

Commentary: 27 proofs of “The First Church”

A further commentary on the writings of Davis W. Huckabee, and S. E. Anderson

One of the most prominent omissions I noted in researching and studying the writings of these men concerning the founding of the New Testament church were references to Acts 20:28 and Hebrews 9:15-21. While Davis W. Huckabee does reference Acts 20:28, he attaches no real significance to it. Moreover, he does not reference Hebrews 9:15-21 at all. It is as if these verses have no bearing on the New Testament church. I find this odd in that service in the church is the center of the New Testament. In fact, since salvation has always been the same, the truly new thing about the New Testament is the local, visible church and its emphasis on grace.

There are several other things worthy of note about both S. E. Anderson and Davis Huckabee. Most obvious was their continual referencing of Bible versions that were not the King James Version. What I found was that they would quote out of whatever Bible version would support what they said. They demonstrated no regard for the fact that the underlying texts, methods for determining the proper underlying text, and the methods of translation are vastly different from the entire process that governed the translation of the Authorized King James Version of the Bible. This means either one, or both of two things:

1. They were ignorant of the major differences between all the modern versions and the King James Version.
2. They did not care about the differences between the versions.

Either one of the above reasons are sufficient to discount the teaching of both men. The reason for this is the lack of care

exhibited in searching out and proving what the Scripture actually states. If a man of God is not careful, he will teach error, and will allow error to creep into the church he pastors and into the doctrine he teaches. Thus, everything he states must be carefully examined and proved out.

I do note that Davis Huckabee goes further than S. E. Anderson in his disregard for the King James Version in that he calls the text of the King James Version a "manifest mistranslation" at one point.

With regard to their doctrine of salvation, I have yet to find it with Davis W. Huckabee, but I have sufficient evidence to state that S. E. Anderson held to Hyper-dispensationalism which is a perversion of the both salvation and the nature of God. I do know that Davis W. Huckabee is a Calvinist as his writings amply demonstrate it. Calvinism also distorts the very nature of God and is a perversion of the gospel. I expressly hold to neither view (please note that I am not an Arminist either).

Further, both men do something that I do not understand when addressing doctrinal issues: They make heavy use of the writings of other men. It is as if the agreement of others is sufficient proof and carries the same weight as Scripture. I never find either of them depending entirely and solely upon Scripture. Rather, I find that they make a supposition, and gather quotes from like minds, and then throw in some Scripture to suit what they suppose. This is not fundamentalism. This is the use of the judicial doctrine of stare decisis, which is depending upon precedent set by others, instead of going back to the original document and depending upon it.

Due to all the above, and the extensive analysis I have done regarding the reasons set forth by S. E. Anderson concerning the founding of the New Testament church (of which Davis Huckabee is in agreement) I cannot accept either individual as

authoritative. As such, I discount the justifications they give for the claims they make regarding the New Testament church and its founding.

What does this mean with regard to the baptism of John?

There is considerable hypersensitivity concerning the baptism of John among some Baptists. This is unwarranted. It is possible to determine what John's baptism was all about, without doing violence to the rest of Scripture, and without contorting the meanings of Scripture passages. It is also possible to place the baptism of John properly without denigrating it as well. However, it will take considerably more research and study in the Scriptures to correctly place it, without contradicting something else in Scripture.

What I do know at this point follows:

1. John's baptism was effectual for those who would join Christ's ministry prior to His crucifixion.
2. The baptism of John was replaced by the baptism done by the New Testament church in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.
3. The message of salvation preached by John was identical to the gospel message preached throughout all the Old Testament (Repent and believe on Christ to come), and identical to the Lord Jesus Christ's gospel.
4. John had the privilege of both heralding Christ and identifying Him (Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world) .
5. John knew that his ministry was transitional (He must increase and I must decrease).

Within this framework, the baptism of John and its functionality must be established. To attempt to prove something beyond the proper place of John the Baptist's ministry and its attendant baptism will result in contradicting a proper doctrine of Scripture somewhere. Moreover, it will create disjunctions in Scripture that cannot

be reconciled.

In Christ,

Paul W. Davis

Conclusion: 27 proofs of “The First Church”

Of the 27 points given by S.E. Anderson, only two (2) of them are truly valid points with which we can expressly state that the New Testament church was in existence prior to Pentecost. However, it is not necessary to have reams of proof to prove something. Rather, all that is necessary is one irrefutable proof and whatsoever we are trying to prove is indeed proved. The giving of all kinds of extraneous suppositions and evidence that does not prove the point in contention actually gives considerable latitude to those who oppose proper doctrine. It is not necessary to open up one’s argument to attack by giving material that really doesn’t uniquely prove the point. Why bother with discussing material that is not immediately relevant to the issue at hand, particularly since the possibility of making an erroneous statement multiplies with each non-essential point.

Now, do the two valid points prove that the New Testament church existed and functioned prior to Pentecost?

Yes they do!

They just don’t prove what S. E. Anderson was really after – proving that the New Testament church existed from the beginning of Christ’s earthly ministry.

Answer 20: 27 proofs of “The First Church”

20. They had the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13; John 20:22).

Three points as to why this is no proof at all of the existence of a New Testament church:

- The Holy Ghost has indwelt every believer since Adam.
- The Holy Ghost will indwell all believers till the end of this earth.
- Those in Israel who were called to perform an express ministry were gifted by the Holy Ghost to perform that ministry. (e.g. Bezaleel)

Thus, by direct statement, S. E. Anderson is supporting the supposition that, not only is the Universal church theory a valid theory, but Israel and the New Testament church are one and the same. It should be noted that Scriptural support for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in Old Testament believers is extensive. Interestingly, the direct statements that attest to it actually come more from the New Testament than the Old, although it is not hard to find in the Old Testament. In examining I Peter, chapter 1, we find the indwelling and gifting of the Holy Ghost in Old Testament believers clearly stated:

Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. (*I Peter 1:10-11*)

The Scriptures clearly attest that the "Spirit of Christ" which is spoken of here, is the Holy Ghost. The very plain passage of Romans, chapter 8 is unmistakable in tying the "Spirit of Christ" to the "Spirit of God," which is the Holy Ghost:

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (*Romans 8:9*)

In the above passage the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are, without doubt, one and the same. This being established, the above referenced passage from 1st Peter is very clear that the Holy Ghost indwelt the prophets of old, and gave them to understand that the Messiah was coming: it was simply a question of when. This is further supported by the passage in 2nd Peter, chapter 1.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (*II Peter 1:19-21*)

However, there are many that believe the moving of the Holy Ghost referenced here was one of coming upon the prophets of old in a special way which is not the same as it is today when a man of God preaches, or the way that is demonstrated or spoken of in the New Testament when it speaks of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Therefore, it is necessary to go further and demonstrate conclusively that the Holy Ghost has always indwelt believers and guided the children of God. The only difference between the prophets that were used to pen the Scriptures and the rest of the believers in the Old Testament, was that those used to pen the Scriptures were

gifted by the Holy Ghost to do so, and knew they were being given something that must be preserved. Moreover, those men of God that received what was written, had it confirmed by the Holy Ghost that what they were reading was indeed Scripture, and was to be kept forever, as written:

Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: That this *is* a rebellious people, lying children, children *that* will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. (*Isaiah 30:8-11*)

Finally, we must examine one other point in looking at the issue of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Old Testament times. The issue of salvation in the Old Testament is very clear in Scripture: it was by grace through faith in Christ to come, even as it is by grace through faith in Christ that has come for us. This being the case, we need to consider the following statement given in Ephesians:

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (*Ephesians 1:13-14*)

Now, if we are sealed by the Holy Ghost, of which that is part and parcel to the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and the Old Testament saints were saved the very same as we: then, by what were they sealed? And if they were sealed by Him, then they were indwelt by Holy Ghost as well. Otherwise, they had no earnest of their inheritance, and had no assurance of their salvation either, as it is written:

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (*Romans 8:14-17*)

The above described indwelling of the Holy Ghost, is that Spirit of adoption. Moreover, He bears witness with our spirit that we are indeed the children of God. Even so, this was the case with the believers in the Old Testament as well. Those who believed in Christ to come for their salvation were born again, and were adopted into the family of God, and had the indwelling of the Holy Ghost even as we. It should be noted that all these things could have been understood during Old Testament times by any one caring to know them. The evidence for this is given in a plain statement to Nicodemus:

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? (*John 3:3-10*)

In short, the Old Testament saints knew the very same things about salvation, including the indwelling of the Holy Ghost

that we know. Moreover, the question is plain in its implication:

- the leadership of the Israel was supposed to know, understand, and teach these very things.

For that to be the case, the teaching of these things would have been recorded by Moses, and verified by the prophets. If we care to examine the Old Testament Scriptures carefully, and understand how things are stated in the Old Testament, we will find all the same things that are taught in the New Testament. The only difference is how they are stated. Even in the Book of Job, which was written around the time of Abraham (Job was a contemporary of Abraham), all the elements of salvation are there, all one has to do is allow the Lord to show them.

With that stated, consider the following passages from the Old Testament and how they testify of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in those who were saved during that time.

And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. (*Genesis 41:37-40*)

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. (*Exodus 31:1-5*)

And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. (*Numbers 27:18-19*)

Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it. (*Numbers 14:22-24*)

Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. (*Psalms 51:11*)

Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not. (*Nehemiah 9:20-21*)

Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands. (*Nehemiah 9:30*)

Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! (*Isaiah 30:1-2*)

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man,

prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! (*Ezekiel 13:1-3*)

By all the above evidence, it should now be clear that the Holy Ghost indwelt believers in Old Testament times. This point should now be settled, allowing us to examine the cited references S. E. Anderson uses to support his proof without the bias of thinking the indwelling and gifting of the Holy Ghost are specific to the New Testament. In examining them, it should become apparent what they apply to, and how they ought to be used.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? (*Luke 11:13*)

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. (*John 20:19-23*)

If we note it, we will find a distinct difference in time between the verse in Luke and the passage in John. We should note that one occurs prior to Christ's death on the cross, and the other occurs the day of His resurrection. Thus, we have here a mixing of contexts in which one does apply to the New Testament church, and the other does not. At a minimum this is a confusing message to send.

I think what is at work here is a confusion between the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, which every believer has always had (and will have), and the gift of the Holy Ghost that is given to the New Testament church so that each member of a congregation can carry out the work the Lord has called them to do. Regardless, this supposition fails as proof as we can easily see that the indwelling and enabling by the Holy Ghost to perform certain ministries was also done in Israel.

Answer 21: 27 proofs of “The First Church”

21. They had divine power to do Christ’s work (Luke 9:1).

Since it is implicit in the claim, the question must be asked:

What is “Christ’s work?”

According to the verse referenced above it is the ability to perform a signs ministry:

Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.
(Luke 9:1)

If this is S.E. Anderson’s proof text, then Moses has serious claim to being in the New Testament church. After all, a signs ministry is a signs ministry, regardless of the signs performed. Now, it is noted that this power is expressly stated as being the power to cast out devils and cure diseases. But, both those things were not unknown to the Jews in the time of the Old Testament:

And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils. (Matthew 9:33-34)

If the Jews were not already familiar with the casting out of devils, the Pharisees could not have recognized what was going on, which they surely did know by the aspersion they cast. What was “never so seen in Israel” was the absolute power over the demons and devils that the Lord Jesus Christ exercised.

When we examine the issue of curing diseases, the names of Hezekiah and Namaan come to mind:

In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is* good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered. And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What *shall be* the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day? And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for

the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz. (*II Kings 20:1-11*)

So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, *if* the prophet had bid thee *do some great thing*, wouldest thou not have done *it*? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. (*II Kings 5:9-14*)

Hence, if this is the “proof” offered by S.E. Anderson as attesting to the existence of a New Testament church, there is no choice but to answer his assertion of the church having divine power exclusively, with the statement:

So did Israel.

But, let us go further and look at one particular aspect of “Christ’s work” that others could engage in: The preaching of the gospel.

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be

saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. (Romans 10:12-18)

So then, the only other part of “Christ’s work” in which men could engage – the preaching of the gospel, Israel did as well.

Answer 27: 27 proofs of “The First Church”

27. Christ was their corner stone (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20).

This is indeed a unique proof of the New Testament church, but the usage of Matthew 16:18 is out of sequence for reasons previously stated. In Matthew 21:42-43 the Lord Jesus Christ specifically states:

Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God **shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.** (Matthew 21:42-43)

Thus, at the time of Matthew 16:18, the Lord had not yet taken the kingdom of God away from Israel. However, by the time of chapter 21 we find the New Testament church almost completely built, and the Lord warning of the impending removal of the covenant and its empowerment from Israel and the giving of it to a nation (the New Testament church) that would bring forth the fruits thereof. To be clear, it must be noted that the reference to “a nation” does not necessarily dictate that the nation referenced is in existence as yet. The grammar and construction of the statement do allow for a nation that will exist in the future – regardless of how close that future time is. In short, any time that is not yet, is future, and any time that has passed, regardless of how recently, is in the past.

Answer 26: 27 proofs of “The First Church”

26. They were united and “added unto” (Acts 2:1, 41).

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. (Acts 2:1)

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41)

Even though the verses cited take place in a time in which the New Testament church is indeed in existence, like so many previous proofs, there is nothing in this proof that is unique to the New Testament church, and is thus not proof of the existence of the New Testament church.

It must be understood that the New Testament church is a unique entity that has unique proofs of its formation and existence. Many organizations are united and added unto, but that does not make them churches as they have none of the unique characteristics of the New Testament church. Again, even though the verses cited in Acts are about the New Testament church, as a specific statement of proof it falls far short of the standard required to be actual proof.

Answer 25: 27 proofs of “The First Church”

25. They had a membership roll (Matt. 10:2.4; Acts 1: 13-15).

As does most every organization out there: it doesn't make them a church. However, this claim and proof expressly contradicts an earlier proof cited by S. E. Anderson. In [point 17](#), the passage cited states 'the multitude and the disciples', and that passage is used as a proof of the existence of the New Testament church. I suppose there existed a membership roll of the multitude, or of the disciples (which includes the twelve and all dedicated to following the Lord Jesus)? Would these disciples also include some that would turn against Christ in just a few days? Certainly it would include Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of Christ.

In Matthew, it is the names of the twelve that are recorded – including Judas Iscariot:

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James *the*

son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. (Matthew 10:2-4)

However, in Acts, a different roster is given as there is no Judas Iscariot:

And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. (Acts 1:13-14)

The reason for this is of course, Judas Iscariot's suicide. But beyond that, and more important to this discussion, is the issue of who Judas Iscariot was:

When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and **one of you is a devil?** He spake of Judas Iscariot *the son* of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of

the twelve. (*John 6:61-71*)

If it is true, as S.E. Anderson contends, that the New Testament church is in existence at the point in time recorded in Matthew 10:2-4, then it raises serious questions and has serious implications for the polity (order and functioning) of the New Testament church for the following reasons:

- The Lord Jesus specifically choose Judas Iscariot.
- Judas Iscariot is a devil (is demon-possessed).
- Judas Iscariot is a thief (*John 12:4-6*).
- Disciples came and went. Often leaving in a huff (as recorded in John 6 quoted above).
- It is a church populated with unbelievers.
- A “church member” betrayed the leader of the church and then committed suicide.
- It sets the pattern set for subsequent churches to follow.

If it is true that a New Testament church exists at the time of Matthew 10 and John 6, then there is also a contradiction with another passage of Scripture:

Let all things be done decently and in order. (*I Corinthians 14:40*)

Hence, the issue of Judas Iscariot and his membership in the New Testament church must be addressed:

Was Judas Iscariot, who was specifically chosen by the Lord Jesus Christ, a member of a New Testament church?

If the New Testament church was in existence prior to Christ’s death on the cross, then Judas Iscariot was indeed a member of a New Testament church. If this is true, then it must also be asked:

- Did the Lord Jesus Christ intend for the New Testament church to have such a tumultuous existence?

- Did the Lord Jesus Christ intend for demon possessed individuals to be members of the New Testament church?
- If it is true that demon-possessed individuals are to be members of the New Testament church, doesn't that affect the church's ability to be the "pillar and ground of the truth?" (*I Timothy 3:14-15*)
- Doesn't this directly contradict the contention and doctrinal statement of Baptists that '*only saved, baptized individuals are eligible to be members of the New Testament church?*'
- Isn't this also directly contrary to the statement and directive "*Let all things be done decently and in order?*"

Unfortunately, in his zeal to "prove" the existence of the New Testament church prior to the Lord Jesus Christ's death on the cross, S.E. Anderson opened up a can of worms, and created far more questions than he resolved. However, none of the above questions are even to be considered if we accept the clear testimony of Acts 20:28 and Hebrews 9:15-21 and acknowledge that the New Testament church came into existence when the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross.

Answer 24: 27 proofs of "The First Church"

24. They had business meetings (Acts 1:15-26).

While this does occur after the eleven are indeed a church, it occurs before they are empowered to do anything:

And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the

disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:15-26)

If we recall, the Lord Jesus expressly instructed the eleven:

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)

And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:7-8)

Now, it is impossible to determine precisely how the eleven took that instruction, but it appears they only took it to mean “*don’t go anywhere*” instead of “*don’t do anything.*” Hence, they conducted a “business meeting” without the direction of the Holy Ghost that we see so prominently in the rest of Acts. Being a business meeting of men, it had the same result that the efforts of men, absent the LORD’s guidance and approval, always have. Hence, we never hear of Matthias again.

Since this meeting was conducted without being empowered to accomplish the work of the church, its choice of the twelfth apostle was nullified by the Lord Jesus Christ when He personally chose Saul on the road to Damascus:

But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake. (*Acts 9:15-16*)

The apostle Paul confirmed his understanding of this later in his ministry:

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; Unto Timothy, *my own son in the faith*: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. (*I Timothy 1:1-2*)

And:

Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. (*I Timothy 2:7*)

Thus, we are free to raise the question:

Does holding business meetings prove anything pertaining to the existence of a New Testament church?

Well, since the company I work for has business meetings, to follow S.E. Anderson's logic, I would be forced to conclude that the company employing me is indeed a church. The truth is, holding business meetings doesn't make them (or any other entity) a church. Business meetings are something men engage in, and are a generic utility to make decisions and issue directives. This is not to say that business meetings are wrong, it is just to state that holding a business meeting, regardless of the setting, proves nothing one way or the other about the existence of a valid New Testament church.

Answer 23: 27 proofs of “The First Church”

23. They had prayer meetings (Acts 1:14).

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. *(Acts 1:14)*

Which is very little, if any different from Israel:

Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God *is* upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath *is* against all them that forsake him. So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us. *(Ezra 8:21-23)*

Unfortunately for S.E. Anderson's argument, so do numerous other groups that are not even remotely New Testament churches. While the verse cited is indeed after the church was built and purchased by Christ's shed blood on the cross (and thus the eleven apostles are the New Testament church), it is not yet empowered. Simply having a prayer meeting is not proof that:

A.) a church

B.) the church (New Testament or otherwise)

C.) any church exists.

It is imperative to remember that what S.E. Anderson put forth here is (by his own words) supposed to be PROOF. Hence, the above claim is supposed to PROVE something. Sadly, the claim falls far short of proof of anything other than they prayed together.

Answer 22: 27 proofs of "The First Church"

22. They sang "in the midst of the church" (Matt. 26:30; Heb. 2:12).

The following are the text of the two verses cited in support of this proof of the existence of the New Testament church.

And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. (Matthew 26:30)

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are

all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. (*Hebrews 2:10-13*)

The passage from Hebrews is a quotation from Psalm 22, which states:

I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard. My praise shall be of thee in the **great congregation**: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. (*Psalm 22:22-25*)

Now, Psalm 22 is strictly and specifically a prophecy of Christ to come, and it is focused on the cross. This psalm reveals to all that will attend to it, the suffering of Christ as He hung on the cross. At some point from the time the Lord Jesus Christ was arrested and falsely tried, the Father had turned away from Him as the sin of all men everywhere, at all times was laid upon the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a revealing of things we cannot really understand – the separation from the Father, and reproach of the Father laid upon the Son. This is the only time in all of time and eternity that the Father and the Word (which is Christ) are separated, and that all because of our sin.

However, Psalm 22 also reveals the joy that was set before the Lord Jesus Christ when the work of the redemption was completed. This is where verse 22 picks up and shows us of a time to come. The portion cited in Hebrews, chapter 2, verse

12 is only a small part of the passage of psalm 22 and does not give a context. Even the portion I have quoted above is not the entire passage, but is enough to establish a context. That context is set in the phrase underlined above, which states "My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: . . ." This makes it clear that he is not referring to the New Testament church, but rather to the great congregation that will be in heaven when all the redeemed will gather, and Christ will declare the Father and praise Him before them. In this sense, the word "church" is employed in Hebrews 2:12. This in no way states anything about the form or substance of the New Testament church, other than all the members of New Testament churches will be there. Moreover, it detracts nothing from the New Testament church to reference that great called-out assembly of believers in heaven.

To claim this is proof of the existence of the New Testament church, is to wrest Scripture and yank a passage out of context, and does nothing substantive towards proving the existence of the church. The reason for this is that an assumption must be made that the New Testament church was in existence at the time. However, since Christ had yet to purchase His church with His own blood (*Acts 20:28, Hebrews 9:15-21*) there is manifestly no New Testament church in existence yet.