



# The True Church of God

## Information Booklet J

Supplement to Lesson 28

*"...the hour cometh, **and now is**, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:23-24.*

### Introduction

For thousands of years the question of who and what constitutes God's church has raged. Some, having studied for themselves, have comprehended the importance of this truth. While others have either misunderstood, or have overlooked, the truth on this subject. To comprehend this vital truth is to find freedom in Jesus Christ, but to misunderstand it is to be kept in bondage and captivity to Satan. So it is of the utmost importance to all of God's followers that they take the time to study for themselves and understand who and what constitutes God's true church.

## WHO IS THE TRUE CHURCH OF GOD ?

As there are at least 100 different denominations today all claiming to be God's true church, and yet they all conflict with each other in belief, can they all constitute God's church? Is only one out of them all the true church of God? How can we know for sure? The only way to understand this is to obtain knowledge and wisdom; but from where? Can we depend alone upon the knowledge and wisdom from earthly sources? No, because we would become the enemies of God (see James 4:4). Can we then depend alone upon the knowledge and wisdom from other men? No, because if we depend on the words of other men – be they pope or priest, minister or elder, guru or shaman, we will be cursed (see Jeremiah 17:5). Can we then depend alone on our own wisdom? No, because that is foolishness (see 1 Corinthians 1:19-20, 3:19). Then where do we obtain the knowledge and wisdom with which to understand who and what constitutes God's church? It must be from God Himself, and He mercifully promises to grant us all the knowledge and wisdom we need to understand His truth (see James 1:5; John 7:17, 14:26). The wisdom and knowledge which comes from God, as is found in His inspired word, must be our **ONLY** foundation and dependence in trying to understand the truth of this vital issue.

"To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20.

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15.

We must search and study God's word for ourselves in order to know who and what is declared to be God's church, and we cannot allow any man, or group of men, to be our conscience or to do our study for us. And to make sure that we obtain the correct understanding, we must go back to the basic truths as is found in God's inspired word, and thus build up a solid foundation of truth which we can stand firmly upon.

Since there are only two different powers in this world – either good or evil, and only two different sources of doctrine – either light or darkness, so God's word lists only two kinds of churches – the pure righteous church of God (see Revelation 12:1-5; Ephesians 5:27), or the corrupt Babylonian synagogue of Satan (see Revelation 2:9, 17:1-6). The church of God is founded only upon God's light of truth (see 1 Timothy 3:15), because God is only the Author of light, goodness and truth (see Genesis 1:3-4; Matthew 19:17; James 1:17). While the church of Satan is founded upon lies, for the devil is the author of all darkness, error and falsehood (see Isaiah 14:4-23; Ezekiel 28:15-17; Revelation 12:7-9; John 8:44). So if any church holds to a mixture of truth and error, it can not be God's true church, but is part of Satan's synagogue, because Christ and Satan have no union or partnership with each other at any time (see John 14:30; 2 Corinthians 6:15).

God's true church has only Christ as its Head and Leader (see Ephesians 1:22, 5:23-24; Colossians 1:18). Thus with Christ as its Leader the church will always do only those things which please God (see Psalms 92:15; John 8:29), and by so doing the gates of hell cannot prevail against it because there is nothing the Devil can find in it to use to his advantage (see John 14:30; Matthew 16:18). Thus God's church cannot and will never fall, but will stand forever because it is founded upon the Eternal and Everlasting immovable Rock – which is Christ Jesus (see Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Samuel 22:32; Psalms 18:2; Matthew 7:24-25). Whereas the church which Satan controls will put a man in the place of Christ as its head and leader (see 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). Thus that church will not do those things which please God, but will do those things which please men (see Matthew 16:23). This church cannot possibly stand, but will indeed fall and be destroyed, along with all those who remain in it, because it is founded upon the ever shifting, unstable and deceptive tiny rocks of sand – which is fallible mortal beings (see Deuteronomy 32:31,37-39; Matthew 7:26-27; Revelation 18:2-8).

As the above Biblical truths plainly reveal that God's true church does not deviate from good, light, and truth at any time, even by the slightest degree, the vast majority of religious people cannot comprehend this. They declare that this Scriptural identification of God's true church is too straight and narrow to possibly be correct. They then are further shaken by the thought that there has never yet been a denomination in the entire history of this world which has always done only those things which have pleased God at all times. And as they cannot harmonize their thinking with the Scripture truth and this knowledge of history, they become confused, the above Scriptures are ignored, and they are led to believe that God's true church must be made up of a combination of both good and evil existing together within it. But there does not need to be any confusion, because there is no contradiction between the Scriptures and historical facts in this issue! You may say, how can this be so? The whole problem lies in our understanding of who and what constitutes God's true church.

Multitudes have been taught that God's true church is made up of a building, or a denomination, which has been devoted to the worship of God. With this understanding in mind, there is an urgent desire to find some denomination to join; but which one? With the 100 or so denominations to choose from, and with all these declaring most positively that they are the one and only true church of God, this can be quite an unnerving and difficult task to have to decide between! But with this idea, people have been led to believe that they must be members of, or otherwise connected to, some denomination in order to worship God, be part of His true church, and thus to have their salvation assured. But this is not what the Scriptures teach regarding God's true church!

Jesus, in speaking of Himself and God's true church, declared:

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. ...and I lay down my life for the sheep...and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." John 10:14-16.

First of all, Jesus stated that God only has "one fold" or one true church – not many! So this Scriptural truth debunks the idea that all the denominations collectively make up God's church. The word "fold" translates the same as "flock" (see Strong's Concordance, #4167). So who or what makes up this identity of God's true church – His "one fold" or "one flock"? People have been taught that God's one and only true fold or church is a denomination – such as the Catholic church. But is God's one flock any particular denomination?

"And ye are my flock, **the flock of my pasture, are men**, and I am your God, saith the Lord God." Ezekiel 34:31.

Thus God's one true church, His one fold, His one flock of today is not a denomination – no matter how exalted their name, or how loudly they profess, because God's one true church is made up of people. We must understand this vital point of truth, that God's church is made up of people and not a denomination, in order to be free in Jesus and not continue to remain in bondage and captivity to men!

Even in Christ's time this battle of denominationalism was raging. Various church followers were battling with each other for converts and the right to declare themselves the one and only church of God. Each denomination was declaring that only they had the truth, and only in their church could God be truly worshipped. But did Christ sanction this belief? Did Christ choose one denomination over another for His people to worship God in? One person directly asked Christ this very question, and please read carefully what answer He gave:

"The woman (of Samaria) saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain (the temple at Mount Gerizim); and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for (the message of) salvation is of (was committed to) the Jews. But the hour cometh, **and now is**, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:19-24.

Therefore God's true church is not made up of this denomination or that denomination, but is made up of individuals who worship God in spirit and truth. So you do not need to find any denomination in order to worship God, but you can worship Him in your very homes – just like the disciples and followers of Christ chose to do (see Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2). This beautiful knowledge that God's church is made up of people and not any denomination is what sets you free in Jesus, and leads you to correctly understand other related issues regarding God's church. Whereas, the belief that God's true church is a denomination, will leave you in bondage to men, and to misunderstand other related issues regarding God's church.

Some may still be having problems in seeing the difference between these two understandings, so let us briefly examine the following related scenarios from both perspectives which will help to show the difference between the two issues, and it should become clearer why one leads to freedom in Christ, while the other leads to bondage of men.

The Bible teaches that God is offering rest for all who are weary (see Isaiah 28:12, 30:15; Jeremiah 6:16). With the understanding that God's church is made up of people, then we would individually find our rest only by going directly to Jesus (see Psalms 37:7; Matthew 11:28-30), and if we choose to leave Him, then we lose our rest and salvation. Whereas with the understanding that God's church is a denomination, then we would find our rest only by going directly to the denomination, and if we choose to leave the denomination, then we believe that we have forsaken our rest and are lost.

The Bible also teaches that God's church is the body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 1:23, 5:30). So in understanding that God's true church is made up of people, then we individually become part of Christ's body by joining Christ Himself and are baptized (see Galatians 3:27-29; Matthew 12:30; Romans 12:5; Mark 16:16). And if we should choose to break away from Christ, then we would no longer be part of His body or church and are lost. Whereas with the understanding that God's church is a denomination, then we would become part of Christ's body by joining the denomination through baptism. And if we should choose to break away from, or should be cast out of, the denomination, then we would believe that we are no longer part of the body of Christ and are lost.

The Bible teaches that God's people will obtain immortality or eternal life (see Romans 2:7). With the understanding that God's church is made up of people, then we would find eternal life only through Jesus (see 1 Timothy 1:16-17; 1 John 1:1-2; John 1:1-4, 14:6), and by disconnecting ourselves from Jesus, we have no chance for eternal life and salvation. Whereas with the understanding that God's church is a denomination, then we would find eternal life through the denomination, and by disconnecting ourselves from the denomination we believe we have no chance for eternal life or of salvation.

As you can see, all these scenarios involve the issue of our salvation! The Bible does indeed teach that we must be saved (see 1 Timothy 2:3-4). With the understanding that God's church is made up of people, then we would individually find our salvation by connecting ourselves directly to Jesus Christ (see John 3:17; Isaiah 45:22; Acts 2:21, 4:10-12, 15:11, 16:30-31; Romans 5:9-10) and in separating ourselves from Christ, we are lost. Whereas with the understanding that God's church is a denomination, then we find our salvation by connecting ourselves to the denomination, and in separating ourselves from the denomination, we believe we are lost.

Now let us put all of these points together. With the understanding that God's church is made up of people, then we would individually find our rest, become part of Christ's body and true church, find our eternal life and salvation, by going directly to, and becoming connected directly with, Jesus. Thus our eyes are directed upward, and our attention becomes centered and focused upon Jesus. He becomes the object of our love, adoration and praise. Jesus becomes our All-in-All, His life becomes our best and all absorbing theme to contemplate on. Hence our desire to please Him becomes paramount, and His will and commands become our delight to follow and obey. And by continuing to behold Jesus day after day, our very lives and characters are more and more changed into His perfect image, and our desire to lead others to also join with Jesus and find salvation in Him enlarges more each day. But by leaving, separating, disconnecting and breaking ourselves away from Christ, then we no longer have any rest; we are no longer part of His body or true church; we no longer have any assurance of salvation or hope for eternal life; which means that we are lost.

But with the understanding that God's church is a denomination, then we would find our rest, become part of Christ's body and true church, find our eternal life and salvation, by going directly to, and becoming connected directly with, the denomination. Thus our eyes are directed downward, and our attention becomes centered and focused upon the denomination. It becomes the object of our love, adoration and praise. The denomination becomes our all-in-all, its history becomes our best and all absorbing theme to contemplate on, and our desire to please the denomination becomes paramount. The will and commands of the denominational leaders becomes our delight to follow and obey. And by continuing to behold the denomination, our very lives and characters are more and more changed into the imperfect image it reveals, and our desire to lead others to join with us in the denomination grows more each day. But by leaving, separating, disconnecting and breaking ourselves away from the denomination, then we believe we will no longer have any rest; we believe we are no longer part of Christ's body or true church; and we believe we no longer have any assurance of salvation or hope for eternal life; which means we believe we are lost.

The most serious consequence to those who believe this way, is that their denominational leaders can be as corrupt and wicked as the devil himself, their denomination can even apostatize from the truths of the Bible and exchange these for the doctrines of hell, and yet it would not matter one bit! Why? Because you believe that your denomination is the true church of God. So even if you can be shown evidence that reveals your church to be controlled by the Devil himself, it would not shake your blind faith in the denomination in the least! This is because you believe that your church is going through to heaven, and that by your remaining connected to it your ticket to heaven is thus assured, but if you would be separated from it, you would be lost!

I earnestly pray that you can clearly discern the stark difference between these two ideologies and the pathway which it leads you to follow. One leads to complete liberty and freedom in Christ, the other leads to complete bondage and captivity to men! The one is the gospel truth of the Bible which centers in Jesus, the other is the heinous falsehood of Catholicism which centers in Satan! I sincerely hope that you can clearly understand that if you believe that God's true church is a denomination, that you are in bondage to the men who control that church. And, more importantly, that Christ has been robbed from you as your Saviour because the denomination has taken His place – it has become the object of your worship and source of your salvation!

This sad scenario, of the denominational church being made into the object of worship instead of Christ, is exactly what the Jewish people were led into. And what is even more disheartening, is that the majority of religious people today are being led to believe the very same thing.

The Jewish people accused Stephen of speaking "blasphemous words against this holy place" or against their temple (see Acts 6:13). And what were Stephen's words?

"But Solomon built him (God) an house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hands made all these things?" Acts 7:47-50.

Stephen was basically telling all the Jewish church members that in this New Covenant period, God does not dwell in literal buildings, but desires to dwell in the individual hearts of His people through Jesus Christ. In other words, Stephen was telling them that any who desired to worship God must worship Him in spirit and truth, that no one needed to belong to the denominational church or to visit any temple in order to worship God. This of course meant that no one needed to remain subject to the authority of the corrupt priests or needed to remain connected to their apostate church any longer, but could find perfect rest and lasting freedom in Jesus Christ!

The temple worshipping Jews became very angry that such words were spoken against their church and authority. And instead of recognizing this truth, taking their love and worship from the temple and placing it instead upon Jesus, they rejected Christ, rejected His truth, and stoned Stephen to death. But what is even more amazing, is that in this New Covenant period, this exact same evil spirit, which rises up in angry defiance against anyone who speaks against their denomination, is still rankling in the hearts of many today. When any words are spoken which expose the corruption in their church, or touches upon the false doctrines which their denomination upholds, even if these words are the truth, instead of examining the points brought forth to see if it is indeed true, they rise up in angry defiance against the messenger and want him silenced immediately. This is just an evident token that their denominational leaders have successfully supplanted Christ from their hearts and put the denomination in His place, and have led these individuals to worship their denomination instead of God alone. May these deceived individuals wake up before it is too late, because if they do not exchange their denominational church for Jesus Christ, then they will also be led to fight in any underhanded way against any who dare speak a word against their beloved church-idol, even to the point of murder as did the Jews, and yet all the time blindly believing that they are doing God service!

But friends, the Bible truth is that we are no longer under the Old Covenant system where God's presence dwelt in the literal temple building in the Most Holy Place directly above the 2 tables of stone upon which God wrote His 10 commandments, and to which temple the people had to resort to in order to worship God. But we are the people of the New Covenant system, where God's presence can dwell in our body temple, where God desires to write His law in our heart or mind!

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Hebrews 8:10.

"...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." 2 Corinthians 6:16.

So the Bible is very clear that God's true church is not made up of any denomination – no matter how exalted their name, no matter how much Bible truth they may claim to believe or to have followed for decades, no matter how loudly they may proclaim to be God's chosen, because what constitutes God's true church is individual people.

Praise God for this true understanding! Now individuals no longer have to remain in bondage to a corrupt priesthood or to an apostate church, but they can find true freedom in Jesus Christ! Therefore, any denomination or religious group which puts forth the claim that they are the true church of God, and therefore your salvation is jeopardized if you willingly separate from them, or are cast out, disfellowshipped, or excommunicated from their fellowship, you can then know that they have cast Christ out of their church and have taken His place among their people! How is this true?

The Bible teaches that it is only "in" and "through" Jesus Christ:

- that we find the truth (John 14:6)
- that we become part of the New Covenant (2 Corinthians 3:13-18)
- that we find redemption (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7)
- that we are justified (Acts 13:39)
- that we become righteous (Jeremiah 23:6; 2 Corinthians 5:21)
- that we have peace with God (Romans 5:1; Philippians 4:7; Colossians 1:20)
- that we have access to the Father (Ephesians 2:18)
- that God shows us His kindness (Ephesians 2:7)
- that we receive grace (2 Timothy 2:1; Ephesians 2:7)
- that we receive the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:6)
- that we become wise (1 Corinthians 4:10)
- that we become alive and live (Romans 6:11; Philippians 1:21; 1 John 4:9; John 14:6)
- that God works in us (Hebrews 13:21)
- that we are sanctified (1 Corinthians 1:2)
- that we are made perfect (Colossians 1:28)
- that we can do all things (Philippians 4:13)
- that we gain the victory (1 Corinthians 15:57)
- that we triumph over sin (2 Corinthians 2:14)
- that we can remain faithful (Ephesians 1:1)
- that we can be preserved in sanctification (Jude 1:1)
- that we become the children and heirs of God (Galatians 4:7)
- that we can joy and glory in God (Romans 5:11; 15:17)
- that we receive spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3)
- that we become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9)
- and that we can sit in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6)!

Thus it is only in and through Jesus Christ that we can escape from the wrath of God (Romans 5:9); that we will be resurrected if we should die before Christ returns (John 11:25); that we find our salvation and will be saved (2 Timothy 2:10; John 10:9, 3:17); and that we find eternal life (2 Timothy 1:1; Romans 6:23; 1 John 5:11-12)! **That is why OUR ONLY HOPE IS FOUNDED SOLELY IN AND THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST** (1 Thessalonians 1:3), because anything and everything which is good in us comes only through Him (Philemon 6)!

The above should unquestionably and conclusively prove why the foundation of God's true church can only be based upon Jesus Christ – the eternal and solid Rock (see 1 Corinthians 10:4, 3:11; Psalms 62:2, 18:2, 92:15, 2 Samuel 22:32)! No denomination, religious group, clergy, priesthood, man or group of men, can offer you any of these above items in truth. The only Being who can indeed offer you all of these above items in truth, is only Christ Jesus; not Peter, or Pope, or Buddha, or Krishna, or Mohammed, or Maitreya, or any other being – but only Jesus Christ! Therefore any denomination or religious group which tells you, or leads you to believe, that any of these above items are to be found by joining their religious system, or that your salvation is in some way tied to being or remaining a member in their system, then you can know without a doubt that they are deceived agents of the devil, their church system is a counterfeit posing as God's church, and thus it is a snare and a deceptive trap to try and bring you down to hell by robbing you of Jesus as your Saviour! Only in and through Christ can we gain all things, be assured salvation and become part of His true church, but outside of Christ, we have, and are, nothing!

So God's true church is not made up of any denomination, because what constitutes God's true church is individual people! Yet this Biblical understanding of who and what constitutes God's true church leads us to ask the following vitally important questions: What must we do to individually become part of God's true church on earth, and how can we remain part of it? And where can we find this church so that we can fellowship with other brothers and sisters?

## **What Must We Do to Become and Remain a Part of God's True Church Today?**

As we already learned, we become part of Christ's true church by joining Christ Himself. The only way to become connected to Christ is by recognizing that we have broken God's law and are sinners deserving death, and that we need a Saviour (1 John 3:4; Romans 3:20, 6:23). Then we must accept Christ as our personal Saviour, confess and repent of our sins, and Christ will then covers us with His precious blood, forgiving our confessed sins thereby cleansing and washing us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:7, 9). Jesus freely justifies us from all our past sinful life through His precious merits (Romans 3:23-28), clothes us with His own precious robe of righteousness – these blessed garments of salvation (Isaiah 61:10), and gives us His grace and strength (Romans 5:1-2; Galatians 5:1). We then can stand before the Father perfect and completely righteous as if we had never sinned at all! We become the sons and daughters of God (Romans 8:16; Galatians 3:26), being children of the light and of the day (1 Thessalonians 5:5), being a peculiar and holy people (1 Peter 2:9) – and thus a part of God's true tabernacle, temple, church or house (see Revelation 21:3; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Hebrews 3:6)!

The Bible refers to this amazing miracle of transformation, from a defiled sinner to a perfect man or woman in Christ, as being "born again" (John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:23); becoming a "new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15); a "new lump" (1 Corinthians 5:7); a "new man" (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10); a "newbottle" (Mark 2:21-22; Matthew 9:16-17; Luke

5:36-39); etc. In this justified righteous position, being in a "yoke" together with Christ (Matthew 11:29-30), we have "put on" Christ (Romans 13:14), we are "in" Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1; 1 Peter 5:14), and are "servants to God" and "of Christ" (Romans 6:22; Ephesians 6:6) – being servants "of righteousness" (Romans 6:18-19). As long as we remain in this justified righteous condition being "in" Christ, and do not choose to separate ourselves from Him, we continue to remain perfect and complete in Him, being doers of His will (Romans 2:13; James 1:22), and thus our salvation is assured (1 John 5:11-12). And as long as we remain in Christ, we continue to remain part of His true church.

But if we should choose to separate ourselves away from Christ then we are no longer "in" Christ, but are outside of Him. And what would cause us to be separated from Christ? If we choose to break God's law of 10 commandments and thereby commit sin (1 John 3:4), then we instantly are separated away from God and Christ (see Isaiah 59:1). By choosing no longer to crucify self (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:1-3), but to choose to give life again to the flesh of the "old man" (Romans 6:6), choosing to be guided by our "carnal mind" (Romans 8:6-7), then we no longer stand justified, righteous or perfect before God because we have now chosen to sin and are now defiled by it. We are no longer a "new creature", or a "new lump", or a "new man", or a "new bottle". In this unrighteous condition we are no longer in a "yoke" with Christ, but are now yoked together with the devil; we no longer have "put on" Christ, but now have put on the devil; we no longer are "in" Christ, but are now in the devil, and we are no longer the servants of God, or of Christ, or of righteousness, but are now the servants of Satan, of sin, and of unrighteousness (Romans 6:12-13, 19-21)! Thus we are no longer part of the true church of God, and we have no more assurance of salvation, because we are no longer connected with Christ!

As you can clearly see, this is a very straight and narrow road outlined above, but it is nevertheless Bible truth (see Matthew 7:13-14). We remain part of God's true church only by remaining connected to Christ. We remain connected to Christ by not choosing to commit sin. All those who choose to commit iniquity and sin have no connection with Christ (see Luke 13:24-28). Just one sin committed takes us out of Christ, out of the assurance of salvation, and out of being part of God's true church!

At this startling realization, some may protest that once we accept Christ as our personal Saviour, we are justified forever, we are saved at that moment, and so it doesn't matter what good or evil actions we may do after that point because we will remain Christ's servants forever! But is this really what the Bible teaches? No.

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Romans 6:16.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." John 8:34.

"...of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." 2 Peter 2:19.

So after we have accepted Christ, if we should choose to commit sin, we no longer are justified in Christ, we no longer have salvation in Christ, we no longer are the servants of, or have any part in Christ, because we have become the servants of Satan. You can only serve one master at a time, not two at the same time! You are either serving Christ, or you are serving Satan. So you cannot be Christ's servant while you choose to sin!

"No man can serve two masters..." Matthew 6:24.

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." 2 John 9.

As the above is true, there is no Biblical truth to the belief that once you have accepted Christ as your Saviour, then you are justified in Him forever from past, present and future sins! Justification is only for those sins which you have already committed in the past (see Romans 3:24-25). Thus justification cannot be applied to any sins not yet committed, but only to those in the past. So if you sin, your past justification cannot cover it! You are thereby in a lost condition, and need to repent of these new sins and be justified again by Christ. Thus no one has a blank check to cover their continued sinning.

There is also no Biblical truth whatsoever to the belief that once you have accepted Christ as your personal Saviour, then you are saved at that very moment. When we accept Christ as our Saviour, we have just begun to walk in a saving relationship with Him. At that time we have the hope and assurance of salvation, but not salvation itself (see 1 Thessalonians 5:8; Titus 1:2, 3:7; Colossians 1:27; Romans 8:24). The gift of salvation, the incorruptible crown of eternal life, is only given to you at the end of the trial of your faith if you have endured, not at the beginning of your faith without having endured (see 1 Peter 1:9; Matthew 10:22; James 1:12). Salvation is only given to those who finish the gospel race, not to those who have just begun to run (see 1 Corinthians 9:24-27). Salvation is only given to those who hold fast to the true faith, not to those who have just begun in the faith (see Revelation 3:11). And salvation is only given to those who have fought a good fight, who have finished their course, who have kept the faith, not to those who have just entered the fight, or who have just started their course, or who have just embraced the faith (see 2 Timothy 4:7-8). Since we are not yet saved, it behooves us all that we should, by patient continuance in doing God's will, "seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life" (Romans 2:7), and if some should not continue, then they "shalt be cut off" (Romans 11:22). Thus no one can continue to sin and yet believe that they are saved!

There is also no Biblical truth to the belief that once you accept Christ then you remain His servants forever. You are either the servant of Christ, doing His righteous will and not committing sin, or you are the servant of Satan, doing his unrighteous will by committing sin. No one can serve both Christ and Satan at the same time. Thus you cannot be Christ's servant while you serve Satan by committing sin!

In Christ there is no sin (2 Corinthians 5:21; John 14:30)! In Christ there is no union with the devil, or with unrighteousness, or with darkness and error (see 2 Corinthians 6:14-15). Thus if you are truly united with and are in Christ, then you also will have no continued connection with sin, or with the devil, or with unrighteousness, or with darkness or error either. So if you should choose to sin, you plainly show yourself not to be living in, or connected with, Christ, and thereby reveal yourself not to be part of God's true church! If you are in Christ, you will not and cannot commit sin, because there is no sin in Him. But outside of Christ you will not, and cannot, stop from sinning! So which will you be – in Christ or outside of Him? You cannot be both at the same time!

"Whosoever abideth in him (Christ) sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed (Christ – Galatians 3:16) remaineth in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God..." 1 John 3:6-10.

So if you sin, you show yourself not to be connected with Christ, but a child of the devil and part of his synagogue of Babylon! But if, through the strength and grace of Christ (Philippians 4:13, 2:12-13; Mark 9:23, 10:27) you resist sin and do not yield to it (James 4:7-8; Romans 6:11-22), you show yourself to be in union with, and hid in Christ, and thus a child of God and part of His true church! Thus it is by your words and actions, or by your fruits, that you are known to be of God or of Satan!

"...every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matthew 7:17-20.

Many individuals, as well as denominations, loudly proclaim that they are part of the true church of God, while their fruits plainly reveal them to be liars and followers of the devil! (see Revelation 2:9, 3:9; Romans 9:6.) But this brings up another question: Can God's true church really be made up of only perfect and righteous people who live without committing sin? As hard as it may be to believe this, the Biblical answer is Yes!

The Bible refers to God's true church as being made up of only those who are saints (1 Corinthians 14:33; Revelation 14:12); those who are sanctified (1 Corinthians 1:2; Jude 1); those who are established in the faith and truth (Acts 16:5; 1 Timothy 3:15); those who are subject unto, or who submit self to, Christ (Ephesians 5:24); those who are joined to Christ (Ephesians 5:31-32); and finally those who are in Christ (Galatians 1:22; 1 Thessalonians 1:1). Thus God's true church will be a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Ephesians 5:27).

Those who are saints do not sin. Those who are sanctified do not sin. Those who are established in the faith and the truth; who are subject unto, or submit self to, Christ; who are joined to Christ, and who are in Christ – these do not commit sin! So if you choose to sin you plainly show to others, as well as yourself, that you are not a saint, or sanctified, or established in the faith or truth, or subject to, joined to, or in, Christ! Thus you are not part of God's true church, and being outside of Christ you have no assurance of salvation!

Therefore God's true church is only made up of those who are living a perfect righteous life without choosing to sin, and this is made possible only in and through Christ. That is why God's true church on earth can be one with the church of the firstborn in heaven, because both groups are made up of perfect sinless beings and thus belong to the same true church of God! (see Hebrews 12:22-23). That is also why the remnant people are identified by their character, and not by their profession or name (Revelation 12:17). No denominational name has any virtue to bring us into favor with God, no matter how exalted it may be, because God is concerned with our character! If our character is an image of His Son, we are God's children and part of His true church. But if our character is an image of the devil, then we are children of disobedience and part of Satan's synagogue of Babylon – regardless of what name we identify ourselves by!

Not by its name, but by its fruit, is the value of a tree determined. If the fruit is worthless, the name cannot save the tree from destruction. Our standing before God is to be decided by our character and life. Profession was worthless. If our life and character are not in harmony with God's law, then we are not His people. It is not by our name, but by our revealed character, that we are known to be of God or of Satan. Thus we are not part of God's true church if we choose to sin!

From the beginning of this earth's history, faithful souls have constituted God's church on earth. So there is no other church than the assembly of those who have the word of God, and who are purified by it. Those who keep God's commandments, those who live not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, compose the church of the living God.

So it should be clear that God does indeed have a church on this earth today. But it is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep His commandments. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Where Christ is even among the humble few, this is Christ's church, for it is only the presence of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity who can alone constitute a church.

For those who may find themselves in this perilous condition of not being a part of God's true church and without the assurance of salvation because you have chosen to sin, you do not have to remain in this hopeless condition! Jesus is your High Priest, Mediator and Redeemer who is still, for the time being, ministering in the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary. And He is beckoning you to flee to Him so that you can find complete forgiveness. He will not turn away any who honestly come to Him for pardon, but will mercifully cleanse, justify, and make you perfectly righteous so that you can indeed be part of God's true church and have the assurance of salvation if you remain faithful to Him to the end!

But friends, as there are only two powers today – either of God or of Satan, so there are only two kinds of churches today – either God's true church or Satan's synagogue of Babylon. There is no neutral position, no third church, no fence that you can ride on and still find salvation. Laodicea is a mixture of good and evil which makes it Christ-less and in union with the devil. Christ therefore stands outside of the Laodicean church, and knocks at the door of the heart for entrance – not the heart of the denomination, but the door of the heart of individuals.

"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.

Those who sin reveal they are no longer connected with Christ, and are no longer part of His true church, even though they may have accepted Christ as their Saviour, and may have previously been living in His strength for a long period of time without committing sin! God is no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11; Colossians 3:25; James 2:9; 1 Peter 1:17), and neither is He a respecter of church denominations or religious groups either (Matthew 23:37-38; Romans 11:12-22). If any choose to sin, all their past righteous living cannot continue to allow them to remain a part of God's true church with the continued assurance of salvation!

"Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression...neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth. When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right...None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live." Ezekiel 33:12-14, 16.

Thus your fruits plainly reveal today which church you belong to. So which church are you showing yourself to be a part of today? Which church do you want to be part of today? It is indeed time to choose!

"...How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." 1 Kings 18:21.

"...choose ye this day whom ye will serve..." Joshua 24:15.

## **Fellowship With God's True Church**

The issue of fellowship with God's true church has been one which has been very misunderstood. From what we have already learned, God's true church is made up of people who have joined themselves to Christ, and is not a denomination. So there is no denomination today which is God's true church. Yet it is indeed God's will that His people are to fellowship together whenever possible (see Hebrews 10:25). In fact, it is through this fellowshipping

together that our characters are tested, revealed, and therefore enabled to be brought to perfection (see Manuscript Releases, vol 11, p 179). This is accomplished by our learning how to be united together as one with our fellow brothers and sisters, since all make up the different members of Christ's body (see 1 Corinthians 12:12-14). But are there any conditions for this fellowshiping together, or are we free to fellowship and worship together with any who call themselves Christians?

"...if we walk in the light, as he (Jesus) is in the light, we have fellowship one with another..." 1 John 1:7.

So God's people are to fellowship together with only those who walk in the light as Christ is in the light. And since in Christ there is no darkness or error or false doctrine at all, then this Biblical test for fellowship would prevent God's people from worshipping with any groups or churches who were not following, walking, or living in all the truth, but who had a mixture of truth and error within. This confused condition, brought about by a mixture of truth and error, clearly describes the condition of all denominations of today; whether Catholic, Protestant, Adventist, Evangelical, Full-Gospel, Buddhist, Hinduist, Islamic, Spiritualistic, Occultic, etc. Therefore all of the religious groups of today are disqualified for fellowship with because they all are not walking in all the light but have a mixture of truth and error in their beliefs, and they are unwilling to give up the error! And it is this mixture of truth and error which makes all these churches part of Babylon – confusion!

Now, what if you find yourself already fellowshiping in a religious group or denomination which is not walking in, and living up to, all the truth? Are you to continue to fellowship, worship in, and remain a member of it? God tells you NO!

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 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, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

"Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord." Isaiah 52:11.

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Revelation 18:4.

"Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompense....My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord." Jeremiah 51:6, 45.

So it is of vital importance in regards to our salvation that we make sure to be separate from any denomination which has a mixture of truth and error in it, or we will be held corporately responsible for her sins and will be destroyed along with that denomination. Thus if you refuse to leave these denominations as God is desiring you to do, and continue to fellowship with, worship in, or remain a member of it, then you will become a partaker with the church in her sins, you will lose salvation, and be destroyed right along with that Babylonian denomination – no matter what name the church calls itself by, whether it be called "Roman Catholic" or "Church of God" or even "Seventh-day Adventist"!

Since not one of any of the established denominations today are fit for fellowship according to the test of God's word, then where are we to fellowship together and worship God? In our very homes! God is not calling you to join any denomination in order to worship Him today because they are all defiled and corrupted by error and sin. But God is indeed calling you to worship Him in spirit and truth (see John 4:20-24), and this can be easily accomplished in your very homes – just like it was in the days of the Disciples! (see Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Acts 18:7; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2.)

If you know of others who believe in, and who are walking and living in, the same Biblical truths, and you both are close to one another, then according to 1 John 1:7 you can and should fellowship together with each other. This type of fellowship with those of like faith, where both are striving to be free from sinning through Jesus, can be a great blessing and benefit to all parties concerned – not only through mutual edification, encouragement, and growth in spiritual life and knowledge of the truth, but by knowing that there are indeed others who are going through the same struggles as you are, and in Christ they are more than conquerors! (see Romans 8:37).

Some home churches may be made up of only one person or of one family who are worshiping God in spirit and in truth. And if you are worshiping God alone because there are no other believers near you, then know that you are not really alone, because the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, as well as your guardian angel are there joining with you in worship (see Matthew 18:20), and They will make up for the lack of fellowship by blessing you more abundantly! But other home churches may be full of believers fellowshiping together. **But please never forget that God's true church is not any denomination or home church group, whether individually or collectively, because God's true church is only made up of those individuals who are connected with Christ and who are thereby living a perfect sinless life through Him.**

For those who are not able to have a home church to attend and who miss the benefit of fellowshiping together with others of like faith, there is an on-line Home Church which meets every Sabbath at 12:30 pm Eastern Time or 9:30 am Pacific Time. This is a live broadcast of one of our Home Churches in Oregon. Please feel free to come and fellowship with others of like faith and enjoy the spiritual uplifting experience. You can also stay after the church service and be able to chat with brothers and sisters, as well as visitors, from around the world. Many come away with their questions answered, their hearts uplifted and filled with gratefulness for all that God has and is doing for His people! If you would like to fellowship with us, go to <http://www.lightministries.com/id945.htm>.

May God help us all to fully understanding this issue of God's true church. May He help you to so fully connect yourself with Christ that you may indeed "shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). Thus you, as well as all the other brothers and sisters making up God's true church, may reveal God's pure and spotless character to others, spread His precious gospel truth far and wide, and thereby fill this dark world with the glorious light of truth (Habakkuk 2:14; Numbers 14:21; Revelation 18:1). And this all begins with your continuous choice to be connected with and to be hid "in" Christ.

"I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews (or they say they are part of God's true church and people), and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." Revelation 3:8-12.