

NOT A PROPER CHURCH

You think you've seen better! Some people expect a church to be a beautiful building with lots of stained glass, an altar, an organ, religious pictures and statues. If they do not worship in that kind of building they feel they have not been to church. If the building does not have these things, they say it is not a proper church.

WHAT IS A PROPER CHURCH ?

In the Bible the word "church" is translated from the ordinary every day Greek word ekklesia, which meant an association or group of people with a mutual interest. So, strictly speaking, a building is not a church. A church consists of people, not bricks and mortar or stone. In the Bible the word "church" never refers to a building. The first Christians did not have church buildings and they did not use altars. They met together to worship in homes, hired rooms, or wherever it was convenient. Those groups were non-the-less proper churches. They were the Lord Jesus' churches meeting in their different localities. Now the church worldwide was referred to as "the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood". There was only one worldwide church.

THE ONLY CHURCH THAT MATTERS ¹

Jesus the Christ[#] said "I Will Build MY Church." He was going to build just one worldwide church. It was going to be HIS church. Sadly, today, there are many kinds of denominations, all started by men. These are wrong.² Despite that, the Lord Jesus is still building HIS church, and it is the only church that matters.³ Becoming a member of a denomination doesn't make one a Christian.⁴ You need to be in HIS church to be a Christian. On the day of judgement, when you stand before the Lord Jesus, He will not be the least interested in, which denomination you

belong to. The only thing that will count with Him, will be whether you are a faithful member of HIS church. The church He died for. The only church that matters.⁵

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE LORD'S CHURCH

After Jesus rose from the dead, before He ascended into heaven, He gave His disciples these parting instructions:

"ALL AUTHORITY in heaven and on earth has been given TO ME.

THEREFORE GO and MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS,

BAPTIZING* THEM INTO THE NAME of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

teaching them to OBEY EVERYTHING THAT I HAVE COMMANDED you." ⁶

The apostle Peter was the first to preach this good news:- The Lord Jesus, whom they had wrongly executed, is raised from the dead, is in heaven at God's right hand and God has made him Lord and Christ[#]. Those who believed Peter were stricken with grief and asked what they should do. Peter told them to REPENT[@] and be BAPTIZED* for their sins to be forgiven. THE LORD JESUS ADDED those who repented and were baptized to HIS church. ⁷

The Lord Jesus does the building, the adding. Men do not and cannot add people to HIS church. They might add people to their own churches, churches started by human beings, but to be a member of the church He started you have to be built into it by the Lord Himself.

Jesus said " **I WILL BUILD** my church. ".

You cannot join the church of Jesus the Christ, like you would join a denomination or a club. You have to be built into it by Him. How does this happen?

NOW, JUST AS THEN, THE LORD JESUS ADDS TO HIS CHURCH THOSE WHO BELIEVING IN HIM, REPENT[@] AND ARE BAPTIZED*.

He adds them to HIS church. The only church that matters. Make sure you are a member of HIS church. If you are not, then decide to be a whole hearted disciple of the Lord Jesus who died for your sins. Repent[@] of your sins and be baptized* and Jesus will add you to HIS church. Your sins will be forgiven and you will be part of HIS church, the one He was talking about when He said "I will build MY church".

THE LORD'S SUPPER ⁸

In the early church, each group in each locality had a special meeting every "first day of the week"⁵. They sang hymns, prayed, had teaching and members would voluntarily put, what they considered they could afford, in a collection, which would be used at their discretion to do God's work.

The primary reason for the meeting was to commemorate how the Lord Jesus died for them. Giving thanks to God they shared a loaf of unleavened bread, to remember His body. Then with thanks again, they remembered how He shed His blood, by sharing a cup of grape juice. This meeting was called "the Lord's Supper" and "The Breaking of the Bread (or Loaf)". There was no liturgy but it was all done in an orderly manner.

If and when the Lord adds you to His church, don't join a denomination. Meet with an independent group of people, who have also

been added to His church. If you cannot find a group like that, it requires only two or three to begin meeting together as a church to remember the Lord Jesus.⁹

Follow Jesus' teaching actively and faithfully and then on the day of judgement He will welcome you into eternal happiness.¹⁰

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@ Repentance is not just being sorry. It is making your mind up that you will change.

* "Baptizing" is an anglicized Greek word. It is from Baptizo which means "to dip, immerse, sink". (Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament. by Abbott-Smith. 1964 reprint. page 74.

"Christ" is another anglicized Greek word. It is from christos which means "anointed" ibid. page 484. It is the equivalent of the anglicised Hebrew word "messiah" used in the Old Testament of those whom God put in positions of secular or religious authority.

§ The Hebrews (Jews) reckon their days from sunset to sunset. Their Sabbath (rest day) is from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. The literal translation of the phrase "the first day of the week" is "the first after the Sabbath" so the first day of the week is from Saturday sunset to Sunday sunset. Most of the Lord's churches get together to observe the Lord's Supper on Sunday mornings.

We appeal to churches to return to simple New Testament principles, to abandon creeds, articles of faith, denominations, alliances and be simply independent churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

REFERENCES:-

- ¹ Matt. 16:18 ² John 17:20-21 & 1 Cor.1:10-13
³ Matt. 15:13 ⁴ Matt. 15:14 ⁵ Matt. 7:21
⁶ Matt. 28:18-20 ⁷ Acts 2:29-47 KJV
⁸ Matt. 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26, Luke 22:19-20,
Acts 2:42, 20:7, 1 Cor. 10:16-17, 11:20-28,
Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16.
⁹ Matt. 18:20 ¹⁰ Matt. 25:34.

IMPORTANT: In the UK, Associations handling money must ensure they comply with the Charities Act. The Charity Commissioners will provide details.

This is the fourth of a series of leaflets published by an independent group of people who have been added by the Lord to His church and are trying to follow His teaching faithfully. If you have believed and repented, we would be happy to baptize you and for you to meet with us.

The previous pamphlets in this series were:-

- Yashua the Craftsman
- No Corpse !
- Guilty or Not Guilty ?

If you would like copies of these or want more information, or have any questions, please write, stating you request, to:-

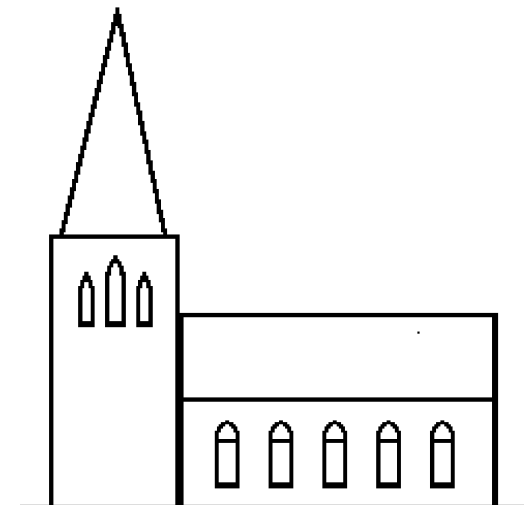
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IS THIS A CHURCH



Sequel to the pamphlet "Guilty or Not Guilty ?"