

A Study of

# THE CHURCH:

**GOD'S EVERLASTING KINGDOM**



By Paul E. Cantrell

# **The Church: God's Everlasting Kingdom**

**Twelve Lessons**

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**Self-Published  
2001**



# Preface

## The Importance of the Church

Jesus told a parable about a man who owned some very nice and expensive pearls. However, he was not satisfied with just owning these pearls, but sought for the greatest, most perfect pearl to be found. In his efforts of searching, he came across such a pearl that was most valuable— "*the pearl of great price.*" (Matthew 13:45-46)

The Lord stated that the Kingdom of Heaven was like that one pearl of great price. It is priceless, of great value, and of great importance. If we are to possess it, we too, must be willing to sell all or give up all in order to possess the Kingdom of Heaven (Luke 14:33).

Many things could be suggested to show the great importance and value of the church, but the following five items will help to illustrate for us:

1. Jesus said it was to be first in our lives (Matthew 6:33).
2. God planned the church and Jesus built it as the wise master builder (Ephesians 3:11; Matthew 16:18; Hebrews 3:3-4).
3. Jesus serves as the eternally sound and dependable foundation of the church (1 Corinthians 3:11).
4. The church was purchased by Jesus' shed blood (Acts 20:28).
5. The church is made up of saved people (Ephesians 5:25).

The church is vitally important! The following lessons are designed to show and emphasize why and how the church or the kingdom of God is so important to mankind.

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## Lesson One

# "According to the Eternal Purpose of God"

*"According to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord"*  
(Ephesians 3:11)

The church is vitally important! This study is designed to show and emphasize this great truth! Each lesson is built around a Scripture phrase that deals with the church. This lesson will show that the church did not come from the mind of man but from the mind of God, Himself.

The church is the product of the infinite and infallible wisdom of the eternal God of the universe. It is therefore perfect in its design and function. It should not be changed or altered to suit the whims and wishes of men; for in so doing, they will destroy the purpose for which God designed the church. The church must not be taken lightly, for it is through the church that God's great wisdom is made know among men (Ephesians 3:10).

### THE CHURCH IN GOD'S MIND BEFORE CREATION

There are two sets of Scriptures that emphasize that God planned the church or the kingdom. One set points out that these plans were made **before** God created the universe, or before Time began; the other set points out that these plans were already made when the foundations were laid.

The following Scriptures indicate that the church was planned before creation or before Time began. Please see Chart #1 in connection with these Scriptures.

**Ephesians 1:4**—God's redeemed people at Ephesus were chosen or elected to be such **before the foundation of the world**. "Before" is "**Pro**" in the Greek, and "world" is "**Kosmos**" in the Greek and has reference to an orderly world or universe. The TCNT translates this phrase as follows: "*before the Creation of the universe.*"

**1 Peter 1:19-20**—Jesus Christ was foreordained **before the foundation of the world** to shed His blood to redeem these Christians. But this was determined in the mind of God before He created all things. Weymouth translates this phrase as follows: "*even before the creation of the world.*"

**1 Corinthians 2:7**—God's wisdom that had planned the redemption of lost sinners through Christ was hidden from man until the time came to reveal it. But it was hidden in the mind of God **before the world**. The Greek word for "world" here is "**Aionios**" which can be translated by the word, "**ages.**" The **New Translation (New Testament)** translates this phrase as follows: "*before time began.*"

**2 Timothy 1:9**—The church's salvation was given in Christ Jesus, but was planned for **before the world began**. Again the Greek word for "world" is "Aionios." The Monmouth New Testament translates this phrase as follows: *"before the beginning of time."*

**Titus 1:2**—God promised eternal life to His people, but He did it in His mind **before the world began**. The TCNT translates this phrase as follows: *"before the ages began."* Or another has put it: *"before the ages of time."*

All five of the above Scriptures clearly indicate the planning on God's part for man's redemption in Christ before He even created the world or before time began.

### THE CHURCH—A MYSTERY FROM CREATION

The next set of Scriptures will indicate that God's plan for the redemption of mankind in Christ was known by God from the beginning of time and was gradually being revealed by His Holy Prophets through the ages—up until the time of the arrival of the Messiah. But what was revealed was not clear (it remained a mystery) until it was fulfilled in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Then, it was fully made known unto the sons of men through the preaching of the gospel. The following Scriptures indicate this!

**Ephesians 3:9-11**—God's mystery was hid **from the beginning of the world**. "Apo" in the Greek is translated "from." "Aionios" is translated "age." "From" indicates a starting point from something. It infers that something was hid *"from the beginning of the ages."* The TCNT translates this phrase as follows: *"Which from the first."* Taylor's translation states: *"from the very beginning."*

**Matthew 13:35**—This passage quotes Psalm 78:2. It speaks of things that have been kept a secret **from the foundation of the world**. "Kataboles" is translated "foundation," which infers a beginning. "Kosmos" is translated "world." Williams' translation puts it simply: *"since creation."*

**Revelation 13:8**—This passage speaks of the Lamb that was slain **from the foundation of the world**. This phrase is the same as Matthew 13:35. The ASV renders this: *"from the foundation of the world"* as the KJV does. But it obviously has the connotation of: *"from the beginning of the ages."*

**Matthew 25:34**—God's new kingdom was prepared for men so that they could inherit it **from the foundation of the world**. Again, this phrase is similar to the two passages above. GSPD translates this phrase as: *"from the creation of the world."*

**Luke 1:70**—Holy Prophets had spoken of a Savior for mankind **since the world began**. "Ton" in the Greek is translated "since." "AP" is translated "time." "Aionios" is translated "age." The literal idea is: *"since time began."* The RSV renders the phrase as follows: *"from of old."*



**Acts 3:21**—God's Prophets had spoken about Jesus **since the world began**. The RSV renders this: "*that have been from of old.*"

**Acts 15:18**—God knows all about His works that were involved in man's redemption **from the beginning of the world**. Literally, "*from ages*" in the Greek. Berkeley renders this: "*from eternity.*"

**Romans 16:25**—The mystery about Jesus Christ was kept secret **since the world began**. "Kronos" is "time." "Aionios" is "age." Literally, "*since the beginning of time.*" The ASV renders this: "*through the times eternal.*"

Thus, from these two sets of Scriptures, it can be seen that God not only planned for mankind's redemption in Christ before the creation of our universe, but also had revealed His plan through the Holy Prophets from the beginning of time. These continued revelations were more of a gradual unfolding of God's plan, but keeping it a mystery until He was ready for Jesus to come as man's redeemer.

### UNFOLDING REVELATION OF THE COMING CHURCH OR KINGDOM

There are passages in the Old Testament that not only show that God planned for the church, but that it was an integral part of His eternal purpose with reference to the redemption and ultimate glorification of man. The church exists today as a living witness to the infinite and eternal wisdom of Jehovah (Ephesians 3:9-11), which was a mystery (secret) through the ages until the "*fullness of time*" came for Jesus to come to earth among men to reveal God's great mystery to man.

Five things are closely tied together in the revealing of the great mystery of God. Please see Chart #2 in connection with these five items.

- 1) **The Promise of a Coming Redeemer.** Because of man's disobedience in the Garden of Eden it was necessary for man to have redemption provided for him since he was unable to save himself. That redemption was planned in the mind of God even before man was created and put on the earth (Ephesians 1:4). It was God's Will that Jesus should die for the sins of mankind (Revelation 13:8) and thus provide a just means of his redemption (Romans 3:26).

The following Scriptures show the intent of God from the beginning:

- a) **Genesis 3:15**—The **seed of the woman** is to **bruise the head of the serpent**. That is, He is to deal a deathblow to Satan's power over man. Hebrews 2:14 tells of the completion of this work in Christ.
- b) **Isaiah 53:1-12**—This prophecy was given about B.C. 690. While many prophecies were given of the coming Messiah (the anointed one of God), this passage in Isaiah is the most revealing.  
**53:5**—"*wounded for our transgressions*"  
**53:6**—"*Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*"  
**53:8**—"*for the transgression of my people was he stricken*"

**53:10**—"*made his soul an offering for sin*"

**53:11**—"*he shall bear their iniquities*"

**53:12**—"*he bore the sin of many*"

- c) **Matthew 1:21**—At the birth of Jesus (B.C. 4)\* an angel appeared to Joseph and stated that the child's name shall be called **Jesus** because he will save His people from their sins!

\* This date, B.C. 4, is the new system of dating and does make an allowance for the approximate 4-year discrepancy in the calendar.

- 2) **The Promise of a Coming King and Kingdom.** God allowed the Jews to set up an earthly kingdom to rule and govern His people under the Covenant that God gave to them at Mount Sinai through Moses. But he planned to set up another kingdom that would be different from the first one. This kingdom was to be special in several ways.

The following Scriptures show what God's plan was in regards to this new king and coming kingdom.

- a) **2 Samuel 7:12-16**—God is speaking to David and making a promise in regards to a successor for his throne. While some of these promises in this passage were fulfilled in Solomon, there is something about the promises that look to the future. David's seed (Solomon) was set upon David's throne. But Jesus was also a seed of David and was set upon David's throne (Acts 2:30; Luke 1:32-33). It was said of David's seed that he would build a house for the Lord. Solomon did build the Temple that served for the worship of God under the Old Covenant. But Jesus also built a house for the Lord (Hebrews 3:3-6), the church! But the one promise that has to be looked at closely here is the promise of God establishing the throne of his kingdom forever. The old kingdom ended with the Babylonian captivity. The only possible fulfillment would be through Christ being placed on the throne of David to rule over this new kingdom of God (Luke 1:32-33; Colossians 1:13). This prophecy to David is dated about B.C. 1000.
- b) **Daniel 2:44**—This prophecy is dated about B.C. 604. Daniel is giving the interpretation of a dream of King Nebuchadnezzar of a giant image of four different sections and of its destruction by a little stone cut out of a mountain. He points out that the image represented four succeeding kingdoms, with the Babylonian being the first and the Roman being the last. It was during the days of the kings of the last kingdom that God would set up His new kingdom. But again a most significant statement is made about it—it will never be destroyed. It will not have an end like all earthly kingdoms have had! The new kingdom of God has lasted for almost 2000 years thus far.
- c) **Daniel 7:13-14**—This prophecy is dated about B.C. 545. It speaks of one likened unto the Son of Man coming before the Ancient of Days (God, the Father). This one was given Dominion, Glory, and a Kingdom. But notice the special feature of this new dominion—all peoples and nations shall serve Him. People of all nations will make up this new kingdom. And again it emphasizes that it is to be an everlasting, unending dominion. It would not pass away nor be destroyed by men.



- d) **Matthew 3:2**—In about the year A.D. 26 (A.D. 30 in original calendar), both John and Jesus came preaching that the kingdom was at hand, about ready to be set up among men. What kingdom? It had to be the one that God had been promising from the beginning of time through His prophets.

3) **The Promise of the Coming of the Lord's House (Church).** This term, "house," is just another way of describing the redeemed people that Jesus would save by His coming death on the cross. The Lord's house and the church are identified as the same thing in the New Testament (1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:3-6).

The following Scriptures show what God's plans were in regards to the church (Lord's House).

- a) **Isaiah 2:1-3**—This prophecy is dated about B.C. 740. The Lord's house was to be established in the top of the mountains (Mount Zion in Jerusalem) (Hebrews 12:22-23). It was to be established in the last days or last age of mankind on earth (Acts 2:16-17). Peter stated that *"this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel"*—that in the **last days** certain things would come to pass...indicating that the last days had begun. All nations were to flow into the Lord's House. The same was said about the kingdom (Luke 24:46-47). And it also pointed out that the word of the Lord would go forth out of Zion or Jerusalem (Luke 24:46-47), which it did!
- b) **Isaiah 9:6-7**—This prophecy was about B.C. 734. A Son would come and the government would be placed on His shoulders. Jesus is the new king over His kingdom and the new head over His church (Matthew 27:11; Ephesians 1:22-23; Matthew 28:18). The names that He would be called indicate dignity and divinity, which shows conclusively that it had to have had reference to Jesus, the Son of God. But again it emphasizes that there would be no end to His government or of His sitting on the throne of David. His kingdom would be established with judgment and justice forever.
- c) **Matthew 16:18-19**—This statement was given by Jesus in about A.D. 28(32). He said that He would build His church upon the great truth that Peter had just confessed (verse 16). He is confirming what God said He would do from the beginning. He also points out that the Gates (Power) of Hades would not prevail against His building it. Jesus also promised to Peter (as well as the other apostles—Matthew 18:18) the keys of the kingdom which gave them the power of opening the doors of the kingdom to all nations of people. The terms **church** and **kingdom** seem to be used interchangeable here in these two verses.

4) **The Promise of the Giving of a New Covenant.** Since there is to be a new kingdom, it would seem fitting to have a new Law or Covenant for governing and directing these redeemed people from all nations of the earth. A New Covenant was made necessary because of the nature of this new kingdom. It would not only have a new king (Jesus), but it would have a new high priest (Jesus). With the change of priesthood the Hebrew writer says that it was necessary to have also a change of Law (7:12). But the Old Covenant was taken away and a New one given in its place because the Old could not accomplish what God wanted (Hebrew 8:6-13).

The following Scriptures show what God's plans were in regard to the giving of a New Covenant.

- a) **Isaiah 2:3**—This prophecy was given about B.C. 740. Isaiah says that the Law of the Lord would go forth out of Zion or Jerusalem. In Luke 24:46-47, Jesus tells His disciples to preach repentance and remission of sins among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. The gospel was preached first at Jerusalem and from there into the entire world (Acts 1:8; Colossians 1:23).
- b) **Jeremiah 31:31-34**—This prophecy was given about B.C. 596. God stated through His prophet that He would make a New Covenant with Israel and Judah. It would not be like the Old Covenant that He had previously given them through Moses—which Covenant they broke. This New Law would be put into their hearts and their sins and transgressions would be remembered against them no more. Hebrews 8:6-13 quotes this passage and indicates that it had been fulfilled.
- c) **Luke 24:47**—Jesus gives his marching orders to His disciples just before He ascends up from them into heaven (A.D. 29(33)). The new message was to go forth from Jerusalem unto all nations.

- 5) **The Promise of the Coming of the Holy Spirit.** Again, something new is going to be given to all mankind, not just the Jewish people but the Gentiles as well. The Holy Spirit would be poured out upon "*all flesh.*"

The following show what God's plan was in regard to the giving of the Holy Spirit.

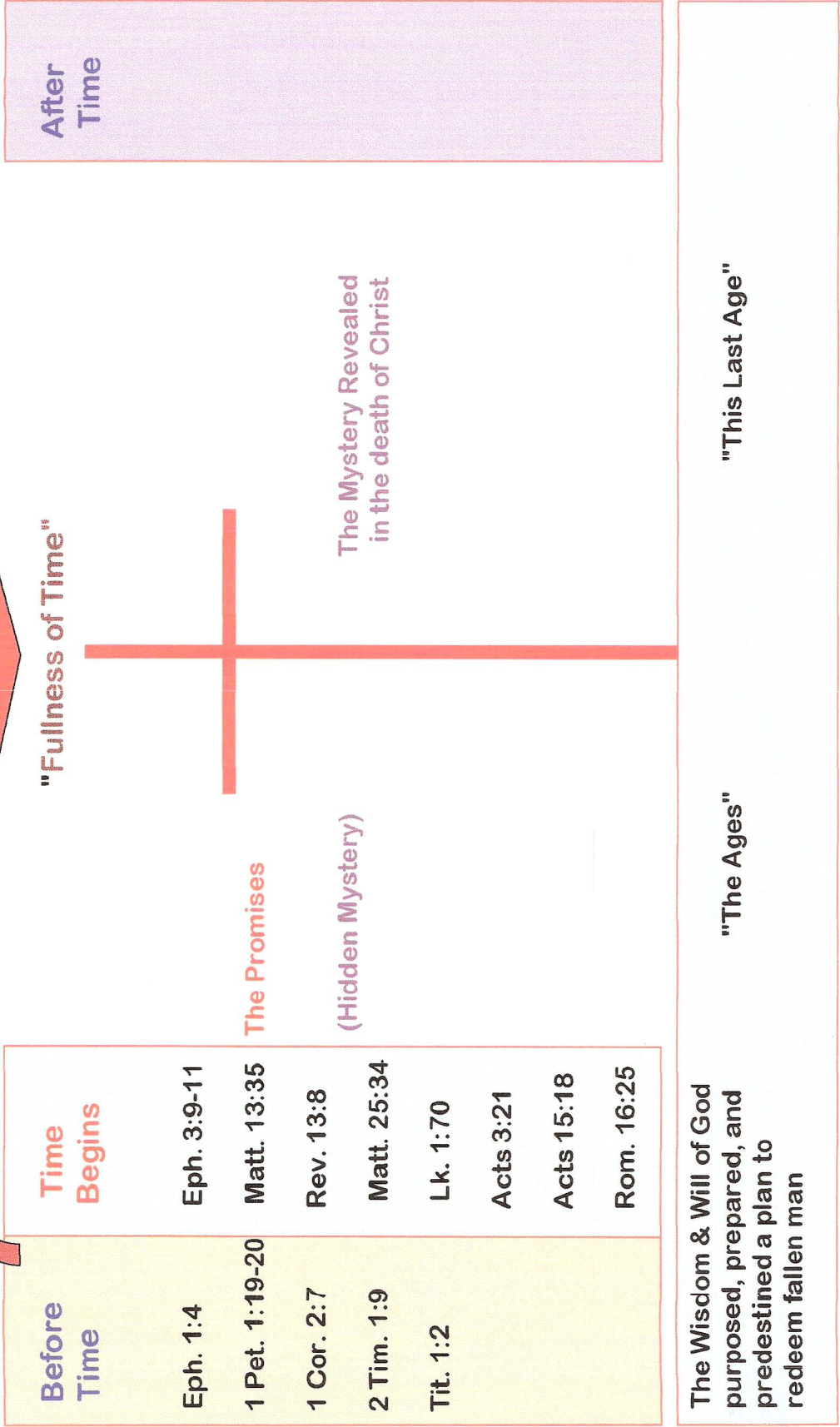
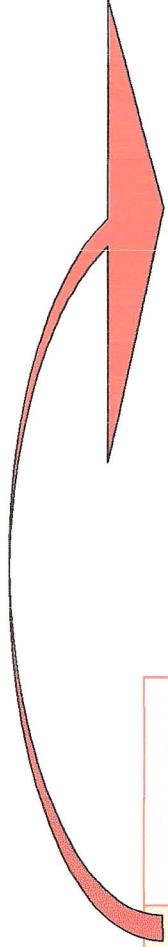
- a) **Joel 2:28-32**—This prophecy was given about B.C. 800. It states that God's Spirit would be poured out upon all flesh. Acts 1 and Acts 10 record the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon both Jew and Gentile. Peter's quoting of this prophecy of Joel states that it was to be fulfilled in the **last days** (Acts 2:16-17). Miracles and signs would accompany this outpouring. And such did happen in both Acts 2 and Acts 10. Deliverance was to be in Zion or Jerusalem. And it was here that the Message was first preached of deliverance through Christ.
- b) **John 16:13-15**—This promise that Jesus made to His close disciples was given just before His death (A.D. 29(33)). He promised that the Spirit would guide them into all truth when He came to them. That He would also glorify Christ. What the Spirit gave was the New Covenant Scriptures!
- c) **Acts 1:4-5, 8**—After Jesus' death and just before His ascension, He appeared to His disciples for a period of about 40 days instructing and encouraging them concerning matters of the new kingdom of God. During this time He repeated the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit that would give them power and enable them to be effective witnesses of His resurrection in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and into all the world (Acts 1:8). In Acts 2, we see the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles that enabled them by inspiration to speak the new message of God to all mankind!

God's mystery that He had planned from before time began was made known in prophetic language throughout the period of the Old Testament history—until the coming of Christ to fulfill these prophetic statements. To make light of God's plans does not reflect to man's good!





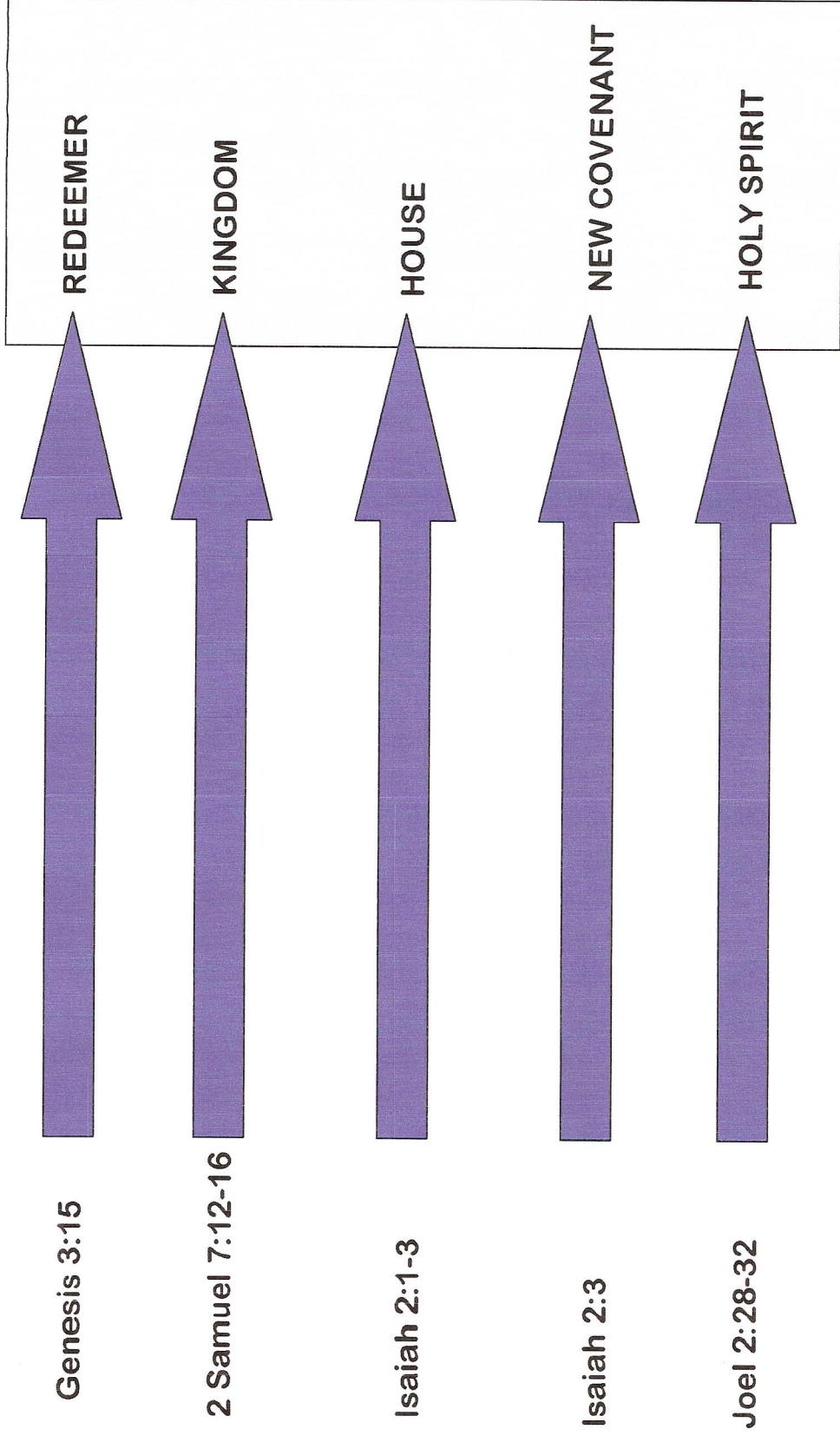
# God's Plan to Save Man





# God's Mystery

Since the world began or time began!



Lesson Two

## *"The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand"*

*"and saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*  
(Matthew 3:2)

In the first lesson, God's plan for setting up the church or kingdom was discussed. Five things were tied together: (1) The coming of the kingdom of heaven (Lord's house or church); (2) The coming of a king over His kingdom; (3) The coming of mankind's Redeemer; (4) The giving of a new covenant; (5) The pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon "all flesh." It is important to see that the church and the kingdom are identified as one and the same thing under this new covenant system. The following passages will help to illustrate this:

- a) **Matthew 16:18-20**—The church and the kingdom are interchangeable in this context.
- b) **Matthew 26:27-29**—Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper to be partaken in his memory in His Father's kingdom. But in 1 Corinthians 11:23-28, it is speaking of the church partaking of it in His memory.
- c) **Colossians 1:12-13**—Saints are in the kingdom, but they are also in the church (1 Corinthians 1:2).
- d) **John 3:5**—One must be born again in order to enter this new kingdom; but Peter, writing to the churches in Asia Minor, states that they had been born again also (1 Peter 1:22-23).
- e) **Hebrews 12:23, 28**—The Hebrew writer uses both terms interchangeable in these verses.

There is a value in knowing when the church or kingdom had its beginning: (1) It helps to distinguish the church from Old Testament agencies and institutions; (2) It helps to identify its laws or when its covenant went into force; (3) It helps to distinguish the Lord's church from those institutions that have been established, named, and governed by men through the ages.

Lesson one pointed out that the church or kingdom would be set up when the Christ (Messiah) or Redeemer would come. But more specifically, was it to be set up at His birth, or during His public ministry, or after His ascension back to heaven? (See Chart #1).

The purpose of this lesson will be to pinpoint with Scripture the beginning time of the house (church) of God or the kingdom of heaven.

The Old Testament Prophets foretold of a coming kingdom or the Lord's House to be built. In the previous lesson, passages of Scripture were looked at in view of the five events that were to occur together at the coming of the kingdom. These prophecies will now be looked at from the standpoint of pinpointing when this new kingdom would be set up or established among men.



**PROPHECIES THAT PINPOINT THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH**



1. **Joel 2:28-32**—God would pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh in the last days. Deliverance will be in mount Zion or Jerusalem.
2. **2 Samuel 7:12-17 (1 Chronicles 17:11-15)**—David's seed (descendant) will build God's house. He will establish his throne and kingdom forever.
3. **Isaiah 2:2-3 (Micah 4:1-2)**—The Lord's house is to be established on top of mountains in the last days. All nations are to flow into it. God's Law or His Word would go forth from Zion or Jerusalem.
4. **Isaiah 9:6-7**—The Government is to be upon His (Messiah) shoulders. He will sit upon the throne of David. His kingdom will be an unending kingdom.
5. **Daniel 2:31-45**—Four world empires (kingdoms) were foreseen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream of the huge image. Below is a list of those empires:



The kingdom of God would be set up during the reign of the kings of the fourth empire. This new kingdom of heaven would be established forever.

6. **Daniel 7:13-14**—The Son of Man ascended in the clouds to the Ancient of Days. He is given Dominion, glory, and a kingdom. All nations are to serve Him. It is to be an everlasting dominion—one that would not pass away or be destroyed.

7. **Malachi 4:5-6**—Elijah to be sent to prepare the way of the Lord.

Chart #2 will give an over-all listing of these points so that they can be seen in sequence all at once. These statements actually pinpoint clearly the time when the church or kingdom of heaven would be set up.

### PREPARATIONS DURING THE MINISTRY OF JOHN AND JESUS

The kingdom of God had been prophesied of for hundreds of years. The Jewish nation had looked for and longed for its coming. After four hundred years of inspired silence (400 BC to 26 AD), a fiery preacher came on the scene preaching a message they had long yearned to hear, "*The kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Matthew 4:17). Great excitement was being created among the people. Their long-looked-for kingdom was about ready to be set up among them.

A factor that complicated the teaching process about the kingdom was the misunderstanding of what kind of a kingdom it would be. Their idea was one of an earthly ruler and realm, one of military power and material wealth (Matthew 2:2). Even the Devil tried to seduce Jesus with the idea of an earthly rulership over all nations (Matthew 4:8-10). The Jewish people were pressing for the kingdom to come (tried to force it on)(Matthew 11:12; Luke 16:16). They even tried to make Jesus king on more than one occasion (John 6:15).

Much of Jesus' teachings were to try to clarify the kind of kingdom that would be established. It was not to be an outward, physical kingdom to which they were accustomed, but a kingdom within the heart of persons who would recognize and follow their king (Luke 17:20-21).

Most of the passages in the gospels deal with the kingdom being at hand; that is, in its preparation stage before its full establishment among men. The following will illustrate:

- 1) **Matthew 3:2**—John preached that the kingdom was at hand.
- 2) **Matthew 4:17**—Jesus preached that the kingdom was at hand.
- 3) **Matthew 10:7**—The twelve were to preach the kingdom was at hand.
- 4) **Luke 10:9**—The seventy were to preach the kingdom was at hand.
- 5) **Matthew 6:10**—Jesus taught his disciples to pray for the kingdom to come.

Several passages indicate the expectation on the part of the various ones of the coming of the kingdom. The following will illustrate:

- 1) **Luke 17:20**—The Pharisees wanted to know when the kingdom would come.
- 2) **Luke 19:11-27**—Jesus told a parable to help those who thought the kingdom was about to be set up immediately. He pointed out that He had to first go away to receive the kingdom.
- 3) **Luke 23:42**—The thief on the cross wanted Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom.
- 4) **Mark 15:43**—Joseph of Arimathea waited for the kingdom of God.
- 5) **Acts 1:6**—Even the apostles, after Jesus' death and resurrection, were still expecting the kingdom to be set up.



But there are also special passages that help to pinpoint the time of the beginning of the kingdom. They are as follows:

- 1) **Mark 9:1**—Some of the people listening to Jesus would not see death before the kingdom would come. The kingdom was to come with power that could be witnessed.
- 2) **Matthew 16:18,19; 18:18**—Jesus said He would build His church and the gates of Hades would not prevail against it. Peter and the other apostles were given keys of the kingdom (to open the door for people to enter). They were given the power to bind and to loose.
- 3) **Matthew 26:28-29**—The Lord's Supper would be taken in His new kingdom.

There are several passages that do not fit into this over-all pattern of the above passages, but have posed problems to some in proper understanding. They are as follows:

- 1) **Matthew 11:12**—The kingdom suffers violence and the violent take it by force.
- 2) **Matthew 12:28**—The kingdom of God is come unto you.
- 3) **Matthew 21:31, 43**—Publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before others.
- 4) **Luke 16:16**—The kingdom is preached and people press into it.
- 5) **Luke 17:20-21**—The kingdom does not come with observation.

Whatever understanding is placed on these passages it must not be in contradiction to the many plain passages that indicate that the church (kingdom) was **not fully** and **completely** set up until later.

When all was in readiness, Jesus allowed Himself to be taken and crucified. Upon His resurrection, He gave plenty of opportunity for His disciples to witness His resurrected body, as well as to speak about things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts 1:1-3). It was here that the apostles wanted to know if Jesus would restore again the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6). So, up to this point the kingdom had not been fully set up.

Chart #3 adds seven more points from Scripture that helps to pinpoint the beginning of the church.

### **THE BEGINNING OR ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH OR KINGDOM**

Up to this point in time (the ascension of Jesus), the kingdom was spoken of as being in the future. By combining the last two charts it becomes evident that the church or kingdom had to be established after the ascension of Jesus, but shortly after. The following points will help to establish this clearly:

- 1) **Acts 2:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2**—The kingdom or church would be set up in the "last days." Peter clearly stated that the "last days" had begun!
- 2) **Luke 3:1**—The kingdom would be set up during the days of the fourth world empire (Roman kings—Daniel 2:44). Luke records that John began his preaching in the 15th

year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when he preached that the kingdom of God was at hand.

- 3) **Daniel 7:13-14**—When Jesus ascended to the Father, He would be given a kingdom, dominion, and glory. In Acts 1:9-11, it is recorded that Jesus ascended back to the Father. But Ephesians 1:20-23 states that Jesus, upon His ascension, was placed over all power and dominion, and that all things were put under His feet, and that He became head over His church.
- 4) **Acts 2:33**—The Holy Spirit would be poured out on all flesh also in the "last days" (Joel 2:28-32). Jesus repeats this promise to His apostles in Acts 1:4-8. Upon ascending to heaven, He sent forth the Holy Spirit upon the apostles (Acts 2:33).
- 5) **Acts 2:23-33**—But the kingdom or church was to be built after Jesus had successfully overcome the "gates of hades." This, Peter said, he had done by being raised up from the dead (Acts 2:23-33), and then He was seated at the right hand of God.
- 6) **Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8**—The kingdom was to also come with power. Jesus promised this power to the apostles after his death. The power came when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles in Acts 2:1-4—on the day of Pentecost.
- 7) **Acts 2:14-47**—The doors to the kingdom were opened by the apostles when they preached their first sermon and made it possible for sinners to enter into the kingdom of God. Some three thousand responded and were baptized and they were added to their number (or the church) (Acts 2:47).

Thus, it can be logically concluded that the church or kingdom had its beginning on the day of Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem as had been prophesied. From here on (Acts 2), the church was always spoken of as being in existence. For example:

- 1) **Acts 5:11**—Great fear came upon the church.
- 2) **Acts 8:1**—The church was persecuted by Paul and it was scattered.
- 3) **Acts 8:12**—Philip preached things pertaining to the kingdom of God.
- 4) **Acts 12:5**—The church prayed for Peter's release.
- 5) **Acts 14:22-23**—Through much tribulation, people could enter the kingdom—They appointed elders in every church.
- 6) **Colossians 1:2, 13**—Those in the church had been translated into the kingdom of God's dear son.

Many other passages could be given to show the existence of the church or kingdom after the day of Pentecost. But from a negative viewpoint—if the church or kingdom was set up before the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), the following things would be obvious:

- 1) If it were established before the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, it was established before the foundation stone had been laid (Isaiah 28:16; 1 Corinthians 3:10-11; Revelations 1:17-18).
- 2) If it were established before the resurrection of Christ, its members would have had no assurance of a resurrection themselves (1 Corinthians 15:12-19).
- 3) If it were established before the death of Christ, the church could not have been purchased by the blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28).



- 4) If it were established before Jesus' ascension to the Father, the church and kingdom would have been without its head or king (Ephesians 1:20-23).
- 5) If it were established before Jesus ascended into the Holy of Holies (heaven), then the church did not have a Mediator to intercede for them to God (Hebrews 7:28; 8:4).
- 6) If it were established before Jesus' death, its message was a "crossless" one. But this is the heart of the gospel message: ***"the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus"*** (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

The church of kingdom of God had its origin on the day of Pentecost when the first gospel sermon was preached in fact and reality and 3000 were obedient to the message and added to their number (apostles). Any church professing to have a beginning before or after this time could not be the one that the Bible speaks about.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. During what earthly empire (kingdom) was the kingdom of heaven to be set up?
2. When did the church have its beginning?
3. Where did the church have its beginning?
4. What was to come at the same time the kingdom came?
5. From where was the Law of the Lord to go forth?
6. When did Christ sit on David's throne?
7. Was Peter the head of the church or was Christ?
8. When was Jesus made king over His kingdom?
9. Why be concerned about when the church or kingdom had its beginning?

### TRUE OR FALSE

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The church was invented by the apostles after Jesus' death.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Jesus promised the apostles special powers after He left them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Jesus stated that the kingdom was already set up during His public ministry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The church began just after the death of John, but before Jesus' death.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Jesus sent 70 disciples out to preach that the kingdom had already come.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Peter speaks of a "beginning" with reference to the events on Pentecost in Acts 11:15.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Only Peter, among the apostles, had the power to bind and loose.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Acts 2 is a very important beginning date for the church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. One of Jesus' parables stated that Jesus had to go away to receive His kingdom.



# The Kingdom-Church Established

When?

Birth  
of  
Christ

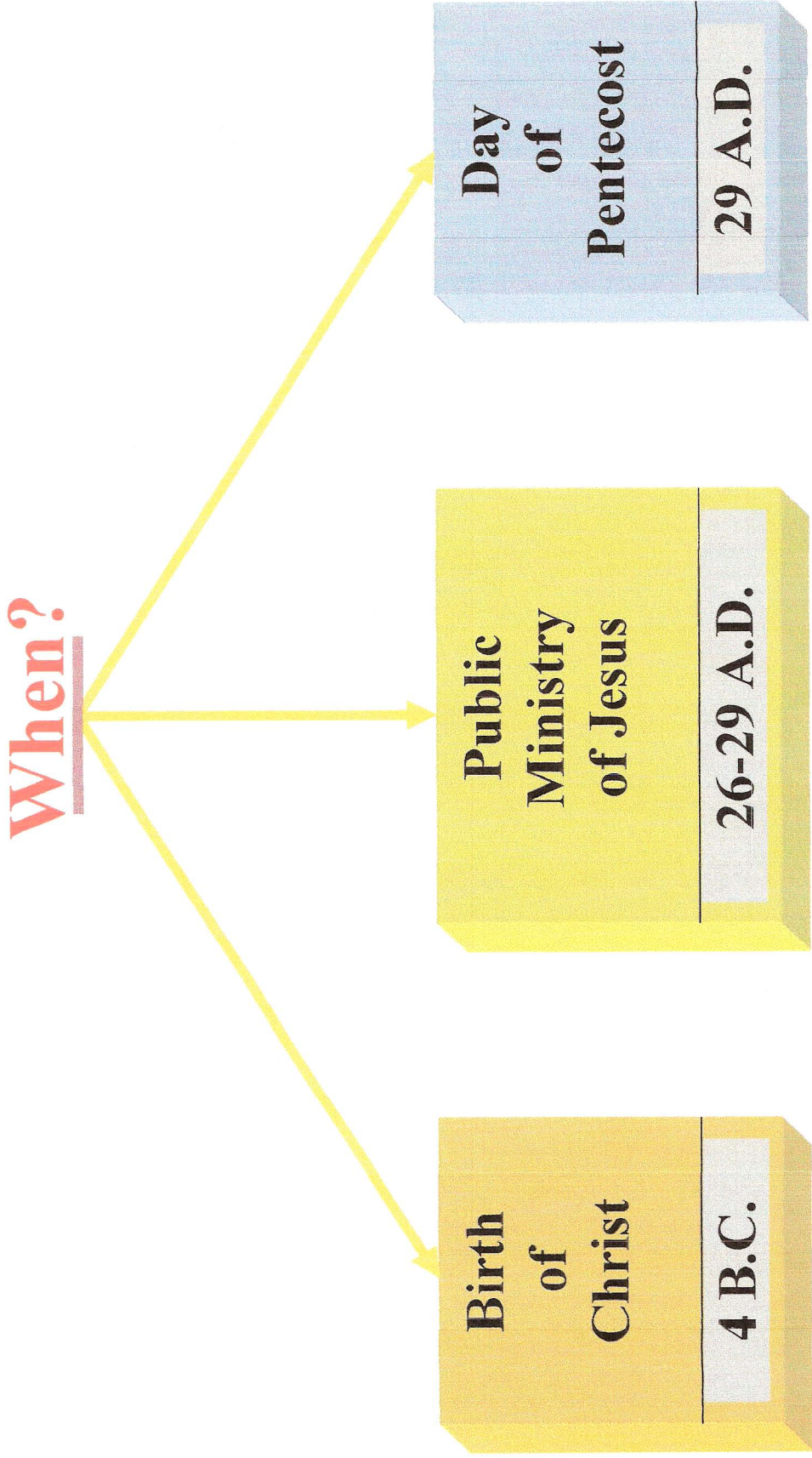
4 B.C.

Public  
Ministry  
of Jesus

26-29 A.D.

Day  
of  
Pentecost

29 A.D.



# The Church In God's Plan

## When & Where to be Established?



1. Pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh in last days (Joel 2:28-32).....
2. Lord's House to be established in Jerusalem in last days (Isaiah 2:2-3).....
3. All Nations to flow into it (Isaiah 2:2-3).....
4. Word of the Lord (Law) to go forth from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-3).....
5. Seed of David to sit upon His throne to govern (2 Samuel 7:12-17).....
6. Kingdom to be set up during the reign of kings of 4th empire (Daniel 2:44).....
7. It is to be an unending kingdom (never destroyed) (Daniel 7:13-14).....
8. Kingdom given to Son of Man when He ascended to the Father (Daniel 7:13-14).....
9. Elijah to come to prepare the way for the Lord (Malachi 4:5-6).....



# The Church In God's Plan

## When & Where to be Established?

1. Pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh in last days (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2).....
2. Lord's House to be established in Jerusalem in last days (Isaiah 2:2-3; Acts 1:3-4, 8; 2:1-4).....
3. All Nations to flow into it (Isaiah 2:2-3; Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 1:23).....
4. Word of the Lord (Law) to go forth from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-3; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; 2:4).....
5. Seed of David to sit upon His throne to govern (2 Samuel 7:12-17; Acts 2:33-36).....
6. Kingdom to be set up during the reign of kings of 4th empire (Daniel 2:44; Luke 3:1-2).....
7. It is to be an unending kingdom (never destroyed) (Daniel 7:13-14; Luke 1:32-33; 1 Corinthians 15:24).....
8. Kingdom given to Son of Man when He ascended to the Father (Daniel 7:13-14; Acts 1:9-11; Ephesians 1:20-23).....
9. Elijah to come to prepare the way for the Lord (Malachi 4:5-6; Luke 1:17, 76-77).....
10. The kingdom was preached as being at hand (Matthew 3:2; Acts 2:47; Acts 5:11).....
11. The kingdom was to come in lifetime of some Jesus spoke to (Mark 9:1; Acts 2:47; Acts 5:11).....
12. The kingdom would come with power (Mark 9:1; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4).....
13. The "gates of Hades" would not prevent Jesus building His church (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:23-33).....
14. Peter & the apostles were given the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 16:18; 18:18; Acts 2:14, 37-47).....
15. The apostles were given the power to bind & loose (Matthew 16:19; Acts 2:38).....
16. Jesus would drink fruit of vine in His kingdom (Matthew 26:28-29; Acts 2:42; 20:7).....

P E N T E C O S T

### Lesson Three

## *"Jesus is Both Lord and Christ"*

*"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."*

(Acts 2:36)

The kingdom about which the prophets foretold and that John and Jesus proclaimed was at hand was set up and established on the first Pentecost after the Resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2). This was to be a new kingdom, not like the one with which the Jewish nation was familiar in their past experiences. The Messiah would reign over this new kingdom. He would govern His people. God was king over the Jewish nation at first, but the people clamored for a king like the nations around them; thus, rejecting God as their only king (1 Samuel 8:1-7). Under this new kingdom, God again would be their king (through the reign of Jesus) over His people.

The purpose of this lesson is to emphasize the kingship of Jesus over His new kingdom or church, and to show what all is involved in the exercising of this kingship.

### PROPHECY THAT EMPHASIZED JESUS' AUTHORITY

The prophets spoke of a Messiah (the anointed One) to come to redeem mankind. This Messiah would come through the lineage of Abraham and David (Matthew 1:1). But the prophets also spoke of a king and a kingdom—a ruler that would build God's house—He would have authority. The following passages in the Old Testament are confirmed in the New Testament as being fulfilled in Christ.

- 1) **2 Samuel 7:13**—God promised to establish the throne of a seed of David. According to Peter in Acts 2:29-33, Jesus is on the throne of David reigning as king.
- 2) **Isaiah 9:6-7**—Isaiah also emphasized that one would sit upon the throne of David and the government would be upon his shoulders. Also, Acts 2:29-33 again shows the fulfillment of this prophecy about Jesus as king.
- 3) **Zechariah 9:9**—The prophet told the people of Jerusalem to rejoice because their king was coming and bringing salvation—as He came, he would be riding upon an ass, a colt, the foal of an ass. John records the account as being fulfilled in the triumphal entry of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem (John 12:12-15).
- 4) **Isaiah 28:16**—Isaiah foretells of a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, that is laid in Zion as a sure foundation. The Psalmists adds that this stone was rejected by men and He became the head stone of the corner (Psalms 118:22). Peter stated that Jesus was the tried stone that they rejected, but which God made the head of the corner (Acts 4:11).



5) **Psalms 110:1**—The Psalmists records what the Lord God said unto David's Lord—"*sit at my right hand until your enemies are brought under your footstool.*" Peter attributes this prophecy as being fulfilled in Jesus (Acts 2:34-36).

Jesus, the Messiah (the Christ), is the fulfillment of these prophecies of a Ruler to come to rule over God's people.

### WHAT DOES JESUS' KINGSHIP MEAN?

**1. It means that Satan's power has been destroyed.** Hebrews 2:14-15 indicates that one of the purposes for Jesus' coming was to destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil. Death no longer has power over mankind that it once had. The victory has been won—Satan has been defeated (Revelation 12:7-12). Jesus foretold of Satan defeat (John 12:23, 31). As a result of this victory: (1) Mankind can now enjoy the salvation of God (Acts 2:38, 47); (2) The Power Jesus promised the Apostles could be sent (John 16:13; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:4, 16-17); (3) The kingdom can be set up (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:4); (4) and the Authority of Christ could be exercised (Matthew 28:18-20).

**2. It means that Jesus has the power and authority to rule.** Jesus is the Monarch of His church or kingdom. He has the right to rule because of the great sacrifice that He made for mankind (Revelation 5:12). He has the right to give commands, to govern, to reward and punish, to give guidance to His subjects. The early church understood Jesus' absolute authority. His authority was greater than: (1) The traditions and customs of men; (2) The gods of the pagan world; (3) The authority of the Caesars of Rome. They were willing to accept persecution and even death rather than to deny their king (Revelation 12:11).

### VARIOUS TERMS USED TO DEPICT JESUS' RULERSHIP

1. **"Government on His shoulders" (Isaiah 9:6-7).** This term easily depicts the idea of rulership. It is the kind of rulership that is characterized as one of judgment, justice, and peace. Jesus is called the "*Prince of Peace.*"
2. **"Jesus as Lord" (Acts 2:36).** The term indicates one who rules over others and has authority over others to reward or punish those who obey or disobey. Christ is to be confessed by men as Lord (Romans 10:9-10). He is referred to as the "**Lord of lords**" (Revelation 17:14). The term, "Lord," also carries with it the idea of "Master" who has servants or slaves whom he employs or has purchased. Paul speaks of our need to glorify God with both our bodies and souls because we have been bought with a price, the blood of Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). For one to turn his back on Jesus after becoming a Christian, the Scriptures say he has turned his back on his Lord that bought him (2 Peter 2:2).
3. **"Jesus as King" (Revelation 17:14).** Jesus is worshipped as not only the "*Lord of lords,*" but also as the "*King of kings.*" His kingship is depicted as one who sits on the throne of David at the right hand of the majesty on high (Acts 2:29-35). He is in the right lineage to be king as a descendent of David and heir of the promise that God made to David (2 Samuel

7:12-17). He will rule as king over His kingdom until the end when He shall deliver the kingdom back to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24).

4. **"Jesus is Head" (Colossians 1:18).** The idea of headship is that of "pre-eminence." This headship involves Jesus being placed far above *all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named*" (Ephesians 1:20-23). But this headship is over His body, the church. The church is subject to Him as their head. There is a very strong emphasis upon the **ONENESS** of the head as well as the body! One head over one body, the church. Not many heads (two or more) and not many bodies or churches. Jesus does not share His rule or authority with anyone, especially with any man! The church has **NO** human head, only a divine One! Any one who would make such a claim is self-deceived and inflated with his own pride! If men originate churches, name them, organize them, give human laws, and place heads over them—they are human institutions (religious, but human) and not the body or church of Christ! For Christ is the only head over His one church.
5. **"Jesus is the Husband" (2 Corinthians 11:2).** Jesus gave up His life to purchase His bride, the church (Ephesians 5:25). As the husband is head over the wife, so Christ is head over His church. The bride is subject to her husband in everything, so the church should be to Christ (Ephesians 5:23-24). This relationship denotes the closeness, intimacy, and love between the husband and his bride.

There is only one source of authority for the church or kingdom—Jesus! All power or authority has been given to Him in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). No man, nor group of men will supplant Him as the supreme ruler of His church. They may try and deceive themselves and others into believing that they have succeeded, but in the day of judgment the truth will come out (Revelation 20:11-15). If Jesus has all authority, then His subjects do not have a right to make laws in His stead for the church. Christ has the right to rule and His rulership must be respected.

### HOW DOES JESUS EXERCISE HEADSHIP OVER THE CHURCH?

If Jesus is to rule or exercise headship over His people, there must be guidance coming from the head! In fact, there is a strong emphasis given to Christians that whatever they do in word or deed that all is to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus (by his authority) (Colossians 3:17). It should be obvious that Jesus has given His people a Law or Covenant to go by in order to be saved and be prepared to serve their king acceptably. The prophet Jeremiah was inspired to foretell of the giving of a new covenant, which the Hebrew writer picks up, quotes, but states that it is a new and better covenant based on better promises (Hebrew 8:6-13). The Old Covenant that was given to guide the Jewish nation was taken away and nailed to the cross by Jesus (Colossians 2:14) and replaced by a new and better covenant that is referred to as the *"perfect law of liberty"* (James 1:25). Thus, Jesus rules His people by the new covenant from God. Those who will not take heed to the words of Jesus will face them in the day of judgment (John 12:48-50). This new covenant or law is complete to accomplish God's purposes for man. It has the power to save those who believe (Romans 1:16); to furnish us completely unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:16-17); and provides us with all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).



Since Jesus only preached while He was on earth and did not write down His Word for men to follow, it was necessary to have it written down after His ascension back to the Father. He had chosen twelve men, called apostles, through whom His word could be given to mankind. Just before His death He informed them of His plans to send the Holy Spirit upon them to give them the guidance necessary to preach, teach, and write down His Word accurately (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-15). He repeated this promise to the apostles after his resurrection (Acts 1:4-5, 8) and told them to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit before going forth to proclaim His Word to mankind (Acts 1:8; Mark 16:15-16). Jude in his letter stated that "*The Faith*" had been once for all delivered to the saints (verse 3) and John in the Revelation letter warned about adding to or taking away from God's truth (22:18-19). The apostle Paul stated that he had received what he taught as a revelation from God and that he wrote it down so that when the Christians read it, they would have an understanding of God's will for man (Ephesians 3:3-7).

The New Covenant Scriptures, containing God's Will revealed through Christ and His chosen ambassadors (guided and confirmed in their message by the Holy Spirit), constitute a complete and perfect rule of faith and practice for God's people today. It is the Divine Constitution of the kingdom of God. When one is obedient to this Law, he shows respect for the authority of Christ over his life. Disbelief or disobedience shows a rejection of the authority of Christ over one's life.

### **HOW IS THE CHURCH ORGANIZED TO FUNCTION UNDER JESUS' HEADSHIP?**

Not only does the church need a head to give direction to it, but it needs to have some form of organizing itself in order to carry out the will of the head. The Lord has given sufficient information to show how He wants His church organized in order to function smoothly. Such should not be a matter of human invention. To do so would be to reject Christ's authority over His people.

The Lord kept the organization of the church simple and not complex like the world. Man's wisdom calls for a complex superstructure, but God's wisdom calls for simplicity. There is no universal organization of the church except with Christ as the only head (Ephesians 1:20-23). Each local congregation of the church is subject directly to Christ as head. This is called "Autonomy" or "self-governing." It stresses that there is no outside authority over the local church except for Christ.

The local body is organized in the sense that it helps to keep things decent and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40). God placed certain servants to be in the church for the purpose of helping the church to be in subjection to it's head, Jesus Christ. At the same time, they serve to build up and mature the church in their service to God and their fellow-men (Ephesians 4:11-16). These servants are as follows:

- 1. Apostles and Prophets.** These were especially chosen by the Lord to reveal His will to mankind. When they completed their work of giving the new covenant in it's completeness, the job was done. They had no successors in the church, for their work continues to guide mankind even until today by what they wrote down—The New Covenant of Christ!



2. **Evangelists.** They are also called preachers or ministers of the Word (1 Timothy 2:7; Ephesians 6:21; 2 Timothy 4:5). As the terms imply, they were the proclaimers of the good news about Jesus Christ. They are pictured as traveling to different places to set up and establish new congregations as well as working with congregations already established. These men have no authority to bind upon mankind their own opinions or the opinions of other men or group of men. Their work is to proclaim the unsearchable riches found in Christ Jesus.
3. **Pastors (Shepherds).** This is one of several words that denote the work of another group of men in the church. They are also referred to as: Overseers or Bishops, Elders or Presbyters. These terms help to describe the work they are called to do among God's people. (1) As older men with wisdom to help make critical judgment decisions; (2) As overseers to help direct God's people in carrying out God's will; (3) As shepherds to show a personal care and love for God's sheep. They are warned against the danger of lording it over God's people (2 Peter 5:3), and were encouraged to serve as examples to them. There was to be a plurality of these men appointed in each church (Acts 14:23) after they have sufficiently met certain character and experience qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Their work is not to bind rules and regulations upon God's people, but rather to encourage, exhort, teach, and persuade them to follow the teachings of Christ.
4. **Teachers.** In a congregation of God's people there may be many who are teachers of God's word in a special way and special situation. While the warning by James was not to have many teachers (James 3:1), the purpose was not to discourage God's people from becoming teachers of the word, but to emphasize the gravity of teaching the truth of God to others. The writer of Hebrews rebukes those to whom he wrote for not yet being able to teach others (5:12). Older women are encouraged to be teachers of good things to younger women (Titus 2:3).
5. **Deacons.** While not mentioned in the list of workers God placed in the church in Ephesians 4:11-16, yet it is obvious that deacons (or special servants) were a part of the work-force of the local congregation. They were to be qualified men in life and works (1 Timothy 3:8-13). While the stress on the work of deacons seems to be that of helping others, it does not forbid them from being teachers of God's word as well.
6. **Saints.** This term is an all-inclusive term for all the members of the body of Christ at a local congregation (1 Corinthians 1:2). They are also referred to as: **Disciples** (Acts 11:26); **Christians** (Acts 11:26); **brothers & sisters** (1 Corinthians 1:10); **believers** (Acts 5:14); etc. Christ's body is made up of "many members," but not all the members have the same work to do. However, all should be held in honor and esteem by a mutual affection, having the same care one for another (1 Corinthians 12:25). And all are exhorted to abound in the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58).

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Christ is "**King of kings**" and "**Lord of lords!**" His authority and headship should be respected by all who claim Him as their Lord (Luke 6:46). The Father spoke from heaven praising His Son and commanded that all hear Him (Matthew 17:5). Those who love God will respect His authority over them by keeping His commandments (John 14:15). This headship is exercised through the New Covenant Scriptures. (Hebrews 1:1-2; Ephesians 2:19-22).



### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why is it vital to have a divine rather than a human head over the church?
2. How does Jesus exercise His headship over His church?
3. If one refuses to belong to the body or church of Christ, what has he done with Jesus' headship?
4. What does a head do?
5. How much Authority does Jesus have?

### TRUE OR FALSE

- \_\_\_ 1. The apostles were selected by the church to serve for a limited time.
- \_\_\_ 2. Peter was made head of the church.
- \_\_\_ 3. Elders are the heads of the local church.
- \_\_\_ 4. The church and the kingdom are the same under the New Covenant.
- \_\_\_ 5. The words "elders or presbyters," "pastors or shepherds," "bishops or overseers," all have reference to the same workers in the church.
- \_\_\_ 6. Christians are called "saints" in the church.

### Please Check the Correct Answer

1. The authority in the church is:
  - \_\_\_ a) The elders.
  - \_\_\_ b) The preacher.
  - \_\_\_ c) A council of men.
  - \_\_\_ d) Christ.
2. The kingdom was to be set up during the reign of the kings of which empire:
  - \_\_\_ a) Babylonian
  - \_\_\_ b) Medo-Persian
  - \_\_\_ c) Macedonian
  - \_\_\_ d) Roman
3. The church was established and organized with special workers as follows:
  - \_\_\_ a) Apostles
  - \_\_\_ b) Prophets
  - \_\_\_ c) Archbishops
  - \_\_\_ d) A Pastor over each church
  - \_\_\_ e) Evangelists
  - \_\_\_ f) Elders
  - \_\_\_ g) Teachers
  - \_\_\_ h) Priest over rest of the members.

**ORGANIZATION  
OF THE  
CHURCH OR KINGDOM**

**THE AUTHORITY  
JESUS, THE CHRIST, SON OF GOD  
He is  
HEAD, KING, LORD**

**THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD  
Given by  
THE APOSTLES & PROPHETS**

**LOCAL CHURCH**

**ELDERS**

**DEACONS**

**TEACHERS**

**PREACHERS**

**LOCAL CHURCH**

**ELDERS**

**DEACONS**

**TEACHERS**

**PREACHERS**



Lesson Four

## *"All Nations Shall Flow Unto It"*

*"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's House shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." (Isaiah 2:2)*

The church or kingdom of God came into existence on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2). Christ was made "King of kings" and "Lord of lords" upon His ascension back to the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:13-14).

In the previous lesson (3), emphasis was placed on the Authority of Christ and the various terms that denote this Authority position: King, Head, Lord, Husband, Government to be upon His shoulders. But Jesus' relationship to this new kingdom has other aspects such as the following:

1. Bridegroom of the Bride. (Matthew 9:15; Romans 7:4)
2. Savior of the Body. (Ephesians 5:23; 1:22-23)
3. Purchaser of the church. (Acts 20:28)
4. Builder of the church. (Matthew 16:18)
5. Foundation upon which the church is built. (1 Corinthians 3:11)
6. The Corner Stone upon which the church is built. (Ephesians 2:20)
7. High priest to make reconciliation for sins of people. (Hebrews 2:17)
8. Mediator (Go-between). (Hebrews 8:6; 1 Timothy 2:5)
9. Prophet. (Deuteronomy 18:18; Acts 3:22; Hebrews 1:1-2)
10. Shepherd of the Sheep. (John 10:11-15)
11. Intercessor. (Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34)
12. The Way, the Truth, the Life. (John 14:6)
13. The Light of the World. (John 1:6-9)

While lesson three was intended to give strong emphasis to the headship of Christ, lesson four will emphasize the Nature of the Body (Church) of Christ.

### **IT IS A CALLED OUT BODY OF PEOPLE**

God's people today are a separated people, separated out from among the peoples of all nations, to be the new kingdom of God upon earth. In the Greek New Testament, these people are referred to as the "EKKLESIA:" that is, the "called out" people of God. This phrase is used in Scripture to denote various relationships as follows:

- 1) In Relation to God:
  - a) "the church of God" (1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 11:22; 15:9; 1 Thessalonians 2:14).

- b) "the house(hold) of God" (1 Timothy 3:15; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:19).
  - c) "the kingdom of God" (Acts 19:8; Romans 14:17; Colossians 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:5).
  - d) "the flock of God" (1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28).
- 2) In Relation to Christ:
- a) "the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:27; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23).
  - b) "the churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16).
  - c) "the kingdom of Christ" (Ephesians 5:5).
  - d) "the bride of Christ" (Ephesians 5:22-27; Revelation 21:2, 9).
  - e) "the church of the firstborn" (Hebrews 12:23).
- 3) In Relation to it's Members:
- a) "the churches of the saints" (1 Corinthians 14:33).
  - b) "the churches of the Gentiles" (Romans 16:4).
- 4) In Relation to Provinces or Countries:
- a) "the churches of Judea" (Galatians 1:22)
  - b) "the churches of Galatia" (1 Corinthians 16:1; Galatians 1:2).
  - c) "the churches of Asia" (1 Corinthians 16:19).
  - d) "the churches of Macedonia" (2 Corinthians 8:1).
- 5) In Relation to Cities:
- a) "the church of Ephesus" (Revelation 2:1).
  - b) "the church of the Thessalonians" (1 Thessalonians 1:1).
  - c) "the church of the Laodiceans" (Colossians 4:16; Revelation 3:14).

For a more detailed description of Christ's relationship to His church with it's privileges and functional aspects, please see the Chart: **"Description of Christ and His Church."**

**Descriptive phrases are used to identify these special "called out" people.** In each case the emphasis is upon the one to whom they belong. The following will illustrate:

- 1) Church of God. (1 Corinthians 1:1-2)
- 2) Church of Christ. (Romans 16:16).
- 3) Kingdom of God. (Acts 19:8)
- 4) Kingdom of God's dear Son. (Colossians 1:13)
- 5) Temple of God. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)
- 6) Family of God. (Ephesians 3:14-15)
- 7) Body of Christ. (Colossians 1:18)

-2-

In addition to showing the relationship of these people to God and His Son, it also was saying to the rest of the world, "You are NOT the 'called out' of God," "You are NOT the kingdom, or temple, or family, or body of God or of His Son." Only certain persons made up this "called out" group of people identified as belonging to God.



**The Nature of this calling.** The Scriptures speak of this calling in various concepts. The following will illustrate:

- 1) It is a heavenly calling. (Hebrews 3:1)
- 2) It is a holy calling (1 Thessalonians 4:7; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:15).
- 3) It is a divine calling (1 Peter 5:10; 1 Corinthians 7:15; 2 Timothy 1:7-9)

**How are these people called out?** Does God, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit call people directly by a "still small voice" inside of our being or an audible voice that we can hear with our ears? The Bible states that men have a divine calling, but does not stop there. It makes it clear how this calling is accomplished. It is done by Jesus when He expressed His loving invitation in these words: *"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* (Matthew 11:28). Or, as He stated to the church at Laodicea: *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."* (Revelation 3:20) Thus, God's call to man is in the normal way of communicating to one another—by words! But God's call is accomplished today by some very special words that is called "the gospel!" We are called by God through the preaching of this gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). He does this calling through His servants' preaching or teach His message of hope to others (2 Corinthians 5:20). Neither God, nor Christ, nor the Holy Spirit come to each individual directly, but calls each through His revealed Will to man (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:21-24).

**Into what are people called?** This calling of God is for men to leave something and come into something. It is being called out of the world (2 Corinthians 6:17) or darkness (Colossians 1:13) so that redeemed men can come into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13-14). Men are being called into a fellowship with God and other redeemed people into the "one body" of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:9; Colossians 3:15). Men are called to be saints (sanctified, cleansed, set apart people) of God (1 Corinthians 1:1-2; Romans 1:7). It is lost prodigal mankind that is being called to be the children of God (Romans 9:25-26; 1 John 3:1). And such are called upon to live worthily of such a calling by God (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12). The church is made up of a separated people unto God (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

### THE CHURCH IS A UNIVERSAL BODY OF REDEEMED PEOPLE

**All Nations were to flow into it.** This new church of God was to be made up of people from all nations, tongues, and kindred (Revelation 5:9-10). Isaiah foretold of all nations flowing into the Lord's house (Isaiah 2:2-3). The Revelation letter pictures it as a reality (Revelation 7:1-12).

The Jews made up the kingdom of God under the Old Covenant as a special people of God on earth. Jeremiah foretold of a New Covenant to be given to the Jewish people (Jeremiah 31:31-34) that would replace the Old Covenant which they had broken. But, in addition, the Gentiles were also to be brought under this New Covenant, as well, and both Jew and Gentile would make up the new kingdom of God (Ephesians 2:16). Following are the prophecies that were given by God in regards to the Gentiles being brought in under this New Covenant and

pointed out in the New Covenant Scriptures as being fulfilled in the church:

- |                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1) Hosea 2:23 (Romans 9:25)   | 4) Isaiah 42:6 (Acts 13:47)      |
| 2) Hosea 1:10 (Romans 9:26)   | 5) Isaiah 42:7 (Matthew 4:15-16) |
| 3) Isaiah 11:1 (Romans 15:12) | 6) Amos 9:11 (Acts 15:16-18)     |

Saul (later known as Paul, the apostle) was chosen to be an apostle unto the Gentiles to preach the gospel unto them as well as unto the Jews (Acts 9:15; 13:46-47; 22:21; 26:16-18). In the Ephesian letter Paul especially emphasizes that the cross of Christ not only took away the Old Law, but at the same time made it possible to reconcile both Jew and Gentile in "one body" or church (Ephesians 2:14-17; Colossians 1:20-22).

**A universal body under Christ as Head.** A body has **ONE** head and a head has only **ONE** body. Yet, the body is made up of "many members" (1 Corinthians 12:14). Each local congregation is made up of "many members." Each member has its special function; yet, they are all members of the same body (1 Corinthians 12:12).

The same would also be true of every other congregation of God's people. They have the same head and are the same body of Christ as any other congregation. The word of God does not advocate a church for Jews and a church for Gentiles that is different, but they are both in the one body of Christ (Ephesians 2:16). It is to be the same body or church throughout the world—it is a universal body of believers. Christ is **NOT**:

1. King over many different kingdoms, but only one kingdom (His).
2. Head over many different bodies, but only one body (His).
3. Shepherd over many different sheepfolds, but only one sheepfold (His).

Jesus made it very clear that His people would be "one fold and one shepherd" (John 10:16). On the night of His betrayal He prayed earnestly that His people would be one as He and the Father are one (John 17:1-26). For an over-all visualization of these concepts, please see appropriate charts.

The letters to the seven churches of Asia illustrate the point well (Revelation 2-3). It was the Lord's people in seven different cities. Each had problems and need for continued growth in the Lord, but they were the churches of Christ in Asia. The church is the "one body of Christ" made up of many members scattered over the nations of the world. Christ is their king, their head, and their loving shepherd!

### **THE CHURCH IS AN ENDURING BODY OF REDEEMED PEOPLE**

The Old Testament prophets continually emphasized the continuity of and the everlasting nature of the new kingdom of God among men:

- 1) "I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." (2 Samuel 7:13)
- 2) "to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." (Isaiah 9:7)



- 3) "it shall stand forever." (Daniel 2:44)
- 4) "his dominion is an everlasting dominion." (Daniel 7:14)

The New Covenant Scriptures pick up on this concept and re-emphasize it:

- 1) "the gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)
- 2) "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:11)
- 3) "he shall reign for ever and ever." (Revelation 11:15)

Christ began His reign over His kingdom (recorded in Acts 2) and will continue this reign over His faithful subjects until the kingdom is delivered over to the Father at the end of time (1 Corinthians 15:24). No matter how bad some churches may become or even apostatize (1 Timothy 4:1-4; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-13); yet, the Lord's church will continue on as a "remnant" concept (Romans 11:5) or even as the church that goes "into the wilderness" for a period of time (Revelation 12:14) and be that small number that hasn't "bowed the knee to Baal" (Romans 11:4). Christ remains head over His church! He has not lost His Bride! The church will be plagued by false teachers, by temptations to return to worldly ways, and by persecution, but God has promised that this new kingdom is everlasting in its nature!

### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

The universal nature of the church gives strong emphasis to the oneness of the church. The church is not made up of many differing bodies, but it is to be the same body or church throughout the world—as it was in the first century. There is to be no longer a division among Jew and Gentile in the kingdom, but they are to be one in Christ. What makes that oneness possible is the respect and subjection to our ONE HEAD, ONE KING, ONE SHEPHERD!

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. What is meant by the expression "called out people of God?"
2. What is the privilege we can enjoy as a branch tied to Christ as the Vine?
3. What do priests do in a temple?
4. What kind of calling has the church received?
5. How are people called into this kingdom?
6. What made it possible for Jew and Gentile to be in One Body in Christ?
7. Is it possible to trace Christ's kingdom through the centuries.....that is, His faithful people?

**TRUE OR FALSE**

- \_\_\_ 1. Christ is pictured as being many things in relationship to His church.
- \_\_\_ 2. The church is to come out of the world.
- \_\_\_ 3. The church is related both to God and Christ at the same time.
- \_\_\_ 4. The church has no ONE official name.
- \_\_\_ 5. Jew and Gentile have separate churches in the kingdom.
- \_\_\_ 6. A body can have many heads.
- \_\_\_ 7. A head can only be over one body.
- \_\_\_ 8. Christ is king over many kingdoms, as well as head over many churches.
- \_\_\_ 9. The new kingdom was destroyed by Satan for hundreds of years before it was restored again.

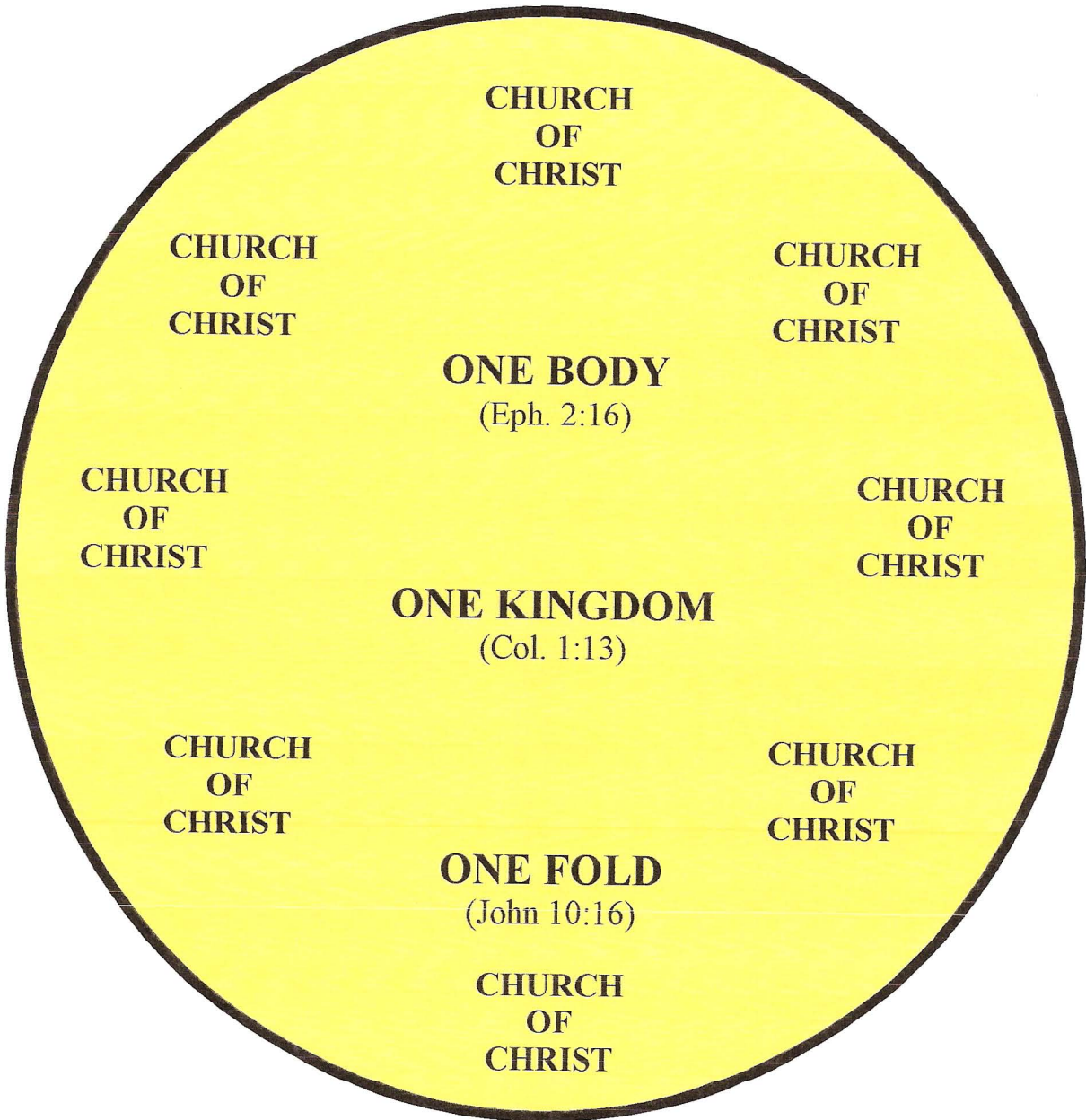


# DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

CHRIST	RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST	PRIVILEGES & RELATIONS TO ONE ANOTHER	FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS
Head Eph. 1:22-23	Body Eph. 1:22-23	Members of body of Christ 1 Cor. 12:12-13	Fellowship, concern 1 Cor. 12:14-27
Builder Mt. 16:18	Church Matt. 16:18	Called out, Saints of God 2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Cor. 1:2	Separate from world Jas. 1:27; 2 Cor. 6:17-18
Foundation Cornerstone Eph. 2:20-22	Temple Eph. 2:20-22	Living Stones, priests, Building in which God's Spirit dwells Eph. 2:22; 1 Pet. 2:5	Offer up Spiritual Sacrifices to God 1 Pet. 2:5
King 1 Tim. 6:15	Kingdom Col. 1:13	Citizens: Lordship of Christ Eph. 2:19; Rom. 10:9-10	Submission to Christ 2 Cor. 10:5
Shepherd John 10:14	One Sheepfold John 10:16	Protection, Sheep John 10:15; 10:11	Follow Shepherd John 10:4
Owner Heb. 4:6	House 1 Tim. 3:15	Family relations, Children, Heirs Eph. 3:14-15; Rom. 8:16-17	Be respectful Children Heb. 4:6
Bridegroom Jn. 3:28-30	Bride Rev. 21:2	Married to Christ; Christian Rom. 7:4; Acts 11:26	Be faithful Bride Rev. 2:10
Vine Jn. 15:1	Branches John 15:2, 5	Have life; Purged John 10:10; 15:2-3	Fruit-bearing John 15:5
Teacher Jn. 13:3	Learner John 13:17	Disciple of Christ Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 11:26	Follower of Christ 2 John 9

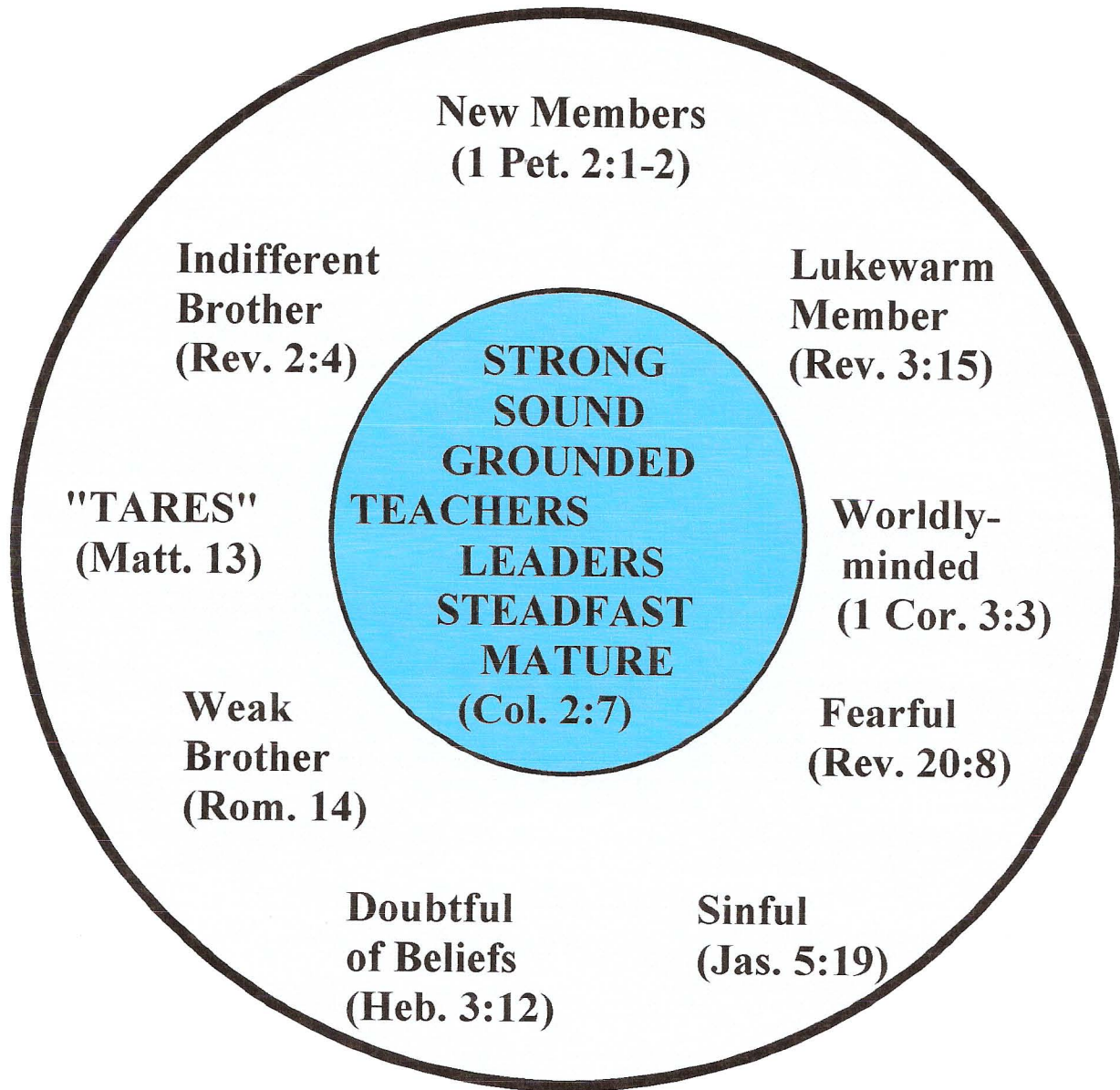
# UNITY

**ONE HEAD, ONE KING, ONE SHEPHERD**





# CONGREGATIONAL UNITY



## APOSTASY

Heb. 6:4-6

Heb. 10:26-30

2 Pet. 2:20-22

## SEVERED

(Gal. 5:2-3)

## DISFELLOWSHIPED

(1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:5-15)

## Lesson Five

## "Ye Must Be Born Again"

*"Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'" (John 3:7)*

God's great mystery has now been unfurled! He had planned for man's redemption through the death of Jesus as an atonement for man's sins. Those who answered His call and came to Jesus were then made a part of the church or kingdom of God. To know how to properly answer the call of God and come to Jesus for forgiveness becomes an imperative on man's part. The God who had planned man's redemption before creation would not leave man in the dark as to how he could receive the benefits of the precious blood of Jesus.

Early in Jesus' public ministry a man came to Him seeking to know the answer to some important religious questions. He had heard Jesus preach that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand. Even though John's gospel does not indicate that the man asked Jesus about how to be a part of the new kingdom, Jesus gave him the answer—*"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (John 3:3). Jesus repeated the statement again in verse 5 and added, *"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."* This was a new concept that Jesus was advocating—that is, a man needs to be changed, born anew, before he can become a part of the kingdom of God. The Jews had become a part of the old kingdom through a physical birth as a Jew under the Old Covenant. But changes are being made in regards to the new kingdom—it requires a "spiritual birth" (John 3:6) before one can enter into it. In other words, one does not enter this new kingdom just because he was born a Jew. It takes more than this. Also, Gentiles could also enter the same way as the Jews would have to enter—by a new birth (Romans 11:13-23).

The purpose of this lesson will be to explain the process of how one enters the church or the kingdom of God and is in a saved state or relationship with God.

### HOW DOES ONE ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

Jesus stated emphatically—one must be born again! (John 3:3). This statement was puzzling to Nicodemus when Jesus spoke it to him and is still puzzling to men and women today who are not sufficiently familiar with the over-all teaching of the Scriptures. One of the best ways to understand expressions like this is to look elsewhere for an example of the very thing that is being discussed.

It should be observed that in order to preach to people about the coming of the kingdom requires that there be an interest in it, as well as a desire to be a part of it. The Jewish people eagerly listened to such a message during the public ministry of Jesus and many were pushing to usher in



the kingdom as quickly as possible (Luke 16:16). They wanted it to come right then and there and they wanted to be a part of it.

But the kingdom of God did not come until the first Pentecost after the Resurrection of Christ (Acts 2). Then, and only then, could people (both Jew and Gentile) come into the kingdom. We have a good example recorded in Acts 2 of the process of one entering the kingdom or church.

**A. The Gospel was preached to them:**

- 1) Jesus was preached (Acts 2:22-24).
  - a) How He was put to death & buried;
  - b) How He was raised up from death by God.
- 2) Proof was given of Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:25-35).
- 3) But Jesus was also shown to be Christ & Lord sitting on David's Throne at the right hand of God (Acts 2:24-36).

**B. The people were told what to do to be saved:**

- 1) The people asked "*What must we do?*" (Acts 2:37).
- 2) They were told to "*repent & be baptized*" for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
- 3) Further exhortations were given for them to save themselves by doing what God had commanded of them (Acts 2:39-40).
- 4) Their response was—they gladly received his word and were baptized (Acts 2:41).

**C. They became a part of the church as a results:**

- 1) The obedient were added to their number (Acts 2:41).
- 2) The saved were added to the (church--KJV) (Acts 2:47).

Thus, salvation and becoming a part of the church became firmly connected in the preaching under the New Covenant System. The following will illustrate these thoughts:

- A. Acts 8:12.** When the Samaritans heard the preaching of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized. Why? Obviously, to be saved, but also to enter into the kingdom.
- B. John 3:3-5.** A person must be born again in order to enter the kingdom of God. But why be born again? Peter states that to be born again is to have one's soul purified from sin! This is accomplished by one hearing and obeying the Word of God (1 Peter 1:22-23). Upon being saved, one is also in the kingdom!
- C. Colossians 1:13-14.** Those who are in the kingdom of God's dear Son have been redeemed and forgiven (saved) by the blood of Jesus. The two are inseparably tied together!
- D. 1 Corinthians 12:13.** By the directions or teaching of God's Holy Spirit, one is commanded to be baptized in order to get into the body of Christ. But it is this same act that brings salvation to the penitent believer (Acts 2:38, 47).
- E. Ephesians 3:15.** The church is the family of God (1 Timothy 3:15). But to be in the family of God is to be a child of God that enjoys redemption and adoption as an heir of God (Galatians 4:1-7).

- F. Ephesians 1:3-7.** To be "*in Christ*" is to have redemption and forgiveness and access to all spiritual blessings. But one cannot be "*in Christ*" without being in His "*body*," the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). The same act that puts one into the church (1 Corinthians 12:13) is the same act that puts one into Christ (Galatians 3:27). Thus, salvation and the church are tied inseparably together!

The question is often asked, "*Can one be saved outside the church or the kingdom of God?*" The answer should be obvious from the above Scriptures. God designed that both concepts be tied together as one. The following thoughts connecting the blood of Jesus, the act of baptism, and the church or kingdom can help to further illustrate these truths:

**A. Man needs cleansing from sin.**

- 1) The blood of Jesus cleanses from sin (1 John 1:7).
- 2) The blood cleanses when one is baptized into Christ (Acts 22:16).
- 3) The cleansed make up the church (Ephesians 5:26; 1 Corinthians 6:11).

**B. Man needs to be redeemed from the bondage of sin.**

- 1) This redemption comes through the blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1:18-19).
- 2) But one is set free by the blood of Jesus when he obeys from the heart the form of doctrine delivered to him, that is, baptism (Romans 6:4, 17-18).
- 3) It is the church (Galatians 1:2) that is made up of the redeemed (Galatians 3:13).

**C. Man needs to be reconciled to God.**

- 1) This reconciliation comes through the blood of Jesus (Colossians 1:19-20).
- 2) This reconciliation is made possible when a person's faith leads him to be baptized into Christ where he becomes a reconciled son of God (Galatians 3:26-27).
- 3) But it is in the body (the church) that reconciliation is possible (Ephesians 2:16).

**D. Man needs saving from the penalty of sin.**

- 1) Man's forgiveness (salvation) comes through the blood of Jesus (Matthew 26:28).
- 2) But it is in the act of baptism that a person receives this forgiveness (Acts 2:38) or is saved (1 Peter 3:21).
- 3) And it is the body or church that Christ is the Savior of—so the church is made up of the saved (Ephesians 5:23).

After God went to all the trouble to plan redemption for lost mankind and predetermined that redemption was to be "*in Christ*" or in the "*body*" (church) of Christ, it certainly would not make sense to say the Bible teaches man can be saved outside of the Lord's body, the church! (See Chart #1).

## UNDERSTANDING THE NEW BIRTH

When Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again to see or enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5), He was using a comparison to the human birth process to illustrate His message. The new birth is not a physical birth, but is like it. It is a birth brought about by God's Spirit along with the desire of man to be born again (John 1:12-13; John 3:6). The process of the new birth is described in detail in the New Testament Scriptures as follows:



**A. Who does the begetting?**

- 1) God (John 1:13; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18; 1 Peter 1:3; James 1:18).
- 2) The Holy Spirit (John 3:5-6).
- 3) In a limited meaning—one who does the preaching or teaching (1 Corinthians 4:15).

**B. What is the seed that brings about the begetting and birth process?**

- 1) The Word of God (1 Peter 1:23; Ephesians 6:17).
- 2) The Gospel (1 Corinthians 4:15).
- 3) The Word of Truth (James 1:18).

**C. Where is the seed planted?**

- 1) Heart (soul or spiritual part of man) (John 3:6).
- 2) Heart receives it through faith (John 1:12; 1 John 5:1).

**D. What part is played by water?**

- 1) A person comes forth from water to walk in "*newness of life*" as a new creature (Romans 6:4-5; 2 Corinthians 5:17).
- 2) Baptism in water puts one into Christ where he becomes a new creature (Galatians 3:27; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

For a parallel visual of this process, see Chart #2.

### AN OVER-VIEW OF SALVATION

Salvation of man is what could be termed a "two-way-street," that is, it involves both God and man. Man cannot do it by himself and God does not take away all responsibility from man. The Bible teaches that man is saved by a number of things, both on God and man's part, and not by any one thing! The following Scriptures will illustrate how man is saved:

**A. God's part in man's salvation (1 Timothy 4:10):**

- 1) By His love (John 3:16).
- 2) By His mercy (Titus 3:5).
- 3) By His grace (Ephesians 2:5).
- 4) Through Christ (John 3:16-17; 1 Timothy 1:15; John 14:6).
- 5) Because Christ died (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
- 6) Through the Blood of Christ (Romans 5:9; 1 John 1:7; Colossians 1:14).
- 7) Made known by the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 1:5; John 16:13).
- 8) 8. Made known by the Apostles (John 16:13; Matthew 18:18).
- 9) Continues to be propagated by:
  - a) The Gospel of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 1:16).
  - b) The Word of God (James 1:21).
  - c) Proper preaching of the Word today (1 Timothy 4:16; 1 Corinthians 1:21).

**B. Man's part in his own salvation (Acts 2:40; Philippians 2:12).**

- 1) Hearing God's Word (John 6:44-45; Romans 10:13-17).
- 2) Calling on the Name of the Lord by doing what told to do (Romans 10:13-15; Acts 2:21; Acts 22:16).

- 3) Faith or Belief in Gospel message (John 3:16; 20:31; Hebrews 11:6).
- 4) Repentance (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Peter 3:9).
- 5) Obedience (Luke 6:46; 1 Peter 1:22).
- 6) Confession (Romans 10:9-10).
- 7) Baptism (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; John 3:5; Acts 22:16).
- 8) Keeping God's commandments (Revelation 22:14).
- 9) Faithfulness (Revelation 2:10; 1 Corinthians 15:58).
- 10) Adding to our Faith (2 Peter 1:5-11).
- 11) Saved by Hope (Romans 8:24).

God has certainly done His part for man to be saved. Man, therefore, must do his part if God is to save him (Hebrews 5:8-9). Man cannot honestly nor authoritatively say that any of the above things are unnecessary for him to do. To do so is to challenge the authority of God and His Word over us. When man does what God commands of him to do, he will enjoy the salvation extended through the blood of Jesus, as well as, give him: (1) Redemption (Ephesians 1:7); (2) Remission of sins (Matthew 26:28); (3) Reconciliation (Ephesians 2:13); (4) Cleansing (1 John 1:7); (5) Justification (Romans 6:9); (6) Sanctification (Hebrews 13:12); (7) Washing (Revelation 1:5-6).

Beyond doubt, the church is the most important institution or organization that God has established among men. No other institution compares with it in glory, or splendor, or in necessity. Entrance into this glorious body is made simple and clear, but also necessary if man is to be redeemed.

### **JUSTIFICATION IS BY GRACE NOT WORKS OF MERIT**

Man can never earn the right or merit being saved or being a part of the church of kingdom of God. Such has been provided by the rich mercy and grace of God. The contrast between the two systems of justification are clearly drawn in Scripture.

#### **A. First—see the System of Justification by Works of merit:**

- 1) One must keep the Law of God perfectly. If the Law is broken in one place, a person is under the curse of the Law, which is death (Galatians 3:10; James 2:10; Romans 2:13; Romans 6:23).
- 2) If one could live a perfect life like Jesus, he would not need God's mercy, for he would have no sins to be forgiven of and would be JUST before God on his own merit (Romans 11:6; 4:4). He would not need to be saved because he is not lost.
- 3) Justification would therefore be man-produced and earned (Romans 4:2, 4; Titus 3:5).
- 4) Such a person could rightfully boast (glory) of his own achievement before God (Romans 4:2; Ephesians 2:8-9).

#### **B. Second—see the System of Justification by Grace:**

- 1) A person recognizes he is a Law-breaker and has the curse of the Law upon his soul (Galatians 3:10; Romans 3:23; Galatians 3:22; 2:16).



- 2) This person also recognizes the need for mercy from God, not justice (what he deserves) (Romans 11:32; Titus 3:5).
- 3) This person fully recognizes that justification is God given, not merited by man's efforts (Romans 3:24-25).
- 4) Such a person can only boast in the fact that his justification is from the Lord (Romans 3:27; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Corinthians 1:31).
- 5) It is also important for the person to recognize that the Grace of God to man is a **conditional** thing, not unconditional. If it were unconditional:
  - a) All men would be saved.
  - b) Salvation would totally be on God's part.
  - c) Man would not be responsible before God.
  - d) Man could be saved in disbelief and disobedience.
- 6) However, conditional Grace says:
  - a) Only certain people will be saved (Matthew 7:13-14; Revelation 22:14).
  - b) Salvation depends on man doing something (Acts 2:40; Philippians 2:12).
  - c) That man is a responsible being and is expected to express this obedience to God's will (Matthew 11:28-30; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Revelation 22:17).
  - d) That man must believe and obey God in order to be saved by God's Grace (Hebrew 11:6; 5:8-9; Romans 6:16-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8; Matthew 7:21).
- 7) That Salvation by Grace comes to man through the avenue of faith on man's part. This faith is not just a mere mental assent to some facts, but involves much more. The following things help to define this faith:
  - a) Faith only without works (obedience) is dead (James 2:17; 2 Peter 3:9).
  - b) Obedience is necessary to complete faith so that it can bring justification (James 2:21-22).
  - c) Faith must be demonstrated in order to justify man (James 2:24; Acts 2:38).
  - d) Salvation depends upon a continued obedient faith (Revelation 2:10; 3:5).

See Chart #3 for a visual of the above concepts.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

God planned for man's redemption to be "*in Christ!*" God also planned the church (Isaiah 2:2-3). But God planned for the two to be tied inseparably together—the saved make up the church—the church contains the saved! In Christ, in His body (the church), mankind can have access to all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3). What a great privilege to be a part of the kingdom of God!

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. **Who enjoys all spiritual blessings?**
2. **Does one have to be a member of the church to be saved?**
3. **Does the church save us?**
4. **What must a person do to be saved?**
5. **What must a person do to become a member of the church?**
6. **How many bodies is Christ the head over?**
7. **How many churches is Christ the head over?**
8. **What is the result of being born again?**
9. **What part does water play in man's birth into Christ?**
10. **To be justified by works, what must a man do?**
11. **Does man have something to do in being justified by God's grace?**
12. **Is Grace conditional or unconditional?**
13. **How is faith only described in James 2:17?**
14. **Why won't all men be saved?**



# *The Saved Make Up The Church*

*(Acts 20:28; 2:47)*

Faith - - - - -Repentance - - - - -Confession - - - - -Baptism

Jn. 3:16    Acts 17:30    Rom. 10:9-10    Acts 22:16

## The Saved Are:

- 1. Cleansed. Acts 22:16*
- 2. Purified. 1 Peter 1:22*
- 3. Redeemed. Colossians 1:13-14*
- 4. Reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:20*
- 5. Justified. Romans 5:1*
- 6. Sanctified. John 17:17*
- 7. Forgiven. Colossians 1:13-14*

## **CHURCH - - KINGDOM**

**INTO CHRIST (Galatians 3:27)**

**INTO BODY (CHURCH)  
(1 Corinthians 12:13)**

**SAVED ADDED TO CHURCH  
(Acts 2:41, 47)**

**INTO**

**FORGIVEN & REDEEMED  
IN KINGDOM OF GOD'S DEAR SON  
(Colossians 1:13-14)**

**GOD'S CHILDREN ARE IN  
HIS HOUSE (1 Timothy 3:15)**

**ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS ARE  
IN CHRIST (Includes Salvation)  
(Ephesians 1:3)**

# NEW BIRTH

DEPOSIT      DEVELOPMENT      DELIVERY

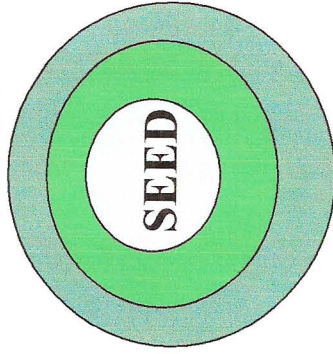
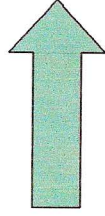
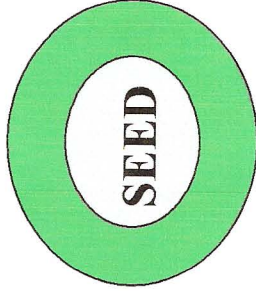
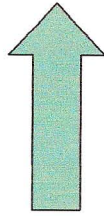
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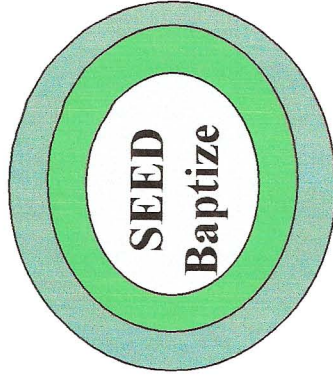
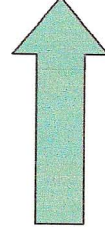
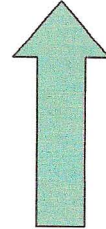
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New Child

Physical  
Birth  
Process



Spiritual  
Birth  
Process



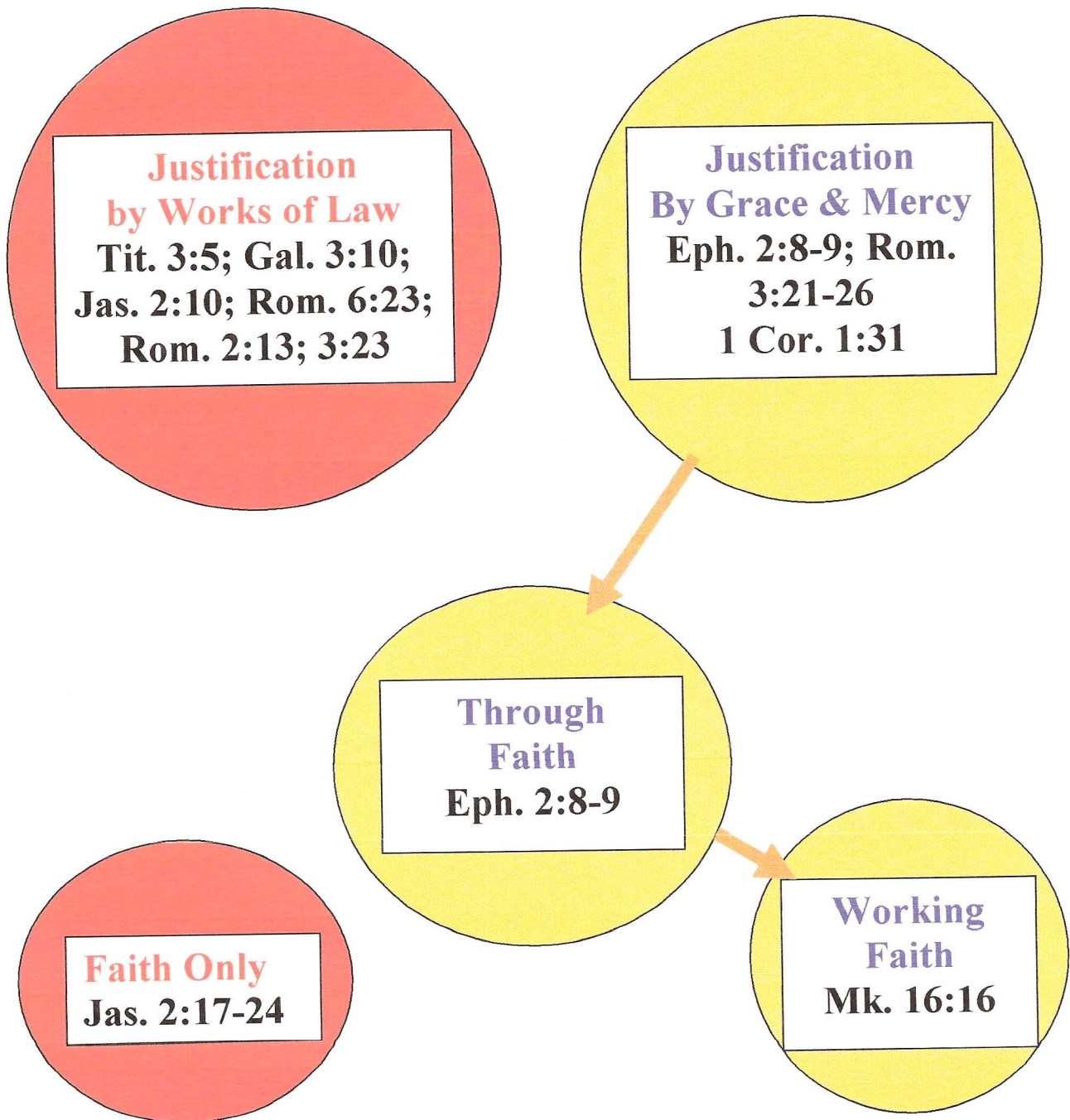
James 1:18

John 1:12

Romans 6:1-6



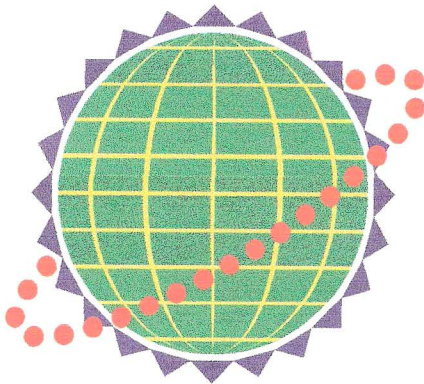
# JUSTIFICATION BY WHICH SYSTEM?



## Lesson Six

*"Go Teach All Nations"*

*"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" (Matthew 28:19)*



The church is to be UNIVERSAL; that is, WORLD-WIDE! All nations were to flow into it (Isaiah 2:2-3), and the Redeemed were to be from all nations, tongues, and kindred (Revelation 5:9). Thus, it is not surprising to hear Jesus give His marching orders to His close disciples for them to preach the gospel to all nations and peoples (Mark 16:15). This universal commission was given on more than one occasion and recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke's gospels, as well as repeated again the book of Acts. Please see Chart #1 for a visual of the "Great Commission." As can be seen, all of these accounts stress that the message was to be preached in every place and the same church established in each locality. It was to be Christ's church throughout the world!

**THE CHURCH CARRYING OUT ITS MISSION**

After the ascension of Jesus back to the Father, the chosen Apostles were told to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit before they launched out on their work of carrying the message to all nations (Acts 1:4-8). Some ten days later, the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles and they began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4). Thus, all was in readiness for them to begin to carry the message into all the world. The progress of their preaching was recorded in Acts 1:8.

- 1) They were to start their preaching first in **Jerusalem**. This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 2:2-3 as well as Jesus' own statement in Luke 24: 47. Chapters 2-7 of Acts record the preaching done in the city of Jerusalem. In fact, they were so successful that it brought on persecution (Acts 5:28, 41-42; 8:1-4).
- 2) As persecution began to scatter those early Christians, they went into **Judea** and **Samaria** preaching the message (Acts 8:4). Acts 8:1-11:18 records the preaching done in these two provinces.
- 3) Persecution caused these Christians to scatter and preach even outside of Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria—even as far as Antioch of Syria (Acts 11:19). From these early beginnings, the message continued to be propagated into all the world so that within about thirty years, Paul could say, by inspiration, that the message had been preached



to "**all creation**"(Colossians 1:23). The remainder of the book of Acts (11:19-28:31) records the spread of the gospel into several nations.

The church truly is to be a universal kingdom made up of Redeemed people from all nations.

### ITS MESSAGE

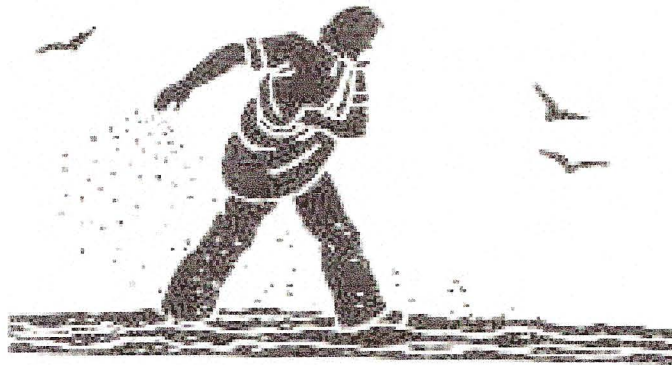
The church's message was one of **HOPE!** It offered to sinful mankind a way out of his sinful and condemned condition through the death of Jesus. This is the reason why the message is referred to as "**the gospel of Christ.**" The word "gospel" means, "good news." It was not only good news, but the greatest news that mankind could hear. The descendant of Abraham that was to come to bless all nations has arrived and made redemption possible. Now, the message of hope needed to be made known to all nations for their reception or rejection of the message. It was the responsibility of the early Christians to carry this message of hope to all nations then—and now, it is still the church's responsibility to see that this same message of hope is preached to all nations. Paul said that this message is simply:

- 1) That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;
- 2) That He was buried;
- 3) That He arose again the third day according to the Scriptures;
- 4) That His resurrection was well attested to by eye-witnesses. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

Peter, in Acts 2, preached this message (Acts 2:14-36). Philip preached "**the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ**" to the Samaritans (Acts 8:12); as well as, he preached "**Jesus**" to the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:32-33). Paul's message to the people of Antioch of Pisidia was of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 13:14-37). Paul stated clearly that his mission was, "**to preach the gospel**" (1 Corinthians 1:17), and the reason was also stated: "**to save them that believe**" (1 Corinthians 1:21). Various terms were used to identify their message:

- 1) To preach "the word of God." Acts 6:7
- 2) To preach "the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ." Acts 8:12
- 3) To "preach the gospel." 1 Corinthians 1:17
- 4) "Preaching of the cross." 1 Corinthians 1:18
- 5) "Preach Christ crucified." 1 Corinthians 1:23
- 6) "Speak the wisdom of God." 1 Corinthians 2:7

Not only did the apostles fill Jerusalem with this preaching, but the "newly born" disciples of Jesus began preaching the message as well every where they went (Acts 8:4). The book of Acts not only records the carrying out of the commission of Jesus, but also records the response of those preached to. Chart #2 will give a sampling of the response to the preaching of Christ.



*gospel can save—if the seed falls in  
good ground.*

### THE CHURCH TRAINED FOR ITS MISSION

The gospel message had to be brought before "all nations" for their reception or rejection! Jesus spent three years with some chosen disciples to help train them, prepare them, for the great work of carrying the message into all the world. But, strangely enough, only a short time after many thousands had been converted and further taught (Matthew 28:20; Acts 2:42), it was **they** who continued to spread the message, along with the chosen apostles (Acts 8:4). Common sense makes it clear that others besides the apostles would have to preach or teach the message to others. Thus, the apostles infused the minds and hearts of the early disciples with the message so that they in turn could teach it to others. Paul gave these same instructions to Timothy that others be taught so that they in turn could teach others (2 Timothy 2:2). Paul stated in the Ephesian letter that God had placed workers in the church to help: (1) Mature God's people; (2) Prepare them for serving others; (3) To build up each other. (Ephesians 4:11-16).

The commission of Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 28:19-20, emphasizes the teaching to be done after one becomes a disciple of Jesus. The church needs to be built up, edified, strengthened, grounded in God's truth so it can do its work well. Growth needs to come in several areas, such as:

- 1) The Grace & knowledge of God. 2 Peter 3:18
- 2) In Christlikeness. Ephesians 4:15
- 3) In all discernment. Philippians 1:9-10
- 4) Quiet, industrious Christian character. 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12
- 5) Christian graces. 2 Peter 1:5-13
- 6) In faith and love. 2 Thessalonians 1:3
- 7) Ability to resist temptation. Ephesians 6:10-11
- 8) In ability to serve and sacrifice. Matthew 25:20; Romans 12:1-2

The church, in reality, should be: (1) A light to the world (Matthew 5:14); (2) Salt for saving the world (Matthew 5:13); (3) The pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15).



Its function in the world is to bring glory to God (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 10:31) by reaching out to meet the needs of others, whether physical or spiritual (Galatians 6:10; James 1:27). But primarily the church is designed to meet the spiritual needs of lost mankind. The church is to plead with men to be reconciled to their creator (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). See Chart #3 for a visual of these thoughts.

The early church struggled with the need to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. The Jewish Christians had a background of distaste for Gentiles. It took God's outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48) before they could understand that God wanted Gentiles to be saved as well (Acts 11:18).

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Today, the church struggles with a similar challenge—to preach the gospel to all nations! It is so easy to **turn inward**, to be concerned only for our own things! There is always the danger of becoming so involved with the local congregation and its needs that it forgets its world-wide mission.

The church is a close fellowship of committed disciples of Jesus to carry out the commission He has given His people. This fellowship needs to be strengthened and become a source of unity and harmony and working together of the body of Christ towards its common goals—carrying the message to all nations!

**QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION**

- 1. What is the primary mission of the church?**
- 2. Why does the gospel need to be preached to all nations?**
- 3. To whom has God given this responsibility?**
- 4. Is the teaching and training of the church for our own selves only?**
- 5. What does the word "edify" mean?**
- 6. Do Christians have any responsibilities toward helping others with physical needs?**
- 7. What procedure did the apostles use to evangelize the world as given in Acts 1:8?**
- 8. What does the word "gospel" mean?**
  
- 9. What is the gospel?**
  
- 10. What does it mean to "preach Christ crucified?"**
  
- 11. What indication do we have that others besides the apostles preached the gospel to others?**
  
- 12. Why do Christians need to grow?**
  
- 13. How do Christians glorify God?**



# THE COMMISSION OF JESUS

## To His Disciples

Mat. 28:19-20	Go	Teach	All Nations	Baptize	Teaching		
Mk. 16:15-16	Go	Preach	Every Creature	Believe	Baptize		
Lk. 24:47		Preach	All Nations	Repent			
Acts 1:8		Witness	Uttermost				
Summation	Go	Preach	All Nations	Believe	Repent	Baptize	Teaching

If all four accounts are combined, we can see a full picture of what Jesus expected of His disciples, and of His disciples today.

# EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION

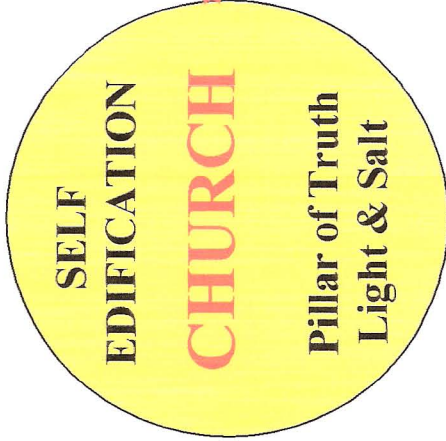
**Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:156-16)**

PREACHING	BELIEVE	REPENT	CONFESS	BAPTIZED	SAVED
<b>3000</b>					
Acts 2:14-47	V. 37	V. 38		V. 38	V. 38
<b>Eunuch</b>					
Acts 8:35-39	V. 36-37		V. 37	V. 38	V. 39
<b>Saul</b>					
Acts 9:17-18				V. 18	Acts 22:16
<b>Cornelius</b>					
Acts 10:1-48	V. 43	11:18		V. 48	V. 43
<b>Jailer</b>					
Acts 16:27-34	V. 31, 34			V. 33	V. 34
<b>Lydia</b>					
Acts 16:13-15				V. 15	V. 15



**"DO GOOD TO ALL MEN"**  
(Galatians 6:10)

**Matthew 5:13-15**  
**1 Timothy 3:15**



**GLORIFY GOD**  
1 Cor. 10:31; Matt. 5:16

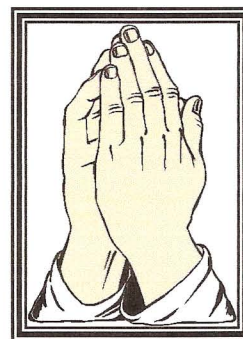


## Lesson Seven

# "THOU SHALT WORSHIP THE LORD THY GOD"

*"Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Matthew 4:10)*

Every one who obeys the gospel of Christ is added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:38-47). As a member he has his place to fill in the body of Christ. As a Christian, a disciple of Jesus, he becomes a part of a local congregation and works and worships together with other Christians. Paul, writing to the church at Rome and also Corinth, emphasizes the need for each member to do his part in helping the body (church) to function at its best (Romans 12:3-5; 14:7; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27). A part of the function of the body is to give praise and adoration to God through various avenues of what is called worship.



## WHAT IS WORSHIP?

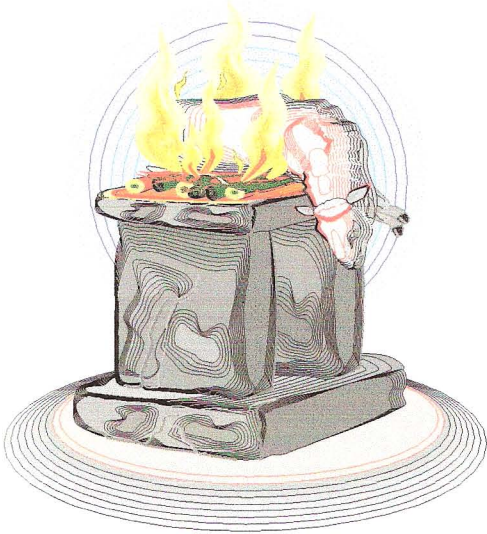
The idea behind the word "worship" is that someone is "worthy" of special attention from man. Its obvious use with reference to God is that God is worthy of all the praise, honor, and recognition man can give to Him. The idea behind the Greek words translated "worship" is: "*to kiss forward,*" "*to bow down,*" "*to serve,*" "*to fall back before,*" "*to fear,*" "*to show reverence to.*" *Such ideas stress the need for:*

- 1) Humility on man's part in the presence of Almighty God (James 4:8-10).
- 2) Showing an Awe, Reverence or Respect for the Nature and Actions of God (Revelation 14:7).
- 3) Expressing openly man's admiration, adoration, praise, and honor to the God that has redeemed man (Revelation 15:3-4).
- 4) Being acceptable in life and actions before this true God of heaven (Isaiah 1:13-17).

Worship is something that needs to come from within the heart and soul of man and expressed openly in appointed ways by God (John 4:24; Psalms 29:2) to give honor, praise, and glory to God. Worship should be primarily engaged in to be pleasing to God, not man! However, there is a strange phenomenon about the design of the worship to God—it is intended to benefit primarily the worshipper. The very activities commanded by God lead to an upbuilding and encouragement to those who sincerely participate.



## ONLY PRIEST CAN APPROACH GOD ACCEPTABLY



Under God's Covenant with the Jewish nation, only priests were allowed to offer a sacrifice unto God and be acceptable. Saul, the first King of Israel, found this out the hard way. He was strongly rebuked by Samuel (a prophet and a priest of God) for offering a burnt offering rather than allowing the priest to offer it (1 Samuels 13:8-14). No one could just appoint themselves priest, but they had to be chosen by God to serve as priest for the people—like Aaron (Hebrews 5:4). Priests were taken from among men to serve as "go-betweens" between God and man. He is the one to offer gifts and sacrifices before God for the people (Hebrews 5:1). But God wanted these priests to have compassion on the people that they served—to help them (Hebrews 5:2).

Under the New Covenant, Jesus is the Christian's Great High Priest that serves His people before the throne of God, continually making intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25-28; 9:12; 4:14-16) by His blood that serves as their means of atonement. But, what about priests here on earth that offer gifts and sacrifices to God for the people? The Hebrew writer gives an indication when he says in chapter 13:15-16: *"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well-pleased."* How could this writer even suggest such action unless Christians are appointed by God to act as priests! Peter makes it very clear that Christians are a *"royal priesthood"* and are to show forth praises to God (1 Peter 1:1-2; 2:9). He also states that this *"holy priesthood"* is to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptably to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5). Paul admonished the Christians at Rome to offer their bodies as living sacrifices to God (Romans 12:1). John says that Jesus had made His people to be both *"kings and priests"* unto God (Revelation 1:6). Thus, all of God's redeemed people are appointed as priests to wait on the services of God and to offer up acceptable gifts and sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ.

## ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

Just any kind of worship offered to God will not be accepted by Him. Since only priest can offer acceptable gifts and sacrifices to God—one who is not a priest would offer vain worship to his Maker. The Bible speaks of various things that makes one's worship **UNACCEPTABLE** to God:

- 1) To worship God ignorantly (Acts 17:22-23).
- 2) To make one's worship vain by turning from what God teaches and following the doctrines and commands of men (Mark 7:6-8).
- 3) Living an ungodly life makes one's worship vain (Isaiah 1:13-17).

- 4) Worshipping of angels or men (Colossians 2:18-19; Acts 10:25-26).
- 5) Designing one's own avenues of worship to God (Colossians 2:20-23).

**ACCEPTABLE** worship involves several aspects:

- 1) **The Right object.** The right object must be worshipped. Only God is to be worshipped (Matthew 4:11; John 4:24). Man cannot reasonably or acceptably worship a being he does not know. Paul wanted to tell the Athenians about the true and living God so they could worship Him correctly (Acts 17:23) and not ignorantly. It would be correct to worship Jesus, since He is God also (Revelation 5:5-14).
- 2) **The Mind of Man.** The mind of man must be involved! Worship is to be with understanding (1 Corinthians 14:15). It is to involve the memory of what has been done for us (1 Corinthians 11:24). It is to worship the God that one has come to know with his mind (John 17:3). It is to express one's love to God with his mind (Matthew 22:37). Worship is a decision of the mind!
- 3) **The Heart of Man.** Man's heart must be in his worship! Jesus said that worship with the lips and not with the heart is unacceptable (Matthew 15:7-9). Acceptable worship comes from the spirit within man (John 4:24). It is to express one's emotions and feelings about God: one's thanksgiving (1 Corinthians 1:4); one's love (Matthew 22:37; 1 John 4:19); one's praise for His grace (Ephesians 1:6); one's awe, reverence, respect (Hebrews 12:28). Worship should be the outpouring of one's heart towards God.
- 4) **The Body of Man.** Man's body needs to be involved in his worship to God. Man bows his body in humility and reverence to God (Ephesians 3:14). In order to express himself in proper worship activities: Man's mouth, tongue, arms, legs, etc., are all involved in one way or another in worship of his Maker (1 Timothy 2:8).
- 5) **A spirit of Harmony.** A spirit of harmony has to be involved in order to worship God publicly with others. Fellowship or joint-participation is involved even though it is individual participation. The early church continued in their activity of worship that involved fellowship (Acts 2:41). Worship is a desirable fellowship activity.
- 6) **Proper Actions.** Proper worship also involves proper actions. Not only is the inward part of man to express worship to God, but it needs to be expressed in ways that God has stated He wants and will accept (John 4:24). It must be sincerely expressed to God, but we show our sincerity by listening to what God says He wants in the way of worship. Thus, worship needs to be in truth, according to God's Word (John 17:17). All we do is to be done by Jesus' authority (Matthew 28:18-20). There is a danger that man can go through the right actions outwardly, but still not worship God from the inner man. Such worship is not acceptable to God (Matthew 15:8). Jesus strongly condemned the Scribes and Pharisees for their outward show of righteousness, but their hearts were not in the right relationship with God (Matthew 23:25-28). The following examples will help illustrate not only the need for proper attitudes in worship, but proper actions as well:



- a) Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-4).
- b) Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-3).
- c) Saul (1 Samuels 15:10-23).
- d) Israel (Isaiah 1:11-17).
- e) Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).
- f) Corinthians (1 Corinthians 11:17-30).

### PUBLIC AND PRIVATE WORSHIP

It has been stated by many that a person can worship God in his closet at home or on a mountain side just as acceptably as in a "church building." It is true that the place where man worships God is no longer a binding command upon the true worshipper of God as it was under the Old Covenant (John 4:19-24). Jesus placed the emphasis of acceptable worship, not on the place, but on it being "*in spirit and in truth.*" The New Testament indicates that worship can be both private and public in nature. However, it is not the one to the exclusion of the other, but both that is needed!

Indications of **Private Worship**: (1) Doing alms (Matthew 6:1-4); (2) Praying (Matthew 6:5-6); (3) Singing (James 5:13); (4) Studying the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15).

**Public Worship** is where the members of the Lord's church comes together to jointly participate in prescribed activities of worship to God at set times. Five activities are specially mentioned as being done in a collective situation:

- 1) **Partaking of the Lord's Supper** (1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Acts 20:7). This is a communion together in memory of the body and blood of Jesus in His death on the cross for mankind's sins. It is also referred to in some places as the "*breaking of bread.*"
- 2) **Giving of one's prosperity** (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7). This money is placed into a common treasury and is to be used to carry out those things commanded of the Lord. Christians are warned against loving money (1 Timothy 6:10); being covetous (Colossians 3:5); giving grudgingly (2 Corinthians 9:7); giving stingily (2 Corinthians 9:6). Such are encouraged to give liberally (Romans 12:8); as one is prospered (1 Corinthians 16:1-2); bountifully (2 Corinthians 9:6); and cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- 3) **Learning the Word of God together** (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 14:26). The church is a teaching institution. It is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15). The church is not only to teach the lost in order to make disciples of Jesus, but to teach these disciples to observe all that Jesus has commanded (Matthew 28:18-20).
- 4) **Praying together** (1 Corinthians 14:15; Acts 2:42). The Christian needs to pray continually, faithfully all along (1 Thessalonians 5:17). In prayer, he can receive help, guidance, forgiveness, comfort, as well as petition for others (James 5:16; Philippians 4:6).
- 5) **Singing together** (1 Corinthians 14:15; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19). Melody is made in

the heart to God as one sings with his mouth. Singing can express not only joy and thanksgiving to God, but as well the sadness of the conditions in one's life (James 5:13; Psalm 88:1-7).

### **A SPECIAL DAY FOR WORSHIP**

While God can be worshipped on any day of the week by certain activities, but He has appointed a special day for His people to come together in a worship assembly. Two activities of the above are specifically commanded to be done or was done on the first day of the week (Sunday): Giving and the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-34; 16:1-2; Acts 20:7). This day is special in that:

- 1) The Lord was raised on this day (Luke 24:1, 13).
- 2) Jesus met with His disciples on this day during the 40 days after His resurrection (John 20:1, 19).
- 3) The church had its beginning on Pentecost, which was the first day of the week (Acts 2:1).
- 4) The early church evidently met on this special day (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 20:7).
- 5) A warning is given not to forsake the assembly of God's people which would indicate a special time for worship together (Hebrews 10:24-25).

### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

While public and private devotion or worship to God is necessary and is to follow the prescribed activities, it is also evident that Christians can bring glory to God by their daily lives that are lived correctly (1 Corinthians 10:31; Matthew 6:13-16; Romans 12:1). In this sense, every day is a worship or giving glory to God. True devotion to God will be expressed from the heart according to God's direction.





## Lesson Eight

# "YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

*"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.....Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*

(Matthew 5:14, 16)

Jesus said that His redeemed people become "salt" to preserve the world and "light" to help the world find their way out of the darkness of the bondage of sin (Matthew 5:13-16). At first, such a concept can be over-whelming, but after realizing that it takes time (much time) and effort (much effort), the possibilities seem more within the grasp of the new Christian. It is a growing, maturing process that never stops all of one's life. In fact, even the terms and phrases that are used to identify the Christian makes it obvious what his relationship is to be to God, but as well what his relationship is to the world about him. Please note as follows:

1. One called out of the world (2 Cor. 6:17-18).
2. One who is no longer a servant of sin (Rom. 6:17).
3. One who is NOW a servant of righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18).
4. One who walks in newness of life (Rom. 6:4).
5. A follower of Jesus that has put the old life behind (Luke 14:26-27, 33).
6. A person who has been crucified with Jesus (Gal. 2:20).
7. A child of God (1 John 3:1).
8. A believer (Acts 5:14).
9. A disciple (Acts 6:7).
10. One beloved of God (Rom. 1:7).
11. One called to be a saint (1 Cor. 1:2).
12. One in whom the Spirit of God dwells (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 8:8-9).
13. A living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1).
14. A transformed person (Rom. 12:2).

It is this type of person, with this understanding, that can truly be "salt" and "light" to the lost world about him. Such terms and phrases used to identify or characterize the Christian are actually indicating that things have happened, and are happening, in his life that are good! The following things help to identify those good things that are taking place in the Christian's life.

## HE BECOMES THE TEMPLE OF GOD

The Christian becomes the new dwelling place for the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 6:19-20). The Holy Spirit comes into his life in a special "indwelling" upon his obedience to the gospel of



Christ (Acts 2:38; 5:32). A distinction needs to be made here between the miraculous and the non-miraculous activities of the Holy Spirit.

For several years in the early church, miraculous gifts were given by the Spirit of God to certain individuals in the church (1 Cor. 12:1-11). These gifts were needed to reveal the message of God and to confirm it as being from God (Mark 16:17-20; Heb. 2:3-4). These gifts were given either by God directly (Acts 2:1-4; 10:1-11:18) or by the laying on of the hands of one of the apostles (Acts 19:1-7). These miraculous gifts ceased when their purpose was fulfilled—in the giving, confirming, and writing down of the Word of God in its completed form (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

The "indwelling" of the Spirit of God in the Christian was something different. It could not be seen or felt, but was something to be believed. This indwelling was to serve as a seal for the new Christian and also serve as God's assurance (earnest) that He will carry out His promises (Eph. 1:13-14). But the primary purpose of this indwelling is to serve as a motivation to the Christian to live a godly life. Just the realization that God's Spirit dwells within the Christian should help him to stay away from sin (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

### HE IS A TRANSFORMED PERSON

The new Christian becomes a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). He has experienced a "death" to the old way of living that was wrong and is "alive" to the new way he is to live (Rom. 6:1-6). He no longer desires to be a "servant of sin," but now has become a "servant of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18). The Christian life is not just abstaining from sinful activities, it is also an involvement in righteous actions. There are things to be put off as well as things to be put on in one's life (Eph. 4:21-25). Paul lists several things that need to be put off in Eph. 4:21-5:19:

- |                               |                     |                          |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Former behavior of old man | 7. Anger            | 13. Covetousness         |
| 2. Lying                      | 8. Clamor           | 14. Filthiness           |
| 3. Stealing                   | 9. Evil speaking    | 15. Foolish talking      |
| 4. Corrupt speech             | 10. Malice          | 16. Jestings             |
| 5. Bitterness                 | 11. Fornication     | 17. Not filled with wine |
| 6. Wrath                      | 12. All uncleanness |                          |

But Paul does not stop with things to be put off, but also adds the things to be put into one's life:

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Righteousness   | 8. Forgiving one another      |
| 2. True holiness   | 9. Walk in love               |
| 3. Speak truth   | 10. Walk as children of light |
| 4. Be angry and sin not, let not sun go down on your wrath | 11. Walk circumspectly        |
| 5. Edifying speech   | 12. Redeeming the time        |
| 6. Kind to one another                                     | 13. Be filled with the Spirit |
| 7. Tenderhearted.  |                               |

In the Colossian letter Paul repeats a similar admonition of things to be put out of one's life (Col. 3:5-17):

- |                         |                 |                          |
|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Fornication          | 5. Covetousness | 9. Blasphemy             |
| 2. Uncleanness          | 6. Anger        | 10. Filthy communication |
| 3. Inordinate affection | 7. Wrath        | 11. Lying                |
| 4. Evil concupiscence   | 8. Malice       |                          |

He also adds the things to be put on as well:

- |                       |                           |                          |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Bowels of mercies  | 4. Meekness               | 7. Forgiving one another |
| 2. Kindness           | 5. Long-Suffering         | 8. Charity (love)        |
| 3. Humbleness of mind | 6. Forbearing one another |                          |

It is quite obvious that these are sample listings of things to be put off and put on. Other listings could be given that indicate the same things, for example:

1. To put off the works of the flesh. Gal. 5:19-21
2. To put on the fruit of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22-23
3. Unrighteous and ungodly deeds to be put off. Rom. 1:18-32
4. Christian virtues to be added to one's life. 2 Pet. 1:5-12
5. Evil things to be put out of one's life. 2 Tim. 3:1-5
6. Things to put into one's life. 1 Thess. 5:14-22

Every effort should be put forth on the part of the new Christian to rid his life of sin, but also to fill his life with righteousness. The new Christian is especially urged to live as follows:

1. A godly life—maintaining a right relationship with God. 1 John 1:7-9
2. A righteous life—maintaining a right relationship with all men, but especially with other Christians. Rom. 12:18; 1 John 3:7, 14-18
3. A holy life—A life that has been cleansed and set apart to serve God according to His direction. 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; 1 Thess. 3:13
4. A sacrificial life—Giving one's body and spirit in the serve of God. 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rom. 12:1; Gal. 2:20

This truly is a transformed life! One that changed from setting affections on things on earth to things above (Col. 3:1-3).

### **HE IS A HARMONIOUS PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST**

Upon being baptized into Christ, the Lord makes the saved person a part of His body, the church (Eph. 2:16; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Cor. 12:13). See Chart #1 for a visual of this concept. God's people are made "one in Christ Jesus" by the blood of Jesus (Eph. 2:16). Upon becoming a part of the "one body of Christ," the new Christian is urged to help maintain that unity and harmony among the people of God.



1. He is urged to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Eph. 4:3
2. He is urged not to allow division among the people of God. 1 Cor. 1:10
3. He is to function like a physical body, having the same care for each member of the body of Christ. 1 Cor. 12:25
4. He is to strive to grow and mature in this oneness of the faith. Eph. 4:13, 4-6
5. He is to strive to be like-minded, of one accord and of one mind. Phil. 2:2; 1 Cor. 1:10
6. He is to hold fast to sound words. 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:3-4
7. He is to avoid things that bring about division. Tit. 3:9; 2 John 9
8. He is to avoid those who teach falsely. Tit. 3:9-10; Rom. 16:17-18

It is important to realize that this unity is not based upon perfection of belief or of obedience but rather upon our being in the one body of Christ striving daily to walk in the light (1 John 1:7). See Chart #2. Unity is more of a spirit within than of outward actions as this chart indicates. The chart visualizes the fact that Christians are at all levels in their growth or lack of growth in the church, but can still live in unity and harmony with one another as they grow.

Another Chart #3 helps to emphasize the many passages that tell Christians to care and be concerned about one another to help keep this unity and harmony in the body of Christ.

Also, this oneness is made possible and maintained as each person continues to abide in Christ Jesus (John 17:21). We have fellowship with God and as well with one another as we abide in Christ (2 John 9). See Chart #4. This chart is trying to show that one's unity with other Christians is made possible through one's unity with God!

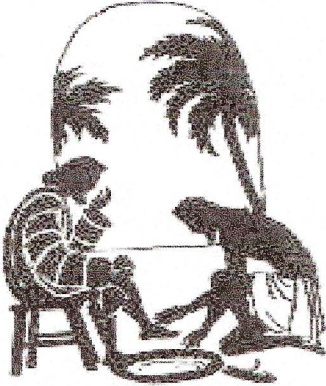
### **HE IS A FRUITFUL WORKER**

God has not called His people out of the world to sit down and wait for His return, or for death! Rather, Christians are called out of the kingdom of darkness so they can live in the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13-14). But what is involved in this "living" in the kingdom of God? It involves at least the following:

1. Such are to be taught all that Jesus has commanded to be done and to do it (Matt. 28:19-20) so their minds and lives can be fully enlightened by God's truth (Rom. 12:2; John 8:32).
2. Able teachers are to teach others so they in turn can also teach (2 Tim. 2:2; Tit. 2:3-5).
3. Such are then to reach out with this message to those in darkness (Phil. 2:13-16; Acts 8:4).
4. Such are to be fruitful workers in the vineyard of the Lord (John 15:1-8; 2 Tim. 2:20-21).
5. Such are to fill their lives with good works (Tit. 2:14; 3:8).
6. Such are to be servants to God and others (Matt. 20:25-28; John 13:1-16).

It is through such activity that God is glorified (John 15:8; Matt. 5:16) and souls are prepared for eternity (Eph. 4:13, 16).

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS



"The servant is not greater than his lord."

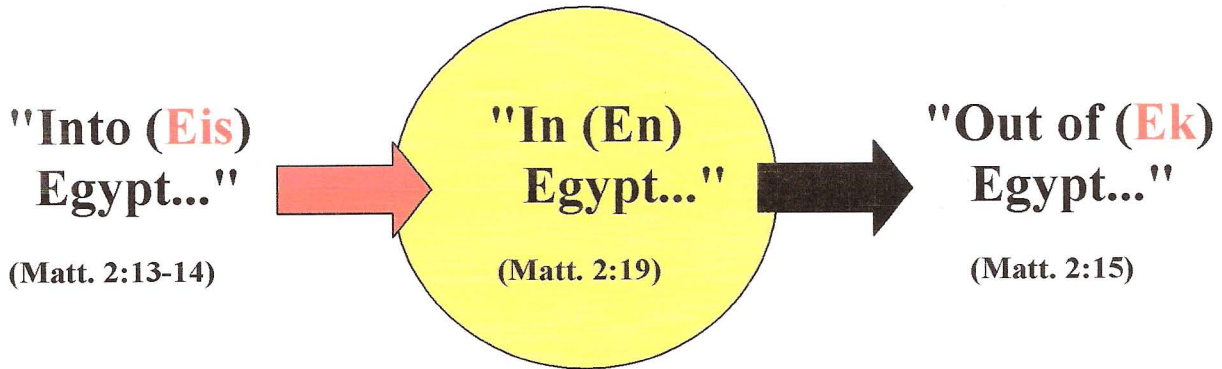
The early Christians continued in a fellowship with one another that was characterized as being "of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 2:42; 4:32). Even when sin reared its ugly head in their midst and was rooted out by God (Acts 5:1-11), their unity was still intact. Even when murmuring arose over some members being neglected, they quickly solved the problem and maintained their unity (Acts 6:1-7). Perfect unity and harmony will never be possible for human beings, even those redeemed by Christ. Yet, this is the goal towards which all Christians are to strive, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).



### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

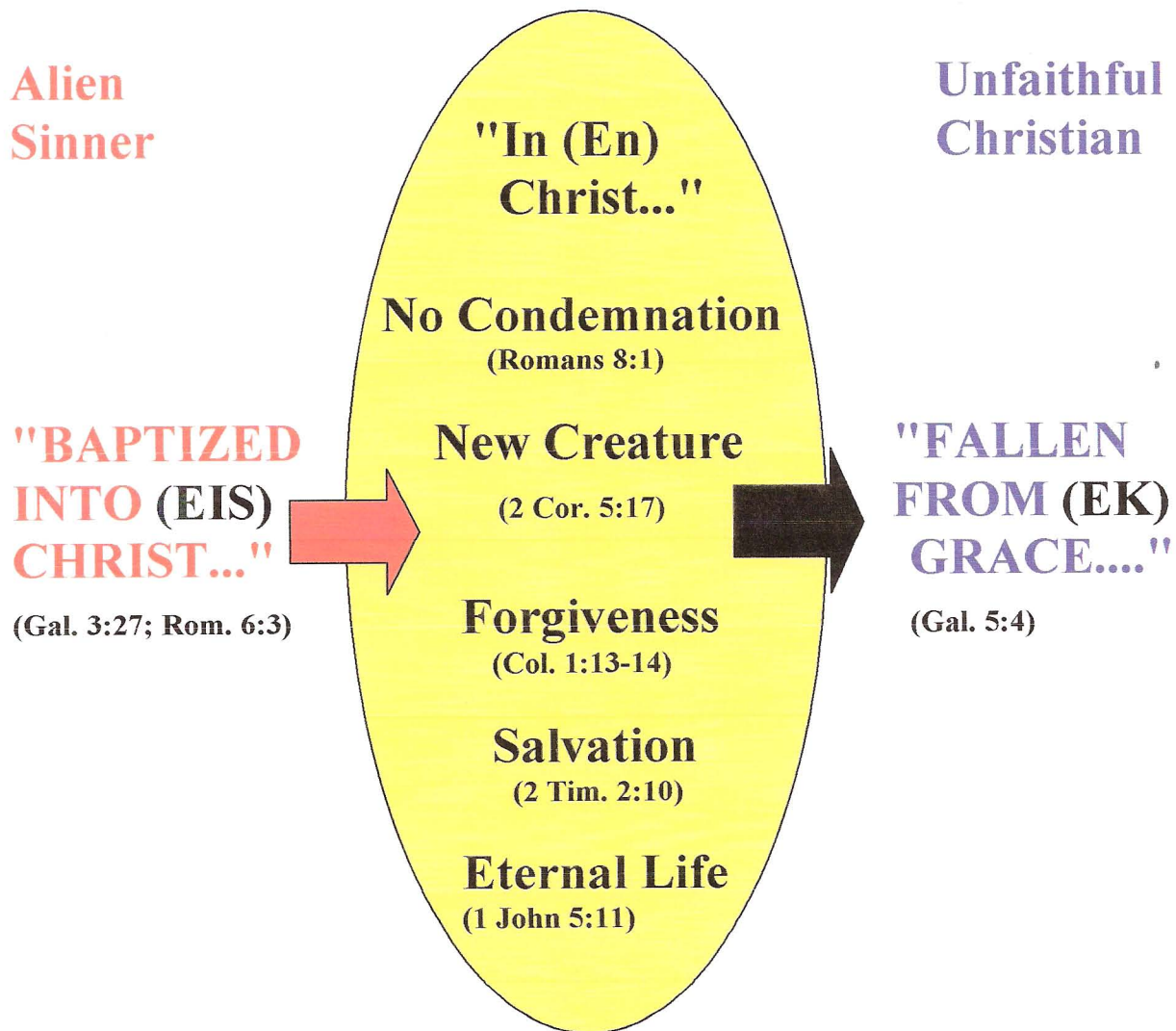
1. What do the terms used to identify or characterize Christians say has happened to the person?
2. What is the distinction between the miraculous and non-miraculous activity of the Holy Spirit?
3. What is suggested to be the primary motivation for the Spirit's dwelling in the Christian?
4. Why putt off some things and put on others?
5. What one thought characterizes a Christian as found in Col. 3:1-3?
6. Distinguish between a godly life and a righteous life.
7. How does one get into the "one body of Christ?"
8. Why the admonitions to keep the unity of the Spirit?
9. What helps to maintain the unity in the church?
10. Why is it so important for Christians to bear fruit and be filled with good works?

# "INTO, IN, OUT OF"



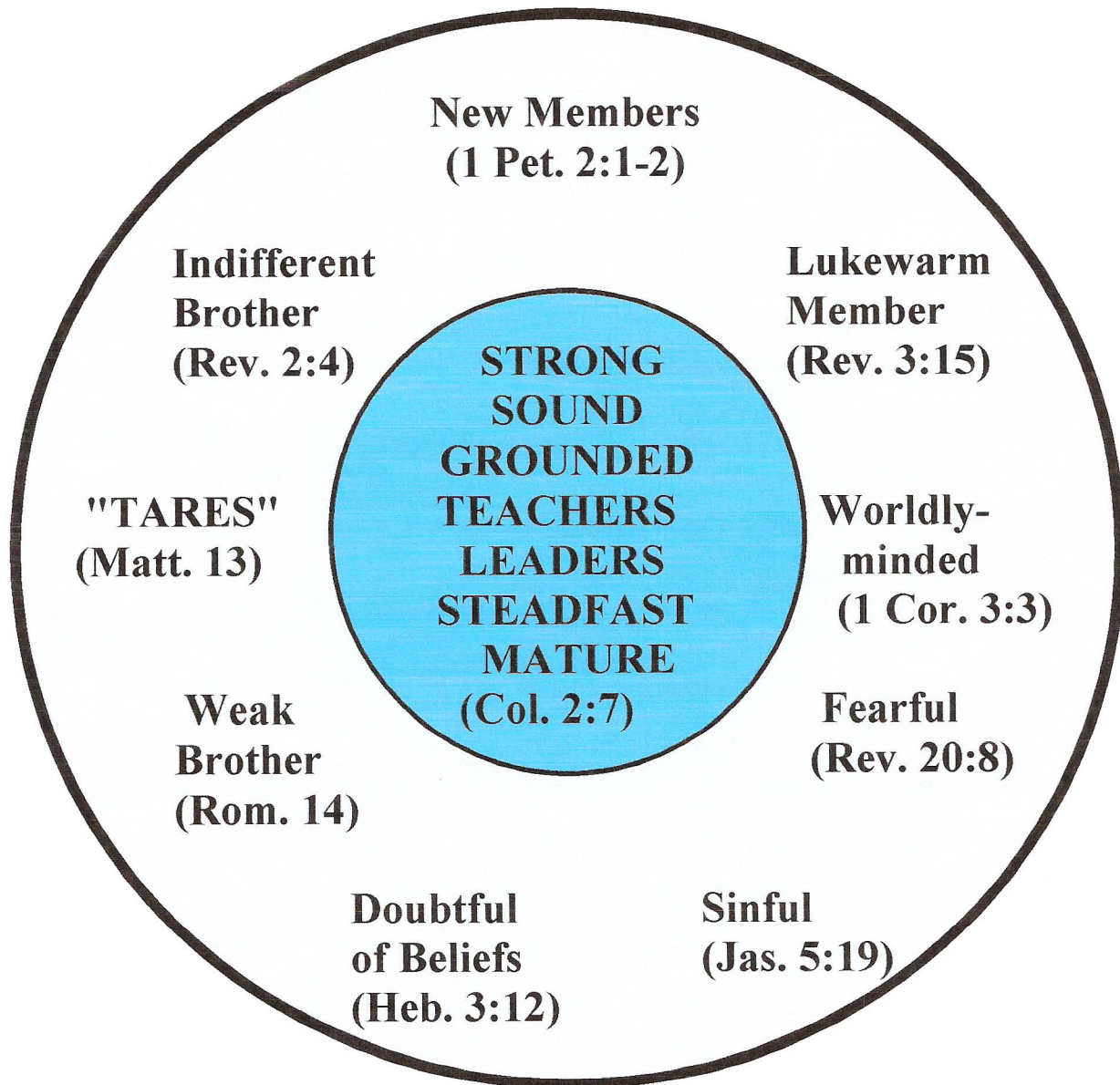
**Alien  
Sinner**

**Unfaithful  
Christian**





# CONGREGATIONAL UNITY



## APOSTASY

Heb. 6:4-6

Heb. 10:26-30

2 Pet. 2:20-22

## SEVERED

(Gal. 5:2-3)

## DISFELLOWSHIPED

(1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:5-15)

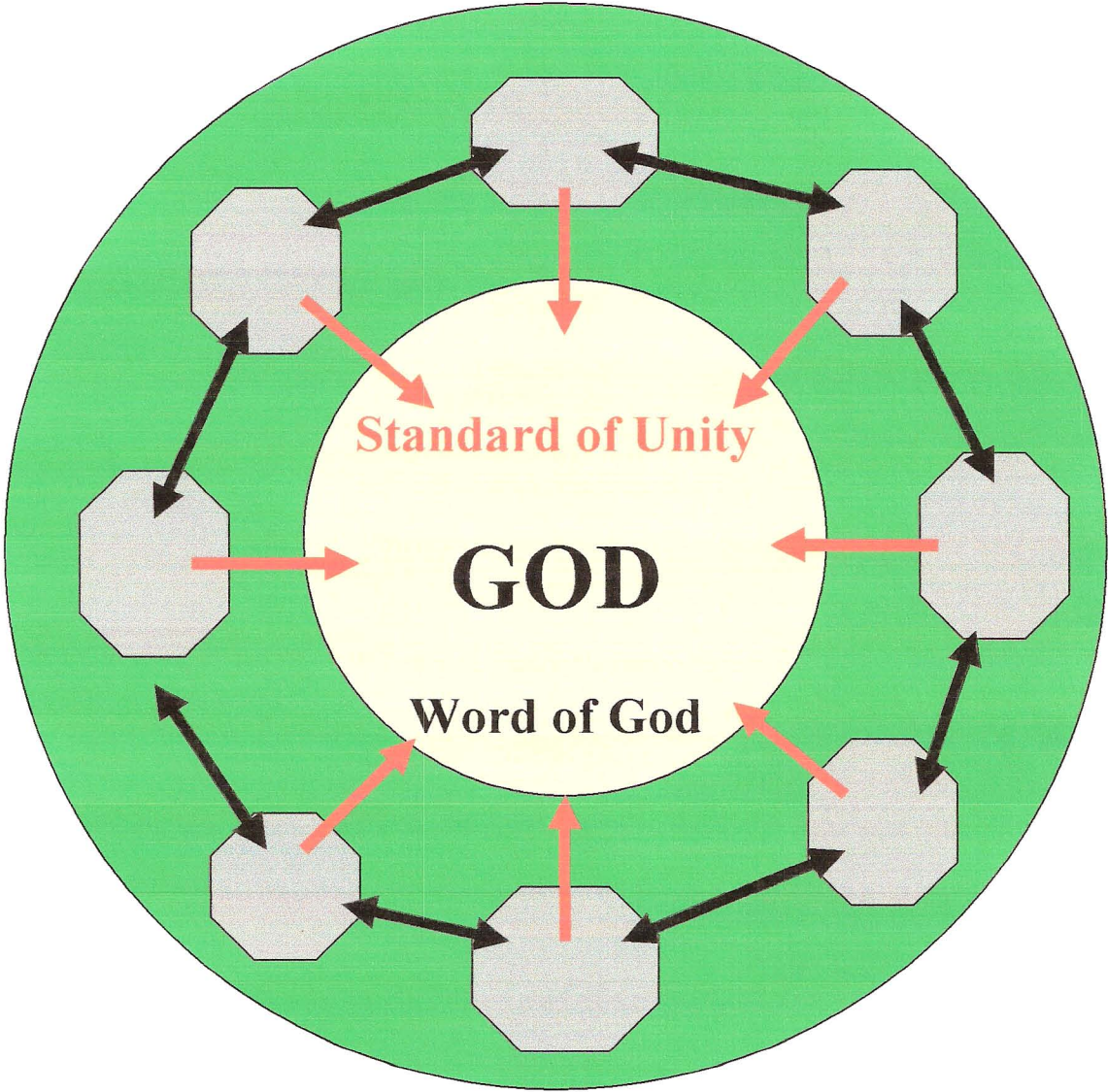
# "ONE ANOTHER" PASSAGES

1. **Love one another.** John 13:34; 15:12, 17; Rom. 13:8; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11; 2 John 5; 2 Thess. 1:3.
2. **Build up one another.** Rom. 14:19
3. **Admonish one another.** Rom. 15:14
4. **Wait for one another.** 1 Cor. 11:33
5. **Care for one another.** 1 Cor. 12:25
6. **Be Kind to one another.** Eph. 4:32
7. **Be tender hearted to one another.** Eph. 4:32
8. **Comfort one another.** 1 Thess. 4:18
9. **Provoke one another to love and good works.** Heb. 10:24
10. **Pray for one another.** James 5:16
11. **Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.** Rom. 12:10
12. **Give preference in honor of one another.** Rom. 12:10
13. **Serve one another.** Gal. 5:13
14. **Be subject to one another.** Eph. 5:21
15. **Be humble before one another.** 1 Pet. 5:5
16. **Regard one another as more important.** Phil. 2:3
17. **Be of the same mind towards one another.** Rom. 12:16; 15:5
18. **Accept one another.** Rom. 15:7
19. **Bear Burdens of one another.** Gal. 6:2
20. **Forbearing one another.** Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13
21. **Forgiving one another.** Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13
22. **Greet one another.** Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Pet. 5:14
23. **Show hospitality to one another.** 1 Pet. 4:9
24. **Fellowship one another.** 1 John 1:7
25. **Confess sins to one another.** James 5:16
26. **Do not judge one another.** Rom. 14:13
27. **Do not speak against one another.** James 4:11
28. **Do not complain against one another.** James 5:9
29. **Do not lie to one another.** Col. 3:9



# TRUE BIBLICAL UNITY

(Individual)



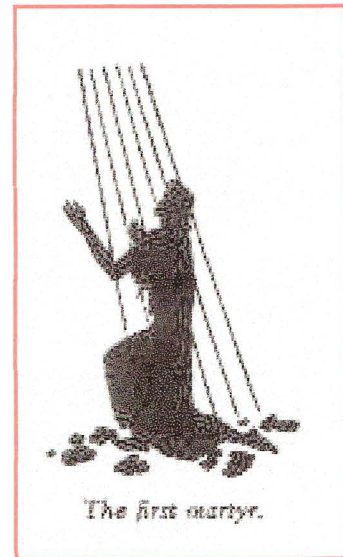
## Lesson Nine

# "PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE"

*"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:10)*

The inspired history of the early church (Acts) covers a period from about 29 AD up to 63 AD. Additional historical insights can be gained from the later letters that brings the inspired account up to the close of the first century. From here on, the history of the church depends upon any prophetic statements plus the writings of some of the early Christians. This lesson will have a mixture of Scripture quotations as well as exerts and information from uninspired writers of the early centuries of the church.

Persecution of believers in God has been a prevalent fact of history dating back to the time of righteous Abel being slain by his wicked brother, Cain (Genesis 4:8-9; Hebrews 11:4; 1 John 3:12). The beginning of the church was no different. Within a few days of it's beginning, opposition set in by the religious and political leaders among the Jewish people. Their concept was that a "new sect" had sprung up among them and they were going to stamp it out (Acts 5:17-42; 28:22). At first, imprisonment and beatings were involved, but it evolved further into death itself for those who would preach this Jesus before the people. Thus, shortly after its beginning the church had its first martyr, Stephen—one of the seven men that had been chosen by the church to help relieve the neglected Grecian widows (Acts 7:54-60). As the church began to spread throughout the world, its persecutors became Gentiles along with the Jews. And even later, it became an imperial decree of Rome itself to oppose and to persecute the church.



## CHRISTIANS WERE TOLD TO EXPECT PERSECUTION

These early Christians were prepared in mind and heart for the persecution that was to come upon them; and thus, weathered the storm that came in strong waves time after time! Jesus tried to prepare his disciples for persecution in the famous Sermon on the Mount. One of the beatitudes indicated that persecution would come and such who endured it would be blessed (Matthew 5:10-12). Even at the end of His public ministry He was still warning of the coming persecution upon His followers (Matthew 24:8-10).

The book of Acts records some of these persecutions.



1. Acts 4—Imprisonment of Peter and John.
2. Acts 5:17-42—All the apostles were arrested, beaten & imprisoned.
3. Acts 7—Martyrdom of Stephen.
4. Acts 8:1-4; 9:1-2—Persecution by Saul of Tarsus.
5. Acts 9:26-30—Efforts to kill Saul (Paul) by Jews in Jerusalem.
6. Acts 12:1-25—Herod kills James and imprisoned Peter with intent to kill him.
7. Acts 14:1-4—Persecution by Jews at Iconium.
8. Acts 14:19—Persecution by Jews at Lystra.
9. Acts 21:27-28:31—Paul's imprisonments in Jerusalem, Caesarea, and finally at Rome for trial.

The persecution at first came upon the apostles and then it spread to members of the church, which resulted in the church being scattered abroad (Acts 8:1-4). As the church continued to spread and preach the gospel message, it eventually would come to Rome and there to be judged worthy of acceptance or persecution.

### **ROMAN PERSECUTION**

At first, the church was unhindered in its progress in the Roman Empire. But, this was short-lived! It was during the reign of Nero that open persecution broke out upon the church with the backing of an Imperial Decree from Nero. For some reason Nero seized upon the idea of blaming Christians for all the evils that had befallen Rome.

1. He made laws against them.
2. He declared Christians to be cannibals.
3. He accused Christians of burning the city of Rome to cover up his own mis-deeds.
4. He made sport of the death of Christians—covering them with skins of wild beasts and setting dogs on them.
5. He nailed them to crosses to slowly die—often covering them with pitch and burned to death.
6. It is believed that both Paul and Peter met their death during the latter part of Nero's reign (AD 68)(2 Timothy 4:6-8; 2 Peter 1:12-14).

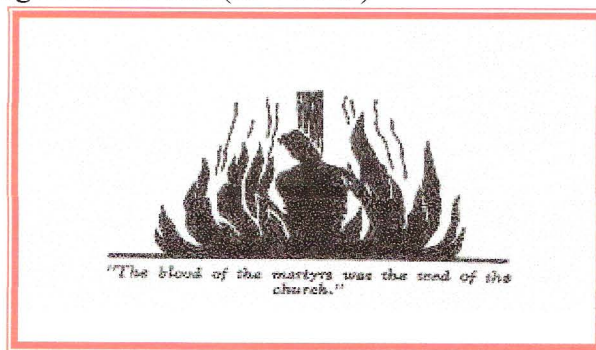
Shortly before this, both Paul and Peter were inspired to include in their letters to the churches strong encouragement to be ready for persecution that would come. (Romans 8:35; 12:12; 2 Corinthians 1:4; 7:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 1:6-7; 2:21-25; 3:14-18; 4:1-2).

### **A PERSECUTED, BUT FAITHFUL BRIDE OF CHRIST**

Since the Roman government was closely tied in with its pagan religions, Christianity would be considered as a challenge to both. Upon the death of Nero in 68 AD and the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, Christians might be lulled into thinking that persecutions were over by both Jews and Gentiles. Shortly afterwards, during the reign of Domitian, another organized

effort was put forth to stamp out the church by the Empire. It was this persecution that brought on the need for the Revelation Letter to be written to give strength and hope to Christians for the next 200 years. Below are the severe periods of persecution that faced the church until the turn of the 4th century:

1. Under reign of Nero (54-68 AD)
2. Under reign of Domitian (81-96 AD)



3. Under reign of Trajan (96-116 AD)
4. Under reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180 AD)
5. Under reign of Severus (193-211 AD)
6. Under reign of Valerian (253-260 AD)
7. Under reign of Diocletian (284-305 AD)

In spite of such severe and terrible persecution at times, the church continued to grow and spread throughout the Empire. It was the edict of Milan in 313 AD that finally stopped the persecution, but not before a terrible price had been paid by so many who were faithful to Christ and endure awful brutality and inhuman treatment simply because they were Christians.

**The Revelation letter** not only depicted the severe persecutions that the church would face, but also symbolically foretold of its faithfulness in the midst of these terrible persecutions and its ultimate triumph over the forces that was striving to stamp it out.

1. The letter begins with a call to be faithful even in the face of death (Revelation 2:10).
2. The next scene is of beheaded souls who had been faithful to the Lord even in death, and crying out for God's vengeance upon their persecutors. They were given white robes signifying faithfulness, purity in service to God. They were told they would have to wait until more of their brethren had endured the same as they (Revelation 6:9-11).
3. Then, a worship scene is pictured in heaven of an innumerable number of souls worshipping God who had passed through the "great ordeal" and washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:13-15).

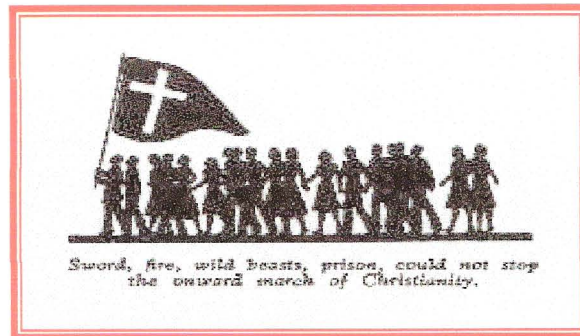
With the Edict of Milan (313 AD) the church was to have rest from the terrible persecutions it had so successfully endured to the glory of God. The church had weathered one of the great storms that the Devil had brought on to destroy its existence from the earth.



## THE DEFENSE OF CHRISTIANITY

Another battle that was raging during this time was the church's efforts to defend itself against false accusations, defamation, as well as false teachings and corruption of doctrine. As long as the apostles were alive, these efforts were mainly dealt with through the inspired writings of the apostles. Many scripture statements give indications of these problems being dealt with during the first century. Following are some Scriptures that give such indications: 1 Corinthians 15:12; Colossians 2:8, 18; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; 6:3-4; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; 3:6-8; 4:3-4; 1 John 2:18; 4:1-3. In addition to struggling with vain philosophies of men, efforts were being made to corrupt the lives of Christians (2 Timothy 3:1-5; 2 Peter 2; Jude; Revelation 2:20, etc.).

Upon the death of the apostles and with the onslaught of the Gnostic heresy and the continual defamation of the church, men began to arise in the church to speak up for Christianity and to give rational reasons for believing its message. These writings are referred to as "apologies"—that is, a defense of the Christian System. These writings explained to a pagan and an unbelieving world the origin, doctrine, and worship of the new religion and gives great insight to how they attempted to affect their world with the message of Christ. Because of their public effort, some of these men died a martyr's death. Some of the better known of these men was as follows:



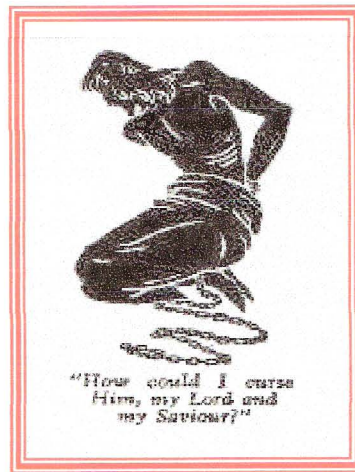
1. Quadratus (125-129 AD)
2. Aristides (138-147 AD)
3. Justin Martyr (103-165 AD)
4. Tatian (125-200 AD)
5. Melito (169-190 AD)
6. Athenagoras (177-180 AD)
7. Theophilus (190 AD)
8. Irenaeus (130-200 AD)
9. Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD)
10. Tertullian (155-223 AD)
11. Hippolytus (170-236 AD)
12. Origen (185-254 AD)

These men, making use of inspired writings and their skills and learning, were able to

refute the calumny and expose the irrationalities of paganism. And yet, a more noble apology was written in the tears and the blood of the Christians by the examples of their beautiful and holy lives that they lived before a pagan world. The new spirit of self-denying love, which they exemplified, awoke wonder and amazement in that selfish, self-centered society.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The church had faced and won its first great battle. It remained a faithful bride during most of this time. But the next onslaught of the Devil was to be of such a nature that the church would suffer severely from his wiles!





### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. About how much time is covered in Acts of inspired history of the church?
2. Who was the first righteous person to be persecuted and why?
3. Who was the first martyr in the church?
4. In what way did Jesus attempt to prepare His followers to face persecution?
5. Who were the first to be persecuted after the beginning of the church?
6. What caused the church to be scattered?
7. Who was the first Roman Emperor that brought persecution upon the church?
8. What is recorded in early writings about Paul and Peter's death?
9. What was Peter trying to help the Christians to understand when he said: "*Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you?*"
10. How many severe Roman persecutions were brought upon the church?
11. How did the Revelation letter help Christians to deal with the terrible ordeal of persecutions?
12. What finally stopped the persecutions?
13. What is an "apology" of Christianity?
14. What was the most beautiful "apology" for Christianity?

## Lesson Ten

## **"THERE COME A FALLING AWAY FIRST"**

*"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition."*

(2 Thessalonians 2:3)

By the end of the first Century the New Testament Scriptures had been given in their completed form, the church had spread over the known world, and was still growing in spite of the severe persecutions that came upon her for over 200 years.

The Apostles had given inspired instructions in all matters of organization, worship, and doctrine to the church. A plurality of elders were appointed to oversee each congregation (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). There was no presiding elder, but they were all equal in authority in the church. Each congregation was directly under the headship of Christ (Colossians 1:18). Their worship was simple—on each first day of the week they met to partake of the Lord's Supper, Prayed, engaged in Singing, studied together from the word of God, and gave of their prosperity. People became Christians by believing in Christ, repenting of sins, confessing their faith in Christ, and being immersed into Christ so they could be forgiven of their sins. These simple things need to be kept in mind as one studies this lesson on the apostasy of the church.

### **APOSTASY FORETOLD AND SYMBOLIZED**

When the phrase is used "falling away," it implies that the people were a part of the Lord's church, but left the way of God and became apostate from God. Such was foretold in no uncertain terms, as the following Scriptures will indicate.

1. **Matthew 7:15-20.** Jesus warned of the dangers of false teachers and to be aware of them.
2. **Matthew 24:24.** Jesus even warns not only about false prophets to come, but even false Christs.
3. **Acts 20:28-32.** Paul stated not only would "*grievous wolves*" enter in among the flock to destroy them, but also from among the elders would men arise speaking "*perverse things*" to draw away disciples after them.
4. **1 Timothy 4:1-5.** Paul said "*some shall depart from the faith.*" He even mentioned two of their errors they would teach: (1) Forbidding to marry; (2) Forbidding the eating of certain foods.
5. **2 Timothy 4:1-5.** Paul said some would turn their ears from the truth and turn unto fables.
6. **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.** These verses give more in detail of what brought on the apostasy. The "*man of sin*" is pictured as:
  - a) "*opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped*"



- b) *"he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."* Both of these concepts show clearly the exalting of men above God by usurping His authority over His people. These men take the place of God and are to be listened to as God.
- c) Paul said the *"mystery of iniquity"* was already at work, but he is being held back for now. He then turns to identify the *"man of sin."*
- 1) *"Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."*
  - 2) *"With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish."*
  - 3) *"They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."*
  - 4) *"God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."*
  - 5) Their end is to be condemnation because they did not believe the truth, but preferred to enjoy the pleasures of sin or unrighteousness.
7. **2 Peter 2:1-3.** Peter said that false teachers would come.
- a) *"They will secretly bring in damnable doctrines"*
  - b) *"Denying the Lord who bought them"*
  - c) *"Bring swift destruction upon themselves"*
  - d) *"Many will follow their pernicious ways"*
  - e) *"Way of truth will be evil spoken of"*
  - f) *"They will make merchandise"* of Christians.
8. **1 John 2:18.** John tells about the anti-Christ that was coming who would deny that Jesus came in the flesh (1 John 4:1-3).
9. **Jude 4.** Jude speaks about ungodly men turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and denying both God and Christ.

### THE FALLING AWAY SYMBOLIZED

John, by inspiration, not only pictures the martyred saints and their final victory, but as well symbolizes the great apostasy of the church brought on by the combining powers of the Religious and Civil authorities. The church in the eyes of those who beheld her had turned into a whore (harlot) riding on a scarlet Beast. Following are some references in Revelation that seems to be picturing what happens to the true church and the apostate church as it appears before the world:

1. **Revelation 11:1-2.** The Temple, Altar, and Worshippers are measured and numbered. But the outer court was not to be measured. It was given over to the Gentiles (unbelievers). The church was to be corrupted for a period of 42 months or 1260 days.
2. **Revelation 12:5-6.** The true church went into the wilderness for 1260 days and there she was sustained by God.
3. **Revelation 12:13-17.** The dragon seeks to make war against the followers of Christ.
4. **Revelation 13:1-8.** The dragon worked through the first beast to wage war against the saints. He blasphemed and reigned for 42 months. he overcame the followers of Christ. He was given authority over tribes, peoples, languages, nations. All the world was to worship the beast except for the faithful saints.
5. **Revelation 13:9-18.** The second beast wielded all the authority of the first beast. He deluded the inhabitants of the earth. he had control over the lives of all peoples.

6. **Revelation 17:1-18.** The next picture is of the great whore (harlot) sitting on the scarlet beast. She commits fornication with the kings of the earth. Her names are blasphemous before God. She holds a cup full of foulness and obscenities and fornication. Her name is, "*Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of every obscenity on earth.*" The whore is drunk with the blood of the saints. Ten kings (kingdoms) will be in league with the harlot to wage war against the true saints of God. The woman is the great city that holds sway over the kings of the earth.
7. **Revelation 18:1-5.** The call goes forth to come out of her and not partake of her sins. Her sins are piled up to heaven.
8. **Revelation 18:24.** The blood of prophets and God's people was found in her.
9. **Revelation 19:1-8.** But in stark contrast—the true and faithful church is pictured as a pure bride dressed in "*fine linen, clean and shining.*"

### DIGRESSION IN CHURCH GOVERNMENT

It is the desire of the devil to undermine the authority of God over His people. Paul made this very clear that this would happen (2 Thessalonians 2:4). Persecution failed to destroy the church, so the next step was to get inside the church and bring about an undermining of the headship or kingship of Christ. Following are the ways this was accomplished over a period of several hundreds of years.

- A) **By the Rise of the Monarchal Bishop.** From writings during the middle of the second Century we learn that one of the elders was referred to as "the bishop of the church" rather than as one of the bishops of the church. The next indication that can be seen from these writings is that "the bishop" was over several churches in a given area—mostly a large city church with several smaller churches in the countryside. By the middle of the third Century, Cyprian (248-258 AD) was strongly promoting the bishop as being the personal representative of Christ in a community and had authority over that church or churches in the area. In time, the bishops in leading cities were referred to as metropolitans. But those bishops in the chief cities such as Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus, Jerusalem, and Constantinople were referred to as patriarchs.
- B) **By the rise of the Councils of Bishops to Decide Issues in the Church.** At first, these councils were only held in provinces where bishops would meet and discuss problems of the churches. It was the Emperor (Constantine) that really brought all of the bishops together in a general conclave or council to help to unify the teachings of the churches and issue statements of doctrine for the churches to go by. The councils became the "Law-Making-Body" for the churches. The Emperors after Constantine were the ones who summoned the bishops in council, bore the expenses, presided in council, and gave to the decisions made by the bishops the force of Law for the whole Roman Empire, and maintained them by their authority. The Emperors even nominated or confirmed the most influential metropolitans and patriarchs. The seven councils recognize by both Eastern and Western churches were:
  - 1) Council of Nice. 325 AD
  - 2) Council of Constantinople. 381 AD
  - 3) Council of Effuses. 431 AD
  - 4) Council of Chalcedony. 451 AD (Largest & most authoritative, so far).



- 5) Council of Constantinople. 553 AD
- 6) Council of Constantinople. 680 AD
- 7) Council of Nice. 787 AD

Other councils met after this, but these are considered the most important. Thus, more and more men were assuming authority as the authority of Christ was being undermined. By the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century there remained only a mere shadow of the original church government in most of the churches.

**C) By the Rise of the Popes at Rome.** The struggle for power among the bishops became more and more obvious in the years from 300-600. By the 6th Century, five patriarchs were recognized as the greatest powers in the church: ROME, ANTIOCH, ALEXANDRIA, JERUSALEM, CONSTANTINOPLE. In 324 AD, Constantine had built the city of Byzantium (or Constantinople) as the new center of the Roman Empire. He also desired it to be the center of the church. Elaborate church buildings were built, exalting of church leaders, and efforts to give great prominence to the patriarch at Constantinople. The struggle for power between the patriarchs at Rome and Constantinople became evident to all. In 588 AD, the bishop at Constantinople assumed the title of universal bishop of the church. Quick replies and sharp words built a wall between the bishops of these two cities. Finally, in 606 AD, the new bishop at Rome assumed the title of universal bishop or pope of the church and was able to maintain the assumption among the western churches.

At this time the pope did not have the power that later would be given to him. There was still the conflict over who had the final authority—the pope or the council of bishops. A doctrine was developed that stated that the bishops in council cannot err. Thus, the power still resided in the councils more than the pope.

**D) By the Rise of the Papal Power over the Churches and Nations.** The following ten things were involved in helping to give more and more power to the pope at Rome over the churches and nations:

- 1) The invading of Western Europe by Barbaric kings brought about a disunity and lack of stabilization. The Roman bishop became a stabilizing force to weld things together giving him more influence and greater power, which the Emperors had to deal with.
- 2) The invasion of the Moslems helped to unite east and West to repel their attacks. In recognition of the help of the Roman bishop, he was given temporal powers in 756 AD.
- 3) The sharing of power between pope and Emperors continued for years. During this time the Pseudo-Isidorium Decretals were forged and knowingly accepted to help exalt the pope over all other rulers.
- 4) The power to excommunicate gave the Roman pope greater power. He could cut people (rulers or peasants) off from God, the church, and any social contact and privileges as a citizen. This kept the average person in submission to the pope.
- 5) The final break with Constantinople in 1054 AD caused more power to be shifted to the pope at Rome. Western nations gave power to the papal church and allowed the people to be trodden down for centuries.

- 6) The papal church armed herself with the power of the sword and vexed and fought against all whom she considered to be a heretic.
- 7) The power of the Interdict gave her power over even rulers who would not repent. Priest would withhold Mass, would not perform marriages, nor allow the dead to be buried by them until the ruler repented. Pressure from the people would force the ruler to repent.
- 8) The Monastic orders became a strong support of papal power.
- 9) Also, the Crusades helped to strengthen papal power.
- 10) Possibly one of the greater things that gave power to the pope was the inquisition. Opposition to the Roman hierarchy was stopped by persecution. Some of the opposing groups were almost or altogether annihilated by the sword because they were "heretics"—in opposition to papal power and its corruptions. Two-thirds of the people of Southern France were killed in an effort to wipe out the Abigensians. Names of some of the opposing groups that were persecuted were: Catharists, Paulicans, Petrobusians, Arnoldians, Waldenses.

Papal zenith was believed to have been reached during the reign of Innocent III as pope. Truly the Son of God was not the head of this apostate church, but sinful man had taken full control. In 1870, the official statement was made by the Vatican council that the Roman bishop is infallible in matters of Doctrines and Morals when speaking "ex cathedra."

### **DIGRESSION IN THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH**

Over the centuries as men gained more and more authority over the churches, digression became more and more apparent in all areas. Following are some of the changes brought about in the area of worship.

- 1) **Lord's Supper.** The simple remembering of Jesus' death as one partook of the loaf and the fruit of the vine was changed into a highly ritualistic and sin removing act. The Lord's Supper became a Mass, a "sacrifice" of Christ all over again every time such was done; and, the special class of "priests" played a major role. The elements literally became the body and blood of Christ in some mystical way (by the 9th Century).
- 2) **Priesthood of Believers.** The change was from individual Christians participating in the worship of God to only the special order of "priests" could participate in those things that made one right with God. The people thus became more and more dependent upon this special class of "priests."
- 3) **Giving.** The simple act of giving freely as God had prospered them was changed in several ways. The most obvious was the sale of indulgences to raise money for the church (7th Century). By the 12th Century the Roman church became wealthy through such sales.
- 4) **Prayer.** Prayers became ritualistic, reading or saying what was prescribed by high-up officials. Prayers to dead "saints" or to the virgin Mary for help was begun as early as 350 AD. By the 13th Century, the confessional to "priests" had supplanted the individuals right to pray directly to God through Christ for forgiveness. This again made the people more and more dependent upon the "priests" for a right relationship with God (in their eyes).



- 5) **Singing.** Singing was not replaced, but another kind of music was introduced into the worship—**Instrumental Music.** The first indication of such was in the 5th Century, but only sparingly used. It wasn't until the 14th Century that Instruments were generally used in Western churches.
- 6) **Worship of Images.** Idolatry found it's way into the churches in the West as early as 450 AD. The Eastern churches refrained more from such. The Moslems later on considered the Western churches as idolatrous.
- 7) **Pagan Customs & Rituals.** The influx of so many unconverted people into the churches brought more and more pressures to pacify them and hold them. So, special "holy days" were established to coincide with Jewish and Pagan feast days to try to keep these in the church. Some of these days were: Easter, Lent, Good Friday, Christmas, etc.
- 8) **Use of "holy water."** Indications of such concepts and practices were as early as 120 AD.
- 9) **Making the sign of the Cross.** This became a practice among the people by the middle of the 6th Century.
- 10) **Counting of Prayers with Rosary Beads.** This became a common practice by the 10th Century.

Most of these changes at first were to please the carnal sense of the people. Christianity had become the fashionable thing to be a part of and it became the church of the world, a church of the masses.

### **DIGRESSION IN DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH**

In addition to the usurping of the authority of God and His Word and the changes in worship, there were many other changes from New Testament teaching that occurred over the years to cause the church to go into apostasy. Most of these changes were brought in between 250 to 787 AD. Since the 8th Century, efforts have been made to define and perfect the innovations brought in by man. Following are some of the changes or additions:

- 1) **Baptism.** The change was from immersion of the penitent believer to "infant baptism." A change of doctrine brought about also the substituting of sprinkling for immersion. Historically, these changes began to occur in the middle of the 3rd Century but were not officially recognized by a council until 1311 AD.
- 2) **Penance & Indulgences.** Doing penance to earn forgiveness became a common practice by the 7th Century. Also buying the right to indulge in a sin and be assured of forgiveness was also practiced by the 7th century. After this, confession to a "priest" replaced man's right to pray to God himself for forgiveness. This was not officially approved until the 13th Century.
- 3) **Original Sin.** During the 3rd Century such ideas were being discussed and even advocated by some. Along with this doctrine additional concepts were attached, such as: Total Depravity, Infant Baptism, and the Lack of Free Will.
- 4) **Prohibition for "priests" to marry.** This began as early as 325 AD.
- 5) **Purgatory.** This was taught as early as 593 AD.
- 6) **Confirmation.** This became a practice tied in with "infant baptism."
- 7) **Peter as the First Pope.** This became a prevalent doctrine to justify what men had done in appointing a man as the head of the church.

- 8) **Tradition accepted on a par with the Bible.** Tradition gradually became more authoritative than the Bible itself.
- 9) **Priest being called "father."** This became another way of exalting the priest and making the people more dependent upon them.
- 10) **Extreme Unction.**
- 11) **Special Services for the Dead.**
- 12) **Organizing of Monasteries.** These were started under the influence of Benedict (480-543 AD). By 550 AD, there were 100 monasteries in Europe. Hermits and Ascetics became commonplace.

### **DIGRESSION AND DIVISION OF THE APOSTATE CHURCH**

The church was fairly united in its beliefs and efforts to spread the Word of God in the beginning. Different sects arose within its ranks, but had little effect on the whole. Some of the early false teachings that resulted in splinter groups breaking away were as follows:

- 1) **Asceticism.** A rigid self-discipline that led to the monastic life.
- 2) **Montanism.** Revival of miraculous powers and teaching of the thousand year reign of Christ on earth.
- 3) **Ebionism.** Stress by Jewish Christians for Gentiles to be circumcised and to keep the Law of Moses.
- 4) **Marcionite.** He went to extremes about the Law—He accepted only certain books of Paul and the gospel of Luke and rejected all others.
- 5) **Gnostics.** Superior knowledge over the Word of God as given by the apostles. They relied on human traditions, wisdom, and speculations of men. Made distinction in the body and the spirit of man. Denied the fleshly birth and life of Jesus.
- 6) **Docetism.** Christ did not really suffer on the cross, He just seemed to suffer. Material was evil and Christ could not come in the flesh because of this.

One of the prime purposes of the early councils was to deal with some of these doctrinal issues. The church began to divide more after the Council of Chalcedony in 451 AD. After this council the Oriental Orthodox churches declared their independence from the Western and Eastern churches. These churches were located in: SYRIA, ARMENIA, EGYPT (COPTS), and ASSYRIA. Efforts have been made in later years (16th Century to the present) to try to entice these churches under the papal authority at Rome and be united with the Western church. Some of them have done so!

Peace between the Eastern and Western churches never was good from the 4th Century on. When the bishop of Rome was recognized as the universal bishop of the church, the Eastern churches never accepted him. The Eastern churches did not accept several of the practices of the Western churches, such as:

- 1) Authority of the Roman bishop.
- 2) Doctrine of Purgatory.
- 3) Transubstantiation.



- 4) Hereditary Sin.
- 5) *Sprinkling instead of Immersion.*
- 6) Instrumental Music.
- 7) Selling of Indulgences.
- 8) Practice of Extreme Unction.
- 9) Special services for the dead.
- 10) Worship of images.

Things became so estranged between the two churches that in 1054 AD the final split came between them. Thus, the church was divided into three main divisions: Roman Catholic (Western); Greek Orthodox Catholic (Eastern); and Oriental Orthodox Catholic (Middle East). Only the Western churches recognized the papal power until recent times. Overtures are being made now to the Eastern churches for bringing about a union with the Roman Catholic Church.

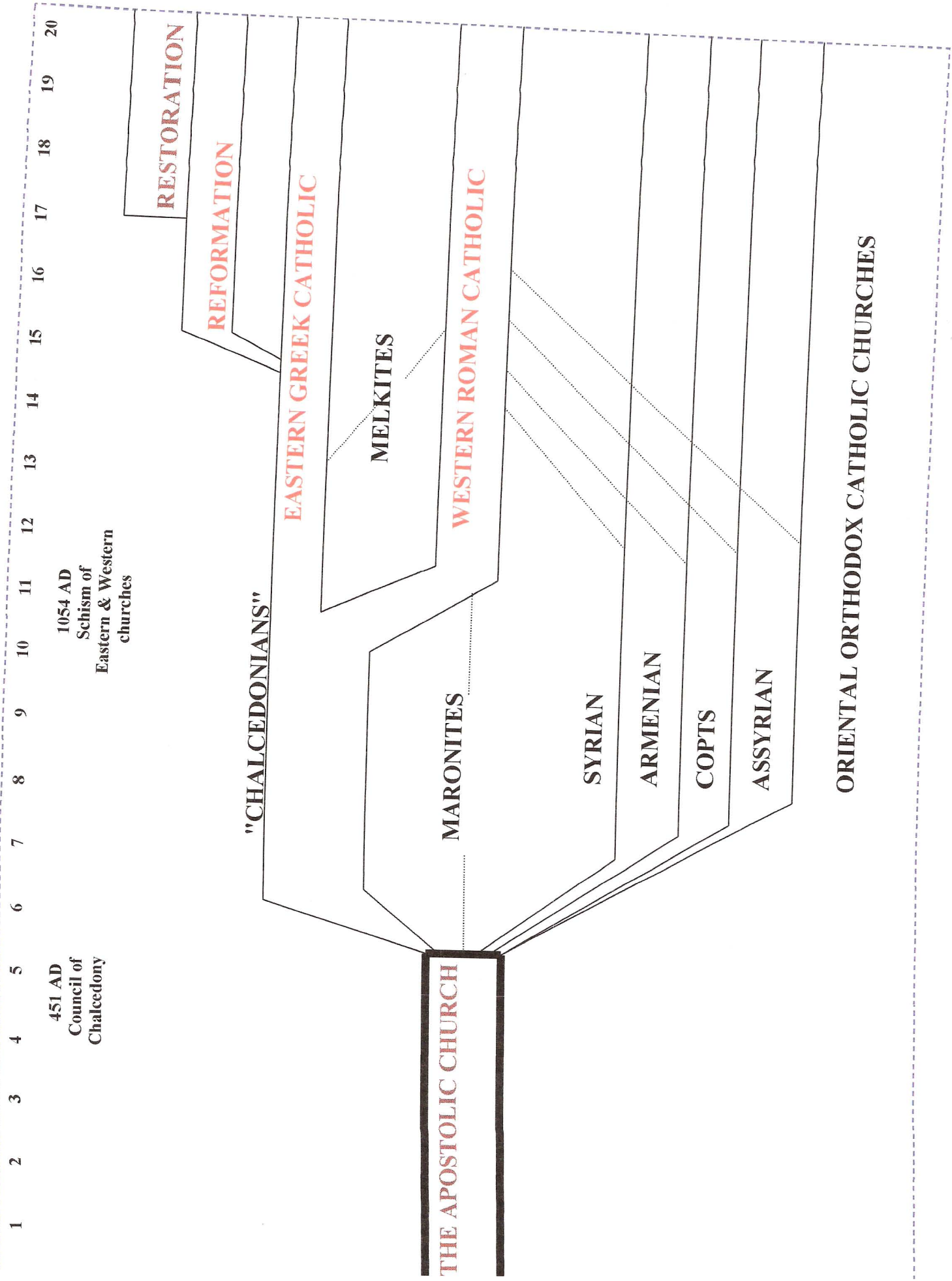
### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

Through the centuries the church went into apostasy and became what the world saw as Christianity, but was in reality the "Harlot on the Scarlet Beast" that committed fornication with the nations. The true church is pictured as doing into the wilderness, a place to be cared for until it was time to come out again. Our next lesson will look at the great efforts to restore the church before the eyes of the world as it was in the first Century. The contrast will be clearly seen between the apostate church and the true bride of Christ.

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

- 1. To what extent was the falling away of the church foretold?**
- 2. What had to be undermined before an apostasy could occur?**
- 3. How is this falling away symbolized in the Revelation letter?**
- 4. What part did the rise of the monarchical bishop play in apostasy?**
- 5. What part did the rise of Councils play in apostasy?**
- 6. What things attributed to greater papal power?**
- 7. Name some digressions in the worship of the church.**
- 8. What are some digressions in the doctrine of the church?**
- 9. What were the three major divisions brought about in the church?**





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451 AD  
Council of  
Chalcedony

1054 AD  
Schism of  
Eastern & Western  
churches

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

"CHALCEDONIANS"

EASTERN GREEK CATHOLIC

MELKITES

MARONITES

WESTERN ROMAN CATHOLIC

SYRIAN

ARMENIAN

COPTS

ASSYRIAN

ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CATHOLIC CHURCHES

RESTORATION

REFORMATION

Lesson Eleven

**"THE BRIDE ARRAYED  
IN FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND WHITE"  
(Part #1—The Reformation Movement)**

*"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." (Revelation 19:8)*

In lesson ten, the emphasis was upon the "fallen church" (The Harlot Woman on the Scarlet colored Beast) that committed fornication with the nations! The Roman Papacy had become the greatest force on earth and was producing the greatest defilement of things sacred of any before her. The degradation and shame to which the religious leaders had gone was crying out more and more for reform. And reform came, slowly at first, and then it burst into a flame that begins to sweep through one country after another. The ultimate outcome of these and other efforts finally resulted into a "Restoration" of the church as originally given by God. Thus, the reason for the symbolic picture in Revelation of Christ's bride arrayed in fine linen, clean and white" (Revelation 19:8).

This lesson will historically trace the efforts of Reformation that was to lead up to the Restoration of the church. Men had forgotten the strong warnings of Scripture about:

- 1) Not exalting men above that which is written. 1 Cor. 4:6
- 2) Not preaching another gospel or perverting it. Gal. 1:6-9
- 3) Not to go outside the doctrine of Christ. 2 John 9

God's will was no longer preached as originally given and the church had been greatly corrupted. Now it was time for some changes to take place. Chart #1 gives a possible historical view of what the Revelation letter is trying to depict to the reader of the efforts to restore the preaching of the gospel again as originally given by God that brought about the re-appearing of the Bride of Christ dressed in her proper attire.

**EARLY EFFORTS AT REFORM**

While the existing church as viewed by historians was mostly divided into Eastern, Western, and Middle Eastern fellowships, the reforming efforts were primarily to take place in the Western fellowship of the Roman Catholic Church. Because of its strong control over nations, peoples, and rulers, it was not an easy thing to go against such powers. In spite of the dangers, brave men spoke out and made efforts to bring about reforms—many of them dying a violent death for their efforts. Proper credit should be given to these brave men during the early Reformation period that helped to pave the way for a successful Reformation Movement. These men were grasping for the truths of God, but their background was filled with so much false ideas that it was hard for them to see the truth all at once.



Most of the early efforts at reform were made by men in the Catholic Church and had no desire to leave it—only to reform it. Their attempts were repulsed by the Catholic Church officials with such strong measures that most of them died without seeing much reform. Some of the better known men among the early reformers were as follows:



1. **Claudius of Turin** (died 839 AD). Spoke out against images and relics of all kinds. Lessened the superstitions of the people.
2. **Peter of Bruys** (died 1135 AD). Denied infant baptism, the Mass, Ceremonies and prayers for the dead. Was burned at the stake as a heretic.
3. **Peter Waldo** (or Valdez)(died 1218 AD). Secured a copy of the New Testament and began preaching it. This became a strong movement in Southern France. Stressed that the New Testament was sole rule of belief and life and was strongly against the complicated and corrupt organization and elaborate ritual of the Catholic Church.
4. **William of Occam** (1280-1339 AD). Advocated the separateness of state and religion and that the church did not have authority over the state. He also advocated that the Word of God, not decisions of councils and popes, was alone binding on Christians.

5. **John Wickliff** (1328-1384 AD). Wickliff was referred to as "the morning star of the Reformation." His greatest contribution was to get the Bible into the hands of the common man. His translation of the New Testament from Latin into English came out between 1382-1384 AD. He rejected the papacy, priestly absolution and transubstantiation as being unbiblical. He advocated marriage for all men as being honorable.

6. **John Huss** (1367-1415 AD). An ardent disciple of Wickliff in the country of Czechoslovakia that caused him to openly rebel against the sale of indulgences. He was excommunicated and burned at the stake.

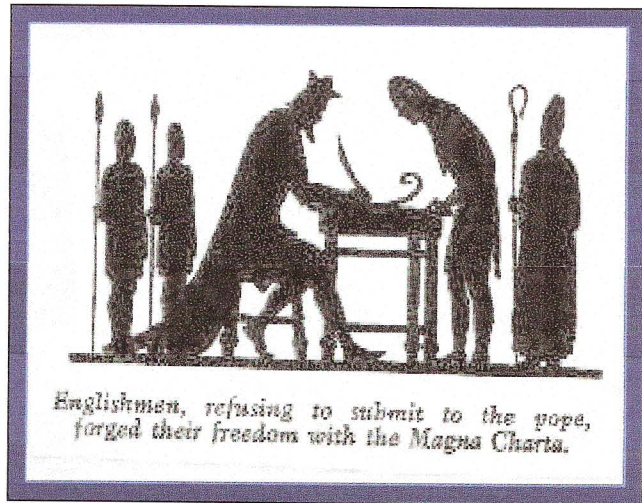
7. **Jerome Savonarola** (1452-1498 AD). Noted by one historian as the "Most imposing preacher of the Middle Ages and one of the most noteworthy preachers of righteousness since St. Paul." He preached in Florence to vast audiences. His opposition to the pope caused him to be excommunicated and put to death.

8. **John Reuchlin** (1455-1522 AD) and **Erasmus** (1465-1536 AD). German scholars of repute that added impetus to the reformation by their literary works. Reuchlin gave a scientific basis for the study of the Hebrew language in his Hebrew Grammar and Dictionary published in 1506 AD. He was the uncle of Philip Melancthon. Erasmus gave scholars the Greek pronunciation of words, edited and translated Greek Classical works and the church fathers, and furnished the key to the critical study of the Greek New Testament. He was the first to issue a Greek New Testament and advocated it's translation into the languages spoken in his day.

## PROMOTION OF THE REFORMATION MOVEMENT

Many factors contributed to helping the movement get underway and move forward with greater force. An early factor, in addition to the efforts of early reformers, was the signing of the **MAGNA CHARTA** on June 15, 1215 AD. This charta granted greater personal and political liberties of the people of England. Following are some Major factors that historians have listed that have helped to contribute to the success of the Reformation:

1. **The tyranny of the popes had become unbearable.** They had secularized all spiritual things to their own personal aggrandizement. The popes themselves were chosen with difference to the princes who supported them with military power.
2. **The decline of papal influence through the capture of the pope by the French.** Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303 AD) was captured and taken to France—becoming a toy of the French kings. Also, in the latter part of the 1300s there were three



popes that had been appointed, each claiming to be legitimate. This condition lasted until 1449 AD when France gave up the papacy.

3. **The underlings of the popes (cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, etc.) followed the scandalous example of their superiors.** The literature of this period is full of complaints and exposures of the ignorance, vulgarity and immorality of the priests. Simony and nepotism were shamefully practiced.
4. **The study of the Scriptures had degenerated into a study of "scholastic subtleties, Aristotelian dialectics and idle speculations."**
5. **Preaching was neglected.** Or, it was prostituted to the promotion of the sale of indulgences, of pilgrimages and processions.
6. **Discipline was destroyed.** It was because of the flagrant violations of the spiritual laws by those who pretended to be spiritual leaders.
7. **The worship of God was obstructed.** It was done by saint-worship, image worship, and superstitious rites and ceremonies.
8. **Good works were distorted.** It was done by the notion of meritorious works, which appealed to the selfish motive of rewards.
9. **Remission of sins could be bought with money.** It was a shameful traffic in indulgences carried on under the encouragement of the pope.



10. **A growing respect for the Scriptures as authority in faith and morals above the councils and popes.**
11. **The translating and finally the printing of thousands of copies of the New Testaments into the language of the people.** This greatly enhanced their receptivity.
12. **Many European kings and princes were privately in favor of full separation of the state from the church.** The obvious reason was the enhancing of their own powers and to get out from under domination of the pope and the church.

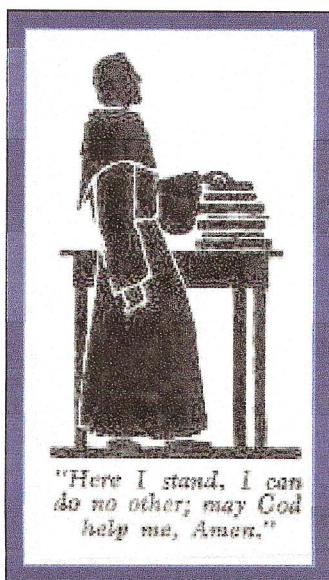
### BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE "PROTESTANT REFORMATION MOVEMENT"

The desire of those advocating reform was not to start another church but to bring about reforms within the framework of the Catholic Church. Their attempts were repulsed by the Catholic hierarchy and were therefore forced to separate themselves from the church, forming "protesting groups"—each with its own form of government and system of doctrine. Following are some of the basic principles that most reformers held in common:

1. The Bible, as the inspired revelation of God, is the only infallible rule of faith and practice—not ecclesiastical tradition and the Bible.
2. What is not contrary to Scripture is acceptable.
3. Justification by faith alone and not works of any kind.
4. The priesthood of all believers in contrast to a special class of priests.
5. Each believer has access directly before the throne of God himself.

While the above principles were a definite change in beliefs for the reformers; yet, the many other needed changes did not come until much later during the Restoration Movement.

### 16TH CENTURY REFORMERS



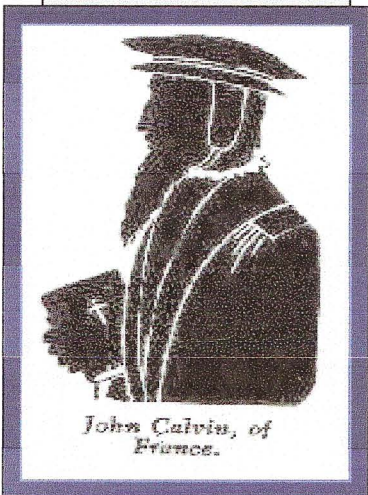
1. **Martin Luther** (Germany)(1483-1546). Luther's deep study of the Scriptures led him to the conclusion that justification was not by works of merit but by deep trust or faith in God. His prominence became more pronounced by his strong opposition to the sale of indulgences (listing 95 reasons why the sale of indulgences was wrong). Upon his excommunication by the Catholic hierarchy, he was protected by King Charles V and continued to actively preach, teach and publish books against the errors of the Catholic Church. His efforts resulted into what is today known as the Lutheran church, which became the state church of Germany, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. Luther's determined stand on the Bible when being examined by the Catholic hierarchy showed his strong faith in the Word of God.





2. **Ulrich Zwingli** (Switzerland)(1482-1531). He was very prominent as a preacher in Zurich. His strong resistance to the sale of indulgences kept Bernahardin Samson out of the city of Zurich. He opposed Catholic teachings of the Mass, prayers to saints and Mary, human doctrines and ordinances, the papacy, exclusiveness of ordained people to preach, singleness of priests. His untimely death in a war against the Catholics of Switzerland curtailed his influence after this.

3. **Philip Melanchthon** (Germany)(1497-1560). A brilliant scholar who helped to promote the Reformation with his teaching of the Bible, his friendship with Luther, and his scholarly works. Luther and Melanchthon complimented each other. Melanchthon was the author of the Augsburg Confession, the doctrinal basis of the Lutheran Church in Germany. While Luther appealed to the common people, Melanchthon appealed to the scholarly.



4. **John Calvin** (France & Switzerland)(1509-1564). He had a brilliant mind. By the age of 27 he had organized the teachings of Augustine into his famous "Institutes," which became highly influential in the Reformation Movement. Being forced to flee from France, he settled in Geneva where he exerted his greatest influence in the Reformation. The teaching of Calvin was summed up in five basic principles that became known as "Calvinism:" Inherited sin; Predestination; Limited Atonement; Preservation of the saints; Irresistible Grace. The reformed Presbyterian Church was established as a result of his efforts also. John Knox was greatly influenced by Calvin and helped to form the Presbyterian Church in Scotland.



5. **Henry VIII** (England)(1491-1544). King Henry VIII was not strictly a reformer, but his run-in with the pope helped to foster "Protestantism" in England. He openly broke ties with the Catholic Church in Rome and formed a separate church in England with himself as the head of the church in 1534. While he identified to some extent with the Reformers, there was little change at first in the Church of England. Edward VI, who followed Henry to the throne, was very favorable to the Reformers. However, upon his death, Mary came to the Throne and changed the tide back to the papacy. After her short reign of terror, she was replaced by Elizabeth who legalized the reform churches and help to encourage the reformation.



## **EFFECTS OF THE REFORMATION MOVEMENT**

The reformation advanced rapidly throughout Europe both from a religious standpoint as well as a political one. Not only were there drastic changes taking place religiously, but politically as well. Three effects can be traced back to the Reformation Movement in the area of the political:

1. In helping to reform the apostate church, it also helped to transform Western civilization.
2. It helped to encourage literacy by encouraging people to read and study the Bible for themselves.
3. It gave stress to the concept of democracy for all people.

One of the sad things that came out of "Protestantism" was that it contributed to wars in the 16th and 17th centuries that almost laid waste much of Western Europe.

During the 17th and 18th centuries there was a geographic expansion of peoples who were "Protestants" in name and heredity. It was during this time that the 13 colonies in America were formed. At that time only about 5% of the population professed church membership. But during the 19th Century, further migration of people—a majority of which were "Protestants"—settled in America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Also, European peoples brought most of the world under its influence or control during this time. "Protestantism" followed and made great strides in reaching these nations.

The Reformation also gave rise to small group movements like the Puritans, Quakers, Independents, Baptists, Anabaptists, Mennonites, Dunkards, Methodist, etc. The reform leaders could not agree among themselves which resulted into a mired of different religious groups, each having their own peculiar names and creeds. From these original divisions have come many differing religious groups claiming to be Christian.

## **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

While the Reformation caused a break with Rome as far as ecclesiastical jurisdiction and control, yet many doctrines and practices introduced by men over the centuries were retained in the various denominations, such as:

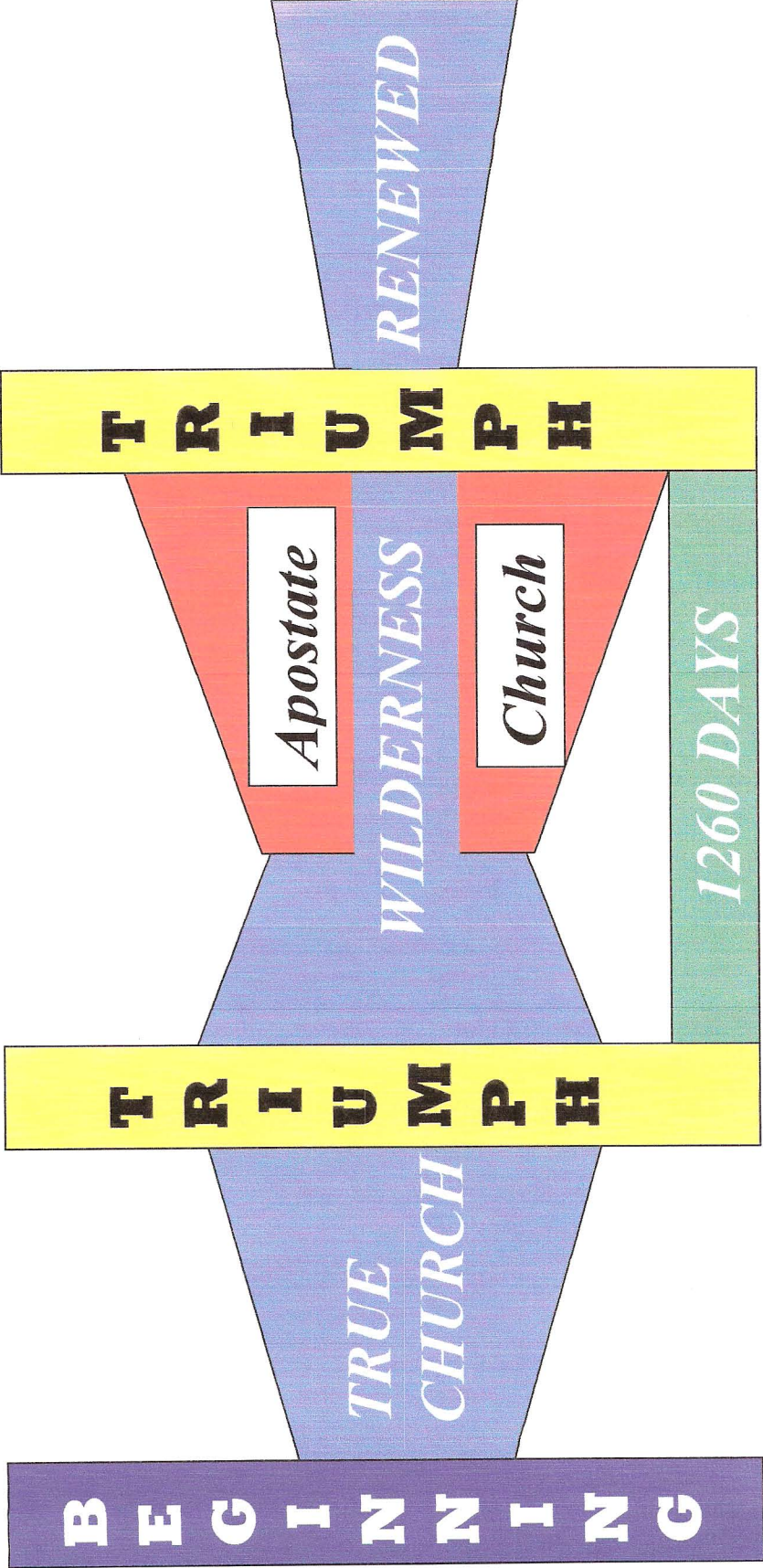
1. Infant Sprinkling for Baptism.
2. Instrumental Music in worship.
3. Division of the people into Clergy and Laity.
4. Observance of religious holidays (Lent, Easter, Good Friday, etc.).
5. Use of Religious Titles (Reverend, Father, etc.).

The irony of it all is seen in the fact that "Protestants" in many instances have only changed from one man being the head of the church to a group of men serving as authorities over the churches, with doctrines and commands of men considered as more authoritative than the Bible itself.





**SUCCESS OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE WORLD**



**THE TERRIBLE TRIO**  
**DRAGON—1<sup>st</sup> BEAST—2<sup>nd</sup> BEAST**  
**Enemies of Righteousness**

Lesson Twelve

**"THE BRIDE ARRAYED  
IN FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND WHITE"  
(Part #2—The Restoration Movement)**

*"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." (Revelation 19:8)*

The Reform movements had succeeded in freeing the Bible for all people to have access to and gave encouragement to them to read it for themselves. This resulted in a resurgence of Bible study in Europe and even in the colonies. While the Reformation was attempting to get back to the Bible as an authority in religion, it took more than a few years to make the kind of strides that was needed. Unfortunately, prideful men began to advocate human heads, headquarters, and ruling bodies over the newly established churches that crystallized the various movements into different denominations that would not fellowship each other. Each had adopted their own peculiar creeds and confessions as their lines of fellowship, and took on human names to make that distinction easier to see.

The 18th Century saw not only continued efforts at reform, but more stress placed on unity of professed Christians. Resistance was strong among the Reform churches to efforts to unify the groups, resulting in propagation of more divisions among the existing churches. By the end of the Century, there were 12 kinds of Presbyterian churches; 13 different types of Baptist churches; 17 different kinds of Methodist churches. Men were struggling for an answer to the question of how to unify so many warring groups of professed believers in Christ.

**EFFORTS AT RESTORING THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

By the end of the 18th Century and going into the early part of the 19th Century men were coming up with some needed answers to the question of unity. Circumstances became a major factor in helping to advocate and bring about a unity movement among those who professed to be followers of Christ.

- 1) Men were enjoying more freedom politically and religiously. State churches were not as dominating and persecuting as they were earlier.
- 2) The Fall and Judgment of the Harlot (apostate church) took away the powerful persecuting possibilities of that church.
- 3) The Word of God was being read, studied, and meditated over by more people.
- 4) This period was characterized by an intense spiritual awakening and revival in religion, not only in Europe but in the colonies as well. Great Camp Meetings were the order of the day and thousands were being converted.



## EARLY LEADERS OF UNITY AND RESTORATION

Several men, both in Scotland and in the colonies, were not only advocating the unity of believers, but also stressing the need for further reform or even a "restoration" of New Testament Christianity as first given by God. "Restorationism" was not a new idea. Such was advocated in Europe as early as the 1500s & 1600s by the Ana-Baptist Movement. They formed churches made up of baptized believers—advocating the need to go back to the original teachings of the apostles. Not having strong leadership, the movement splintered into several different groups and were not able to have the effect that was needed. And, these churches were so suppressed and persecuted that they were almost eliminated by the early part of the 1600s. The Mennonite group of the movement survived.

### EARLY EFFORTS IN SCOTLAND

**John Glas** in the mid 1700s broke with the Church of Scotland advocating:

- 1) The autonomous nature of the church.
- 2) The New Testament, not synods and councils, were authority for the church.
- 3) Weekly observing of the Lord's Supper.
- 4) Plurality of elders in each church.
- 5) Wear only the names in the Bible.
- 6) Distinguished the Lord's Day from the Sabbath.
- 7) Baptism for remission of sins, but any mode was accepted.
- 8) Strong advocacy of a Restoration of the church.



**Robert & James Haldane** established an independent church in Edinburgh in 1799. They advocated:

- 1) The all-sufficiency of the Scriptures.
- 2) Congregational independence.
- 3) Rule of elders.
- 4) Weekly communion.
- 5) Immersion.
- 6) Wear no human names.
- 7) No distinction in clergy-laity.
- 8) Strong emphasis on Restoration of the church.

### EARLY EFFORTS IN THE COLONIES

**Robert Sandeman**, son-in-law to **John Glas**, establish a "church of Christ" in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on May 4, 1765. There were some variations from the church established by the Haldane brothers.

**Ebenezer White**, a follower of **Sandeman**, established a "church of Christ" in Danbury, Conn., in 1764. They didn't become immersionists until 1817 after reading a tract by Henry Errett on the subject.

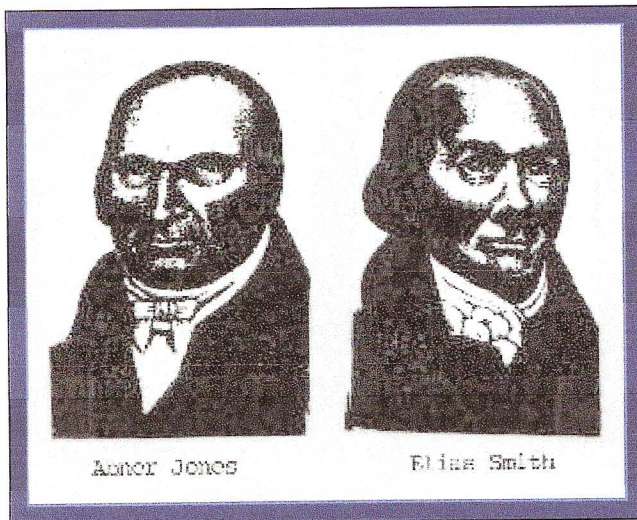
**James O'Kelly** withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1793 and formed a new church calling themselves "Christians." He was advocating:

- 1) Jesus as the only head of the church.
- 2) The Bible as the only rule of faith and practice.
- 3) Christian character as the only test of fellowship & membership.
- 4) Liberty of conscience—right of private judgment.
- 5) The name "Christian" to be used to the exclusion of all party and sectarian names.
- 6) Union of all followers of Christ.

**Rice Haggard** (1769-1819) advocated:

- 1) That division was the Devil's best tool.
- 2) Stressed that where non-essentials are made terms of fellowship, it will always cause division.
- 3) It was he who influenced O'Kelly to use the name of "Christian."
- 4) He also had an influence on the Stone movement to use the same name.

### EARLY 19TH CENTURY EFFORTS IN AMERICA

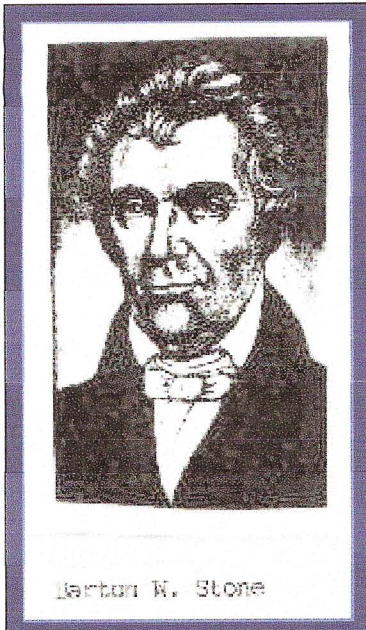


**Abner Jones** broke with the Baptist over human creeds and human names and established a "church of Christ" in Lyndon, Vermont. He rebelled against Calvinism. He was later joined by **Elias Smith** who established a "church of Christ" after breaking with the Baptist. They advocated Immersion, the Bible as the only guide, only be called by name "Christian." They had a strong Restoration concept.

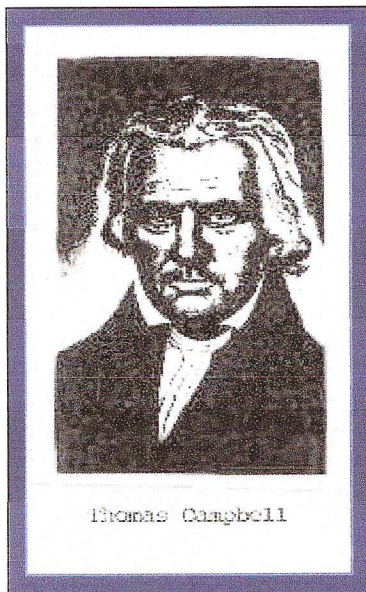
**Barton W. Stone** (1772-1844). He was one of several outstanding Presbyterian preachers in the CANE RIDGE REVIVAL in Kentucky. He was one of five men who protested against the control of the church officials. They advocated:

- 1) Their desire to be free from such control.
- 2) The right of free men to interpret the Scriptures for themselves and base their faith on the Bible alone.
- 3) They were anti-Calvinistic and anti-creeds.





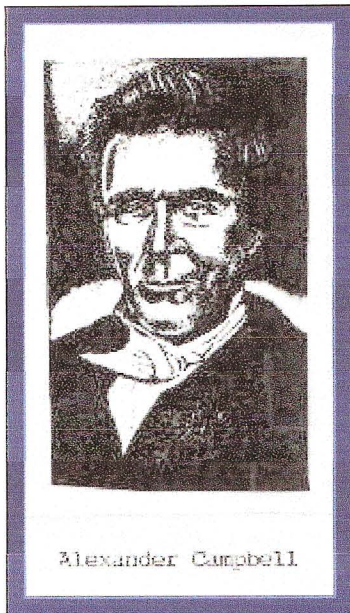
**Stone** helped to form their own Presbytery and then a year later dissolved it on June 28, 1804. This showed their efforts to discard anything that was "sectarian" in nature. Their adoption of the name "Christian" was to avoid a sectarian concept. They were at first a freedom movement, but later became a "unity" movement. One of **Stone's** statements was *"If the church is free of creedalism and partyism, it will become a united church."* They didn't began to preach the need to be immersed until years later, 1827.



**Thomas Campbell** (1763-1854). He was born and educated in Scotland and England but moved to America in 1807 without his family. It wasn't long that he broke with the Presbyterians, mostly over church domination. He did not feel free to preach what the Bible taught. He wrote his now famous "Declaration and Address" that expressed so many of the ideas of a unity of believers in Christ on September 7, 1809. He began preaching "A plea for unity of all Christians upon the Bible alone." His family joined him in 1809. He advocated:

- 1) There is but one church of Christ.
- 2) There ought not to not be any schisms or divisions.
- 3) Nothing ought to be taught as articles of faith or terms of communion but what is expressly enjoined in the word of God.
- 4) The New Testament is the constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the New Testament Church.
- 5) If the Scriptures are silent on a point, no human authority has the right to make laws for the church.
- 6) Those who realize they are lost and are willing to profess faith in Christ and obedience to Him according to His Word should be admitted in the church.

At this time, **Thomas Campbell** had not established a separate church, but was preaching in homes and in whatever church that would listen to him. It wasn't until later that a separate church was formed in which he and his family and other interested individuals met for worship and edification.



**Alexander Campbell** (1788-1866). Alexander arrived in America in 1809 with his family. He was a Scholar extraordinary. As a youth he was fluent in Greek, French, and Latin. He committed to memory a voluminous amount of information from Literature and History. Before leaving from Ireland and England He:

- 1) Had been influenced by **John Glas**, the **Haldane** brothers, and **Greville Ewing**.
- 2) His heart was set on a reformation course before even coming to America.

Upon his arrival in America, he discovered that his father and he both were of the same mind religiously. They built a meeting house at Brush Run and Alexander Campbell preached his first sermon there on September 16, 1810.

At this time he was unimmersed. Later, from their study of the Scriptures they saw their need for immersion and secured the help of a Baptist preacher to baptize them. Their association with the Baptist churches was cordial for several years until he preached his famous sermon on the LAW in 1816 at the age of 28.

His debate with Walker (1820) and with MaCalla (1823) thrust him into great prominence, and gave greater opportunities to preach in Kentucky. Alexander became an outstanding leader of his day in many fields. Some reasons for this greatness lay in the following things:

- 1) His extensive knowledge of a variety of subjects.
- 2) His powerful preaching. He was an outstanding orator.
- 3) An almost unlimited capacity that he had for work.
- 4) He possessed an aggressive spirit and had the ability to turn this spirit into proper channels.
- 5) He was a successful business man.

Alexander Campbell probably had more influence upon a Restoration of the church than any other man of his day. His efforts finally begin to come into contact with the work of Barton W. Stone and eventually led to a unity of the two groups.

**Walter Scott** (1796-1861). He moved from Scotland to Pittsburgh where he came under the influence of George Forrester, who had been influenced by John Glas. Forrester immersed him in 1819 and became a member of the church that Forrester had established, as well as involved in



teaching in his school. Forrester's untimely death thrust upon Walter Scott a church and a school to care for. He met Alexander Campbell in 1821 and they realized that they both were of the same mind and effort religiously. It was Scott that brought out clearly the teaching that baptism was for "remission of sins," in 1827.

By the year of 1832, the Stone movement and the Campbell movement were brought together in union as one group. The combined movement numbered about 25,000. John T. Johnson, Racoon John Smith, and John Rogers were influential men who helped the union to succeed. By 1857, the membership of the churches had grown to 200,000. See Chart #1.

### **BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT**

The above men had seen the great truth that the Reformation leaders did not fully see—that the apostate church did not need to be reformed, but the "church of Christ" needed to be restored as God originally gave it. This would then help to bring about a unity of all those who wanted to follow Christ as Lord. Four basic principles were advocated by these men:

- 1) Acknowledgement of the New Testament Scriptures as the only authoritative rule of faith and practice for the Christian.
- 2) Renunciation of all human creeds and the acceptance of the precepts and examples of Jesus as the only creed binding upon Christians.
- 3) The Restoration of the Apostolic or New Testament church with its ordinances and life as originally practiced in the first Century.
- 4) The union of all Christians upon the basis of the Bible.

Slogans that were adopted and used by these men that helped to promote unity upon the Bible were as follows:

- 1) "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where they are silent, we are silent."
- 2) "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, love."
- 3) "In matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinions or methods, liberty; in all things, love."
- 4) "Wear Bible names and do things in Bible ways."
- 5) "Christ as our only creed."
- 6) "Christians only, but not the only Christians."

### **OUTCOME OF SUCH EFFORTS**

The various efforts by different men had to come in contact with each other sooner or later. Contacts were made between Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell as early as 1824, but it wasn't until 1831-32 that a real determined effort was made to unite the two movements into one movement. There were many things in common, but some differences as well that would have to be worked out over a period of time. Because their emphasis was so strong upon unity and letting the Bible be their only guide, most of these differences were worked out so that unity could be

maintained. Membership of the two combined groups numbered about 25,00 in 1832 and grew rapidly to 200,000 by 1857.

In an effort to reach out further with their message of unity and restoration, schools were formed to train workers and magazines were started to help strengthen the members and pull the churches closer together in their unified efforts. Public debates were held with other religious leaders that helped to spread their message. A great number of outstanding men were involved in helping to spread the cause and cement the union between the two movements: Racoon John Smith, Jacob Creath, Sr., and Jr., Benjamin Franklin, Tolbert Fanning, J. W. McGarvey, and David Lipscomb. Various terms were used interchangeably among the churches that identified them with the movement: "Disciples of Christ," "Christian Church," or "Churches of Christ."

The O'Kelly, Haggard, Jones and Smith efforts in the Eastern shore states resulted in a movement separate from the Stone-Campbell movement. They also used the terms "Christian Church" or "Church of Christ." This group later joined with the Congregational Church and were known as the "Congregational Christian Church." In recent years they have united with the Reform church and are now called "United Church of Christ." There are similarities between the two groups, but several differences that separate the two movements.

### THE STRUGGLE FOR GROWTH AND UNITY

The plea for unity of all believers in the one body of Christ that conforms to the New Testament teaching spread rapidly across the country. Thousands were renouncing their religious creeds, hierarchy control, doctrines of men and taking their stand upon the New Testament alone, being recognized as simply "Christians." By the middle of the 19th Century the unity of the movement was being threatened by men advocating the introduction of things that many felt could not be justified by Scripture. Strenuous efforts were made by men on both sides of the issues to keep the unity of the movement and work out the problems from the Scriptures. Over a period of time, it became evident that the two different groups would become a permanent division. By 1906, the two groups were identified as separate churches in the census. The movement eventually divided into three major groups: The "Disciples of Christ," "Christian Church," and "churches of Christ." All three groups have spread world-wide in their mission efforts and would have a combined membership of between 5 to 6 million adherents.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Churches of Christ are still emphasizing the need for the unity of all professed followers of Jesus in the one body of Christ. Whether many accept and conform to this concept or not does not keep it from being relevant, and necessary as well. For the very Son of God prayed fervently for the oneness of His followers (John 17).

The movement toward restoring the church back to what God originally gave demands:

- 1) The rejection of:
  - a) All human names and creeds;
  - b) All human heads and authorities in religion;



- c) All innovations of men, all doctrines and commands of men.
- 2) The acceptance of:
  - a) Christ as the only head of each congregation of the Lord's people.
  - b) The simple gospel plan of salvation in becoming a "Christian" only.
  - c) Christ's teachings on how we are to worship and live as a Christian.

We not only believe this plea to be desirable, but necessary as well! With these things we know the Lord is pleased, since He gave them in His Word.

Every generation must make a diligent effort to examine their beliefs and practices in the light of New Testament teachings to be sure they are following KING JESUS and not some man or group of men. It is a never-ending battle to restore the proper respect for Christ's authority over men through His inspired Scriptures.

How thankful we ought to be for all of those brave and searching souls who wanted to know the Will of God and sought to do it that has helped to restore Christianity again like it was first given; and, that we can be a part of it!

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. **What resulted from a stress on unity during the 18th Century?**
2. **What 4 things helped to promote a unity movement in this country?**
3. **What kind of a movement were the Ana-Baptists?**
4. **Who were some men in Scotland that advocated a Restoration?**
5. **Who were some men in America in the 18th Century that helped to push the idea of just being Christians?**
6. **Who were the two leading men that helped to bring about a unified effort to restore New Testament Christianity?**
7. **What document was produced by Thomas Campbell that helped to solidify ideas on how to bring about unity?**
8. **What early influences affected Alexander Campbell towards a restoration?**
9. **Why did Alexander Campbell become such an outstanding leader?**





