

THE WORD OF

TRUTH

Bible Study Course

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32

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CHRIST HAS A CHURCH

There are many voices saying - "Here is Christ" or, "There is Christ." But which is true and how can we know if we are on the path that truly leads to the eternal kingdom of God?

When discussing religion, there is one question that invariably arises --- why are there so many churches if all the churches are heading in the same direction? Of course this is a perfectly valid question and deserving of an answer.

God has made it very clear as to what constitutes His Church. In our lesson today we will focus on these very distinctive features and from this it may be evident as to why there are so many variations on what is a plain *Thus saith the Lord*.

Right from the beginning of time, God has had a people that He calls His own, a people that abide by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Similarly, today near the end of time, He has a people who still meet those qualifications.

At a specific point in time, God singled out a nation that He called His people. If they remained faithful to Him and obeyed His directions, they would be an example, a spectacle to the world, of what God can do for a man fully surrendered to Him. With this blessing, they would be an avenue through which God would woo the rebellious world back to Himself. Alternatively, if they themselves rebelled and went the way of the world, they would meet the same fate as those who reject God's offer of life.

The name God has given to His people, as a nation, is "Israel" (1Kings 6:13). Their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were the original recipients of the promise to reclaim them from sin and death (Exodus 2:24; 3:16). This promise was to be received and enjoyed by every descendent of Abraham and is the same promise given to every true follower of Jesus Christ.

The name given to God's people anciently is the same name He uses today. The true and faithful saints are known as "spiritual Israel". Every promise, every blessing, every condemnation and every curse applied to ancient Israel, is equally and surely applied to spiritual Israel. This means, that it would behove every professed follower of Jesus Christ, to be aware of the covenant that God has made with national Israel, that they may not fall as did that nation.

Let us now examine the promise given to God's people and see how that we, who are not necessarily direct descendents of Abraham, can be counted as of the seed of Abraham, or spiritual Israel and therefore, a partaker of the heavenly gift.

1. Who are counted as being the seed, or descendents of Abraham when considering the promise God offered to Israel? Comment on the position now held by national Israel, that is, those who are genetically linked with Abraham.

Romans 9:6-8 _____

Compare Acts 13:46-48 _____

Note: Looking at Rom.9:6, it is apparent that God is defending His word, in that the nation who counted themselves unworthy of their sacred trust and forfeited the promise, did not negate God's Word, for God now clarifies the true definition of His people, Israel.

2. What did Abraham do that gave him the status of righteousness?

Galatians 3:6 _____

3. Concerning those who are not actual blood descendents of Abraham, what can they do to receive the same acceptance with God as did Abraham?

Galatians 3:7,8,9 _____

Compare Isaiah 56:1-8 _____

4. What was Abraham's relationship with God, that moved Him to enter into a covenant with Abraham?

Genesis 22:18 _____

James 2:20-23 _____

Note: Faith in God is demonstrated by obedience to God and we too may be a friend, or son and daughter of God (2Cor.6:18; Isa.43:6,7).

5. What act of Abraham demonstrated his unswerving faith in God, when God made, what appeared to Abraham to be, an extreme demand of him?

Genesis 22:1-12 _____

Compare: Job 13:15 _____

Note: Every professing Christian will be tested on the very issue that is dearest to their heart, or the most sensitive to them (Gen.22:12).

That which makes a non-Jew counted as the seed of Abraham and a partaker of the promise, is the surrender of all the affections and every thought to God and to accept His moulding influence upon the heart and mind. This, the Christian will do in the same way that Abraham surrendered (review lesson 4 regarding surrender).

6. Through Jesus, what may the Gentiles become and of what may they partake?

Ephesians 3:6 _____

Note: a) Gentiles are non-Jews, or those not of spiritual Israel.

b) It can be seen that the covenant of salvation through Jesus Christ is open to all people of the earth regardless of race, colour, religion, social standing, or any other characteristic. Once these people accept the terms of the covenant and forsake that which is foreign to Christ, they are counted as spiritual Israel (Galatians 3:28,29; Rom.9:6-8).

7. What instrument does God use in the Spirit, or power of Christ, to make the Gentiles partakers of the promise?

Ephesians 3:6b _____

Compare Romans 1:16 _____

BECOMING A PART OF GOD'S CHURCH

8. How is Jesus cleansing His people to form a Church of faithful, committed and dedicated believers who no longer consciously practice sin?

Ephesians 5:26,27 _____

Compare Isaiah 1:16 _____

Note: During the cleansing, Jesus regards them as holy, or righteous, as He did with Abraham ! This is not talking about the saints after translation into God's kingdom, it is describing the spiritual condition of God's true followers on earth, now! (Titus 2:12).

9. The water in which the true and faithful saints are cleansed is the Word of God. What does God say He will do for the soul thus cleansed and what power enables it to happen?

Ezekiel 36:25-27 _____

Compare: Deuteronomy 30:14 _____

1John 1:9 _____

Note: Here is a direct assurance from God, that He will impart all of the power necessary to apply the decision of our own will -- the decision not to sin. The failure to gain the victory over self, lies in our own will, we do not genuinely desire to be free of our darling sins. If we truly seek Him, conscious of our inability and in spite of our sin, desiring to be free, He will give us the power (see lesson 5).

10. Describe the covenant God has made between Himself and man.

Hebrews 8:10 _____

Compare: 2Corinthians 3:3 _____

Note: With the Spirit of Christ and the Word of God written upon the heart, there is the moulding of the character after the likeness of that upon which the heart continually dwells, in this case, it is after the character of Jesus (2Corinthians 3:18). In like manner, the same principle is true for the heart that dwells on the vile and corrupt. When the thoughts of the heart are evil and the meditations unholy, that is what we are, for this becomes engraved upon the heart (Jeremiah 17:1; Proverbs 23:7; 4:23).

11. When God thus writes His law into the minds of His true followers, what knowledge will the saints then possess?

Jeremiah 24:7 _____

Compare John 6:46 _____

Note: Souls thus filled with the knowledge of God will not apostatise, or depart from the Lord (Heb.8:10,11; Rev.3:12; 1John 3:9). It is not that they cannot depart from God, but rather they choose not to. In fact, to the committed Christian, the thought of being separated from God is a fearful terror, a dread that keeps him turning to Jesus for strength

and defence; for he dare not trust his own power or reasoning to combat sin and temptation (Proverbs 3:5,6,7; Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 28:26). When our love for God is not divided by a self interest, we are being watchful that we sin not (Luke 12:35-44); we have confidence in His abiding presence and the fear is gone (1John 4:18).

12. What does God expect of those who claim to be His faithful followers?

Psalm 119:1-3 _____

2Timothy 2:19 _____

1John 2:6 _____

13. What will be the guide for God's people so that they walk in the steps of their beloved Saviour?

Psalm 119:133, 105 _____

Note: Our "ways" or "steps" are our doings. The life of the Christian will be moulded by God's holy document, the Bible (Deut. 6:24,25; 30:16).

14. Considering Christ's warning to the seven churches, what does He require concerning those practices that He has condemned?

2Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1 _____

Note: In considering the implications of this text and remembering the message of Jesus to the seven churches (lessons 20 and 21), let us ask the question -- does God approve of His people continuing in the course of misguided worship when He has taken the time to enlighten them? God has made a specific request of those who would follow Him -- see Rev.2:5,7,16,17,26; 3:5,19,21, and Acts.17:30.

15. The Word of God is Truth. As God is cleansing His Church with truth, how shall we recognise the Church of the living God?

1Timothy 3:15 _____

John 17:17 _____

Note: To be sanctified is to be made holy (Heb.10:29; Eph.5:26,27)

and holy is the character of the saints through the indwelling of the Holy One of Israel, Jesus (Isaiah 43:3).

16. What value does Christ place on a worship system that is based on man's traditions and not on a *Thus saith the Lord* ?

Mark 7:5-9 _____

Compare: 2 Timothy 3:5 _____

17. What will be the final result of those who have had the knowledge of true Bible based worship, yet lived according to traditionally accepted church doctrines that are at variance with God's Word?

Matthew 7:21-23 _____

Compare: Luke 6:46 _____

18. If we are seeking to enter the kingdom of God, what will be the result of taking a path that many claim to be right, a path that may even have the beautiful illusion of piety?

Luke 13:23-28 _____

Proverbs 16:25 _____

Note: To some of the seven churches that Christ counselled, He warned that to follow their present course, would lead to destruction. The few honest souls in the midst of these churches were called upon to repent and change their course, that is, to have nothing to do with what they see is not according to Scripture.

19. No man knows everything about the salvation plan. For those of us who know very little, yet are seeking to learn, need we have any fear of failing at the end of the Christian path?

Isaiah 35:8 _____

Note: The highway is the Christian road. The wayfaring men are the Christians on that road. We walk the road with our feet and our feet are our ways, or way of life. The way of life of the wayfaring man is to walk as Jesus walked, to face every issue of life as He did, to withstand every temptation in the power of Christ (1John 2:4-6).

The "fool" is not a credulous man, nor one with diminished mental faculties, but is the man of limited knowledge and understanding. And that is all of us. Even if this man knows very little of the Bible and the salvation plan, as long as he obeys the voice of God, living up to all he knows to be right, he will not err or falter, but will reach the home at last (Matthew 21: 28-32; John 10:4,26-29; 2Peter 1:3-11; Jude 24; Romans 2:12-16).

Nowhere in the Bible does it say that we are saved according to how much we know. We are saved through the blood of Jesus Christ and this is only for the repentant, those who have turned from sin and observe what they have learned from the Word of God (Hebrews 5:9; 1Kings 8:61; Philip.3:16). Do not accept, without question, what someone tells you is in the Bible, read it for yourself and compare what you hear with the straight testimony of the True Witness and pray that God will give you discernment (Col.2:4-10; Eph.5:6-8; Isa.8:20; John 7:17). ***Only those who have fortified the mind daily with the Word of God will withstand the last great delusion.***

There are many and varied churches because men have introduced their own concepts into the church to form a doctrine that is a blend of truth and error. These long standing traditions have now become accepted as fact because the masses have blindly accepted man's judgement (Deut.4:1,2).

Those who are a part of Christ's Church, or Spiritual Israel, will obey the instructions of God and have the faith of Jesus (Rev.14:12). They will have no part of a worship system that is not as laid out in the Bible, for the Bible is their guide and counsellor, the light for their every way of life. They obey God rather than men. In this way God is placing His seal upon the foreheads of His faithful people --- His Church.
