

# The Gospel Truth

BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE  
MISSION FIELD WORLDWIDE.

## WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” (Revelation 12:1).

The apostle John was privileged to see a glorious vision of this woman in the firmament of heaven, resplendent in illustrious light. The visions recorded in Revelation are often figurative in nature to bear out vital truths. Symbolically, a woman is representative of a church--whether false or true. In this vision, the woman was depicted as pure for she was clothed with the sun. She represents the purity and glory of the apostolic church. It is in direct contrast to the apostate church represented in later visions by a harlot--a woman unfaithful to her husband.

The woman in this vision is standing on the moon. The moon has no light of itself but reflects only a small percentage of the true light given by the sun. The moon is an apt symbol of the Old Testament Covenant which was a “shadow of good things to

come” (Hebrews 10:1). The covenant was a schoolmaster and teacher to bring us unto Christ (Galatians 3:24-26). It pointed forward to something better to come.



### The Glorious Church of God

“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17).

The woman was clothed with the splendor of the sun. The sun is the source of natural light in our solar system. There was a beautiful sunrise of truth that dispelled the darkness when Christ came to this lost world. Christ is the source of spiritual light in the New Testament dispensation. The light of truth reveals sin and points the way to righteousness and victory. The true church is clothed with that resplendent light of purity and it far supersedes the dim, obscure light of the Old Testament church.

The woman had upon her head a crown of twelve stars. The crown represents authority and reigning power. God’s church is not subdued or bound by sin but is reigning victoriously over all the power of the enemy, even in this present evil time.

The apostle John was previously shown a vision of “seven stars....and the seven candlesticks” (Revelation 1:20). He was told that the stars were the angels of the seven churches. The stars then

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# WHAT THE BIBLE Teaches About...

## **Word of God**

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

## **Relationship of Love**

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

## **Repentance**

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

## **New Birth**

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;

Eph. 2:1, 5-6

## **Freedom From Sin**

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

## **Infilling of the Holy Spirit**

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

## **Holiness**

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;

Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

## **Kingdom of God**

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

## **The Church**

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

## **Unity**

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

## **Ordinances**

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;

1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

## **Divine Healing**

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

## **Sanctity of Marriage**

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;

1 Cor. 7:10-11

## **Outward Appearance**

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

## **End of Time**

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;

Matt 25:31-46

## **Pacifism**

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

## **Worship**

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

## **Great Commission**

Mark 16:15

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represent ministers who are termed 'angels', or message-bearers. The twelve stars that made up the woman's crown would be the ministry that carried the gospel message to the lost world. Most prominent among the early ministry were the twelve apostles who labored from the beginning to share the light of truth. "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 corner stone" (Ephesians 2:19-20).

Many 'churches' and religions have committed spiritual adultery and fornicated themselves to the things of this world. Churches are bowing down to the idols of this age and endorsing sinful philosophies and practices. The creeds of men are taking preeminence over the written Word of God. These churches have not been faithful to the bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

God's true church is espoused to one husband and will be presented a chaste virgin to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2). It is the desire of the Lord "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" (Ephesians 5:27). Thank God for the beautiful bride of Christ who is keeping herself pure and undefiled, arrayed in the glorious light of God's Word.

-mws

## THE GOSPEL TRUTH

The Gospel Truth periodical is published in the name of the Lord for all people of all lands in the interest of establishing and encouraging them in the truth of God's Word. This publication teaches and promotes the truths of the Bible that have been established since the time of Christ and the apostles.

The Word of God is the singular, acceptable rule of faith. It teaches salvation and deliverance from sin through the atonement of Jesus Christ; a subsequent infilling of the Holy Spirit to lead, direct and empower; practical holiness in every area of life; and the unity and oneness of God's people. Acceptable service to God is through a personal relationship of love founded in truth.

Editors: Michael & René Smith

## SUBSCRIPTION

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## CONTACT

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# Editorial



*"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Isaiah 62:1).*

The study this quarter is on the subject of 'The Church'. My heart's desire is that every honest person would get a vision of the beauty of God's true church. The majority of religious institutions and fellowships have watered down the truth so much that people need not "take up their cross daily" as the Lord taught. Serving the Lord is a narrow, holy way but it is a good way. It is the way that leads to power and victory. Allowing the reality of God's church to be in our life and fellowship brings freedom and liberty to worship in "spirit and in truth."

Most people won't acknowledge that they are part of a church of man, but when the scripture is studied, it becomes clear that most churches are really not part of God's one true church. God very clearly laid down the framework for His church. It is not our job to change it or to modernize it. It is our job and call to measure to the Word of God. The Church of God is beautiful and resplendent. As Mt. Zion, it rises above the clouds of confusion that permeates the religious world.

It is a blessing to be free from sin and a blessing to be free from man's creeds and dogma. It is not enough to have a head knowledge of this truth. It needs to be applied in a very practical way that the true body of Christ would keep herself unspotted. Many churches call themselves 'Church of God', but the name alone isn't enough. Is the Spirit of God leading or is there man-rule? Is the Bible our rule of faith or is it really just what the ministers have said? Is there an unspoken hierarchy in the ministry or is Christ really the head? May the Lord help us to die out more to ourselves that the church would truly be that 'City on a Hill' that cannot be hid.

Our allegiance should not be to a past history or to a traditional lifestyle alone. Many people, even in 'Church of God' are there because they were raised that way. Being in God's church takes a divine transformation of the heart. Our allegiance is to God Himself and to His divine Word that brings us into a walk of daily, practical holiness.

As the Lord leads, I may address some practical issues of unity and fellowship in future issues.

Be faithful my friend, for the Lord is coming soon.

Michael W. Smith

October 2013



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# BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

## SUBJECT: THE CHURCH OF GOD

*There is*

**ONE**

**Body**

*Spirit*

**Hope**

*Lord*

**FAITH**

**BAPTISM**

**GOD**

**Father**

*Doctrine*

**NAME**

*Ephesians 4:4-5*

*2 Timothy 3:16-17*

*Ephesians 3:14-15*

**Scripture Reading:** ...*And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.* Acts 2:47

**Summary:** The church is a divine institution founded by Christ, led by the Spirit, and the Word of God is the rule of faith. The Biblical church —The Church of God, is composed of all believers who are saved from their sins.

**Definition:** *The word 'church' comes from the Greek word 'ekklesia' which means 'congregation' or 'called out.'*

### I. Founder & Builder

- A. Matthew 16:15-18 Built by Christ.
- B. Hebrews 8:1-2 Not built by man.

### II. Foundation & Door—Jesus

- A. 1 Corinthians 3:9-11 The foundation.
- B. Ephesians 2:20 The chief cornerstone.
- C. John 10:7-9 The only door to salvation.

### III. Membership

- A. Acts 2:46-47 All of the saved.
- B. 1 Corinthians 1:2 The saints.
- C. 1 Corinthians 12:18 God sets the members in the body.
- D. 1 John 5:18 Members do not sin.

### IV. Membership Book

- A. Luke 10:20 Names written in heaven.
- B. Philippians 4:3 Book of Life.  
(Revelation 20:12).

### V. The Head—Christ

- A. Ephesians 1:22 Head over all things.
- B. Ephesians 5:23-24 Head of the church.  
(Eph. 4:15-16)
- C. Colossians 1:17-19 Head of the body.
- D. Isaiah 33:20-22 Judge and lawgiver.

### VI. Creed or Rule of Faith

- A. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 All scripture.
- B. 2 Peter 1:21 Divinely inspired.

### VII. Organization

- A. 1 Corinthians 12:18, 27-28 God sets the members.
- B. Ephesians 4:10-13 God gives the gifts.
- C. 2 Corinthians 3:5-6 God makes the ministers.

### VIII. Biblical Name

- A. Ephesians 3:14-15 Named after the Father.
- B. Acts 20:28 Feed the church of God.
- C. 2 Corinthians 1:1 Church of God at Corinth. (1 Thessalonians 2:14)

### IX. One Church

- A. Romans 12:4-5 One body in Christ.
- B. Ephesians 4:4-6 One faith.
- C. 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 20 Many members but one body.

### X. Descriptions of the Church

- A. Ephesians 1:22-23 Body of Christ.
- B. 2 Corinthians 11:2 Bride of Christ.
- C. Hebrews 12:22-23 City of God --  
Mount Zion.
- D. 1 Timothy 3:15 Pillar and Ground of Truth.

# THE CHURCH OF GOD

*Companion article for Bible Study*

## THE CHURCH IS A DIVINE INSTITUTION OF GOD

The practical truths on the subject of the church illuminate God's will and purpose for us in this life and reveal much of the fallacy of religious institutions in society. The world has been inundated with religions and churches of all different standards and belief systems. While many people today espouse the theory to "attend the church of your choice," the Bible teaches that there is only one narrow way that leads to life (Matthew 7:13-14).

### DEFINITION OF 'CHURCH'

The first mention of the word *church* in the Bible is found in Matthew 16:18. "... Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The word *church* is a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia* which means 'called out.' The scripture uses the word *church* again in Acts 2:47. "...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." The church is not a building or a place of worship but is composed of individuals who have been saved from their sin. True people of God have been 'called out' of sin, the world, religions, etc. They are in fellowship with God and in unity with the Spirit, walking in the faith of the Word of God.

### MEMBERSHIP IN GOD'S TRUE CHURCH

Membership does not come about by attending worship services, by getting your name written in a church roll book, or by receiving a baptism certificate. Only God sets the members in the body (I Corinthians 12:18). We come into God's church when we are born again and saved from our sin by the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Everyone in God's church is living free from sin.

## JESUS IS THE ONLY DOOR

Jesus is the only door through which we can enter into His church, as He alone has the power to forgive sin. "... by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved..." (John 10:9). There is no organization, priest, bishop, or minister with that power. Hence, no man can put us into the church and no man can put us out of it. The membership of the church is kept in heaven (Luke 10:20) and the names are in the book of life (Philippians 4:3). As God knows each life and each heart, the membership of His church is accurate and up-to-date.

### CHRIST IS THE FOUNDER

God's church was founded and built by Jesus Christ himself. "...I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). Any religious organization that points to a man as their founder is not of truth. Circa 30 A.D., Jesus established His church on this earth, not man (Hebrews 8:1-2). He died, rose again, ascended to Heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to fully equip believers to live holy lives.

### THE FOUNDATION IS CHRIST

Jesus is the foundation of this divine institution. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11). The divinely inspired Word of God is the singular creed or rule of faith of God's church (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The scripture takes precedence and has final authority over every tradition, practice, or creed of man. In God's church, there is no electoral body of bishops or ministers that determine the framework of the church. God has already given us His Word and His Spirit by which to live.



## Divine Institution

The church is not a building...but is composed of individuals who have been saved from their sin.

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### **CHRIST HAS NO SUBSTITUTE**

Jesus is the "...head of the body, the church...that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:18). There is no substitute for Christ in heaven or on earth. He is head over all things. "For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us" (Isaiah 33:22). In God's church, there is no room, or necessity, for elections of a chief bishop or overseer, for Christ is the bishop of our souls.

### **LEADERS APPOINTED BY GOD**

In God's church, God sets the members in the body as it hath pleased him (I Corinthians 12:18). God gives the gifts in the church (Ephesians 4:10-13) and the Spirit organizes and leads according to His will. So often, man tries to fill this place of directing and appointing. In the body of Christ, members look to the Spirit to direct them in the way. Anointing and leadership come not by education, seminary, or by being related to someone of position but by consecration to God's call.

### **THE CHURCH WAS NAMED BY GOD HIMSELF**

There are many names and descriptive titles for churches and institutions of religion. However, God has already named His people. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Ephesians 3:14-15). It is a re-

proach for the spiritual family to be named by any other name than that of the father. The Word of God taught the ministers to "feed the church of God..." (Acts 20:28). The Biblical name of the true church is 'The Church of God'. Local congregations of believers in the scripture were referred to as the Church of God (2 Corinthians 1:1). Carrying the

name alone doesn't save anyone but this is the given name of God's church.

### **ONLY ONE CHURCH**

With all of the churches and religions that exist, God only has one church — The Church of God. The church is referred to as the 'body of Christ' (Ephesians 1:22-23).

"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" (1 Corinthians 12:12). The scripture refers to the Church as being a bride (2 Corinthians 11:2). God is not a polygamist. He has one bride and one church.

May each reader see the difference between God's true church and the churches of man. The Church of God is that city that is set on a hill that cannot be hid (Matthew 5:14). It rises above the confusion and quagmire of man's religions and doctrines. God's church — The Church of God — is pure, holy, undefiled, and true. Christ is the founder, leader, law-giver and Saviour.

-mws



*God's church is not organized by committees and elections but is governed by the Holy Spirit.*



**Question:** The church that I attend does not teach all of the truth found in the Bible. What should I do?

**Answer:** This is a serious and weighty question that deserves a very careful answer as many people find themselves in the given situation. It is important to first recognize that the Church of God is a divine church. Everyone that is saved from their sin through Jesus Christ is part of that true church (Acts 2:47).

Attending services at a congregation of any denomination or by any name does not bring someone into the divine institution of the church. People, anywhere in the world, that repent of their sins gain entrance into the church. They may identify themselves with a 'group' but that isn't what God is recognizing. That person is in the Church of God whether they know it or not, as God recognizes the condition of their heart and life.

An institution or 'church' that is not teaching all of the truth can be very detrimental to people's souls. It is true that people can be saved under that preaching if there is genuine repentance. The problem with continu-

ing in fellowship with that body is that it will be hard to 'stay' saved as spiritual deception is one result of remaining under false teaching. Let there be no question, that a 'church' that is teaching error and has compromised the truth of the Word of God is fallen in the eyes of the Lord. The scripture refers to these churches as Babylon, or confusion. They are symbolized in the book of Revelation as being 'harlots.' They are not allowing the Spirit of God to lead them. Their written creeds supersede the Bible. The ministerial coun-



## SHOULD I FELLOWSHIP A FALSE CHURCH?

cil fills the place of the Holy Spirit, etc. The system is wrong and God's approval is not on it. The scripture teaches to "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins..." (Revelation 18:4).

The devil has caused more damage to true Christianity by professing Christian churches than he ever accomplished through paganism and direct persecution of the church. Churches that teach part of the

truth but not all of it are more dangerous to people seeking truth than religions that teach totally contrary to the Bible. The partial truths leave areas for the enemy to work in people's lives. The Lord would have us separate ourselves from the false prophets and from the institutions of man and be in fellowship with people of the true body of Christ—The Church of God.

While the system and foundation of many churches is wrong as they don't teach the full truth, it is important to recognize that there may be innocent people in these systems. As long as these individuals live holy before God, they will go to Heaven when they die. But, if someone sits under preaching that is not complete truth, it has a long term detrimental affect. They will eventually find themselves at a cross roads -- "Do I stay under this false preaching and just accept it, or do I stay clear with the Lord and separate myself from what is wrong?"

How that question is acted upon will make the difference in someone's eternal destiny. People need to take a humble stand against error and be in fellowship with the oneness of the faith and of the Spirit.

May the Lord grant grace and much wisdom to each one who is in false religion and give the courage to take a stand for what is right and true. Amen.

-mws



### DID YOU KNOW?

#### Facts about the Apostle Peter....

- His name was Simon, son of Jona. Jesus renamed him *Cephas* (Peter), which means *rock*.
- He was born in Bethsaida, near the Sea of Galilee and was a fisherman by trade.
- Peter was one of the original twelve disciples and was married.
- Andrew, his brother, was first a follower of John the Baptist and then became the first apostle of Jesus.
- He died in 64 AD in Rome under Emperor Nero. He was crucified upside down because he didn't consider himself worthy to die in the same manner as Jesus.



A Word  
In Season

## Jehova-Nissi—The Lord My Banner

### Contact

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Exodus 17:15 *And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi.*

As long as Moses held up his hands, the children of Israel prevailed against the Amalekites in battle. Aaron and Hur stood beside Moses holding his hands in the air when he was weary. God granted them victory over their enemy. In commemoration, Moses built an altar and called it Jehovah-Nissi which means “The Lord my banner.”

Soldiers held up banners to fight under for many reasons. The banner was used to identify the people, to give direction in battle, to rally the troops and to signal victory. The children of Israel were not fighting as individuals but as a unified body under the direction of the Lord God. Jehovah was their banner. It was in His name that the Israelites conquered.



Sometimes the smoke and clamor of battle clouds people's eyes and blurs their vision and perspective. This is true in the spiritual battles that we face in life. If we look around us too much, we can be disheartened and discouraged by things we see. We **MUST** look for and rally around the banner. Christ is our ensign (Isaiah 11:10) and it is for His cause that we work, labor, and sacrifice. Our identity is founded in Jehovah-Nissi and it is in Him that we will find purpose, renewal, and victory.

-mws

HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD