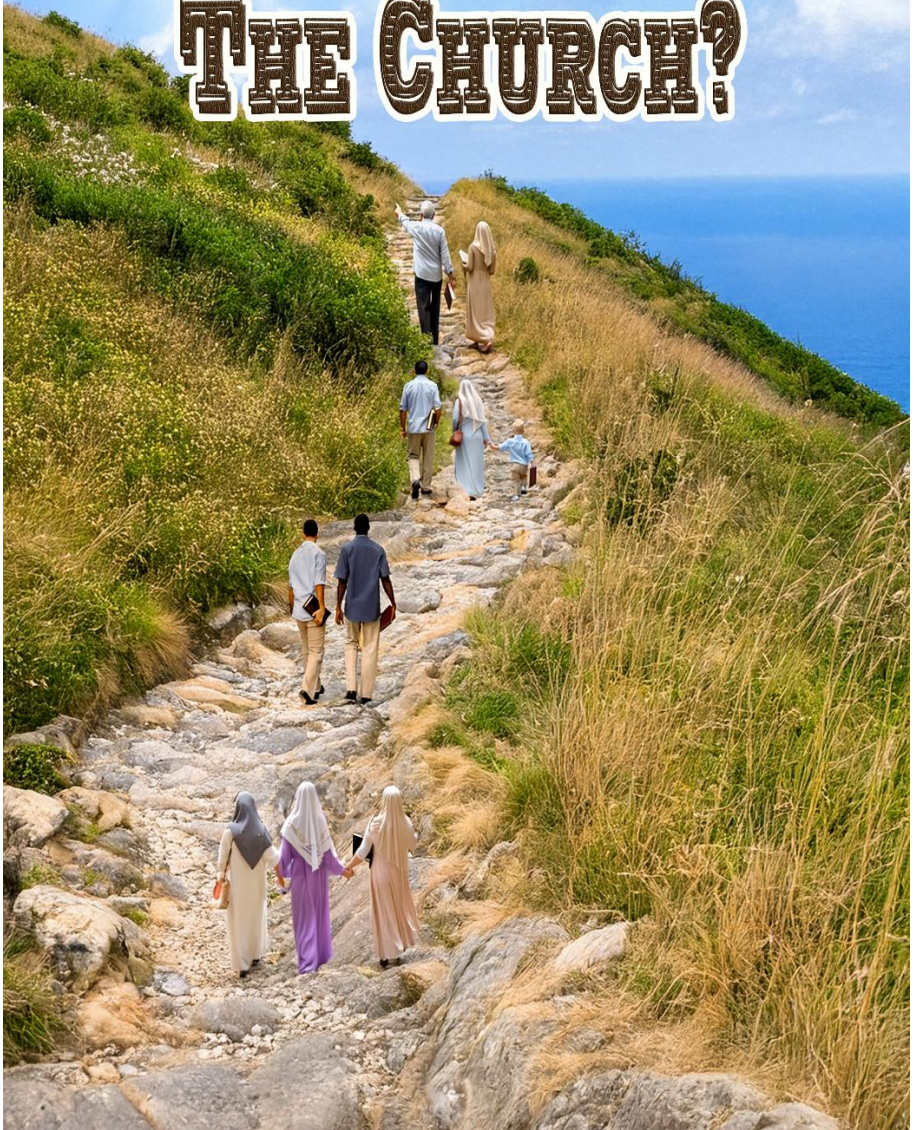


WHAT IS THE CHURCH?



What is the Church?

It is impossible to number those who claim to be the “church”. It seems that man has invented his own definition of the church or maybe he has borrowed it from satan! If you ask anyone about “church”, they point to a building, a denomination, or a group. The church of today is a business that collects money, has bank accounts, has buildings, and is used only twice a week. Is this the church of Jesus Christ that was purchased with His precious blood?

Without judging anyone, it is important to look at the “fruit” or lifestyles of those who make this claim, for Jesus warned us in Matthew 7:15-16 that we will know His followers by their “fruits”.

*“Beware of false prophets, which come in SHEEP’S CLOTHING,
but INWARDLY they are ravening WOLVES.
Ye shall know them by their fruits...”*

These false prophets LOOK so good on the outside claiming to be the church, but INSIDE their hearts they are greedy wild beasts, which is shown by their lifestyles. II Peter 2:12-15 describes them very well,

*“But these, as natural brute beasts, **made to be taken and destroyed**,
speak evil of the things that they understand not;
and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;
And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness,
as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time...
Having eyes full of adultery, and that CANNOT CEASE FROM SIN;
beguiling UNSTABLE souls: an heart they have exercised
with covetous practices; cursed children:
Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray...”*

They constantly make excuses for their sinful lives blaming God for His grace and “...turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness...” [an excuse to sin]. No matter what they claim with their mouths they are all what Peter describes and more than what is quoted above. Please **read chapter 2 of II Peter** to get a clear understanding of how much God hates the sins practiced in His name. Remember, Paul said that the wrath of God would come upon these people in Romans 1:18, “...who hold the truth in unrighteousness...” These have never been “called out” of sin!

In order to understand what the “church” is, we must understand the definition of the word. The word church is translated from the Greek word “ekklesia” which means “a calling out”. This definition tells us the origin or meaning of the word. From the very beginning God has “called His people out” of the world, so they separate themselves unto Him!

Let's review that "calling out" of God's people from the world. We will see that the "church" has nothing to do with buildings, bank accounts, denominations, or incorporation with the government as a not-for-profit business. It has nothing to do with large groups of sinful people who are prosperous, worldly accepted, and living a "form of godliness"!

WHO HAS BEEN CALLED OUT?

God has called all men out of the world starting with Adam and Eve to see if they would be worthy of eternal life by obeying God's call. Adam and Eve were "called out" to be separated unto God, but they refused to separate themselves from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil! They refused to be separated from the serpent who **questioned** ("Yea, hath God said?"), **contradicted** ("Ye shall not surely die!"), and **elevated them above God** ("Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."). They feared to follow His holy call to all men to

"...come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

You can see satan's schemes that he still uses today to deceive men. He **questions**, **contradicts**, and then **elevates them above the commandments of God!** God has called man out of sin to be separated unto Him. God desires to be our Father, but He will NEVER justify any sin that is practiced. All men will make mistakes, but God commands us "...touch not the unclean thing..." Since they did not obey God's calling out, they were rejected of God. They had rejected Him and eternal life. Soon they died as is recorded in Genesis 5:5, "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died." What a sad end to a man that was offered eternal life with God, if only he had separated himself to God as God had commanded!

God continued to call men giving the next chance to Cain and Abel. Cain refused to sacrifice unto God as God had commanded, while Abel obeyed God's **call out of the world and separated himself in obedience to God** by sacrificing as God required. Abel inherited eternal life since he obeyed God's call out of the world. Cain was rejected and every one of his descendants were wiped out in the flood.

Only Noah and his family who also obeyed God's call out of the world were spared during the flood. Noah was of the family line of Abel! Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD (Genesis 6:8). Scripture records God's call to Noah and his family in Genesis 6:11-18,

*“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood...And, behold, I even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life... and every thing that is in the earth shall die. **But with thee will I establish My covenant;** and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy son’s wives with thee.”*

We see the deliverance of Noah and his family as they obeyed God’s call out of the world.

*“Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he...And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for **thee have I seen righteous before Me** in this generation... And Noah did according unto **ALL** that the LORD commanded him.”*

The ark was how God called Noah out of the world. Remember that Noah had already come out of the world, for God said of Noah, “...for *thee have I seen righteous before Me*...” There were NO OTHER RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE ON THE EARTH AT THAT TIME... ONLY NOAH! We know that Noah was the only righteous man on the earth, for God would not have punished the righteous with the wicked!

Paul records this act of faith as Noah obeyed God’s call out of the world in Hebrews 11:7,

*“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved **with fear**, prepared an ark **to the saving of his house**; by the which he **condemned the world**, and became heir of the righteousness which is **by faith**.”*

Noah obeyed God’s warning and in the fear of the LORD, he prepared the ark and saved his house! You can see right here how many godly people there were on the earth at that time. VERY FEW. Remember that Jesus said this also in Matthew 7:14, “...and **FEW** there be that find it.”

When the word church is used today, you immediately think of a building where religious people meet one to three times a week. They dress up and pretend to be the “good” people that they wish they were. They “go to church”, as **they call** it, because they are supposed to go. They sing songs and listen to a boring sermon after donating money that they wish they could keep.

This building has a name, a denomination, and a list of its own rules that contradict the righteous law of God to which those in attendance are supposed to obey. You may say “That is my church,” as you point to a building down the street. Ironically, these buildings are not found in the Scriptures, nor did Jesus or the Apostles attend such a building. It will be even more shocking to note that this definition of “church” is also not found in the Scriptures.

There is a huge difference in man’s thinking that a building or a group of people in the building defines a church, when Jesus said that His “called out” of the world children are the Bride of Christ or the Church of the Living God. When asked when the Kingdom of God should come, Jesus answered in Luke 17:20-21 telling us the location of His church by saying, “...*the kingdom of God is within you.*”

*“And when He was demanded of the Pharisees,
when the kingdom of God should come,
He answered them and said,
The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:
Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there!
for, behold, the KINGDOM OF GOD is **within you.**”*

Jesus locates the “church” or “ekklesia” [Greek – called out] within His followers. When these followers obey His command to fellowship “daily”, they are the Church of Jesus Christ that has been called out of the world. They follow in the steps of Abraham who was called out of his country and the Israelites who were called out of Egypt! This “calling out” of the world is not only the name of His people, but it is also the definition or description of their lives. **The church is the household of God or Christian community of saints that assemble daily to build one another up in the Truth as they seek eternal life.** Paul explains this in I Timothy 3:15,

*“...that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave
(conduct your life) **thyself in the house**
[Greek word “oikos” – family, household] **of God,**
which is **the church** (a calling out) **of the living God,**
the pillar (support) and ground (foundation) of truth.”*

God has always desired that His people be separated from the world, the flesh, and the devil. He has called them out of the world and from sin. We see that Abraham was called of God “*Get thee out...*” of his land and to go to a land that God would show him. Read this in Genesis 12:1-4,

*“Now the LORD had said unto Abram,
Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred,
and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee:
And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee,
and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:
And I will bless them that bless thee,
and curse him that curseth thee:
and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.
So **Abram departed,** as the LORD had spoken unto him...”*

Abraham was “called out” of his heathen country, so that he might be set apart or sanctified from his heathen relatives! God’s promise of the receiving of “a land” is the same promise given to the “called out” body of Christ, eternally! For Abraham received a promised land for his posterity, but God’s people today that “Abide in Christ” will receive eternal life with the LORD forever and all the blessings that He has for the household of God!

Abraham’s descendants, the children of Israel, were “called out” of Egypt by God. God called Moses who would lead them out of Egypt as we read in Exodus 3:10,

*“Come now therefore, and I {God} will send thee {Moses}
unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest **bring forth MY PEOPLE**
the children of Israel out of Egypt.”*

God showed His mighty power in delivering them from the Egyptians, just as He shows His people today the power of God in the lives of all who will deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him! As we can see, God delivered His people from the sins that they had returned to many times. They were “called out” that they might serve Him. Read God’s promise to Israel after their Babylonian captivity in Ezekiel 20:34,

*“And I {God} will bring you {His people} out from the people,
and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered,
with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm,
and with fury poured out...”*

This “church” or calling out of His people is a witness to us today that God does not change! He has always desired that His people are “called out” of the world from the sin practiced by those who do not love Him.

Before being martyred for the faith, Stephen rehearsed for us the history of those whom God called out of Egypt in Acts 7:38. He speaks of Moses who taught the people that Jesus, the Prophet of Deuteronomy 18:15-19, would come as the Word of God! Notice, that Stephen calls those coming out of Egypt “...the church in the wilderness...”

*“This is he {Moses}, that was in the **church in the wilderness** with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us.”*

These “called out” brethren from Egypt received the thinking of God {lively oracles}, which were the commandments of God that teach all men what is right and wrong. Just as they received these commandments, Jesus came to teach us the gospel, which teaches all men how to fulfil {keep or obey} the commandments of God! Just as Moses was faithful in all his house, so the LORD Jesus Christ has been faithful to His people from the beginning of time. He gave us His law and His gospel that we also might be faithful to Him in all that we do on this earth. This is explained in Hebrews 3:5-6,

*“And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over **His own house**: **WHOSE HOUSE ARE WE, IF WE HOLD FAST** the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope **FIRM UNTO THE END.**”*

Notice the requirement that God gives us to be part of His “house”. He says that we must HOLD FAST the FAITH shown by our obedience to Him FIRM UNTO THE END. God has always desired that His people show their love for Him by “coming out of the world”!

IS THE CHURCH “CALLED OUT” TODAY?

Paul commands all Christians in II Corinthians 6:16-17 to come out of the world.

*“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For **ye are the temple of the living God**; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be MY PEOPLE. Wherefore **come out from among them, and be ye separate,** saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”*

Here Paul tells us what the “church” is when he says, “**ye are the temple of the living God.**” He reminds us of God’s promise of dwelling IN us and walking IN us! He promised to be our God, and that we might be His people. Where did Paul learn this? He was personally taught by Jesus, Who also taught us this in Luke 17:20-21,

*“And when He {Jesus} was demanded of the Pharisees,
when the KINGDOM OF GOD should come,
He {Jesus} answered them and said,
The KINGDOM OF GOD cometh not with observation:
Neither shall they say, Lo here! OR, lo there! for, behold,
THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU.”*

Upon denying ourselves, taking up our cross, and following Jesus, God’s faithful children are “translated” {exchanged our temporal lives} to the KINGDOM OF GOD. He puts **within us** His divine nature in the form of the Holy Spirit of God! He died to wash away our sins that we might go and sin no more. Now that our sins have been washed away, He gives all those faithful to Him the gift of the Holy Spirit to dwell within them.

The Holy Spirit now guides the lives of all who have surrendered all to Him, which is called “walking in the Spirit”. Read Colossians 1:12-13,

*“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet
to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:
Who {Jesus} hath delivered us from the power of darkness
{the devil}, and hath translated {exchanged our lives}
us **into the KINGDOM of His dear Son.**”*

This is the church! God continues to “call out” His people from the world, the flesh, and the devil. He desires to dwell within them, IF they will walk in the Spirit! This is no longer a “mystery”, for God has revealed to us His plan to dwell with us. **IF** we will only continue in the words of Jesus, which is the gospel that fulfils or obeys the commandments of God! Paul explains this in Colossians 1:26-27,

*“Even the **mystery** which hath been hid from ages
and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints
{the obedient}: To whom God would make known what is
the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles;
which is **CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY.**”*

When man obeys God’s “call out” of the world, he sanctifies [separates] himself to God. To be “called out” of the world, you must separate yourself from sin and those practicing sin. Your obedience to God’s law “calls you out” from the world, the flesh, and the devil. Practiced sin separates you from God, Who desires to be your Father. Separation from sin by coming out of the world unites you with God. This coming out of the world purifies, separates, and causes you to “...shew forth the praises of Him who hath **called you out of darkness** into His marvellous light...” as is recorded in I Peter 2:9-10,

*“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood,
an **holy** nation, a peculiar people;
that ye should **shew forth the praises of Him who hath
CALLED YOU OUT of darkness into His marvellous light:**
Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God
(sanctified and separated unto Him):
which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”*

This passage is written to all True Christians who have taken up their cross daily; denied themselves of their own fleshly desires; have died daily by crucifying the lusts thereof; and have followed Jesus as He commanded. They have forsaken houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for Jesus' name's sake. These show God daily that He is their God as they put nothing before Him!

The “called out” shall inherit everlasting life. This calling out of the world changes them from walking on the Broad Way that leads to destruction to the Strait and Narrow Way that leads to everlasting life. They show forth the praises of God, Who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous Light. This teaching is overlooked, for satan hates for people to be called out of darkness. This is the very purpose for which Jesus died as Titus 2:14 teaches us,

*“Who {Jesus} gave Himself for us,
that **He might redeem us from ALL iniquity,**
and **purify unto Himself** a peculiar [special; for Himself] people,
zealous of good works.”*

The brethren in the “church” are not to dwell in darkness! The “Called out Body of Christ” are the children of Light, for Jesus is the Light of the World. Jesus has now left the church as His light in this dark and wicked world. Paul makes this very clear in I Thessalonians 5:4,

*“But ye, brethren, are **NOT** in darkness,
that that day should overtake you as a thief.
Ye are all **the children of light**, and the children of the day:
WE ARE NOT OF THE NIGHT, NOR OF DARKNESS.”*

What a blessing that God forgives the past life of His people who turn from sin. He will not remember their wrongdoing from which they repented. God's wrath must come upon all sin, but those who turn from sin will be granted a new life in Him. Paul explains this in Colossians 3:5-7,

“Mortify [put to death; stop sinning] therefore *your members* [body parts] *which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:*
In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.”

The will of God for His church is that they are sanctified [set apart; separate] from sin as Paul explains in I Thessalonians 4:3-7,

*“For this is the will of God, **even your sanctification,** that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel [body] in **sanctification and honour;** **NOT IN THE LUST** of concupiscence [strong sinful desire], even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud [cheat] his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.
FOR GOD HATH NOT CALLED YOU UNTO UNCLEANNESS, BUT UNTO HOLINESS.”*

We must daily cleanse ourselves from the lusts of the flesh. This is the gospel of Jesus that we might be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect [Matthew 5:48]! The church must obey the gospel so that it is holy. The precious promise of eternal life is worth giving up **everything in this world!** Paul explains this in II Corinthians 7:1,

*“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, **PERFECTING HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF GOD.**”*

Will **you** come out of the world, the flesh, and the devil by denying yourself, taking up your cross daily through crucifying your flesh, and following Jesus? Will **you** forsake all for Him and keep His commandments faithfully? It is **your responsibility** to God to “keep yourself” in the love of God as Jude 1:21 teaches,

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

You see the test and the responsibility of man to be “called out” and to come out of the world (the church – ekklesia – called out body of Christ – the assembly or gathering of the “called-out” children of God!). The truth that Jesus and the Apostles taught to the entire world is the gospel that applies to all nations! You must continue in the Son and in the Father by obeying the gospel that teaches you how to inherit eternal life. This gospel is expressed throughout the Scriptures and explained in I John 2:24-25,

*“Let that therefore **abide in you**, which ye have heard from the beginning. **If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you**, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life.”*

We must abide in Christ as He commanded in John 15:4,

*“**Abide in Me**, and I IN YOU. As the branch CANNOT bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, **except ye abide in ME.**”*

This is our show of praise to God... that we abide in Christ by keeping His commandments. We must love Him more than our own fleshly desires. Nothing in this world is more important than our relationship and walk of faithfulness to Him. Faith is shown by our obedience to His written Word and commandments. Jesus told us how to love Him in John 14:15,

“If ye love Me, keep My commandments.”

We must crucify the flesh and the lust thereof as Paul explains in Galatians 5:24,

“And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”

The “gathering” of the “called out” body of Christ on this earth is the church or assembly of the saints. God has ordained a structure in the church of which Christ is the Head and the Chief Corner Stone. The apostles and prophets (they heard from God and spoke His Word) are the foundation of the church of Jesus Christ. You can see that the church is not a building or a denomination or a business. It is the gathering of the saints on this earth in purity to glorify God in their bodies. God’s people are builded together to be the dwelling of God within us!

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

I Peter 2:5

This is the fellowship of the saints and the “spiritual house” of God. It is the “new family” for those who have “come out” of the world having left everything for the sake of the gospel. As we just read, we are “*living stones*” and “*an holy priesthood*” that the Holy Spirit of God might dwell within us. If the Holy Spirit of God dwells within you, then you must strive to be holy as God is holy. Read II Timothy 2:19,

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

The “called out body of believers” on this earth is the “light of the world”! Without the “light of the world”, there would be only darkness! The light of truth must shine for the entire world to see, so that every person will have a chance to turn from their sins. If you look around today, you see no support or strength for the truth in the not-for-profit businesses or churches! This is explained in Ephesians 5:25-27,

“...even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

WHO CALLED THE CHURCH OUT OF THE WORLD?

The gospel of Jesus is the calling out of the world from the mouth of God! The church is not of this world, for God’s children have been “called out of the world”. If the church and the world agree, then the church is not the church at all. It is just using the term “church” to cover up their “form of godliness” [only an outward appearance]. Jesus taught His followers to come out of the world and to keep God’s Word in John 17:6,

*“I {Jesus} have manifested Thy name {the Father} unto the men {disciples} which Thou {the Father} gavest Me {Jesus} **OUT OF THE WORLD:** Thine {the Father} they were, and Thou {the Father} gavest them Me {Jesus}; and **they have kept Thy word.**”*

Because the “called out body of believers” [the church] is not of this world, the world does not understand their lifestyle. Just as Cain hated his brother Abel for doing right, so the world will hate the church. Just as the world hated Jesus for speaking the truth, so all that will live godly in Christ Jesus [II Timothy 3:12] will also be hated for speaking the truth. Jesus explains His Kingdom is not of this world in John 18:36,

*“Jesus answered, My kingdom is **NOT OF THIS WORLD**:
if My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight,
that I should not be delivered to the Jews:
but now is MY KINGDOM NOT FROM HENCE.”*

If the Kingdom of God were of this world, Jesus said that HIS SERVANTS would fight or act like the world. He did not come to destroy the temporal country of Rome, nor did He come to rule the temporal country of Israel. His Kingdom is an eternal kingdom built upon the Rock of Truth... Jesus Christ! Those claiming to be the “church of Jesus” on this earth, must be completely different from the world. Those claiming to be the church that have never been called out of the world use worldly things to “build *their* church”. They go after entertainment, prosperity, materialism, and fulfil the lusts of the flesh. This is not the church of Jesus.

Jesus explains this in John 15:18-19 in His prayer to His Father before His death,

*“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.
If ye were of the world, the world would love his own:
but because **YE ARE NOT OF THE WORLD,**
but I have **CHOSEN YOU OUT OF THE WORLD,**
therefore the world hateth you.”*

The world hated Jesus, because He spoke the truth! We are to be like our Saviour Who was not of this world. We must think eternally as He thought. We must crucify the lusts of this world as He did. He was not ashamed to admit that He was not of this world in John 8:23,

*“And He {Jesus} said unto them,
Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world;
I am not of this world.”*

Jesus said that He is “from above”; therefore, all of His thinking is for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God, which came from above. We are to think as Jesus thought concerning the things of this world. If we possess the things of this world, it is for the glory of God or for the furtherance of His Kingdom. Read Colossians 3:1-3,

*“If ye then be risen with Christ,
SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE,
where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
SET YOUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE,
not on things on the earth. **For ye are dead,**
and your life is hid with Christ in God.”*

Because the church is not of this world, we are dead to the things of this world. How much does a dead man desire? He can't, because he is dead and his desires are dead also! We are to be dead to the sinful lusts of this world. We are to be dead from coveting wealth, comforts, and acceptance by the world. We must seek the things that are above! What is above? Our eternal reward in the New Jerusalem is above... all of our decisions must be for that purpose! We must never allow the things of this earth to hinder us from obedience to God. Read Galatians 2:20,

*“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live;
yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:
and the life which I now live in the flesh
I LIVE BY THE FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD,
Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”*

This is how we receive the grace of God through Christ's death that we might be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the gift of grace that teaches us how to live for Him on this earth. Paul explains that the Holy Spirit teaches us by speaking to our heart. He guides us if we will yield to Him. Read Titus 2:11-12,

*“For the **grace of God** that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
TEACHING US that, **denying** ungodliness and worldly lust,
WE SHOULD LIVE **SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY,**
IN THIS PRESENT WORLD.”*

If we walk in the Spirit or yield to the Holy Spirit's guidance, we learn how to live in this present world. There is no excuse for sin in the church of Jesus Christ! God has given us of His Spirit, which is His Divine Nature. Those who continue to practice sin show that they are not obeying the Holy Spirit. Read II Peter 1:3-4,

*“According as His divine power hath given unto us **ALL THINGS**
that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him
that hath called us to glory and virtue [righteousness; excellence].
Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises:
that by these ye might be **PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE,**
having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”*

If you are not “called out” of the world, you cannot be partakers of the “Divine Nature” of God, because you have not “escaped the corruption that is in the world”! Paul explains how important the light of the gospel is in our daily lives in II Corinthians 4:3-4,

*“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:
In whom **the god of this world hath blinded the minds** of them
which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ,
Who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*

Jesus did not want the “called out” to be “removed” from the world. He commanded us to be the light of the world, and separate from the sins and love of the world. He explains this in John 17:14-17,

*“I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them,
because they **ARE NOT OF THE WORLD,**
even as I am not of this world. I pray **NOT that Thou shouldst**
TAKE THEM OUT OF THE WORLD,
but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil.
THEY ARE NOT OF THE WORLD,
even as I am not of the world.
Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.”*

The Word that Jesus has given commands the church to fulfil its mission of being “called out”! The world hates them, because they are NOT OF THIS WORLD. What is the measurement of how much they are not to be of the world? Jesus told us twice, “...even as I am not of this world.” The “called out” have been separated to God by God’s truth! We must keep ourselves from evil through the power of the Holy Spirit as Jesus prayed. Just as Jesus was sent into the world by His Father, so we have been sent into the world by Him to walk in His steps. Read John 17:18,

*“As Thou hast sent Me into the world,
even so have I also sent them into the world.”*

What do we speak of in this world? Paul explains what we speak of in this world in I Corinthians 2:6,

*“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect
[seeking holiness]: yet **NOT THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD,**
nor the princes of this world, that come to nought:
But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom,
which God ordained before the world unto our glory.”*

Did Jesus command us to “fight for our rights”? Did He tell us to argue and debate? No... in fact, Jesus taught the exact opposite of this! This is the attitude of the world. Jesus used two short parables in Matthew 7:6 to explain who we are to look for when we preach the gospel, and who we must not “waste” our time on.

*“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and **rend you.**”*

The first parable talks of wasting something “holy” upon dogs. The second commands not to cast a valuable pearl before swine. Both of these parables talk of wasting, but there is a reason that Jesus says this. If you “argue” with someone who is “not interested”, they will not only reject what you say, but they may also come against you. You would be in the wrong at this point for upsetting someone AFTER they have already told you that they were not interested. The entire world is going to hell, so don’t argue with people who are not interested.

Jesus called His children out of the world, but if we have the same pride and bad attitude as these of the world do, how are we “called out”? We are commanded to walk humbly with man, especially when being a witness of the Kingdom of God. Do not let pride enter into your preaching of the gospel. Jesus lived in humility as He spoke the truth everywhere that He went. He commands us not to exalt ourselves even in being a testimony for Him. Those who exalt themselves shall be humbled by God as Jesus said in Matthew 23:12,

*“And whosoever shall exalt himself **SHALL BE ABASED**;
but he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.”*

WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH?

The “called out body of believers”, which is the church, is built upon only one foundation. Though false teachers add and take away from the truth, there is only one foundation... which is Jesus Christ... Who is the Chief Cornerstone. What He commanded the Apostles and Prophets to write are His words or the Word of God. These godly men were completely submissive to Him writing only His word. Again, this is explained in Ephesians 2:19-20,

*“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners,
but fellowcitizens with the saints, and **of the household of God**;
And **ARE BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION**
OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS,
Jesus Christ **HIMSELF** being the **CHIEF CORNERSTONE.**”*

Through the washing of our sins in the blood of Christ when we repented, we are now “fellowcitizens” with those who were “called out” and faithful to God before us! We are “joint heirs” with Christ receiving the “blessing of Abraham” that His “called out” Israelites received. We are now being “adopted” into the “family of God”. Those faithful to God are the “temple of the Living God” having received the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit built us together that God Himself might dwell within us. Paul explains in Ephesians 2:21-22,

*“In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In Whom ye also are **BUILDED TOGETHER** FOR AN HABITATION OF GOD THROUGH THE SPIRIT.”*

This is the grace of God that teaches us how to live! The bodies of God’s children are the “temple of the LORD” meaning that the Holy Spirit dwells in us. The Holy Spirit has “*builded together*” the “called out”, no matter what our nationality! We are brothers in Christ having equal opportunity to walk with God through the Spirit. Though we do not deserve it, God dwells within all who deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow Him.

Jesus promised to build His church in the gospel. We have seen already that He built it upon the foundation laid by the Apostles and Prophets. What is the “Chief Cornerstone” upon which the “temple of God” within us will be built? Jesus explains this in Matthew 16:15-18,

*“He {Jesus} saith unto them But whom say ye that I am?
And Simon Peter answered and said,
Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
And Jesus answered and said unto him,
Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood
hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.
And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter {meaning a little stone},
and upon this Rock {Peter’s confession of Christ}
I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH;
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*

The Roman Catholic Church claims that Jesus built the Catholic Church upon Peter, who they claim was the first Pope, but Jesus built His church upon Peter’s confession, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.*” It is important to note that the name “Peter” means a “little stone or rock”. Jesus said, “*Upon this Rock...*” This Rock means a “a large mass of rock” like a mountain! Jesus is the Rock upon which the church is built!

Jesus promised to build “His church”, and He did with those who would be “called out” of the world. Though satan daily comes against the truth of the church of Jesus by adding not-for-profit businesses that teach prosperity, materialism, and the lusts of the flesh; the “few” that will follow Christ will by faith “prevail” in the end as we stand before God... by the grace and mercy of God!

WHO IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH?

Though you think that you know the answer to this question, you may be surprised at the importance of understanding that Jesus is the One and Only Head of the Church! Why is this important? False teachers raise themselves up as the “head of their denominations” etc. They add and take away from the truth of the gospel, which results in the thousands of groups of false “churches” that have **flooded** the world. **Remember that word “flooded”**, because we will see who has “flooded” the world with the false doctrines that justify sin and reject the gospel of Jesus Christ! You know a “false church” by their “fruits” or lifestyle. Few will bear fruit unto perfection! Many will continue in sin following the example of their father the devil!

Paul explained the greatness of the power of God. He speaks of the exaltation of Jesus at the right hand of God. Read Ephesians 1:21-23 as he continues to explain the benefit to the church.

*“Far above all principality, and power, and might,
and dominion, and every name that is named,
not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:
And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the
**HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH,
WHICH IS HIS BODY,**
the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”*

The “Called out BODY of Christ” is the representation of Christ on this earth. This is why Jesus commanded,

*“Let your light so shine before men,
that they may see your good works,
and GLORIFY YOUR FATHER which is in heaven.”*

Matthew 5:16

Jesus is the “HEAD OVER ALL THINGS”! Everything taught in the Scriptures comes from His mouth. None of the Apostles “in their own authority” added anything different from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Though false teachers desire to twist and distort the writings of the Apostles, they “ALL” were in complete agreement with Jesus.

We know this, for they were all “full of the Holy Spirit” when they wrote the Scriptures. This means that Peter, Paul, and James all served the same LORD Jesus in complete harmony of the Spirit. They all taught the same gospel of Jesus Christ to all the nations of the world. Do NOT LISTEN to false teachers tell you that any of them had a “different gospel” or a different opinion than that of the Head of the Church!

This point cannot be expressed enough, for Jesus is the Head of the Church! None of His Apostles taught a different gospel than what God the Father put into Jesus’s mouth. Paul explains this again in Ephesians 5:23-24,

*“For the husband is the head of the wife,
EVEN AS **CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH:**
and He is the SAVIOUR OF THE BODY {THE CHURCH}.
Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ {not the Pope},
so let the wives be to their own husbands IN EVERYTHING.”*

Remember the word “**flooded**”? That is what satan has done with his false teaching and false teachers. They have **flooded** the world with damnable heresies that contradict or reject the gospel of Jesus Christ. They say with their mouths, “Christ is the Head of the Church”, but they reject Him by their actions as Paul warned in Titus 1:16,

“They profess that they know God;
BUT IN WORKS THEY DENY HIM,
being abominable, and DISOBEDIENT,
and unto every good work REPROBATE.”

Read the prophesy of the “**flood**” that is coming and has already come to replace the “Called out Body of Christ” with a worldly acceptable prosperous satanic version that appeals to the flesh.

*“And the serpent {satan} cast out of his mouth
water as **a flood** after the woman {the church},
that he might cause her to be CARRIED AWAY of the flood
{false doctrines and lies}.”*

Revelation 12:15

Paul in Ephesians 4:14-15 calls this “flood” every wind of doctrine and warns against it.

*“That we henceforth be no more **children** [easily deceived],
TOSSED TO AND FRO, and CARRIED ABOUT
with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness,
whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE
may grow up into Him in ALL THINGS, which is the HEAD, even CHRIST.”*

This flood or every wind of doctrine flows in the churches of today that are not the “called out” of the world. Many of these churches do not realize the satanic plot that they are living. They need **you** to warn them from the wrath of God that will come upon all men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. With love and compassion, we must pray that God will lead us to those looking for the truth, so that they can be warned. Most are very happy with their false teaching and worldly accepted “persecution-free” businesses called churches.

Satan and his false apostles (false teachers) have transformed themselves into the “*angel of light*” and “*ministers of righteousness*” as Paul explains in II Corinthians 11:13-15,

*“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers,
transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.
And no marvel; for satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.
Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers
also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness;
whose end shall be according to their works.”*

They twist and distort the Scriptures contradicting the gospel as if it does not apply. They add the doctrines and commandments of men replacing the righteous law of God. Their lives show you that they are false teachers!

*“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were
before of old **ordained to this condemnation, UNGODLY men,
turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,
and **DENYING THE ONLY LORD GOD,**
AND OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.”***

Jude 1:4

What kind of men are these false teachers that have crept in unawares? They are **ungodly** in their actions as can be seen in their lives. They justify sin that brings man into bondage by denying God’s law, which is His thinking. They reject the gospel saying that it is only for the Jews. They reject all the actions of God found in the law and the prophets that show us the unchanging God Whom we serve! They turn the grace of God into an excuse to sin that they might “*continue in sin, that grace may abound*” as Romans 6:1 explains,

*“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin,
that grace may abound? **GOD FORBID** [absolutely not!].
How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”*

They teach false doctrines such as the “rapture” [that is not in the scriptures], eternal security, “the gospel of Paul” [BUT Paul taught perfectly the gospel of Jesus Christ], the millennial period, the second “act of grace” [another excuse to sin], and dispensationalism [cutting the Bible into “time periods” that they say do not apply anymore].

*“But there were false prophets also among the people,
even as there shall be false teachers among you,
who privily {secretly} shall bring in **damnable heresies**,
even **DENYING THE LORD THAT BOUGHT THEM**,
and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”*

2 Peter 2:1

They pull verses out of context without reading the rest of the verses around them, so they can “make up” their own “doctrines of devils”! Such a verse is found in Matthew 16:19. Jesus said that He would build His church upon the confession of Peter. Jesus then said that He would teach Peter the gospel or “give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom”. The Kingdom of God is within you, so it does not have “actual keys”.

*“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven:
and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven:
and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*

The key to the Kingdom of God that “opens” the strait gate or the narrow way is the gospel of Jesus Christ in Matthew 7. False teachers claim that Jesus gave Peter the ability to change God’s laws by “binding” them upon men. Jesus is talking about “binding” men to the Kingdom by preaching the gospel to them and turning them from their sins. Satan is so sly, for false teachers claim that they can “bind” and “loose” the commandments of God, because they claim that Jesus gave His followers that authority making **them** the Head of the Church!

*“I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have
the preeminence [loves to be first place] among them, receiveth us not.”*

III John 1:9

Christ is the Head of the Church! The entire Bible when read in context as it was written glorifies God! There are no contradictions, for every promise in the Bible applies to all who have been “adopted” as the Sons of God! God does not change, nor is He unjust by expecting more obedience from the Jews than the Gentiles! He is faithful to His law, which is His divine thinking about sin that man would not die as its wage! Do not let satan deceive you, for Christ is the Head of the Church and all that He taught applies to every man ever born! Read Hebrews 13:8,

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”

HOW IS THE CHURCH BUILT?

We are the building blocks of the church, because we are “members one of another” as Paul explains to us in in Romans 12:4-5,

*“For as we have many members in one body {hands, feet, nose},
and all members have not the same office {purpose}:
So we {the called out body of Christ}, being many, are ONE BODY
in Christ, and every ONE MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER.”*

The body of Christ is comprised of those “members” or saints that have denied themselves, taken up their cross daily, and followed Jesus in His steps. They continue in His word seeking to fellowship DAILY with one another as Jesus did with His disciples and as the Apostles did in the New Testament. Satan and his false teachers wanted to make “church” convenient, so more could be deceived, so he invented “Sunday Religion” after the false gods of the Romans. Nowhere in Scripture did God invent this “convenient” part-time service to God!

Remember Ephesians 4:15 that says that Christ is the Head of the church? Paul continues to explain the church in verse 16,

*“From whom the whole body **fitly joined together** and compacted
by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working
in the measure of every part,
maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”*

Many claim to be “Christians”, yet they do not fellowship daily with God’s people. They are NOT part of the “Body of Christ” just as a brick all by itself is not part of the building. Just as a brick building is “fitly joined together and compacted” by each brick, so **the brethren in the church are joined together in Christ**. This union produces daily edification [encouragement; love; compassion for each other]. Each “member” of the Body of Christ builds the entire fellowship of believers. Though the “church” or Kingdom of God is within us, we are not the “church” or “called out body of believers” by ourselves.

A good way of understanding the “edification” or encouragement received by each other in the fellowship of believers is to think of a fire that has hot coals. As long as the coal remains in the fire, it continues to produce heat. When one of the coals is taken from the fire, it soon cools down and its fire **goes out**. This coal is the person who believes that they are the church all by themselves. They think that they do not need to obey God, Who commands daily fellowship with the household [family] of God! Paul explains this unity in the church in I Corinthians 12:12-14,

*“For as the body is **one**, and hath many members,
and all the members of that one body, being many,
are **one body**: so also is Christ.*

*For by one Spirit are we ALL baptized into **one body**,
whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free;
and have been ALL made to drink into one Spirit.*

*FOR THE BODY IS NOT ONE MEMBER, BUT **MANY**.”*

No matter what nationality we are or where we live in this world, those who are the “Called out Body of Christ” are all filled with the same Holy Spirit. Every single person throughout the world that is truly “called out”, are not many “churches” but One in Christ. The body is not one person by themselves, but many throughout the world. Even though they fellowship in their local area with the brethren there, they are ONE in Christ with all who are redeemed. There is no division among those truly obeying the gospel as I Corinthians 12:25 teaches,

*“That there should be no schism [division] in the body;
but that the members should have the same care one for another.”*

The only division found in the church should be to “root out” sin being practiced by a rebellious person. They must be warned about their sins in humility and love. Those who are truly One in Christ have “divided” themselves from the world, for they are “called out” of darkness and sin. Jesus taught this in Matthew 10:34,

*“Think not that I am come to send **peace on earth**:*

*I came NOT to send peace, **but a sword***

[division from those practicing sin].

For I am come to set a man at variance against his father,

and the daughter against her mother;

and the daughter in law against her mother-in-law.

And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.”

This division is not in the church of **obedient “called out” brethren**, but it is division from those who oppose the truth and stand against righteousness! Notice, Jesus said that He did not come to bring “peace on earth”. Most churches promise “peace and safety”. This is not the peace that Jesus promised to His disciples in John 14:27,

*“Peace I leave with you, **My peace I give unto you:**
NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH, GIVE I UNTO YOU.
Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”*

This is the peace that comes with daily fellowship among brethren who all have the same goal of inheriting eternal life! What joy and peace comes when fellowshiping with “like-minded” brethren. What peace comes when you know that you are right with God! It is not as the world promises peace. This peace calms your fears by your faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus.

As just explained, the church consists of every “born again, called out” brother or sister in the world. All these brethren cannot fellowship daily as the Scriptures teach, because they live so far away that they cannot come together. Each “member” must be a part of the “Called out Body of Christ” where they live. If they do not have a godly church, **they must move to be with one**. Not fellowshiping daily with the “family of God” is sin. Read I Corinthians 1:2,

*“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth,
to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus,
called to be saints **with ALL that in every place call
upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.”***

Though this church with its brethren that are “called to be saints” is in Corinth, Paul wrote to them as brethren saying, “...with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus...” There can be fellowship with brethren who live “at a distance” when the time is possible. This fellowship is in common with Jesus, Who is the Saviour of the Body of Christ. During their missionary journeys, the apostles fellowshiped with the churches that they visited being One in Christ. This is shown in Acts 11:26,

*“And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch.
And it came to pass, that **a whole year they assembled themselves
with the church**, and taught much people.
And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”*

Paul and Barnabas “...assembled themselves with the church...” for an entire year. Notice, the “assembly” was not the church, but notice that **the “church” assembled**. The “called out” brethren as members of the church assembled together. Many false teachers claim that the word “church” means to “assemble”, but this is not the case!

The church is built upon brethren who walk in the Spirit with God from all over the world. They may fellowship in the area in which they live, but they are part of the Body of Christ, if indeed, they continue in the faith! The church is not a building or a denomination faithful to the teachings of men. The church is the “Called out Body of Christ” that puts Christ “first place” in their lives. Paul explained “first place” in Colossians 1:18,

*“And He {Jesus} is the head of the body, the church:
Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead;
that in ALL THINGS He might have the preeminence
[first place in our lives and in the church].”*

WHAT UNIFIES THE CHURCH?

This is a very important question to understand, because satan has programmed people to think that the “meeting place” of the church... is the church. No, it is only the building in which the church meets. It is not sacred or “holy” in itself, for it is a “worthless” building until the church comes to occupy it. Where did the early brethren meet for daily fellowship? What does the Scriptures record for us? Let’s start with Acts 2:42,

*“And daily in the TEMPLE, and in EVERY HOUSE,
they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”*

This is interesting to find out that they met in a “Jewish” temple. Why would they meet in a Jewish temple? The temple was very large, and it had many different areas or courts. They could meet together privately out in the open court of the temple. Another reason was that the temple contained the Scriptures, which were read on every Sabbath. The New Testament was not written at that time, nor were there any printing presses to make the Scriptures available. The only way that they could hear the Scriptures read [Old Testament law and prophets] was to meet at the temple on the Sabbath.

*“For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read
in the synagogues every sabbath day.”*

Acts 15:21

It is easy for us to understand that the Jewish temple was not the church of Jesus Christ. It was used as a “meeting place” for the church of that particular area. The temple was not the only place that they met daily. They also met in homes. This seems to be the daily place that they met together. In the next lesson, we will study what they did when they met together. Here are Scripture verses that show us where they met. Let’s start with Romans 16:5,

*“Likewise **GREET THE CHURCH
THAT IS IN THEIR HOUSE.***

Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus.

Who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.”

Paul sends greetings to the “church” in their house. You will see that this is the most common place that the brethren met. God allowed Paul to write to various fellowships greeting the churches in their homes. This shows us that the church is not a “sanctuary” or a building [though meeting in a building is not unscriptural]. It must be understood that the building is simply a brick, mud, wood, or steel structure that is used to protect the brethren from rain, snow, or the sun’s rays. Paul sent greetings from a “house church” in I Corinthians 16:19,

“The churches of Asia salute you.

*Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord,
with the church that is in their house.”*

Paul sent greetings to the brethren in the city of Laodicea, and to one person in particular that had a church in his house in Colossians 4:15,

*“Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas,
and the church which is in his house.”*

As you can see, this is not an uncommon thing to have the “Called out Body of Christ” fellowship in a person’s home as we again see in Philemon 1:2,

*“And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier,
and to the church in thy house.”*

Was it only the Gentiles that met in homes? Did the Jews meet also in homes? Yes, we read that the Holy Spirit came upon the brethren on the day of Pentecost in a “...house where they were sitting...” in Acts 2:2,

*“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven
as of a rushing mighty wind,
and It filled all the house where they were sitting.”*

Meeting in a house was “good enough” for the Holy Spirit to come upon the brethren. It matters not where the “Called out Body of Christ” meets, as long as they meet together in complete unity with each other and with God.

HOW MUST THE “CALLED OUT” MEET?

Jesus taught us in John 17 how the church must meet or come together. In His prayer to the Father, Jesus thanks God for giving to Him the church “out of the world” in John 17:6,

*“I have manifested Thy name unto the men which
Thou GAVEST ME **OUT OF THE WORLD**:
Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me;
and they have kept Thy word.”*

Jesus thanked the Father for giving the “called out” to Him from the world. He tells us what the church must do, “...*they have kept Thy word.*” The fellowship of believers keep the Word of God in obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. They do not figure out what they believe based upon their own opinion. They continue in the words of Jesus, Who preached what His Father sent Him to preach. No person in the church has the right to preach anything but the Word of God! Do not base anything that you believe upon historical facts, ancient writings of men, or accepted opinions that contradict the truth. Doctrines of men have been built upon traditions, history, philosophy, psychology, reasoning, and the rudiments of the world. Paul warns against this in Colossians 2:8,

*“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy
and vain deceit, after the tradition of men,
after the rudiments [principles of men] of the world,
and **NOT** after Christ.”*

It is man’s responsibility to study the Scriptures to know the “Mind of Christ”, which will be shown by the Holy Spirit within them. The “called out” must keep God’s word. Opinions and philosophy are **not** what you will be judged by when you stand before God to be judged. Jesus said that His words are Spirit and life in John 6:63,

*“It is the Spirit that quickeneth [gives life];
the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you,
they are Spirit, and they are life.”*

We have the mind of Christ [I Corinthians 2:16], which is the Holy Spirit of God within us. It is our responsibility to yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit as we read God's Word. One way to make sure that it is the Holy Spirit that is "leading you" is to know that "...no lie is of the truth." [I John 2:21] The Holy Spirit will always lead you to the truth. Beware of "seducing spirits" that encourage you to sin with a great justification. They twist the Scriptures, so that you can do as you please. This is not the Spirit of Truth as Jesus taught us in John 16:13,

*"Howbeit when He, **the Spirit of truth**, is come,
He will GUIDE YOU into ALL TRUTH:
for He shall NOT speak of Himself;
but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak:
and He will shew you things to come."*

Beware of churches that "worship" the Holy Spirit and the fleshly "gifts of the Spirit". The "Called out Body of Christ" must keep the Word of God. The Holy Spirit does not speak of Himself. If someone says this, they are the spirit of error as we are warned in I John 4:6,

*"We are of God: he that knoweth God **HEARETH US** [the truth];
he that is not of God heareth not us.
Hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and the **SPIRIT OF ERROR.**"*

Who will the Holy Spirit testify of? Jesus answered this question in John 15:26,

*"But when the Comforter is come,
Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even **the Spirit of truth**,
which proceedeth from the Father, **HE SHALL TESTIFY OF ME.**"*

The fellowship of believers is to come together to keep [obey] the Word of God. Jesus prayed that the Body of Christ would be ONE. But how could they be ONE? Did Jesus want the church to compromise in order to get along with each other? Jesus explains how His church can be ONE in agreement in John 17:11,

*"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world,
and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name
those whom Thou hast given Me, that **THEY MAY BE ONE,**
AS WE ARE."*

Does God the Father and Jesus compromise with evil or wrong in order to be ONE? The church must be ONE with God first and foremost before they could ever be ONE in unity with each other! Men have this backward, for they want to compromise the truth so that their “church” can be in “unity” with each other. They care more about how “many” people are in their “church”, so they do not stand upon the truth and are not **ONE with God!** They do not have a church, which is a “Called out Body of Believers”, if they are **not first ONE with God!**

They may say that they “love Jesus”, but Jesus told us how to show our love for Him in John 14:15,

“If ye love Me, keep My commandments.”

Those who are “striving” to enter in at the strait gate of the gospel keep the commandments of God. They are ONE with Him. Anyone else that is ONE with God by obedience to Him is a brother also, and this is the basis for true unity in the church of Jesus Christ. True unity starts with being right with God by living and preaching the truth being One with the thinking of God. How can anyone claim to be the church if they teach contrary to the Word of God? Think of how holy the agreement is between the Father and Son. Jesus wants His Body of Believers to have this same unity in the truth. This unity of holiness is the light of the world that glorifies God. Jesus explains how important it is to be in unity as ONE with God in John 17:20-21,

*“Neither pray I for these alone,
but for them [including the Gentiles] also
which shall believe on Me through their word;
That they **ALL MAY BE ONE**;
as **Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee,**
THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE ONE IN US:
that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.”*

Such righteousness can turn the world to faith in Christ. Compromise with man only causes the world to blaspheme the name of God! Jesus gives the church His glory or honour of inheriting eternal life with Him. Jesus continues to explain this unity in verses 22-23,

*“And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them;
that **THEY MAY BE ONE**, even as **WE ARE ONE.**
I in them, and Thou in Me,
that they may be made perfect in ONE;
and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me,
and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.”*

The church must be in unity with God, just AS Jesus and God the Father are in unity. This takes denial of self. It takes a genuine love of God and righteousness. This is not just “Sunday Religion”! This is a daily walk with God in unity with others who are walking with God by keeping the commandments of God and having the faith and testimony of Jesus Christ.

This is the “Called out Body of Christ” for which Jesus gave His life. He did not die on the cross to justify practiced sin; He died that we might live in unity with Him and all who love Him with all their heart.

WILL THE “CALLED OUT BODY OF CHRIST” BE LARGE?

Since Jesus said that **few** would be saved in Matthew 7:14, “...and few there be that find it,” the “Called out Body of Christ” will probably be small, for few will come out of the world. When asked, “Are there few that be saved?” in Luke 13:23-24, here is what Jesus said,

*“Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved?
And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate:
FOR MANY, I say unto you, **WILL SEEK TO ENTER IN**,
and **SHALL NOT BE ABLE**.”*

If you really study the Scriptures, you will see that very few obeyed God even in the Old Testament. When Jesus died on the cross, Judas betrayed Him, Peter denied Him, and all forsook Him. They did not understand why He was dying, just as the world and the fleshly church do not understand the “calling out” from the world! We see that even Paul expressed his sadness about those who turned away from the LORD in II Timothy 1:15,

*“This thou knowest, that **ALL** they which are in Asia
be **TURNED AWAY FROM ME**;
of whom is Phygellus and Hermogenes.”*

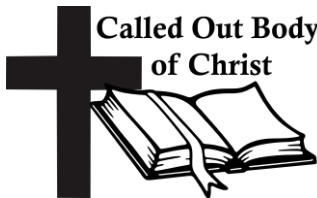
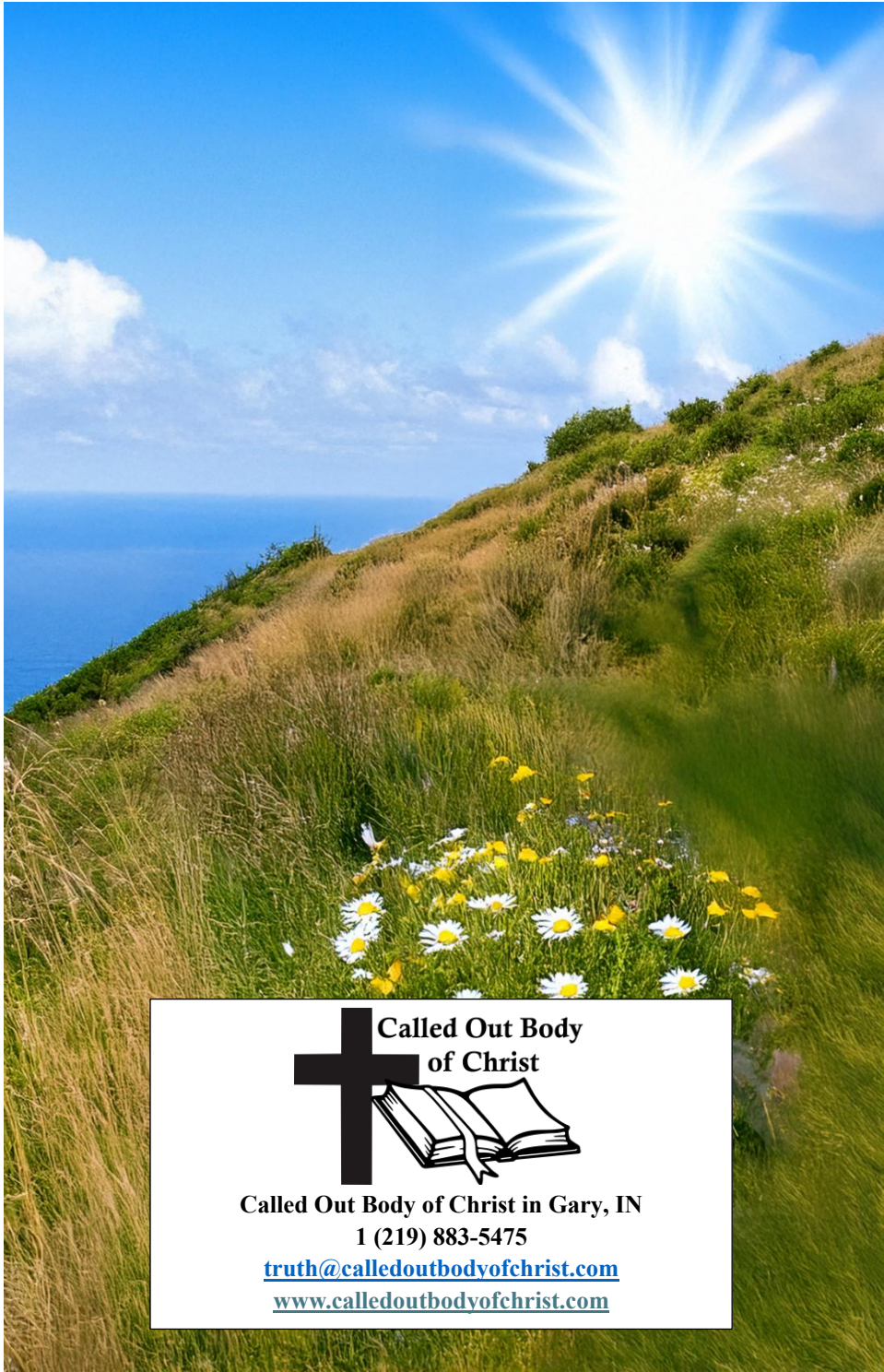
Listen to what Jesus said to the church in Sardis when He wrote letters to them in Revelation 3:4,

*“Thou hast a **FEW NAMES** even in Sardis which have
not defiled their garments; and **THEY shall walk with Me in white**:
FOR THEY ARE WORTHY.”*

Oh! That God would say that of us, brethren! Oh! That we would be found so worthy to walk with Him in white! This is the promise that we have of our Heavenly Father for all the “called out” of this world that will seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness! Brethren, continue in the faith that you might be found WORTHY!

God does not judge a fellowship of believers as man does. Man looks for lots of people and a worldly acceptable doctrine, but God looks upon the obedient hearts of the brethren that love Him by showing by their actions that they are ONE with God! What is the point of having a church that is not “called out” of the world and ONE WITH GOD?

Now that you have an idea of what the church is, we will learn the purpose of the “Called out Body of Believers” and how God designed it to edify the saints. We will Scripturally answer the questions about “membership” requirements, the meeting place, lifestyle in the church, daily actions of the church, and the power of the presence of God within the “Called out Body of Believers.”



**Called Out Body
of Christ**

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