is to be a witness to the world of God's victory.

(Acts 1:8;
2 Cor. 2:14-16)

How does a person become a member of the true Church? How does a person become a stone in this building? How does a person become a member of the body of Christ? Perhaps this diagram will help:



In the above diagram we see that the Head is in heaven (Col. 3:1-2) and the Church is on the earth (John 17:15). Each member of the Church is related to the Head and to every other member. No one can become a member of Christ's Church unless they go through the cross (by faith.) When a person does this, God places them (baptizes them) into His body (see 1 Cor. 12:13).

Are you a member of His body? Are you a living stone in His building? Has the Holy Spirit come to live in your life (John 7:39)? Do you have a love and concern for others who are members of His body (1 John 3:14)? Is it possible to attend a church (even a Bible believing church) and not really be a member of Christ's Church? How does a person become a member of the Body of Christ? The Church is not an organization; it's an organism. An organism has life (see 1 John 5:12). Do you have life? See John 14:6; 5:24; 11:25-26.

CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

O precious is the bride of Christ
 In her dear bridegroom's eyes,
 Fairest of the fair is she
 His eternal prize.
 Gift from God the Father
 Chosen in His Son
 Before the founding of the earth
 Or years their course would run.

Shrouded in the mystery
 Of His eternal plan,
 Redeemed by faith in Christ's own blood
 From sin, the fall of man.
 See her presence glistening
 Whiter than the snow,
 Robed in His own righteousness
 For all the world to know.

All spot and wrinkle vanish
 Before her Bridegrooms' face,
 His glorious church, His holy bride
 Takes by His side her place,
 In Christ's redemptive love she stands
 The trophy of His grace.

-Madelyn Arbon