

with Christ that other saints will not experience. The greatest privilege: in Heaven the church will be married to Christ, becoming part of His Government (Rev. 19:7-9 and 20:4-6).

Meanwhile, on earth during the Great Tribulation the Catholic Church and all her Protestant babies will unite with all the cults and pagan religions to form a one-world religion which the Bible calls "Mystery Babylon the Great" (Rev. 17), and will be led by the "false prophet" (Rev. 16:13). This wicked union will be made possible by the fact that all false religions agree on the fundamental idea that salvation is earned by good works; they only disagree on what good works are necessary. The Ecumenical movement with its World Council of Churches and United Religions, and the interdenominational Charismatic Movement with its false Holy Spirit (1 John 4:1-3) are rapidly bringing the Babylon religion back into power.

At the end of the Great Tribulation, Mystery Babylon the Great will be destroyed (Rev. 18), and the true church will return with Christ to this earth to rule and reign with Him during His 1,000 year Millennium kingdom (Rev. 19-20:6), and after this will live with Him in Heaven on Earth forever (Rev. 21-22).

MARKS OF A GENUINE BAPTIST CHURCH

The Lord Jesus Christ is only founder (Mat. 16:18), head (Col. 1:24; Eph. 5:23), and lawyer (1 Tim. 6:13-16; James 4:12).

The pure, God-inspired-and-preserved Bible—the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament text, and the Textus Receptus New Testament text, or translations of these two texts such as the King James Version of 1611—is its only rule and guide of faith and practice (1 Pet. 1:23-25; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Only two ordained officials: pastors and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-3), and these servants; not dictators (Mat. 23:1-12; Luke 22:24-30; 1 Pet. 5:1-3; Women may not be ordained (1 Tim. 2:11-15; 3:2; Titus 1:6; 1 Cor. 14:34-35).

Only two ordinances: believer's baptism by immersion with Baptist authority (Rom 6:4), and closed communion (1 Cor. 11:17-34; 5:11-13)—both symbolic, not soul-saving (1 Cor. 1:14-18; Mark 14:22-25).

It's church government: a theocratic democracy (Acts 1:14-26; 6:1-8; 15:22-23; 2 Cor. 2:6); sovereignty (Mat. 18:18); independent, unaffiliated—totally rejecting all forms of conventionism and ecumenicalism (2 Cor. 6:17).

Belief in salvation by grace through faith, not of works, resulting in new creatures; zealous of good works (Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 3:5; Rom. 3:20-4:6).

Its members: only repentant, born-again believers (Acts 19:1-4), and these baptized in "much water" (John 3:23), and required to maintain a holy lifestyle (Rom. chapters 6 & 7; 1 Cor. 5).

Belief in separation of church and state (Mat. 22:21; 16:18-19)—but not in separation of God and state (Rev. 17:14; Ps. 2:1-12; Act 5:29).

It's weapons of warfare: not physical (Mat. 5:38-48; 26:52), but spiritual (2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:10-19; Heb. 4:12).

Not Charismatic: the miraculous ability to speak in foreign languages without study ended when the Bible was completed (1 Cor. 13:8-10); God no longer speaks to men through tongues, dreams or visions now that the Bible is complete (Rev. 22:18); bodily healing is not part of the atonement—if it were, Christians would never die physically.

Absolute religious freedom for everyone (John 8:31-32). No one—infant or adult—baptized without personally willing it; no one forced to believe or support that which his conscience forbids (Mat. 22:15-22).

Financed only by tithes and offerings freely given (Mal. 3:8-9; Mat. 23:23); never by gambling or sales of merchandise (John 2:13-17).

Sunday its main day of assembly (Mark 2:27-28; John 20:19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Col. 2:8-17 and Heb. 4:3-11; Rev. 1:10).

It's mission: **Evangelize** all nations, **Baptize** believers, **Indoctrinate** disciples, and **Organize** disciples into churches (Mat. 28:18-20).

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CHRIST'S CHURCH

(WITH A CHART OF CHURCH HISTORY INSIDE)

by Louis A. Turk, B.A., M.Div., Ph.D.

The word church is translated from the Greek word ἐκκλησία (ekklēsia) which means "called-out assembly" and was originally used of Greek city-states which practiced democratic government. The citizens were called out of their homes to assemble to vote; noncitizens were not allowed to vote. By its very nature a true ἐκκλησία is, therefore, a local, visible, assembly of people united together as a sovereign, democratic state. Jesus used the word ἐκκλησία to refer to the new institution He founded to carry His gospel to the nations. A church then is a local, visible, sovereign, democratic state (Mat. 16:19 & 18:18-19; Acts 6:1-7; 3 Joh. 9-11; 1 Pet. 5:1-3; Mat. 23:1-12)—but spiritual not temporal in nature (Joh. 18:36-37), and therefore separate from (not combined with) civil governments (Mat. 22:15-21).

In Eph. 5:23, the Bible speaks of "the church" generically as an institution, and of "the wife" generically as a position. But there is no universal, invisible wife, nor is there a universal, invisible church. A "called-out assembly" is by necessity local and visible (Mat. 18:17; Acts 8:1; 9:31; 13:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:2). In 1 Cor. 12:13 the word "body" is also used generically, and refers to a local, visible, called-out assembly; and the word "baptism" then refers to water baptism. Eph. 4:4 says that "There is 'one body.... one baptism.'" So there cannot be both a local, visible body *and* a universal, invisible body. Nor, since Pentecost, is there both water baptism *and* Spirit baptism.

THERE ARE COUNTERFEIT CHURCHES

The universal, invisible church myth is just one of many of Satan's attempts to confuse people as to the definition and identity of the true church. Yes, Satan has many counterfeit churches to confuse and deceive; over and over again the Bible warns us to beware of "false apostles and deceitful workers" who would come in the name of Christ but preaching "another Jesus" and "another spirit," and "another gospel, which is not another; but there be some that would trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3-15; Gal. 1:6-9). Nevertheless, **Christ's true, genuine church is still in existence today, for Jesus promised her, "Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world" (Mat. 28:20), and He declared to the world concerning His church that "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it" (Mat. 16:18).** It is your duty to God to reject all false churches, and to join and faithfully attend and support Christ's true church.

WHY CHRIST'S CHURCH IS IMPORTANT

The true church is vitally important to you and your family because the true church "is the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). Christ designed His church to be the preserver and proclaimer of the genuine Bible, which is the inspired word of God (2 Tim. 3:16), and contains the genuine Gospel (1 Pet. 1:25) "which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16).

It is not true that you can be just as close to Christ at home or on the creek bank Sunday morning as you would be in Church. If you do not care for Christ's church then you do not care for Christ, for Christ founded the Church (Mat. 16:18), and Christ is the Head of the church (Eph. 1:22 and 5:23), and the church is His body (Eph. 5:23 and Col. 1:18). Furthermore, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25), and has chosen her for his bride (2 Cor. 1:2 and 11:2). Christ, himself, is the Rock upon which the church is built (1 Pet. 2:2-8; Eph. 2:20). Ephesians 3:21 tells us that God receives "glory in the church." Therefore, church membership and faithful church attendance is commanded by God: "...they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them [the church] about three thousand souls.... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:41 and 47); "...consider one another to provoke unto love and good works:

not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:24-25). It is therefore sin not to join Christ's church and attend it faithfully. If you don't love church you don't love Jesus, for Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

WHICH CHURCH SHOULD YOU JOIN?

There are many different kinds of organizations which identify themselves as Christian churches. Yet each of them teaches a different and conflicting set of doctrines. **How is a person to know which church is the true, genuine church? The Bible does not leave us to guess, but identifies the genuine church clearly and plainly in Mat. 16:18 and other verses:**

And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. The above verse and other verses reveal the following important facts which enable us to identify the genuine church:

(1) **The genuine church was founded by Christ**—not by Peter, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Charles Wesley, or some other mortal man. Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Mat. 16:18).

(2) **The genuine church was founded in the land of Israel**—not in Rome, Germany, France, England or America (Mat. 16:18-18:17). We know this to be so because the context of these verses shows that Jesus was in the land of Israel when these events took place.

(3) **The genuine church was founded after Christ's birth and before His crucifixion**—The church was conceived in embryonic form at the ordination of the twelve apostles in Luke 6:13, otherwise it could not be written "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles..." (1 Cor. 12:28); this verse also directly implies that Christ's church did not exist before the apostles. By Mat. 18:17 the church was fully organized, and Jesus told His disciples that the final step in discipline is to "tell it to the church." They could not have obeyed this instruction if no church yet existed. Thus it is clear that the genuine church was founded *before* Christ was crucified—*not* on the day of Pentecost or hundreds of years later (Mat. 18:17).

(4) **The genuine church was founded so as to withstand all corrupting forces**—Jesus said of His church that "...the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it" (Mat. 16:18). Therefore the genuine church has never become corrupt, and so has never needed to be "protected" or "reformed." Nor has it ever been a part of (or come out of) any religious organization that needed to be protested or reformed. This pure church still exists today.

Important fact: Using the word church generically, only the genuine Baptist church was founded by Christ, in Israel, before Christ's crucifixion. All the other so-called churches were founded by the wrong person, in the wrong place, at the wrong time. The Baptist church is the oldest church and is the original, genuine, pure church.

THE BAPTIST NAME

John was the first Baptist. In Mat. 3:1, John was called "the Baptist" [singular] because he was the first and only Baptist at that time. "There was a man sent from God whose name was John" (John 1:6). His name was not "John the Baptist," but "John," "the Baptist" was what he was.

What was John sent to do? John 1:32-33 says that John was sent by God "to baptize." Luke 20:1-8, confirms that John's baptism was "of God," thus directly implying that not everybody has the authority to baptize—there are baptisms *not* of God.

According to Mark 1:9, Jesus "came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan." It is approximately 20 miles from Nazareth to the Jordan river—a long way in a day when you either walked or rode a donkey. Why didn't Jesus let someone in Nazareth baptize him? Because only "the Baptists" had authority from God to baptize. John the Baptist baptized Jesus; this made Jesus a Baptist (Mark 1:9). Jesus took disciples baptized by John (John 1:35-51) and organized them into the first church; this church was therefore a Baptist church (Mark 3:14-19; 1 Cor. 12:28). Only this church is commissioned with authority to Baptize (Mat. 28:18-20). John was a Baptist. Jesus was a Baptist. All of Jesus's disciples were

Baptists. The first church was Baptist. You should be a Baptist also. Consider that Martin Luther, John Calvin, and the other Protestant reformers all left the Catholic Church because they said it had become incurably corrupt and that the Pope was the anti-Christ. Yet these Protestant reformers had no baptism except Catholic "anti-Christ" baptism. They had no authority to start new churches or to baptize, and in fact were expressly forbidden to do so by the Roman Catholic Church that had baptized them.

Caution: just as not all so-called churches are really churches, so not all that claim to be Baptist churches are really Baptist. The Baptists have an honorable name which other groups like to use undeservedly. Several types of phony Baptists are the Seventh Day Baptists, Hard Shell Baptists, German Baptists (also called Dunkards), and Free Will Baptists. Other unscriptural organizations which wrongly use the name Baptist are the American Baptist Convention, Southern Baptist Convention, Baptist Bible Fellowship, World Baptist Fellowship, General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, and all mission boards and other such extra-church institutions, all of which are neither designed, founded, nor headed by Christ. All such organizations violate the sovereignty and usurp the authority of the local church, and divide the churches, while leading those in them into apostasy. For a church to embrace any head except Christ is to commit spiritual fornication (Rev. 17:2). "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:17).

DOES CHURCH MEMBERSHIP SAVE?

Baptist churches are the true, original, genuine churches (2 John 5:19), therefore you should join a Baptist church. **However, this does NOT mean that you must join a Baptist church in order to be saved; in fact, you will NOT be allowed to join until you are ALREADY saved! ONLY THE LORD JESUS CHRIST CAN SAVE YOUR SOUL.** "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Only after you have been saved through faith in Christ may you be baptized into the membership of a Baptist church. The answer to the question, "What doeth hinder me to be baptized?" is, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest" (Acts 8:35-37). Baptism does not save the soul; believing the gospel of Jesus Christ saves the soul (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:17). "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7) before you are baptized (Mat. 3:1-12; Acts 8:36-38). It is vitally important that you understand this.

What if you were baptized before you got saved? That happened to some disciples in Acts 19:1-5. Since baptism is "of repentance" (Mark 1:4), baptism before repentance and faith in Christ does not count, being invalid, so they were rebaptized—no not rebaptized, but legitimately baptized for the first time (compare Acts 19 verse 3 with verse 5). You will need to be legitimately baptized also.

Ask the pastor of the church that gave you this tract how to present yourself as a candidate for baptism. You will be welcomed into the glorious heritage of the Baptists.

THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

This present age will end when the Lord's church is taken up to Heaven together with the saved of all previous ages, and the seven year Great Tribulation begins on earth (Rev. 4:1). The bodies of the dead in Christ will be resurrected, and the bodies of those living in Christ will be "changed" (1 Cor. 15:51-52) to leave earth to "...come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel!" (Heb. 12:23)

At that time all the members of all the genuine, local churches from the time Christ started His church will be members of the local, visible church in Heaven. Note that the church is distinct from the "general assembly." Not all the saved are a part of the bride of Christ. Members of Christ's church will enjoy privileges and an intimacy