

# The Mystery Of The Church

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The only Scripture quotations used are copied from The King James Bible which  
is held and known by faith to be the only Inspired and preserved copy of The  
Word of God in the English language..

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# Foreword

I have known Dr. Tim Luchon for the better part of two decades. Our hearts have been knit together based upon the Word of God and the truths contained therein. It is with great pleasure that I read of another who incorporates “The First Mention Rule” into the meaning of Bible words and their accuracy. He also adds to this understanding “The Last Mention Rule” so as to not wonder or allow the words of truth to be altered from original intent. Dr. Luchon has labored extensively to provide an accurate understanding of Bible doctrine apart from denominational influence. It would do every Pastor, Evangelist and Christian a great service to let the Holy Spirit teach the doctrine of the local church based upon the scripture. Please enjoy his thorough study about the “Mystery of the Church.”

Dr. Bryan Sharp  
Evangelist  
Pacific, Missouri



## Dedication

I want those who read this to know of a faithful church member who unselfishly serves her Lord Jesus. She willingly goes about her many responsibilities on staff, without complaint, and is often unnoticed by many. This is not because some do not care or fail to take note of her work ethic; but it is because she does nothing to selfishly promote what she does. This good friend, and fellow servants name, is known and loved here at Hilltop Baptist Church as Dee Trout. The hours Dee has spent proofing, and at times helpfully correcting, now thirty of this Pastor's books, is voluntary, and most, if not all of this work, has been done on her own time. I am also thankful for her faithful husband, Clyde Trout, who has sacrificed some of their time together, to allow so much to be given in service for this ministry. I have no doubt that both he, and this faithful, Christian Lady, will be blessed here and especially in Heaven, for truly being examples of what it is to possess and to exemplify a servant's heart!

With love and great appreciation,  
Pastor Luchon



# Introduction

## Mystery or Confusion about Church

*1 Corinthians 11:18-19 "For first of all, when ye come together in **the church**, I hear that **there be divisions** among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be **also heresies** among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."*

Those words were first written to a very confused group of believers. The "**...church...**" at Corinth seems to be synonymous with the word "**...confusion...**" As an application; many in our own kind of Baptist churches seem confused about the definition of the word "**...church...;**" and what constitutes a "**...church...**"

The Word of God tells us that this particular subject is not only a "**...mystery...;**" but that it is specifically called "**...a great mystery...**" (*Ephesians 5:32*) It has proven to be just that in many a theological circle. But when this part of the "**...doctrine...**" of "**...the faith...**" is studied first from only the inspired words as preserved by The LORD in the English copy of His One BOOK, this kind of "**...mystery...**" is found not to be the cause of "**...confusion...**"

What comes to your mind when *you* hear or read the word "**...church...**"? What is it that *you* see

which relates to that inspired word? Do *you* see a physical place in which The Lord by His Holy Ghost and the saved meet together; or do *you* imagine an invisible, universal entity? Do *you* understand it to be one kind of “**...church...**” owned by The Lord Jesus and directed by His One BOOK; or is it all who have ever been saved with no regard for doctrinal purity? Is it only a new testament assembly of Gentiles; or are Moses and the Jews first spoken of in Scripture as part of a “**...church...**”? What is your understanding the words “**...body...**” and “**...the body of Christ...**” in relation to the word “**...church...**”? How do *you* reconcile the word “**...church...**” with the words “**...the bride, the Lambs wife...**”? Have *you* gained *your* understanding of the word “**...church...**” from *theological words*, or directly from The Words in The WORD of God?

The only valid place to start to learn God’s meaning of the word “**...church...;**” is where He first mentioned it in His BOOK. Once that definition is settled; all *theories* will be shown to be faulty; and God’s inspired and preserved word “**...church...**” will be used as He intended before time, throughout time, and into its purpose in eternity.

*“For God is **not the author of confusion**, but of peace, as in **all churches of the saints.**” (1 Corinthians 14:33)*

The LORD had the Apostle write the words to those “**...members in particular...**” (1 Corinthians 12:27) of “**...the church of God...**” “**...at Corinth...**” (1 Corinthians 1:2) If those doing the teaching and preaching in “**...all churches...**” from then till today, would have been more diligent in defining the word “**...church...**” with the inspired and preserved words from God’s Book; the “**...confusion...**” about “**...church...**” would have been left to Catholics, Protestants, unbelievers, reprobates and apostates.

Have you ever asked yourself if your thoughts about the word “**...church...**,” are what The Lord Jesus thinks of His word “**...church...?**” Could it be that you have had some things introduced into your thinking about the word “**...church...**” which do not match God’s use of that inspired word? Did you get your definition of the word “**...church...**” from a systematic theology book, or from the words of The Book of God? Are you sure that you do not have any Catholic or Protestant theology about the word “**...church...**” as a part of your thinking? (Are you 100% sure of the thoughts you just had?) Can you right now, write down a Scripturally correct definition of the word “**...church...?**” Just how certain are you that you could accurately describe what The Lord calls “**...the church...**” to another person? Could you do so using *only* His Written words as the basis for the thoughts and words of your explanation? Where in God’s Book would you begin?

In this study, I will start at the very beginning of God's use of the word "**...church...**" That has not been the case with many who have attempted to teach what The LORD meant when He first wrote that word.

That only leads men to assign or adopt their own or another's version of the word "**...church...**" The differing ideas and explanations as to what the word "**...church...**" means; and what makes up "**...the church...**" are many, confusing, misleading, and often just plain false. Theological *applications* are habitually used instead of Scriptural *interpretation*; and the voicing of metaphors which veil the truth of this "**...great mystery...**"

Much of the religiously accepted explanations for "**...the church...**" do not doctrinally define it. Over the years, I have heard and read many word descriptions of "**...the church...**" such as:

- The church is an organism made up of the physical and the spiritual.
- The church is an organization.
- The church is a living organ.
- The church is a community of Christians.
- The church is a divine entity.
- The church is a cooperative organization.
- The church is a united society of saved people.
- The church is an institution.
- The church is called Christendom.

All of those and more have been used for many a theology class; but none of those things are actual *Scriptural terms* used by “...**the author**...” (*I Corinthians 14:33, Hebrews 12:2*)) of The Word of God. What about the fact that the word “...**church**...” simply means a place where certain saved and baptized people assemble in local, physical places on this earth? Is that too simplistic for a *theologian* to accept?

Then there is also chronological “...**confusion**...” about “...**the church**...” as to when it actually *began*. Those differences include:

- Before the earth was made.
- In the Garden of Eden.
- Back “...**in the wilderness**...” with Moses as per *Acts 7:38*.
- In *Luke 6:12-13* when Jesus “...**chose**...” the twelve Apostles out from many other disciples.
- When The Lord Jesus said in *Matthew 16:18*, “...**I will build my church**...”
- In *Matthew 18:20* “...**where two or three are gathered together** ...”
- In John 20:22 when The Lord said “...**Receive ye the Holy Ghost**...”
- In the “...**upper room**...” of *Acts 1:13*.
- In *Acts 2:1* “...**when the day of Pentecost was fully come**...”

Before anyone can accurately teach about the word “**...church...**” they first must go directly to the only reliable source which will make this “**...great mystery...**” understandable. And that means we must look at, and learn from the inspired and preserved words which The LORD has written in The Book of God.

I believe that the “**...confusion...**” about the word “**...church...**” can be reconciled by the truth of The Scriptures. But it must be remembered, that we are attempting to study what The LORD has written is “**...a great mystery...**” The “**...confusion...**” will only remain if we do not take God at His word. Many things in this study will not be fully known or 100% explained. Some parts of this work will not be easy to grasp; but that is not what causes “**...confusion...**” I know God has not yet revealed all that is associated with this “**...great mystery...;**” and we will not see all of it, until we stand with Him after time is no longer with us!

Question? Would you think it would be safe to say, that when and where The Lord first introduces a word in His Book, that that would be the best place to see when something began?

This subject is precious to The Lord Jesus Christ; and we must determine in mind and heart, not to allow this “**...great mystery concerning Christ and the church...**” to be turned into a debate of theological “**...confusion...**”

# Chapter 1

## *The Corruption of The Word Church*

*Acts 20:28-30 "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all **the flock**, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed **the church** of God, which he hath **purchased with his own blood**. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves **enter in among you**, not sparing **the flock**. Also of your **own selves** shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."*

In speaking those words to the men called to be "**...overseers...**" in the "**...church...**" at Ephesus, The Lord had Paul give a stern warning as to what would come to be in the future. That situation has been repeated within many an Independent, Fundamental Baptist Church since that time. This pointed admonition; when heeded, has been a great help in the identifying of those of our own kind, who have erred, become reprobate, or apostatized into the propagating and publicizing of false "**...doctrines...**" Here we are now, some two-thousand years after that prophesy; and the "**...doctrine...**" and the meaning of the word "**...church...**" is still unsettled in many a mind. This is unnecessary, and should not be so prevalent among those who openly profess to hold a King James Bible

full of inspired and perfectly preserved words. But, there are those who have not received the meaning of the word “**...church...**” from only the words in The Book of God. Satan, with his “**...doctrines of devils...**” concerning his many versions of the word “**...church...**,” has tempted many a Baptist to “**...depart from the faith...**” (1 Timothy 4:1), and what was first and “**...once delivered unto the saints...**” (Jude 3)

The meaning of the word “**...church...**” has never been changed since it was first penned down by the hand of The LORD in His *one original* Book in Heaven. There cannot be two “originals” of anything. And that good word has never changed since its first *chronological* mention with Moses and “**...the church in the wilderness.**”

The LORD has given *us* every word we need to be able to comprehend His word “**...church...**” There are several words in The Bible which need to be understood along with the word “**...church...**” Some of those other words will be spoken of in this book, however, the things written in this study, will concentrate mainly on the word “**...church...**” as it is used in God’s Book. You will find no positive references to Protestant systematic theologies. The words God has written for us, are much more than sufficient, to cause proper interpretation, translation, application, and thoughts about the word “**...church...**” One of the main problems which has lent to the corrupting of the word “**...church...**,” is due to that order being first influenced by

thoughts gleaned from other men before letting God interpret His words first!

Some of the other words of Scripture which are associated with “...**church**...” are: “...**tabernacle**...,” “...**temple**...,” “...**congregation**...,” “...**sanctuary**...,” “...**synagogue**...” “...**assembly**...,” “...**house of God**...” “...**church of God**...” “...**pillar and ground of the truth**...” “...**body**...,” “...**fold**...,” “...**flock**...,” “...**body of Christ**...,” “...**churches**...,” and “...**the bride**...” Each of those words have been placed in Scripture as appointed by The LORD for His purpose. God always has a reason for using these different words in His Book. Different or similar words, associated with one specific word, are for learning, identifying, describing and defining that word. To assume them all to mean the same thing does great damage to the interpretation of the word “...**church**...” Each of His inspired and preserved words are designed to cause our minds to think a certain pattern of thoughts.

*Isaiah 55:8-11* “For my thoughts are **not your thoughts**, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, **that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater**: So shall **my word be** that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto

*me void, but **it shall accomplish that** which I please, and it shall prosper **in the thing** whereto I sent it."*

This passage is often applied only to the entire Book of God; but it must also be interpreted as speaking about every "...**word**..." in His Book. The LORD'S "...**thoughts**..." formed every individual "...**word**..." in His written "...**word**..." Each "...**word**..." was sent to us full of His own life and breath! A "...**word**..." is a "...**thing**...;" and if those words are used; proper "...**thoughts**..." will be created from the life-giving "...**seed**..." of those verbal "...**things**..." called "...**words**..." (Revelation 22:18)

We must pay more attention to the words! When God wants us to know a word is to be used interchangeably in Scripture; He always interprets those words in writing. As an example of this, which will be covered further on in this study; The word "...**church**..." and the word "...**congregation**...", in context, can be used interchangeably because of *Hebrews 12:2*; in which The LORD has Paul to quote *Psalm 22:22*. In these two Scriptures, God has translated and interpreted the word "...**church**..." to be the same as the word "...**congregation**..."

*Hebrews 2:12 "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of **the church** will I sing praise unto thee."*

*Psalm 22:22 "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of **the congregation** will I praise thee."*

When The LORD combines two words such as these by inspired *translation and interpretation*; we had better study them out with all diligence; and in a manner free from the words and thoughts which produced the "**...doctrines...**" of Catholic and Protestant theologies!

Since The LORD had the inspired word "**...church...**" written for the first time in His Book; many differing ideas, opinions, positions and philosophies, have been attached to the meaning of the word. If all such additions to this word could be erased from the mind, and purged out of every theological study and book authored under some level of Catholic and Protestant influence; I believe more Bible-Believing Baptists would be returned to, or strengthened in their understanding, teaching, preaching, and, in the practicing of "**...church...**" I know that sounds like an extremely bold premise; but in light of how many Baptists can't seem to be on the same page in defining the word "**...church...**," it has to be considered. Surely this would not be considered a bad thing by any Independent, Fundamental Baptist seeking doctrinal purity; for then the false "**...doctrines...**" concerning the word "**...church...**" would be weeded out; allowing the minds of the saved, to think of and to see the word

*“...church...”* as does its *“...author...”* (I Corinthians 14:33) and owner.

There is an underlying factor which supports this which must be carefully measured. Satan, by use of his *“...doctrines of devils...”* (I Timothy 4:1) has perverted the *“...simplicity...”* (II Corinthians 11:3) of the word *“...church...”* He hates that word for several reasons. I believe the main one is that The Scriptures reveal that The Lord Jesus has *“...purchased...”* His *“...church...”* with the *“...blood...”* of the *“...one sacrifice...”* (Hebrews 10:12)

*Acts 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed **the church** of God, which **he hath purchased with his own blood.**”*

Then in Acts 20:29-30, God has the Apostle warn us of the devils’ plan to infiltrate the *“...churches...”* He warns that in the future from that time, that not only outside influences will hurt *“...the church of God...”*; but that those in our own ranks will rise up and do damage from the inside of *“...the flock...”*.

*“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing **the flock.** Also **of your own selves** shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”* Acts 20:29-30

The corruption of the word “**...church...**” is seen even in the wrong interpretations of that Scripture. Protestants, and others, have defined the word “**...church...**” to be synonymous with *all saved people*; instead of recognizing it as an organization, and a *physical place where certain members* of the family of God assemble together. That part of what a “**...church...**” is must be emphasized so that the saved know they are ultimately responsible; not just to an out-there-somewhere ideology; but to a local, physical, organized institution ordained by God; with an address! Hey, even when the trumpet sounds; that too will be a *physical* meeting place! Amen!

This is why we must take a hard look at the word “**...church...**” Why? God has placed three things in and on this earth from heaven. They are The Spirit of God, The Book of God, and “**...the church of God...**” Of those three; two of them are in the form of *physical things*. The Lord has placed them here on this earth to be used for the purpose of instructing and directing His work. The Spirit of God uses those two *physical things* now in association with the surrendered lives of “**...evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers...**” (*Ephesians 4:11*); to get others who are born again to do His work of winning the lost, teaching them The Word of God, and training them to actually practice serving The Lord; and all under the authority of an actual, local “**...church...**” which Jesus “**...purchased...**”

This is why the devil has worked so hard at corrupting the word “...**church**...” He has done this by use of his “...**devils**...,” and his teachers, and his preachers, and his professors, who promote his demonic falsehood. Satan’s main weapon of choice; is the *adding to or changing* the definition of the words of God. In doing so, he has tainted not only the word “...**church**...,” but what it is, its purpose, and the practicing of that purpose.

As you read the next verses, try to put yourself in the mindset of the people listening to these words for the first time. As always, Satan was at hand with his evil influences; but at that time, there were no Catholic or Protestant systematic theologies masquerading as truth. There were no Baptist preachers who had attended a Methodist college to earn a theological degree as a professing Baptist. There were no copy-and-paste; no study necessary, instant sermons to download. And, there were not yet any Baptist colleges influenced by the errors in the teachings and writings of such men.

*I Corinthians 11:18-20a “For first of all, when **ye** come together **in the church**, I hear that there be divisions among **you**; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among **you**, that they which are approved may be made manifest **among you**. When **ye come together** therefore **into one place**...”*

Those words were first written to a group of saved and baptized believers who assembled in an

actual local **“...church...”** which met in **“...one place...”** That is the simple context of the words. A group of God’s redeemed people, were in a physical **“...place....”** The conduct of the people in that **“...place...”** were the subject; not **“...the church...”** As far as we know, at that time in history, the **“...members in particular...”** (I Corinthians 12:27) of that individual **“...church...”** were not introduced to the false **“...doctrines...”** (I Timothy 4:1) of the pagan, *universal church* of Rome. I have no doubt, that when the **“...church...”** members at Corinth heard the words **“...in the church...,”** that they did not automatically think the Apostle was writing of *an invisible, non-tangible entity*; but that they knew at the reading of those inspired words; God was speaking to them as individuals. They obviously had many other issues going on which needed to be addressed; but the deceit of universal **“...doctrines...”** was not yet a problem in the minds of the people, and in the doctrinal statement of that **“...church...”** That heresy would not be transferred from Catholics, to Protestants, and then to some Baptists, until many years in the future.

Here we are some two-thousand years from when God had the Apostle write to the people who assembled in that local **“...church...”** During those years, scores of Baptists have had their minds influenced by many a **“...wind of doctrine...”** (Ephesians 4:14) concerning the word **“...church...”** If we are to understand the word **“...church...”** we

must keep it in its proper place as it *was/is* written in God's Book.

When you read the word "**...church...**" what is it that comes to your mind? Where does your memory take you in search of where and when that word is *first written* in God's Book? What have you heard that it is? What is "your" definition of the word "**...church...**"? Have you ever studied that one word using *only* The English words in The Scriptures?

As you continue to read, please keep in mind, that this study is being approached with words of *Ephesians 5:32* in mind.

*Ephesians 5:32* "**This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and **the church.****"

If The LORD writes of the word "**...church...**" in that manner, we should expect some level of difficulty in the full understanding of what God calls a "**...church...**" That does not mean He will not reveal this truth to us. But, the understanding of the word "**...church...**" will require strict adherence to the words in God's Book. It is *the words* which He has written to define His "**...church...**," along with "**...the Spirit of truth...**" (*John 16:13*), which must be our *teacher*.

*John 16:13* "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not

*...speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."*

*I John 4:6 "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."*

When it comes to the word "**...church...**," the false "**...doctrines...**" of Catholicism and her offspring, Protestantism, have polluted many a Baptist mind from the simplicity of this "**...great mystery...**" (*Ephesians 5:32*)

I am amazed at how many who proclaim to believe in what has been called 'The Local Church,' have been deceived into the acceptance, promoting, and propagating the idea of a universal, invisible church. I think it is true, that many who speak of the word "**...church...**" in that way; do so in some level of innocence. But that is no excuse or reason for allowing that inspired and preserved word to be so mishandled.

In *Exodus 34:27*, The LORD set in Scriptural stone, an eternal principle concerning the writing of the "**...words...**" in His Book. In His instructions to the first human writer of Scripture; The LORD said to Moses,

*"...Write thou **these words**: for **after the tenor of these words** I have made a **covenant** with thee and with Israel." Exodus 34:27*

The specific, individual “...**words**...” in God’s Book are given to set the “...**tenor**...” (*Exodus 34:27*) for all subsequent thoughts for all teaching, learning, “...**doctrine**...,” and the proper practice of those things. That Scripture is forever binding when it comes to every word in God’s Book. And, in a human application, it must be applied to the words we use as the basis for what we say, write and do. Words matter much more than many saved people seem to understand. Each of us are a combination of words and their practice! Those can be our words, another man’s words, a devil’s words, or, The Words belonging to The LORD. We have got to allow the words in The Word of God, to be the things which create and control our thoughts; especially when it comes to such an important word as “...**church**...”

Here is an example of how words set the foundation of future thoughts. When a Baptist reads the words in *Acts 7:38*, in which The LORD wrote of “...**the church in the wilderness**...;” and then the question is asked “**Who**” was the church in the wilderness? All study from that moment on will be based on the thought that the “...**church**...” was synonymous with the people. Why is it today that people think that same thing first? Where did such influence come from? The correct question should have been “**What**” is “...**the church in the wilderness**...”? In its first placement in the *chronology* of Scriptural time, The LORD was writing of **the place** where He told His people to assemble after He called them and led them out of Egypt. It

was there He gave instructions as to how the “...*tabernacle...*” was to be constructed; what was to be inside that *physical enclosure*; and what His people were to perform in the service of that place. Many have failed to ask “**What**” was The LORD speaking about when He first wrote of a “...*church in the wilderness...*” Even the obvious seems often to be neglected as to “**Where**” this “...*church in the wilderness...*” first assembled; and “**Why.**” The “**Who**” are a definitely a part of that first mention of the word “...*church...*;” but there were many other things involved there in that **place** and time. The place and the organization of that first “...*church...*” is the subject of the first emphasis.

If the word “...*church...*” means *only all saved people* collectively, without respect for *the place* they are commanded and called to assemble; that faulty definition of the word has been the cause for Baptists to fight over things such as; whether or not the word “...*church...*” is valid in relation to old testament saints, when did the church start, is it physical or only spiritual, is it both, and will “it” go through the tribulation? God put that inspired word there in time, in inspired placement, inspired translation, inspired interpretation, and all in association to a **place** first!

When the word “...*church...*” is first thought of as a **physical place** ordained by The LORD: a **place** where He would meet with **His people**, Jews or Gentiles; only then are we free to accurately learn all that the word “...*church...*” means. That is the

divine order given by The LORD in Scripture. If this is not where we begin in the understanding of the word “...**church**...” it will be those who fail to do so, if not already there; who will eventually “...**depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils...**” (1 Timothy 4:1)

As The LORD has already written in Ephesians 5:32, “This is a **great mystery**: but I speak concerning Christ and **the church**.”

## Chapter 2

### The Mystery of The Church

*Ephesians 5:22-33 “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of **the church**: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as **the church** is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved **the church**, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 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. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord **the church**: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is **a great mystery**: but I speak concerning Christ and **the church**. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”*

This passage in The Word of God opens up the minds of the saved to “...**a great mystery...**” And that “...**mystery...**” is all centered around the words “...*Christ and **the church...***”

Please go back and read *Ephesians 5:22-32* again.

When you read those words about “...**the church...**” carefully, thoughtfully, and prayerfully; you will understand that The Lord is thinking about many things at one time. The Lord begins in verse 22 speaking about the relationship of a husband and wife. He then turns the thoughts to that of authority and submission of the wife to her husband; and relates this to the words “...**the church...**” He speaks of the wife as “...**the church...**” being “...*subject unto Christ...*” (*Ephesians 5:24*) as unto Himself. With these words, God causes us to think that the wife is a depiction; an illustration of “...**the church...**” which He is preparing to be clean and pure. As you read verse 27; you get the sense that The Lord’s mind is thinking about something far into the future with the words, “*That he might present it **to himself a glorious church...***” Yet, in verse 31, His mind brings us back to what God said to Adam at the first marriage in *Genesis 2:24*.

*“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Genesis 2:24.*

At that time, being that they were the only two humans in existence; Adam and his wife had no earthy father or mother. It is obvious that back in the time of that Garden marriage, God was then thinking and seeing forward to the words in *Ephesians 5* and beyond! The Eternal Mind of God was there in *Ephesians 5*; and back in *Genesis 2*; and, in the future of eternity at “...**the marriage of the Lamb...**” all at the same instant! Talk about a “...**great mystery...**”

*Revelation 19:7-8* “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for **the marriage of the Lamb** is come, and his wife hath **made herself ready**. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in **fine linen, clean and white**: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

Compare those words with *Ephesians 5:26-27*.

“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 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.”

Truly this is all “...**a great mystery...**” God has written the word “...**mystery...**” twenty-two times in *Matthew* through *Revelation*. But only once do we find the combined words “...**great mystery...**” As is

evidenced by so many differing views and opinions as to what a “...**church...**” is; truly His “...**church...**” is a subject which has proven to be a “...**great mystery...**” This air of “...**mystery...**” always surrounds many things which are of God. In some respects, this should be expected, being that we are talking about The God Who has always lived in eternity and created a thing such as time.

In comparing other Scriptures which have in them the word “...**great...**,” that word is also used in conjunction with the word “...**mystery...**” when The Holy Ghost had Paul write of The Lord Jesus being God “...*in the flesh...*” in *I Timothy 3:15-16*.

*“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in **the house of God, which is the church** of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy **great is the mystery** of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” *I Timothy 3:15-16**

These words are also speaking of the word “...**church...**” and of Christ: “...**God was manifest in the flesh...**” That is part of the meaning of the word and name “...**Christ...**” The LORD even adds to the wonder of this “...**great mystery...**” by using the words “...**without controversy ...**” That Scripture presents the word “...**church...**” in the context of

being a *physical place* on earth; which is also attached to *God in the flesh*.

There is a very practical part of this “**...doctrine...**” which needs to be considered. And that is the simple fact, that God has always used a *physical place* of assembly, to prepare people for something much greater and which reaches beyond the time of this present world. The word “**...church...**” and what it is for, has a far more important purpose than some saved people seem to realize. Others have made this subject much more complicated than it needs to be. The word “**...church...**” is a “**...great mystery...**,” but The Lord wants us to take the time, prayer, and the work of study which will be necessary, to learn about these things. He does not want this “**...great mystery...**” to be forever concealed.

People love to solve mysteries. And The LORD has given us this “**...great mystery...**” to be diligently searched out. As we do so, God will reveal these things to us so we can understand this important “**...doctrine...**” But the best part of this; is so that we can enjoy getting to know more about Him!

Because of the Scriptural fact that many things relating to “**...the church...**” are such a “**...great mystery...;**” we have got to be sure to let the words of God define His “**...church...**” The LORD had a very specific thing in mind as He decided to write the word “**...church...**” in His Book. It is those

pure and holy thoughts, which we must strive to learn, and seek to understand. We must ask The Holy Ghost of God to reveal to us this “**...great mystery...**” from His own words.

Because of the words God uses to introduce our minds to this “**...great mystery...**,” I am convinced that no man will ever be able to fathom the smallest fraction of what God knows. I am also sure, that no matter what we will learn from His Book while still living in time, and later on in eternity; that the wonder of God will forever be the greatest “**...mystery...**”

I am thankful that God has written and has provided us with the words of His Book, so that we can learn from His mind. It could be said that The Word of God is the revealing of the “**...mystery...**” of Himself to man. And it seems that most of this “**...mystery...**” centers around the word “**...church...**” While we look into The Scriptures; we must determine, never to allow our human limitations in learning divine truth, to cause us to lose the wonder of this “**...great mystery...;**” by adding our own preconceived ideas to it. I believe that that has been one of the greatest hindrances, to the spiritual understanding of the “**...doctrine...**” of the word “**...church...**” Many a human “**...mystery...**” is solved when just one important fact is discovered. That simple thing then brings together the whole picture.

## Chapter 3

### The Mystery of the Counterfeit Church

*Isaiah 14:13-14* “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will **be like** the most High.”

Please take notice of the words “**...be like...**” in *Isaiah 14:14*. In this Scripture we are given the very core of Satan’s devilish agenda. Lucifer has set himself to do all that he can to counterfeit and corrupt everything God has done. This includes the counterfeiting of the meaning of the word “**...church...;**” and as to what constitutes a “**...church...**”

The devil has blinded many from seeing the simplicity of the word “**...church...**” in so many ways. And I am not applying that statement to only the lost, but directly to the saved, and Baptists in particular. Anyone or anything may “**...be like...**” another person or thing; but there is only one original of anything. Even an exact and perfect copy is still a copy. The devil has created many things which are “**...like...**” the things of God. There is only One God. In *Isaiah 14:14*, Lucifer says he will “**...be like** the most High.” That means he will attempt to

be a counterfeit of the real God. The LORD has given us “**...every word...**” (Luke 4:4) in His One perfect Book. The devil has produced hundreds of counterfeit bibles full of “**...feigned words...**” (II Peter 2:3) There is only ONE Who is “**...the Christ...**” (Matthew 16:16) The deceiver will present himself as the counterfeit called “**...anti-christ...**” (I John 2:18) We were given “**...one faith...**” (Ephesians 4:5) “**...which was once delivered...**” (Jude 3) The serpent has many false *faiths*. God gives us “**...doctrine...**” (John 7:16) The devil has “**...doctrines...**” (I Timothy 4:1) In all of these and more, Satan is seeking to get people to receive things that are “**...like...**” the things of God; but are not! The same goes for the word “**...church...**”

Stop and ask yourself these questions: “What is the devils idea of a “**...church...?**” “How would Satan’s many imitations contradict God’s one version of “**...the church...?**” “How would he counterfeit the word “**...church...?**” “How does he seek to make his churches to “**...be like...**” The LORD’S “**...church...**” And, “In what ways has Satan turned this “**...great mystery...**” into religious mysticism?”

When The LORD wrote the word “**...church...**” for the first time; He had one precise and exact thing in mind. Yet, theologians have and are still *theorizing, hypothesizing, and speculating* about “**...the church...**” The majority of those who would call themselves a theologian, have turned this

precious “**...mystery...**” into many unnecessary and mysterious doctrinal debates. Knowing Satan’s tactics, this is understandable for the fact that “**...the church...**” is a very precious thing to the heart of Jesus Christ. Because it is so, the devil attacks this “**...doctrine...**” with a vengeance! And he does so with his own set of words and definitions, for his versions of the word “**...church...**”

The devil has always persecuted the saved in the “**...churches...**” But he really stepped up his assaults when he counterfeited The Lord’s “**...church...**” He has always sought to keep people away from the place God selected to meet with His own. Israel provoked The LORD as the people worshipped in “**...groves...**” (1 Kings 14:15) instead of at God’s appointed place. But after 300 AD, Satan conceived one of the worst examples of a counterfeit church ever, by the invention of Roman Catholicism. That false version of a “**...church...**” was established upon the premise of being “universal.” A Roman emperor named Constantine decided that he would institute a *worldwide* and mandatory Church. From looking at history, it seems that he thought a ‘state church’ would be acceptable so that ‘Christians’ would no longer have to be persecuted. That is, if they would bow to *a church* ruled by the government instead of God! The Romans had the mind and will to dictate rule over the entire world and all who were in it. The devil could not have Christ-like believers freely preaching the gospel without accountability to him and his earthly ruler.

That pagan, church-state institution, was the beginning of Catholicism. This is why every born again person needs to know that the word Catholic is the Latin word 'universal.' Just that fact alone ought to cause a Baptist who loves and respects the words in God's Book, to check or reevaluate their ideas of the word **"...church..."** That spirit of antichrist is powerful; and has *crept* into many systems of theology. If any part of your understanding of what a **"...church..."** is; has in it any thought or association with that of being a *universal, or an invisible non-tangible institution*; you had better weed out those seeds of **"...feigned words..."** (II Peter 2:3) The Holy Spirit of God would never teach a saved person to accept *universal* Protestant **"...doctrines..."** If they are in you, here are several possible reasons which could be discovered and repented of.

1. You have simply and innocently accepted what you have always heard about the word **"...church..."**
2. You really haven't studied The Scriptures on your own; to read every verse God has written about the word **"...church..."**
3. You have not compared every word of Scripture which is closely associated with the word **"...church..."**
4. You have decided to accept a dispensationalist view of universal

**“...doctrines...”** without consulting only The Scriptures.

5. A wrong idea of the word **“...church...”** has been taken into your mind, as the result of being taught by a teacher or preacher, who has not yet rightly divided the **“...doctrine...”** of the word **“...church...”**
6. The devil has deceived you; and has his plans for you to be used to teach his false versions of the word **“...church...”** to others who will not study it out for themselves!

Lucifer has always taught things which seem at first to be **“...like...”** the things of God. If you have any doubts about the devil’s attempts to counterfeit how The Lord defines the word **“...church...”** please think again. In *1 Timothy 4:1-3*, God wrote another warning to us that is also a prophesy which speaks to the identifying of this demonic influence. Nearly three-hundred years in the future from the writing of the words **“...Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats...”** God listed two of what would become the demonic **“...doctrines...”** of Catholicism **“...Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats...”** are tenets of Catholic practices.

*1 Timothy 4:1-3* **“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their**

*conscience seared with a hot iron; **Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats,** which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”*

When Catholicism did not go as well as Satan planned; and was revealed to be a false church; Protestantism was birthed as the offspring of Catholicism. The institution of the Roman Catholic church is revealed in *Revelation 17:4-6* in a wicked and ungodly sense, as “...**THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS...**”

*Revelation 17:4-6 “And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.** And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, **I wondered** with great admiration.”*

Compare the words in *Revelation 17: “...**MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS...**”* words with those in *Ephesians 5:32. “This is **a great mystery:** but I speak concerning Christ and **the church.**”*

Look at those words carefully. In *Revelation 17:9* The LORD identifies the “**...woman...**” of the city of seven hills which is Rome. This is a word picture of Satan’s filthy , spotted, worldly counterfeit version of a “**...church...**” And in that prophesy, we find the words “**...MYSTERY...**” and “**...GREAT...;**” but in their evil applications. This *church* is portrayed as an unfaithful “**...woman...**” instead of a pure, spotless and clean bride! That is not coincidence. This is truly the LORD revealing to us, that this harlot; as a so-called “**...like...**” *church*; would be the devil’s version of a church. He has used *her* and *her* offspring, to deceive people into thinking Catholicism and Protestantism were “**...like...**” the “**...church...**” of “**...the most High...**” (*Isaiah 14:14*)

The revealing of “**...THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS...**” is no doubt speaking of the Roman Catholic church. Those words are also a prophesy of the unholy Protestant churches which she would birth. The subsequent Protestant churches which came out of her, incorporated and fed on that same tainted milk of doctrinal influence from its Catholic *unholy mother*, as they established their many man-made organizations. The so-called churches they invented all bear the inherent genetic marks of *universal doctrines* concerning what they deem to be “**...the church...**”

God marked this for those who seek to know what His kind of “**...church...**” truly is, and what it is not. Universal “**...doctrines...**” whether of Catholic

or Protestant origin, are the very spirit of anti-christ and must be exposed, marked, and avoided! We must seek to win the precious lost souls deceived by those earthly-birthed institutions. But we are not to sympathize or accept those false so-called churches. As organizations, they were not “...**purchased...**” with the blood of The Lord Jesus as He did when He “...**purchased...**” what He calls His “...**church...**” “...**with his own blood.**” (Acts 20:28)

In this very day, there are many Independent, Fundamental Baptists, who have universal “...**doctrines...**” influencing the core of their beliefs about “...**church...**” This is affecting the people in our kind of Baptist churches and colleges in a bad way. Because of this, there are many Baptist pastors who are leading their congregations away from the old paths of Scriptural standards, and back closer to the culture of this world. While The LORD has always led those in His churches toward holiness, and out and away from the world and it’s ways; Satan is pushing to keep people attached to this world and worldliness. God wants the members in His kind of Baptist churches to be in unity with Him; while the devil promotes a false unity with the world. God commands us to preach “...**doctrine...**” which naturally divides between right and wrong; while Satan moves his *ministers* to teach against any “...**doctrine...**” which causes conviction of sin.

Think of this comparison. I am not in any way condoning Protestantism; but there is a principle

here which has to be considered. There was a day when Protestantism would have nothing to do with the Catholicism which they protested and came out from. Those reformers left that religious world and were willing to die for their choice. But now, they seem to promote unity with Catholicism. They get along just fine under the spirit of ecumenicalism. The devil has led them against the very beginning of their own purpose for existing. Now here is the real point of this. This same worldly attitude is now working hard on some Baptists. Many who claim to have been saved out of lives of sin and worldliness, are being taught and tempted to turning back into the world; under the false pretense of being more worldly-friendly, so they can win more people! The Word of God condemns the joining back in with the world in the strongest of terms.

*James 4:4 "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the **friendship of the world is enmity with God?** whosoever therefore will be **a friend of the world is the enemy of God.**"*

You may ask: "How does that apply to the subject of the **"...church..."**? Members of Baptist Churches are supposed to be faithful; and **"...unspotted from the world..."** (James 1:27), as a part of the future **"...bride..."** for The Lord Jesus! His **"...church..."** in His mind is not an unfaithful-worldly **"...church..."** But, many are caught up in a counterfeit unity with the world. As saved people,

we have been made one with God! That is a picture of marriage; and we who are born again will one day be joined as part of what the Scriptures call “**...the bride, the Lamb’s wife...**” (*Revelation 21:9*) That is the main reason why we must learn and understand the word “**...church...**” as it has been written by God. True faithfulness in and to The Lord’s kind of “**...church...**” can only be right if we know the right meaning of the word “**...church...**” Not “**...like...**” “**...church...,**” but His “**...church...**”

A marriage always goes badly when a spouse forsakes their vows of unity and purity and goes back into the arms of another! This is exactly what is happening at an alarming rate of apostasy. This evil “**...spirit...**” of counterfeit “**...church...**” is rampant. Many are being led to disobey their ‘vows’ to The Lord. Look at *Ephesians 2:1-2* and you will see both interpretation and application to what was just said.

*“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in **time past** ye walked according to **the course of this world**, according to the prince of the power of the air, **the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience...**”*  
*Ephesians 2:1-2*

It used to be that if a saved person claimed to be a Baptist; that people knew, just by their appearance alone, that they were not “**...like...**” the rest of the people in the world. But here we are in

2017 with a bunch of Laodicean-Christians. Hyphenated-worldly-believers. You say, "That's harsh!" Yes it is. But what some may be missing is; how does The Lord Who bought and paid for our salvation and for His "...**church**..." feel about this? Why even in The United States of America, people used to come out of their home country to become Americans. But now, we have hyphenated-Americans who want to bring their old ways into American life. Hey born again Fundamental Baptists; you got saved out of the world and from Hell, and are on your way to Heavens Land! Stop bringing your old world into God's realm! Don't be a counterfeit-Christian. Don't be a contemporary-Worldly-Baptist. We are to live to bring the culture of Heaven into this world; not the reverse. We are to be and to show Christ-likeness. Saved people are not to "...**be like**..." the disobedient kids antichrist!

The "...*spirit of antichrist*..." (1 John 4:3) conceived the churches of Catholicism, Protestantism, Ecumenism; and also what are now being called Emergent churches. That unholy "...*spirit*..." is the force behind the scenes of all that is counterfeit within many Baptist churches. This is why we have got to understand the simplicity of the word "...**church**..." When the word "...**church**..." is understood as The LORD gave that word; much of this satanic influence of universalism will be revealed and repelled out of the lives of the saved,

and it will be kept out of our kind; The Lord's kind, of Baptist Churches.

The reach of the ungodly, unbiblical power of the universal “**...doctrines...**” of those counterfeit religious organizations is vast, and has damaged many a Baptists mind and ministry. But if we will go only to the words in The Word of God to understand this “**...great mystery...**,” we will not be confused about the word “**...church...**”

If the devil can succeed in influencing a saved Baptist to accept things which are only “**...like...**” the things of God, but not the real things; he will control *the thinking and the theology* of such a soul. We had better know just what the word “**...church...**” means; and teach and preach against all counterfeits of the word “**...church...**”

## Chapter 4

### First Mention of the Word Church

*Acts 7:38 "This is he, that was in **the church in the wilderness** with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us..."*

The first time a word is written by The LORD; with it He sets a precedence which must govern the understanding of the mind every other time that word is used. God has written the word "**...church...**" eighty times beginning in *Matthew 16:18* through *Revelation 3:14*. But in its first use *chronologically*, that inspired and preserved word points us back to Moses and the Jews in "**...the wilderness...**" To fully understand God's word "**...church...**" we must go to *Acts 7:38*.

*Acts 7:38 "This is he, that was in **the church in the wilderness** with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us..."*

That is a Scriptural fact which has to be the starting point of the understanding of the word "**...church...**" Some have attempted to ignore this first mention. Some have even tried to explain it away almost as if it should not be used during the

days of Moses. There are those who go to *Matthew 16:18*, or *Acts 2* for when they think is the first ‘valid’ mention of “...**the church**...” Others who claim to be Bible believers wrestle with that verse in *Acts 7* because it does not fit into their own private interpretation of the word “...**church**...” Many who have been deceived by the false “...**doctrines**...” of Protestant Dispensationalism get confused when they hear of “...**the church in the wilderness**...,” because it does not fit into their man-made “...**doctrines**...” of “dispensations.” There are those, who will admit that they do not have this all figured out, but they want to know. Some have never taken the time necessary to study this out from use of only the words written in The Word of God. And as always; there will be those who will remain “...**wise in their own conceit**...” (*Proverbs 26:5*) and unwilling to admit that they have been deceived and will not repent “...**to the acknowledging of the truth**...” (*II Timothy 2:25*)

The first mention of the word “... **church**...” definitely directs our minds back to “...**the wilderness**...” That should not panic a person who believes that God’s Word is perfect. God’s words will always explain the truth in His Book, if we don’t get ahead of Him with our own thoughts. Remember, God told us that His “...**church**...” is a “...**great mystery**...” But it does not have to be ambiguous or cryptic.

The use of that word in association with Israel on their journey to the promised land is the

first part of this “**...great mystery...**” That is where and when The LORD *first revealed His mind* about the word “**...church...**” And, it is there we too must go if we are to fully understand as to what He wanted us to learn about His word “**...church...**” This should cause us to want to know just why The LORD introduced this word at that time, in His account of history, in His “*...dispensation of the fulness of times...*” (*Ephesians 1:10*).

Let’s look closely and simply at a few of the facts in the context of this first reference of the word “**...church...**”

1. The first use of the word supersedes our present history and all that is spoken about the word “**...church...**” back to that time.
2. God’s people were enslaved in Egypt, which in Scripture, is a type of the world.
3. The LORD sent Moses, a Jew who lived among the Egyptians, as if he was one of them; to call and lead Israel out of Egypt.
4. God used Moses to bring them to a *physical place* where The LORD would meet with His people.
5. It was there “**...in the wilderness...**” when The LORD delivered His plans for the construction of the “**...tabernacle...**” (*Exodus 25:9*)

which would be a *physical inclosure* where His Presence could dwell.

6. According to Acts 7:38, it was Jesus: ***“...the angel which spake...”*** with Moses there.

Those first mention facts all relate to an actual physical place and time which are Scripturally attached to the word ***“...church...”*** No matter what some think or have made the word ***“...church...”*** to mean now, or the many other aspects of what a ***“...church...”*** is; those first facts cannot be ignored! By that first definition of God’s word ***“...church...”*** there was definitely a ***“...church in the wilderness...”*** After that time, The LORD reveals more about what He calls a ***“...church...”*** But we had better start our understanding of that word where God first revealed it. If not, we will miss out on a great portion of His truth; and as is evident now; the devil will be allowed to continue his corruption of that inspired word ***“...church...”*** in what is called the old testament!

With that basic meaning of ***“...church...;”*** this is especially interesting when we read of when Jesus spoke of the word ***“...fold...”*** in John 10:16.

*John 10:16 “And **other sheep** I have, which are **not of this fold**: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be **one fold**, and **one shepherd.**”*

The word “**...fold...**” is defined in Webster’s 1828 Dictionary as:

- ‘A pen or inclosure for sheep; a place where a flock of sheep is kept, whether in the field or under shelter.’
- ‘To double and insert one part in another;’
- ‘To close over another of the same kind...’

If we have respect for the words of The LORD’S choosing; this has to be part of the understanding of the word “**...church...**”

In the first mention of the word “**...church...**” it is clear to see that The LORD is speaking of a *physical meeting place* specifically appointed by The LORD. God’s people, Israel, the “**...sheep...**” of the first part of the “**...fold...**,” *assembled* before God on a “**...mount...**” of earth. So, without anything added, in its basic form, a “**...church...**” is first shown in Scripture to be a *physical meeting place*.

It was/is a called-out assembly of God’s people, comprised of His chosen servants, and a congregation; in an appointed enclosure; and all in the presence of God which was on and in the atmosphere of this earth. Stop! Go back and read that again. Be sure that that is your basic and first understanding of the word “**...church...**” For if it is not; you will not be able to understand all the other aspects of what the word “**...church...**” means. By not knowing this first, it is a great probability that you may have been influenced by false versions of the LORD’S word “**...church...**” That Scriptural,

foundational definition must be in the mind every time the word “...**church**...” is read; from “...**the church in the wilderness**...” (Acts 7:38) through to its last use in speaking to the people in “...**the church of the Laodiceans**...” in Revelation 3:14. Just understanding that “...**the church**...” has always been a *physical assembly*; casts out the Catholic and Protestant versions of the word “...**church**...” By the way, when the saved are caught up into the clouds; that will also be a *physical assembly*!

Once we go to The Book of God first for the understanding of the word “...**church**...,” then we can go to Webster’s 1828 Dictionary for the English definition of the word “...**church**...” Look at just a few parts of this words meaning which fit in with what is written in God’s Book.

‘A house consecrated to the worship of God, among Christians; the Lords house. This seems to be the original meaning of the word. The Greek, to call out or call together, denotes an assembly or collection. The followers of Christ in a particular city or province; as the church of Ephesus, or of Antioch. The disciples of Christ assembled for worship in a particular place. The worshipers of Jehovah or the true God, before the advent of Christ; as the Jewish church.’

It is interesting to note, that that English definition was written before things such as the

**“...doctrines...”** of Darbyism of the 1850’s; or as it is now known as **Dispensationalism**. That Protestant and his **“...doctrines...”** have caused many today to think that speaking of a **“...church in the wilderness...”** is something that is heresy! But that is The LORD’S first mention of the word **“...church...;”** and it is back with Moses and the Jews.

Because of the confusion of the **“...doctrines...”** of **Dispensationalism**, many a Baptists’ mind has been deceived when it comes to the understanding of The Lord’s definition of the word **“...church...”** That deceiving, evil **“...spirit of antichrist...”** (1 John 4:3) attaches itself to the minds of the simple and blinds them as to the meaning of the word **“...church...”** The devil hates the *proper interpretation* of God’s words. Many good Baptist men in Baptist Churches, have been unnecessarily divided because of the demonic influence of **Dispensationalism**. Men such as John Darby and C.I Scofield, who were *not Baptists*, as marked by their own writings, were universalists concerning the word **“...church...”** They redefined the word **“...church...”** causing many to think that the primary meaning meant *all saved people in general*, instead of a **“...church...”** first being a tangible organization of individual saved **“...members in particular...”** who assembled together in actual, individual locations on this earth. Scofield’s notes speak of a ‘true church’ and a ‘local church.’ Because of his Catholic/Protestant theology; He falsely combined those saved into the family of God with being the

same thing as the word “...**church**...” Jesus said in John 10:16 that there would be “...**one fold**...” not two!

Such mishandling and mutating of the word “...**church**...” has caused more doctrinal problems than we can name! Independent, Fundamental Baptists who hold that *the words* of The Word of God are perfect, inspired, and preserved, ought to know better! If they had never heard of the deceitful Protestant *dispensational* terms such as ‘the church age,’ or ‘the age of grace;’ no Baptist would think first that “...**the church**...” is synonymous with all who are saved. That is a part of false universal “...**doctrines**...” The word “...**church**...” is primarily speaking about a meeting place which has been appointed by God; so that He can meet together with those who are saved! Without the understanding of that first mention principle; the word “...**church**...” has been changed into things it is not.

John Darby, C.I. Schofield, and his followers, have much for which to answer concerning their false ideas about the word “...**church**...” and their failure to respect The LORD’S first placement of the word “...**church**...” in time. And that is a gross understatement!

Thank God for His Word! The LORD’S “...**tenor**...” (*Exodus 34:27*) of the word “...**church**...” has always been a physical gathering of the saved, from the time God spoke to Moses in “...**the wilderness**...,” now, at the return of The Lord before

the tribulation, and, after the great Jewish-led revival during the tribulation; and it will still be so when *all the saved* are once-and-for-all gathered with The Lord in His Heaven. If any person learned just and only that very simple truth first, there would not be so much controversy about the word “**...church...**” It is a disgrace and a shame that men with many *degrees in divinity* have failed to begin their understanding of a “**...church...**” there with The LORD “**...in the wilderness...**”

The devil hates what a Scriptural “**...church...**” is. And there is an underlying reason for this malice. According to *Acts 7:38*, it was from that *physical place* “**...in the church in the wilderness...**” where Moses was delivered “**...the lively oracles to give unto us...**” The word “**...oracles...**” is defined as: ‘*the place where the answers were given.*’ Those answers were not given *to the place*; but to the people in a physical place! The people and the “**...church...**” are two different things. Jesus Christ also gave command *to the people* in His kind of “**...church...**” to go and preach the eternal gospel of everlasting, eternal life.

This is why the devil then had to devise a way to keep the truth about the “**...church...**” of The Lord’s ownership masked in dispensational doctrinal obscurity. To do this, he would deceive men into producing many false versions of “**...the church...**” This is because he knows, that the blood

of Jesus Christ not only paid the price for all sins; but with it, Jesus in time, also once and for all, publically **“...purchased...”** His **“...church...”**

*Acts 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed **the church** of God, which he hath **purchased with his own blood.**”*

No wonder the devil has worked so hard to obscure the meaning of the word **“...church.”** Satan had to defile and deceive minds from accepting these things. He has done so by the use of universal church **“...doctrines...”** Dispensational, universal **“...doctrines...,”** teach that **“...the church...”** is all saved people combined, and that the organization of the physical place is not the important emphasis. We as Baptist often say things such as, “This church building is not a holy place.” Or, “The church is not this building, it is we the people.” But are those statements 100% correct? Do we think it is ok to ignore the fact that God does speak of particular physical places to meet and assemble with His saved ones? Doesn't that mentality lend to making going to **“...church...”** or being faithful **“...members in particular...”** to be somehow irrelevant? And, that is just what is happening concerning average attendance to **“...church...”!** When the physical assembly is made to be an invisible thing; no wonder assembling together at a physical **“...church...”** is becoming less and less practiced!

The evil influence of Catholicism's and Protestantism's version of "**...church...**" is in many a Baptist mind! These call their version of "*...the church...*" things "*...like...*" (*Isaiah 14:14*) an organism comprised of the spiritual and physical. Their "**...doctrines...**" teach that when a person is saved they are automatically part of what they think is "*...the church...*" They confuse the being "**...grafted...**" (*Romans 11:17*) into the "family" of God" at salvation; with salvation automatically making the one saved part of an invisible, mystical church. In the matter of not making a distinction, between sinners being made a child of God at salvation, and the entrance into "**...the church...**" as being two separate things; they (and some Baptists) have failed greatly by not "**...rightly dividing the word of truth...**" (*II Timothy 2:15*) Sinners being regenerated by The Holy Ghost (*Titus 3:5*), and becoming "**...members in particular...**" (*I Corinthians 12:27*) of a "**...church...**," are not simultaneous at the new birth! If those two things are combined; then what is the purpose of water baptism??? Some Baptists may be more Protestant than they want to admit.

Think of this comparison. A Jew was born a Jew, as one of God's people, but each individual was responsible for a personal choice to receive the truth of the coming Christ by faith; and then obey The LORD and go to worship God in the place where God's instructed them to assemble. Today, any

person who is saved, does not automatically become part of “**...the church...**” They too must do what God’s Word instructs them to do after salvation; and make a personal choice to obey The Lord’s appointed way to enter into one of The Lord’s “**...churches...**”

If people understand what a “**...church...**” really is; the devil knows they will then have to be accountable to meet The Lord at that *physical place*. If Satan cannot stop a sinner from being saved; his next tactic is to keep their minds blinded from knowing exactly what a “**...church...**” is according to The Word of God.

Please keep in mind the simple first mention of the word “**...church...**” as recorded in God’s Book. Once that is excepted and established as part of our understanding of the “**...doctrine...**” of “**...the church...**”; only then will we be able to go to other words used in conjunction with the word “**...church...**”

Including the word “**...church...**,” God uses *twelve* things which are all associated with the “**...doctrine...**” of His kind of “**...church...**” These are: “**...tabernacle...**,” “**...temple...**,” “**...congregation...**,” “**...sanctuary...**,” “**...assembly...**,” “**...body...**,” “**...fold...**,” “**...flock...**,” “**...body of Christ...**,” “**...the bride...**” and “**...the Lambs wife...**” Each of those words are written for a specific purpose and must

be rightly divided according to their place in Scripture. If the first use of the word “**...church...**” in Acts 7:38 is overlooked, missed, skipped, assumed to be something it is not, or denied; that corruption will veil the understanding of all those other words surrounding the word “**...church...**”

God’s Book is amazing. It is beyond and above our thoughts. This is why “**...the church...**” is such a “**...great mystery...**” But it does not have to be an unknown “**...mystery...**”

In Webster’s 1828 Dictionary, the word “**...mystery...**” has in its meaning: ‘That which is beyond human comprehension until explained. In this sense, mystery often conveys the idea of something awfully sublime or important; something that excites wonder.’

I am certain that none of we who are saved, will have all of this “**...great mystery...**” figured out with these human, sin-tainted, finite minds. But, if we will not allow this wonder of God’s Word to be spoiled by other words and theologies; we will be shown as much as The Holy Ghost thinks we can handle. We must never doctrinally sidestep the law of the first mention concerning the word “**...church...**”



# Chapter 5

## First Mention of the Word

### Congregation

*Exodus 12:3 "Speak ye unto all the **congregation of Israel**, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house..."*

Please notice the word "**...congregation...**" for here we are given the first time it appears in writing. After that writing note the events which followed.

1. A physical "**...congregation...**" was to be assembled to hear Moses speak God's Word.
2. This was just before the institution of the "**...passover...**" (*Exodus 12:11*)
3. It was after the "**...passover...**" that The Scriptures say in *I Corinthians 10:2* "*And were all **baptized** unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea...*" Please note that I understand that that particular mention of being "**...baptized...**" is not fully explained in that verse, but it is very significant as to this progression in words!
4. After the crossing of the sea, The LORD brought His people together in "**...the church in the wilderness...**"

Note that order of progression.

1. "...congregation..."
2. "...passover..."
3. "...a lamb for an house..."
4. "...baptized..."
5. "...church in the wilderness..."

This is important because that same order will be repeated again.

1. Twelve "...**sheep**..." of the first part of the "...**fold**..." (John 10:16) assembled with Jesus the night before His death.
2. Lord's Supper instituted.
3. The Lamb is slain in time to purchase His House: His "...**church**..." Acts 20:28
4. People being "...**baptized**..." at Pentecost.
5. Completion of the second part of the "...**one fold**..." (John 10:16) which was the first physical new testament "...**church**..." at Jerusalem.

Go back and consider those two sets of four things carefully. God's Book is beyond amazing!

The word "...**congregation**..." is Scripturally attached to the "...**great mystery**..." of "...**the church**..." Exodus 12:3 is the first time God wrote it down for us to read; but the first time it is used in *chronology* will be covered shortly. According to Webster's 1828 Dictionary, part of the meaning of "...**congregation**..." in English is,

- The act of bringing together, or assembling.
- A collection or assemblage of separate things.
- More generally, an assembly or persons; and appropriately, an assembly of persons met for the worship of God, and for religious instruction.

Two synonyms for the word “**...congregation...**” are, flock and gathering.

The LORD writes the word “**...congregation...**” three-hundred and sixty-three times from *Exodus* to the Book of *Micah*. He translates that word “**...congregation...**” for a Bible Believer in *Hebrews 2:12* which is a quote of *Psalms 22:2*.

*Hebrews 2:12* “Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of **the church** will I sing praise unto thee.”

*Psalms 22:22* “I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of **the congregation** will I praise thee.”

The use of these two words opens up a lot of thought. For we who respect every word in God’s Book, as He wrote them; this is a great blessing. But for those who substitute man-made words and definitions for God’s pure words; things such as

those two words from Hebrews and Psalms contradict their man-conceived theology!

For instance, those whose idea of “**...the church...**” has been influenced by Protestant Dispensationalism, would never agree that there was a “**...church in the wilderness...**” because of how they incorrectly divide up ‘old and new testament’ times. But, in this “**...great mystery...**” which includes “**...the church...**,” the use and definition of the word “**...congregation...**” must be dealt with in relation to times *both before and after the cross*. The truth is, that Dispensational “**...doctrines...**” have unnecessarily, and deceitfully, kept hidden many aspects of this “**...great mystery...**” “**...concerning Christ and the church.**” (*Ephesians 5:32*)

The Book of God tells us that those two words, “**...congregation...**” and “**...church...**” are authorized by The LORD, in context, to be interchangeable at every time throughout all the time covered by His Book. The basic foundational truth of the word “**...congregation...,**” as it is with the word “**...church...,**” are both used to define *a group of people called to a physical place to assemble*. If the words “**...church...**” and “**...congregation...**” are not understood by a saved person, as written, used, and defined by God; Satan will gain an advantage in such a mind. When the definitions of universal “**...doctrines...**” are introduced into the thinking about these inspired and preserved words; that is why the confusion

about what constitutes a “**...congregation...**” and a “**...church...**,” has caused many doctrinal problems. More aspects of these physical gatherings are given in Scripture; but the basics must come first.

Why do you think this subject has been so contested in our time? To The Lord Jesus, His “**...church...**” means much more than the average saved person seems to have learned. I have preached many times that if a born again child of God, fully understood the real purpose for being baptized into membership, as “**...members in particular...**” (*I Corinthians 12:27*) and faithfully “**Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...**” (*Hebrews 10:25*) in a local Baptist Church; that they would never, never, miss a single “**...church...**” service ever again! But you and I both know how little respect many claiming to be saved have for “**...church...**” There is a primary evil reason behind this neglect of “**...church...**” Consider this carefully for it is not anything new. God has revealed it to us in His Book.

From the moment of his rebellion back in eternity, Lucifer has always had his sights set on the deceiving of what The LORD calls His “**...church...**” It has already been established that Lucifer said he will “**...be like...**” God. Now with that in mind, look at the word “**...congregation...**” in *Isaiah 14:13-14*. For here it is that we read of the *oldest mention* of the word “**...congregation...**” according to *eternal chronology*.

*“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of **the congregation**, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”*

That Scripture shows us that the devil had it in him, before the world and before time, to be very close by wherever God’s people would be assembled.

That eternal view of the word “**...congregation...**” has got to be considered with great attention. Many have related that word; and the word “**...church...**” to be valid during only what Protestant Dispensationalists have deemed to be what they have named ‘the church age.’ But when the word “**...congregation...**” is seen as it is in Scripture; and how it relates perfectly to the word “**...church...**,” the boundaries of their man-made dispensational “**...doctrines...**” are destroyed!

Because of the direct influences of the teachings of Protestant Dispensationalism, many Baptists seem to confuse the meaning of a tangible, physical meeting place; with something that they associate as being more spiritual and invisible. Of course, there are *spiritual aspects* of what make up a “**...congregation...**” and a “**...church...**,” and some will be covered later. But the actual physical part of the definitions of these words cannot be left out; for

it is the first premise and evidence of this “**...doctrine...**” Theologians seem to lean more towards ‘spiritualizing’ the word “**...church...**,” and accepting the word “**...congregation...**” as the only real physical part in this. But that is a grave error in the light of The LORD’S use in connecting these two words together by *inspiration, preservation,* and His *interpretation* in His Book from *Hebrews 12:2 and Psalm 22:22.*

The LORD has always met with His own in *physical places.* According to Job, in eternity He met with the angels long before the foundation of the earth. He met with Adam and Eve in the garden before and after a blood sacrifice was made for their sin. In grace, He spoke with Noah and called him and seven others out before the destruction of all that was on the face of the earth. He met personally with Abram and called him out to establish a mighty nation which would bless every family on earth. He met with Jacob to create the future Israel.

Then He came to the place when He met with Moses “**...in the wilderness...**” where we find the first mention of the word “**...church...**” in the chronology of time in *Acts 7:38.* Jesus met with a group on the mountain in *Luke 6:12-13,* and from His first “**...fold...**” (*John 10:16*), He called out from them twelve Jewish men who would form what would become the first of the churches of the New Testament. The Lord at His resurrection gathered the redeemed souls which were in Paradise, reunited them with their bodies; brought them up

out of their graves; and took them with Him into Heaven...a *physical place!* Soon, all the saved from that time till the trumpet; will be called out before the tribulation, to physically meet Jesus in the air. And, He will also call out those saved during the great Jewish led revival of the tribulation, sometime prior to The Lord's thousand-year reign on Earth. And when time is no longer needed; again God will gather all the saved together; in a *physical* assembly in the *physical* city of *physical* new Jerusalem, for **"...the marriage supper of the Lamb..."** (Revelation 19:9)

All of this started with The LORD meeting with man in many *physical places*; including congregations and churches.

## Chapter 6

### The Mystery of a Purchased Church

*Acts 20"28 "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all **the flock**, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed **the church** of God, which he hath **purchased with his own blood.**"*

A "**...church...**" is a very specific thing. Here God writes that it is a "**...flock...**" and calls it His "**...church...**" which He has "**...purchased with his own blood.**" According to the first mention of the word "**...church...**" The Lord has always had an actual appointed *collective* meeting *place* on this earth since Moses "**...in the wilderness...**" The simplicity of that first fact must not be left out in the understanding of the word "**...church...**" Because it has been so widely accepted that "**...the church...**" is synonymous with all the saved; and spoken of as an invisible entity; the word "**...church...**" has been made to mean things that are not entirely doctrinally correct. This "**...great mystery...**" has got to be rightly divided. Remember, we are dealing with what The LORD calls a "**...great mystery...**" One thing that is sure about this "**...mystery...**" is that we will not know all about it until we stand in New Jerusalem! And even then, as redeemed and totally transformed in every way; we will still be born again humans standing before The Eternal Godhead.

The Lord purchasing His “...**church**...” is not an easy concept to understand or to explain. In the simplest of terms, it has to do with *ownership* and the *right to be the authority* of what goes on with and in a “...**church**...” No theological definition is going to fully uncover this subject. And to add more spiritual depth to this “...**great mystery**...,” God also reveals to the Bible Believer more of it as He writes, in what some call ‘old testament’ times, about a “...**purchased**...” “...**congregation**...” of Jews who He writes were “...**redeemed**...”

*Psalm 74:2 “Remember thy **congregation**, which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast **redeemed**; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.”*

To those who leave God’s choice of words just as written; a simple comparison of the words in *Acts 20:28 and Psalm 74:2* opens up the understanding of this “...**great mystery**...” to a greater degree. Dispensationalists, and those influenced or deceived by their irreverence to The Lord’s *one dispersement* of “...**times**...,” (*Ephesians 1:10*) have a hard time making the words of those *old* and *new* testament Scriptures in God’s one Book fit into their differing dispensational theories. Many will readily except the word “...**church**...” in the new testament; but will not associate it as an equal with the word “...**congregation**...” Some may attempt to disregard the simplicity of words such as written in

*Psalm 74:2*; but they must be studied, for they are a part of this “**...great mystery...**” in the full understanding of the word “**...church...**”

In writing about “**...mount Zion ...**,” The LORD says that He “**...dwelt...**” in that *physical place* of His “**...congregation...**” back *before* the cross. And, The LORD has the Psalmist write that His “**...congregation...**” was “**...purchased...**” and “**...redeemed...**” That sounds just like how a Baptist preacher of today, would speak of “**...redeemed...**” people assembling in a local “**...the church...**” that was also said to be “**...purchased...**” (*Acts 20:28*)

Truly The Lord Jesus Christ has always been “**...the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever...**”! (*Hebrews 13:8*) The LORD writes that His people were “**...redeemed...**” back in the Psalms. How is it then, that a Baptist who preaches an eternal salvation by grace through faith, that cannot be obtained by works; why would they think that those in the ‘old testament’ *earned* their salvation by the animal sacrifices and/or the keeping of the law??? Being “**...redeemed...**” in the old testament is the same as being “**...redeemed...**” in the new testament! If not then there would be more than one kind or means of being “**...redeemed...**” Being “**...redeemed...**” has always been the *means* for salvation, and always will be so! There is only one kind of “**...eternal salvation...**” (*Hebrews 5:9*), and only one way of being “**...redeemed...**” (*Ephesians 2:8-9, 1 Peter 1:18*)

When you compare the thoughts produced by those 'old testament' inspired words of *Psalms* 74:2, with the inspired words of *Acts* 20:28, part of this "**...great mystery...**" becomes clearer to those who will let God's Book speak for Him and accept His words.

Scriptural facts always obliterate theological stupidity. The fact is, God writes He has "**...purchased...**" His "**...church...**" and He also has written that He has "**...purchased...**" His "**...congregation...**" If those words mean some kind of invisible, mystical gathering, they then are made to have no place in their prospective context. They must be interpreted as to their context first. This ought to cause some serious questions as to the meaning of the words "**...church...**" and "**...congregation...**" as they are first used by The LORD.

Here is a question which must be answered; for it directly affects one's belief about the meaning of the word "**...church...**" If God has written that He "**...purchased...**" a "**...congregation...**" back before the cross; then why do Protestant Dispensationalists teach that the Jews were not under grace, but had to perform the acts of the law in order to be "**...redeemed...**"? Yet, they will readily teach that during what they have named 'the church age;' people were "**...redeemed...**" by grace and not by keeping the law? Talk about religious double-talk! In

failing to accept God's placement of the words "**...church...**" and "**...congregation...**" in relation to time; just as they are written, those who accept dispensationalism have a real doctrinal dilemma to deal with. God says that He "**...purchased...**" His "**...church...**" by His definition of a "**...church....**" after the cross. He also says He "**...purchased...**" a "**...congregation...;**" according to His definition of a "**...congregation...**" *before* the cross. Those who assembled in the time of each of those different meeting places, were "**...purchased...**" by *one* act of "**...grace...**" That is how all have been, and will be "**...redeemed...;**" and in both cases; it is definitely "**...not of works...**"! (*Ephesians 2:8-9*)

This part of the "**...great mystery...**" must also be reconciled with the words of *1 John 2:1-2*.

*"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, **Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.**"* *1 John 2:1-2*

Those words speak of the payment made with the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. It was that "**...shedding of blood...**" (*Hebrews 9:22*) which appeased the wrath of God toward all sin. That payment was made for *all people* whether they have received that payment by faith or not. Contrary to

Calvinist **“...doctrines...”** who teach a ‘limited atonement,’ and of an ‘irresistible grace;’ the lost who *reject* salvation are also included in this provision for **“...propitiation...”** No person who believes The Book of God can deny that the words of *1 John 2:1-2* are specifically speaking about the part of The Lord’s **“...sacrifice...”** paying for *all the sins of all men*. In *Hebrews 10:12*, God has written that there has been only **“...one sacrifice...”** which is acceptable to **“...put away sin...”** (*Hebrews 9:26*) Therefore, it is that same **“...sacrifice...”** which has also **“...purchased...”** what He calls His **“...congregation...”** and His **“...church...”**

Another fact which must be dealt with; is that when God writes of purchasing His **“...congregation...”** and His **“...church...;”** those words cannot be used synonymously as if a **“...congregation...”** a **“...church...”** are interchangeable in speaking about saved people! That sacrifice did not purchase *only* those who would except salvation by faith. They are used in directing the mind to all sins being paid for, and to a physical meeting place where saved people go to meet!

Salvation is not forced on, or kept from, any soul. Redemption is available to all and freely so. But to be **“...redeemed...,”** a sinner must personally exercise faith in Christ, which then allows that **“...one sacrifice...”** for sins to keep their soul out of Hell and The Lake of Fire. Whether it was after faith

being imputed for salvation before the cross, or in new testament times after salvation and then being baptized, the “**...redeemed...**” have always had to willingly participate in meeting with The LORD at His house. None of the “**...redeemed...**,” Jew or Gentile, has been automatically made part of a “**...congregation...**” or a “**...church...**” when they received Christ by faith. Now, with The Scriptures now being completed on earth; Baptists ought to know these things. Baptists who get their “**...doctrine...**” and practices from only the words in God’s Book, know how a saved person is to be brought into membership in a new testament local “**...church...**” Membership in relation to a “**...congregation...**” or a “**...church...**” does not happen simultaneously at salvation.

Here is another way to word this. The blood of Jesus Christ paid for the sins of every soul which has ever been given life; and awaits their repentant call of faith for that sacrifice to be appropriated and applied to the record of their sins. But that one eternal payment did not automatically make all sinners saved! Therefore, to be consistent without contradiction, it must also be true, that the accepting of that one payment, does not make all saved people spontaneously a part of an invisible, universal church!

Here is a question to be applied to this: When was this one, two part payment, actually made? Dispensationalists sadly do not seem to

understand the “... **great mystery...**” of The Lord purchasing both the means for the salvation of all; and, for His people; in all times, past, present, future, and in eternity: to assemble together in a physical place. The deceit of those man-made “...**doctrines...**” has caused many a good Baptist to be in drastic error when it comes to the word “...**church...**” The people and the place

This same principle and thought of The Lord purchasing both “...**people...**” and a “...**place...**” is shown in the words of the song of Moses *Exodus 15:17*.

*Exodus 15:16-17* “Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till **the people** pass over, which **thou hast purchased**. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, **in the place**, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee **to dwell in, in the Sanctuary**, O Lord, which thy hands have established.”

The Scriptures constantly reveal this as being set in the mind of The LORD. This truth seems to have been overshadowed by such mishandling of the word “...**church...**” But that is always the case when the lofty sounding “...**good words and fair speeches...**” (*Romans 16:18*) of Protestantism are parroted, in place of “...**the simplicity...**” (II

Corinthians 11:3) God's "**...pure words...**" (Psalms 12:6-7)

Dispensationalism has really darkened this "**...great mystery...**" of the "**...church...**" because of a failing to *rightly divide* this subject. Dispensationalists have had to twist the definition of the words "**...church...**" and "**...congregation...**" to fit them into their man-conceived 'dispensations.' And especially so, when those two interchangeable words confront their thoughts with that of being a *physical place to meet* with The LORD. Have the "**...doctrines...**" of Protestant Dispensationalism influenced your thinking about the first and basic meaning of the word "**...church...**"?

Here are some things they and we need to ask and to answer.

- Did Jesus pay for an 'old testament' "**...congregation...**" and then afterward pay for His "**...church...**"?
- Were there two different payments made at different times for these things?
- If The Scripture interpreting Scripture is correct; are what God defines as a "**...congregation...**" and a "**...church...**" two different things?
- Why does God write of both His "**...congregation...**" and His "**...church...**" being "**...purchased...**"?

- Why does The LORD quote *Psalm 22:22* and *Hebrews 2:12* as if the word “**...congregation...**” and the word “**...church...**” are the same?
- What does that truth do to those who say this is now ‘the church age?’
- Why do some refuse to accept that a “**...congregation...**” in the old testament is the same as a “**...church...**” in the new testament for a meeting place of the saved?
- Does being “**...redeemed...**” in old testament, or in the new, automatically make those people part of the “**...the congregation...**” or of “**...the church...**”?
- Doesn’t being “**...redeemed...**” mean that someone or something else paid the required price?

All of those things are directly related to the proper understanding of the word “**...church...**” This is why a “**...church...**” must not be made to be something it is not. It is not an invisible entity. It is not transposable in meaning all who are “**...redeemed...**” A “**...church...**” is simply a place where God meets with His “**...redeemed...**” and from which He has sent us out into this world to do His work of redemption! It has been so back before the first of the new testament churches, and now, and will be so in the future. A “**...church...**” today, as it was also with a “**...congregation...**” in Moses’ day, has been “**...purchased...**” by The blood of Jesus

Christ. If you think a “**...church...**” is defined by universal “**...doctrines...**” that last statement will not make sense to you.

God had a “**...purchased...**” “**...congregation...**” back with Moses; and He has “**...purchased...**” “**...churches...**” today! He has “**...purchased...**” the right as the “**...Head...**” over each of those physical assemblies! In the times before the cross, this was even a greater mystery. But now we have been just given more details because of the Books of the new testament writings which have now been delivered to earth. The LORD has always met with His “**...redeemed...**” whether He called that physical place a “**...congregation...**” or a “**...church...**” Jesus “**...purchased...**” His “**...church...**” and His “**...congregation...**” And with that same blood, He paid all the penalty for all sins so that all could be “**...redeemed...**” No other payment could ever appease the wrath of The LORD against sins! No other sacrifices, or works as payment; past, present, nor through the future till we meet physically with The Lord Jesus Christ in Heaven; have or will be the means, for any person, being part of the “**...great mystery...**” as “**...the bride, the Lamb’s wife...**”! (*Revelation 21:9*)



# Chapter 7

## The Mystery Made Manifest

*Titus 1:2-3 "In hope of **eternal life**, which God, that cannot lie, promised **before the world began**; But **hath in due times manifested** his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour..."*

To help us understand some of this "**...mystery...**;" The God of The Scriptures uses the words "**...manifest...**" and "**...manifested...**" several times; and the word "**...manifestly...**" once; in association with many of the *mysteries* concerning "**...Christ and the church...**" and The BOOK of God.

The base word "**...manifest...**" is defined as, 'Plain, open, clearly visible to the eye or obvious to the understanding; apparent; not obscure or difficult to be seen or understood. Detected.'

Those words are easily applied to The Book of God and The Son of God. The LORD has "**...manifested...**" an eternal Book: written to us from eternity; so that we could see His written Word through the *times* of earth; and, He was "**...manifested...**" when He came to us in *time* as The Eternal God in flesh.

*Hebrews 1:1-2 "God, who at sundry **times** and in divers manners spake in **time** past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us **by his Son**, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds..."*

The words of *John 1:1-2*, tell us of things not readily known to all men also being revealed in Christ and His Word combined as one. That **"...eternal life..."** has always been with God, and has always been available for all who would receive it!

*"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was **manifested**, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that **eternal life**, which was with the Father, and was **manifested** unto us;)..."* *John 1:1-2*

The **"...great mystery..."** **"...concerning Christ and the church..."** deepens as the word **"...manifest..."** is further applied to it. The first part of the definition of the words **"...manifest..."** and **"...manifested..."** is powerful and wonderful. But the next part of that definition is absolutely amazing!

In Webster's 1828 Dictionary, a **"...manifest..."** is also, 'an invoice of a cargo of goods, imported or laden for export, to be exhibited

at the custom-house by the master of the vessel, or the owner or shipper.’

How about this for an application. Isn't that the definition of what The Word of God is? Aren't we to read God's Book as written proof of Who and what God sent into this world?? The Word of God is the written *invoice*, the *statement*, and the *account* of Jesus Christ. He is The God-**Man**, Who was *sent* from Heaven: *exported* to earth; and *received*; as in *imported*, into “...**time**...” and the “...**times**...” of this world: and into the hearts of the saved! And, It is The Living Word; both in print and in our lives; which is to be *exhibited* to all the world! Amen!

*I Timothy 3:16 “And without controversy **great is the mystery** of godliness: God was **manifest in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”*

In *Titus 1:2-3*, the word “...**manifested**...” is used in speaking about things which were “...**before**...,” and after, the “...**times**...” of this world.

*“In hope of **eternal life**, which God, that cannot lie, promised **before the world began**; But hath in **due times manifested** his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour...” Titus 1:2-3*

The “*...mystery...*” of “*...manifestation...*” has everything to do with God writing things down for saved people to read; and to be practiced by them in His kind of “*...church...*” He saves many who will never be part of one of His “*...churches...*” on earth; but He works specifically through the organization of his kind of “*...church...*” Those things revealed, are to be used in and on those as “*...members...*” in that “*...church...;*” who God is preparing to stand before “*...The Lamb...*” to be a part of His “*...wife...*”! (*Revelation 21:9*) It is the **place**, and the **organization**, and those in its **leadership**, and the “*...members in particular...*,” working together, to carry out The Lord’s **purpose** for having a “*...church...*” It is the place for His people to meet; and from which to serve Him in winning the lost; and preparing them to be part of The Lord’s spotless “*...bride adorned for her husband...*” (*Revelation 21:2*) All who have been saved as a result of the work carried out by the Lord’s “*...churches...*” or His “*...congregation...*” of old; will all finally meet together in eternity at the end of time.

Until His BOOK was finished being transferred to this earth; God met with men in person, through dreams, or, directly through the spoken words of the prophets. While those methods were being used, it is interesting to note when the words “*...manifest...*” and “*...manifested...*” and

**"...manifestly..."** were and where they **were not** written.

Before The Lord Jesus came to earth as man; of those three words, the word **"...manifest..."** is used only once in *Ecclesiastes 3:18*, and in context, The LORD is there speaking about man needing to be revealed to himself. But after Jesus came; those words are then used for a combined 49 times! The word **"...manifestation..."** is used only 3 times, and those times were all after The Lord Jesus died and rose again!

Many things in the past were a **"...mystery..."** to *us* who live now; but only because God had not yet **"...delivered..."** those words to *us*. But Jewish men who knew The LORD, who did not have a completed BOOK of God in their lifetimes; they knew many of those things which have now been **"...revealed..."** to *Gentiles* in The Scriptures on earth. This principle is shown as Paul writes for The Lord.

*Ephesians 3:2-6* **"If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me **the mystery**; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in **the mystery of Christ**) Which in other ages was not made known unto the **sons of men, as it is now revealed** unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of**

***the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel..."***

That is stating a part of this ***"...mystery..."*** revealed during the times of the new testament ***"...churches..."***, which is saying that the ***"...Gentiles..."*** have always been in God's plan to receive the ***"...gospel..."*** And those words strongly advocate that the saved Jews who were already part of ***"...the same body..."*** already knew such things; but had to be reminded by a Jew named Paul! From such words, we now know from the Scriptures, that many of the Jews, Prophets, children and sons of God; knew much more than some, (especially Dispensationalists), seem to think. Such things have now been made ***"...manifest..."*** to us in God's BOOK! We are only catching up, in written form, to what those whom The LORD dealt with in person, by dreams, and by speaking directly to men and prophets already knew.

*Hebrews 1:1-2 "God, who at sundry **times** (plural) and in divers manners **spake in time** (singular) **past** unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in **these last days** spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds..."*

Because of not applying the word ***"...manifest..."*** to things in place in the past, there are Dispensationalists who teach and say things like,

‘the Jews could not have known some of the things about “...*salvation...*” and “...*grace...*” and “...*the Holy Ghost...*” as we now know. That only shows their lack of study, and laziness at “...*rightly dividing the word of truth...*” (II Timothy 2:15)

If The LORD did not *move* men to write of such things for us, “...*by The Holy Ghost...*” (II Peter 1:21) giving them His inspired words for them to record in His Book; no human mind would be able to comprehend such things. By the way, those same Dispensationalists have not yet accepted the “...*manifestation...*” that the “...*Holy Ghost...*” was there *all the time and times* when and where The BOOK of God was being transferred to earth!

*II Peter 1:21 “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”*

Through using His completed Word; The LORD has “...*manifested...*” the great truth of the “...*mystery...*” the “...*one sacrifice...*” of Christ which was both in “...*time...*” at the cross, and in “...*eternity...*” before *time* began! No human mind would have ever come up with such a concept on its own. The price of redemption has *always* been paid! Man had only to see it in “...*time...*” at Calvary! Amen! The Lord used “...*time...*” to “...*manifest...*” many wonderful things.

*Galatians 4:4-5 "But when **the fulness of the time was come**, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."*

When The Lord Jesus left eternity to enter "**...time...**," and was introduced into the "**...times...**" of this earth; many things which were already known and which were forsaken by many of the Jews, started coming back into light. The darkness in practice, and in understanding of a hidden past was shattered by the WORD of God: both written and walking in the "**...Godhead bodily...**" (*Colossians 2:9*)

*1 Peter 1:18-20 "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained **before the foundation of the world**, but was **manifest** in these last **times** for you..."*

The sacrifice of The Christ has always been available for every soul! From Adam to the last sinner who will be born on earth. That eternal sacrifice of "**...the precious blood of Christ...**" has always been and will be the means for all men to be saved! No other kind of 'blood' has ever been the

means for salvation! Those other sacrifices, which were only “...**a shadow of good things to come...**” (Hebrews 10:1) and were “...**corruptible things...**” (1 Peter 1:18) God has made these things known to us!

*Hebrews 10:1-4 “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can **never with those sacrifices** which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is **not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.**”*

The Scriptures also make “...**manifest...**” that The blood of the sacrifice of The Lord Jesus bought and paid for two things. First, according to *1 John 2:2*, sins of both the saved and the lost have been paid for in full!

*1 John 2:2 “And he is the **propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.**”*

And second, according to Acts 20:28, The Scriptures teach us that the blood of that *same sacrifice* also “...**purchased...**” His “...**church...**”

*Acts 20:28 "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed **the church** of God, which he hath **purchased with his own blood.**"*

The Lord has made it "...**manifest...**" that not only has He "...**purchased...**" His "...**church...**" of the new testament; but also His "...**congregation...**" "...**of old...**" with that same and only "...**one sacrifice...**" (Hebrews 10:12)!

*Psalm 74:2 "Remember thy **congregation**, which **thou hast purchased of old**; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein **thou hast dwelt.**"*

Unless The Scriptures are allowed to be the only guide to understanding these things; the "...**one sacrifice...**" of Christ will be misunderstood, and misappropriated!

*Hebrews 10:10 "By the which will we are sanctified through **the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**"*

This "...**manifestation...**" is brought about by none other than "...**the Holy Ghost...**" It is He Who has revealed all things by the giving of The Scriptures in the past; and by His teaching us those exact words in the future! The Word of God reveals

to us that He has always been the One Who **"...manifested..."** the things of God to men.

*Hebrews 10:14-18 "For by **one offering** he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for **after that he had said before**, This is the covenant that I will make with them **after** those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is **no more offering** for sin."*

The individual parts of the **"...doctrine..."** of **"...the faith..."** (Jude 3) concerning Christ, His Sacrifice, and His definition of the word **"...church..."** are all Scripturally bound together. These things have always been; but the word **"...manifest..."** is key to the revealing of this **"...great mystery..."** which is directly related to the ministry of Christ and His kind of **"...church..."** of today.

Until The Lord Jesus set up His first new testament **"...church...;"** and the transferring of The Scriptures to earth had been completed; many things now recorded in God's Book were *already in place* and commonly known by Israel. But some of that knowledge had not yet been **"...delivered..."** (Jude 3) in written form to us Gentiles. Gentiles were not privy to much of what God's chosen Nation knew. The Jews however, had a much different

relationship with God. Think about it. He physically appeared to them! The LORD spoke directly to them long before many of those things were made “**...manifest...**” to us by The Scriptures. Those precious saints of old knew far more about The God of Heaven than the average saved Gentile can imagine! And as far as “**...church...**” The Jews were used to going to a *physical meeting place* ordained and established by God all the way back with Moses and “**...the church in the wilderness...**” (Acts 7:38) It is disheartening when faced with the fact that many well intended Baptists have not reconciled that part of truth in the understanding of the word “**...church...**” But it must be added to how that word is thought of today. Such *former things* were not as big of a “**...mystery...**” to the Jews as many Gentiles of today seem to think. If it was not for them; and The LORD using them for the manifesting of His Word; we as Gentiles would still be in spiritual darkness.

To put this in better perspective, when comparing The LORD’S dealings with the Jews; how many “Gentiles” were actually spoken to directly by God??? How many Gentiles were included in The LORD choosing to make a Covenant with man??? How many “Gentiles” were used to write Scripture??? How many “Gentiles” were involved in the establishing of The Lord’s first “**...church in the wilderness...???**” (Acts 8:37) How many “Gentiles” were chosen by The Lord Jesus to establish His first new testament “**...church...**” at Jerusalem??? How

many “Gentiles” were part of that “**...church...**” *before* the day of Pentecost??? Just how many “Gentiles” were involved in actually establishing the first “Gentile” new testament “**...church...**” after the one in Jerusalem??? How many “Gentiles” did The Lord use to specifically start every subsequent new testament “**...church...**” recorded in His BOOK??? And, how many “Gentiles” were used to deliver the “**...doctrine...**” of “**...the faith...**” to the “**...saints...**” in those “Gentile” “**...churches...**” Can you answer those questions with Scripture? My point is this: The Jews knew far, far more about God, and Christ, and, the *physical meeting places* with The LORD, than many “Gentile” Baptists of today seem to realize. What those precious Jewish saved people already knew of the things of God for four-thousand years; was then put down in writing, so that those things, already revealed to, and previously known exclusively in Jewish minds; could now be made “**...manifest...**” to us Gentiles! God writes it in this way in the words of *Hebrews 1:1-2*,

*“God, who at sundry **times** (plural) and in divers manners **spake in time** (singular) **past** unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in **these last days** spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds...”*

God has “**...manifested...**” some wonderful mysteries when He gave His completed BOOK. And

that is to include what the word “...**church**...” means to Him. It is amazing how so many have been detrimentally influenced by Protestant “...**doctrines**...” about the word “...**church**...” Many fail to have considered that the Jews had an assembly place thousands of years before The Lord Jesus came to establish His first new testament “...**church**...” Scriptures, such as **Acts 7:38**, which speak of “...**the church in the wilderness**...,” are an example of God *manifesting* what had already been established for centuries. Instead of allowing only God’s vocabulary words to “...**manifest**...” what the word “...**church**...” means; false dispensational “...**doctrines**...” concerning the word “...**church**...” have been promoted by the theologians of Protestants, and sadly to say, have been unscripturally accepted by many doctrinally erring dispensational Baptists. Such as these use words and terms which suggest that what we now call “...**church**...” is unique only to us as Gentiles. They use the term ‘church age’ in an attempt to say that “...**church**...” was something introduced only to the Gentiles. Because of their shameful failure to let God’s Word speak for Itself; such as these teach perversions of the grace of God; the purpose of the law; and that the means of salvation for today is different than it was for the Jews under Moses.

Without the Scriptural anchor of the “...**doctrine**...” the word “...**church**...” first meaning a meeting place; dispensationalists, whether they

call themselves a hyper-dispensationalist or not, have built and teach several false “...**doctrines...**” These demonically conceived “...**doctrines...**” incorporate things like Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism, Covenant Theology, Replacement Theology; and wrong views concerning the order of three-part sequence of the events of the “...**first resurrection...**” (*Revelation 20:5-6*) The majority of those influenced by such falsehood, show by their speaking about the word “...**church...**” that their beliefs are tainted by *universal church* “...**doctrines...**” Many calling themselves Baptists, who hold to those false concepts, are not cognitive to the fact that much of their lack in the ability to the understanding of pure “...**doctrine...**,” all centers around their false versions of the word “...**church...**,” its beginning place, its physical make-up, and its purpose. If we allow only God’s words; and His Spirit to be our teacher; they together will “...**manifest...**” the truth about “...**church...**”

I understand that this is not an easy thing to grasp. And I see the doctrinal and practical problems which have been caused due to such falsehood having been so long accepted and neglected! We as Baptists must allow The words of God’s Book to correct our minds in this. We are dealing with the mind of God in relation to one of His inspired words. Our minds will never fully be able to understand this “...**great mystery...**” concerning the word “...**church...**” But human thought, carnal reasoning,

and intellectual redefining of “*...spiritual...*” (*1 Corinthians 2:13*) words must be rejected at all cost! Due to human limitations in thought and understanding, the word “*...church...*,” in this life, will always carry some shadow of “*...mystery...*” But from what is “*...manifest...*” now in The Scriptures, any saved person, is able to learn of wonders and things which have always been; but were *hidden*.

Has it occurred to you that things hidden had first to be in existence. It does not mean that they were not in existence or not known by someone else somewhere or at some time. Such is the case with the word “*...church...*” being made “*...manifest...*”

One of the greatest examples of hidden truth being made “*...manifest...*” is how The Word of God teaches us that in His realm, from the point of view from eternity, that The Lord Jesus was “*...slain...*” long before the actual event *in time* at the cross. This directly affects the understanding of the “*...doctrine...*” of “*...the church...*”

*Revelation 13:8 “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”*

Those words are not only speaking about paying the price of redemption; but must also be applied to the “*...mystery...*” of when God as Christ “*...purchased...*” His “*...church...*” (*Acts 20:28*) There is no doubt, that when “*...the Lamb...*” was

**“...slain...”** in *eternity past*; God was then doing so to prepare us for what He would call the **“...congregation...”** and the **“...church...”** At the cross, where this purchase began to be **“...manifested...;”** was an event, not just in time; but in *eternity*. The Scriptures make it known that it was both in eternity and in time, when Jesus **“...gave himself...”** to pay for all sins. Many Baptists will agree to that, but seem to leave out that the same principle of truth applies to the purchasing of His **“...church...”** With God, this wonder of grace and mercy was in existence long before it was made **“...manifest...”** to any mere human! Things which are related to **“...church...”** are not taken as seriously as they deserve and need to be!

To **“...manifest...”** this truth, The Lord uses the relationship of the saved to His kind of **“...church...,”** in conjunction with a Scripturally honoring marriage, as defined by The Word of God. The wonder of this is that The LORD has always had a plan to present Himself with a pure and spotless **“...bride....”** (*Revelation 21:9*) That wedding day in eternity will be the greatest *physical assembly* of all time and eternity!

*Ephesians 5:25-26* **“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word...”**

That final assembly existed long before time in the heart, mind, and in The BOOK of The **“...Godhead...”** (*Colossians 2:9*) An observant study of the words surrounding *Ephesians 5:25-26*, will show that great heart and mind of God as He speaks of a marriage *in time*; and yet He is thinking about His own wedding day *in eternity*! When God first penned those inspired words about the word **“...church...”**; He already loved those who would be there (and those in The Lake of Fire who would not be there) back then! But we had to wait for the truth of those words to be made **“...manifest...”** in His dispersement of truth and time.

A word of clarification and caution must be entered here. There are those who have falsely taught that only “Baptists” will be *the bride of Christ*. But these have not allowed The Scriptures to **“...manifest...”** the real truth about the words **“...congregation...”** **“...church...”** and what and who will be part of that future **“...bride...”** They leave out that part of that **“...bride...”** is revealed in *Revelation 21:9-27* is **“...manifested...”** to be much more than just people! They leave out that this all began with Jews! Saved Gentiles are the ones “adopted” into that family. That future **“...bride...”** is not all about saved Baptist Gentiles! And frankly; God has not **“...manifested...”** all that much about that truth. But one thing is revealed; that wedding day will be absolutely wonderful for The Lord Jesus! That is His Day in eternity!

Jesus has always been the “...**Head...**” of what He calls His “...**church...**” Jesus is “...**the bridegroom...**” It is He Who has been and is preparing a people and a place for His wedding day. This all centers around the word “...**church...**” He is the eternal *owner* of that physical organization; which has and will always be a *physical meeting place* for the people of God! It is the place where the faithful members of the family meet together for instruction, correction, and the closeness of godly fellowship. But it is also, as it is in a marriage, the place where actions are taken to enlarge that family through seeing new births take place! Those additions to the family bring great honor and blessing to the Heavenly Father. It all began by birth with a Jewish family; and then that family grew by many being “...**adopted...**” into that one family! But consider this next statement carefully. All people; Jews or Gentiles, must be born and adopted into *the family* before they can be entered into a “...**church...**”! Those two things must be rightly divided; and are “...**manifested...**” in God’s BOOK.

The “...**manifestation...**” of the truth about the word “...**church...**” ought to prompt the saved to have far more respect and physical participation in the local “...**church...**” of their individual membership! It would be difficult to find a truly born again child of God who would be unthankful for the price Jesus paid so they could be saved. But The Scriptures teach that all of us have also been

**“...bought with...”** that same price which secured The Lord’s *ownership* of His kind of **“...church...”**

*1 Corinthians 6:19-20 “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are **bought with a price**: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”*

In that verse, The Lord commands the saved **“...church...”** member, not only to **“...glorify God ...”** on the inside; but to do the same physically with the **“...body...”** they live in. A saved person’s **“...body...”** ought to **“...manifest...”** their thankfulness for salvation, by being in **“...church...”**; glorifying God every time **“...church...”** meets! There are many who profess to be saved who have not glorified The Lord in their **“...church...”** attendance. Not only does God, by His Spirit meet with the saved in our *hearts*; but He also meets with the saved by The Holy Ghost in His *House*; which are both descriptive and evidence of a physical meeting place on this planet! It is a shame that so many professing to be ‘Christians,’ have so little respect for assembling with the **“...church...”** **“...purchased...”** by the blood of Christ! They will say they are thankful for Jesus dying for their sins; but tread the blood of Christ’s payment for His **“...church...”** under their feet when it comes to their personal record of attendance to His House!

When the word “**...church...**” is made “**...manifest...**” to a submissive saved heart by the Holy Ghost of God; “**...church...**” becomes an *absolute priority* over every other weekly activity! Far too many saved people have not yet “**...manifested...**” this truth in their physical actions!

I read somewhere of an old preacher who went to visit a man who claimed to be saved but was unfaithful to attend “**...church...**” That man of God rebuked him with words similar to, “If I were you sir, I would not trust my soul’s eternity to a salvation to get it to Heaven; that could not get my body to take the time to go to church.”

Perhaps more men of God ought to speak of unfaithful “**...church...**” attendance in the same manner. We speak of missing “**...church...**” but God uses the words “**...forsaking the assembling...**” The word “**...forsaking...**” has a very powerful sense of negative meaning. To simply think of unfaithful attendance as merely missing “**...church...**,” is only a conscience soother which appeases the souls of the unthankful and disobedient “**...church...**” members. To put it into perspective; what if a wife decided to simply not go home for say only 25% of her marriage? Would such unfaithfulness be spoken of by her husband as: “Oh, she just *missed* 25% of being home”? No! That is an unfaithful wife who has forsaken her marriage vows! Hey! Because of the price The Lord Jesus paid for ownership of His “**...church...**” we as saved people ought to be much

more faithful as part of the “...**bride**...” of Jesus Christ!

*Hebrews 10:25-31 “**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. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*

I am absolutely convinced, that the believers' attendance record when made “...**manifest**...” at The Judgement Seat of Christ; will bring more tears and trembling second only to their lack of participation in Soul Winning!

The Scriptures also “...**manifest...**” the “...**mystery...**” of redemption. It must be emphasized that the word “...**redeemed...**” is not only attached to the word “...**church...**” in the new testament; but it is also written in relation to the word “...**congregation...**” back with Moses. Redemption for those in both of those physical places of assembly was paid for long before Jesus came and died in the time of earth! So many of the things which The Lord has now made “...**manifest** to us, are almost too much for the human mind and heart to hold! Our redemption was *purchased* long before time. That means we ought to be thankful for what Jesus did for us and we ought to “...**manifest...**” that gratefulness!

*I Peter 1:18-20 “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not **redeemed** with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the **precious blood of Christ**, as of **a lamb** without blemish and without spot: Who verily was **foreordained before** the foundation of the world, but was **manifest in these last times for you...**”*

The Scriptures “...**manifest...**” that means of our being “...**redeemed...**” was there “...**before...**” the “...**times...**” of this world! It has always been there in eternity. When studying such things; you have got to be conscious of the fact that time and eternity are two distinctly different things. Time is

temporary; eternity has been, is, will be, and has been forever. This is the very nature of our God. He spans all of time past, time present, time in the future; and eternity, at the same “time.” It is only The Holy Spirit, with The Word of God, Who can make such truth “...**manifest...**”

*Revelation 1:8 “I am Alpha and Omega, the **beginning and the ending**, saith the Lord, which **is**, and which **was**, and which **is to come**, the Almighty.”*

What a God! What a “...**mystery...**” While we live in time; eternity is always around us! Eternity itself will always be truly a “...**mystery...**” Remember, The LORD has created time only for us to catch up with what He has already foreknown! That is not an easy truth to grasp; but it must be excepted as the truth by faith. If not, the “...**great mystery...**” of the word “...**church...**” will not be accurately, spiritually understood.

All of this concerns the organization of The Lord’s kind of “...**church...**” It is that physical meeting place which has been given charge to take The Gospel into all the world; and by those called to serve in and under the authority of that organization: All that is in The BOOK of God is to be taught. But nothing spiritual will be learned if The Holy Ghost is not involved in the “...**manifestation...**” of the truth. He is The revealer of this “...**great mystery...**”

# Chapter 8

## The Mystery of The Fold

*John 10:16 “And **other sheep** I have, which are **not of this fold**: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be **one fold**, and **one shepherd**.”*

The thirty-one inspired words in that verse of Scripture, manifests some great truth about the word “...**church**...” In that passage, God writes the word “...**fold**...” That word directs the mind to think about a flock of sheep and their shepherd. There is no doubt that The Lord is using that word as a *descriptive term* to teach us about the word “...**church**...”

Please keep in mind that this chapter (and this book) is being presented with the belief that the word “...**church**...,” and other words associated with that word such as “...**fold**...;” are speaking primarily of individual meeting places. I am in no way thinking about or leaning toward the false “...**doctrines**...” (*1 Timothy 4:1*) of those who believe in a ‘universal church.’ So it is with the use of the words such as “...**church**...,” “...**fold**...,” “...**body**...,” and several other words in The Scripture. With that in mind, please consider the mystery of the “...**fold**...”

The words of *John 10:16*, were spoken to the men The Lord would use in His first new testament *assembly*. Those words have got to be applied to this subject in order to have a full understanding of the word “**...church...**” Go back and read them again, and think about to whom The Lord was speaking.

Those men in that first local “**...congregation...**” were The Lord’s “**...sheep...**” of the first “**...fold...**” (*John 10:16*) It was those twelve Jewish men who were called out from many other “**...disciples...**” by The Lord Jesus in *Luke 6:13*. He then placed them as “**...apostles...**” in His “**...church...**”

*Luke 6:13* “*And when it was day, he called unto him his **disciples**: and **of them** he chose twelve, whom also he named **apostles...***”

Those chosen men who were already part of the “**...one fold...**” were also made the first “**...members in particular...**” (*I Corinthians 12:27*) of the first new testament “**...church...**” at Jerusalem. In *John 10:16*, The Lord, “**...the chief Shepherd...**” (*I Peter 5:4*), told them that He had “**...other sheep...**” which He said would be brought into that same “**...fold...**” They together would all be under “**...one shepherd...**” The Word of God is *revealing* to us that there has been a “**...fold...**” long before new testament times. There are not two folds. Do not miss that and remember the analogy of a franchise. It must be kept in mind that it was Jews who made

up the first part of the “**...one fold...**” It was the Gentiles which were *added* into that “**...one fold...**”

The truth of those words destroys the dispensationalist ideas that the Jews of old were not part of what the word “**...church...**” means in Scripture! All those then, now, and in the future who are saved by faith; and who meet the Scriptural qualifications for membership, are part of the same “**...one body...**” (*Ephesians 4:4*) (The word “**...body...**,” which is also another descriptive term for the word “**...church...**,” will be covered later in another chapter.)

The first “**...sheep...**” which The Lord spoke of as being in the “**...fold...**” were obviously the Jews who had been “**...redeemed...**” This has to be tied into the truth of Moses and “**...the church in the wilderness...**” (*Acts 7:38*) And it also must be read with *Psalm 74:2* in mind.

*“Remember thy **congregation**, which thou **hast purchased of old**; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.”*

The “**...other sheep...**” are obviously Gentiles who would be “**...redeemed...**” and brought into the “**...one fold...**” These would become part with those already “**...redeemed...**” back with Moses. The “**...redeemed...;**” Jews and Gentiles, are said to be in “**...one fold...**” under “**...one shepherd...**”

The Lord uses the word “*...fold...*” to help “*...manifest...*” more truth about the word “*...church...*” Look at the definition of the word “*...fold...*” for it again directs the mind to the fact of a “*...church...*” being a physical place.

‘A pen or inclosure for sheep; a place where a flock of sheep is kept, whether in the field or under shelter. A flock of sheep.’

There is no denying it; that definition manifests that the word “*...fold...*” means a *physical place*! And there is more; for it also means,

‘The doubling of any flexible substance, as cloth; a plait; one part turned or bent and laid on another; as a fold of linen. In composition, the same quantity added; as two fold. The primary sense is ... to press together. To double; to lap or lay in plaits; as, to fold a piece of cloth. To double and insert one part in another; as, to fold a letter. To confine sheep in a fold. To close over another of the same kind.’

Now that part of the definition, when applied to the understanding of the word “*...church...*,” definitely manifests to the saved mind, that with God, “*...church...*” has a much simpler yet deeper meaning than that of the false universal “*...doctrines...*” of Catholicism, Protestantism, and Dispensationalism! If some doubt the validity of this word “*...fold...*” being used

to define what the word “...**church**...” at its base means; think about this. Of the seven verses and the nine times the word is used in them, consider five of the Scriptures where the word “...**fold**...” is written. Please note the words in bold print.

*Isaiah 13:20 “It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the **shepherds** make their **fold there**.”*

*Isaiah 65:10 “And Sharon shall be **a fold of flocks**, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, **for my people** that have sought me.”*

*Ezekiel 34:14-15 “I will feed them in **a good pasture**, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their **fold** be: there shall they lie in **a good fold**, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed **my flock**, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD.”*

*Micah 2:12 “I will surely **assemble**, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as **the sheep** of Bozrah, as **the flock** in the midst of their **fold**: they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men.”*

*Habakkuk 3:17 “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no*

*meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls..."*

God's Word is amazing! In all of those Scriptures, those words all point the mind to a *physical gathering of people in a physical place*. So many of them in their context are speaking about things which easily can be understood to be associated with "**...church...**" Yet, the "**...doctrines of devils...**" (1 Timothy 4:1) about the word "**...church...**" seek to change that inspired and preserved word to mean some invisible, untouchable, universal, Gentile only entity, that cannot be seen!

In that private meeting of *John 10:16*, which is now made verbally public, The Lord Jesus was manifesting more truth about the word "**...church...**" The Jews had lived for some four-thousand years with the Gentiles not being revealed as a part of the "**...one fold...**" Although they may have been aware of the Gentile proselytes allowed to follow and be part of the "**...church in the wilderness...**" as part of the tribe of Dan; it was in *John 10:16* when the Lord Himself, as The Shepherd of His flock, "**...manifested...**" more about this "**...great mystery... concerning Christ and the church...**" (*Ephesians 5:32*)

# Chapter 9

## The Mystery of The Body

*Ephesians 4:4-7* “There is **one body**, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

*I Corinthians 12:27* “Now ye are **the body** of Christ, and members in particular.”

When thinking about the “...**great mystery...**” “...**concerning Christ and the church...**” (*Ephesians 5:32*) Any faithful student of The Word of God has to admit, that when it comes to a saved but human mind, attempting to grasp the understanding of the spiritual truth about the subject of “...**the body...**” and “...**the body of Christ...**” as those words apply to the word “...**church...**;” that this is not an easy part of the “...**doctrine...**” of “...**the faith...**” to comprehend. I personally began the study of these things over 35 years ago, and no matter what or how much I may have learned about the words “...**the body...**,” I still realize that there is much of this “...**mystery...**” which will not be known, until I see Jesus at my death; or, when the redemption of this fleshly mind

and body is completed at the sound of the trumpet. Maybe then, will I get to fully know this wonderful “...**mystery**...” But for now, there are some things which have helped me, and will keep any man heading in the right doctrinal direction. These things apply to all study of the words in God’s BOOK; but perhaps especially to this particular subject.

1. Every word which God has seen fit to record in The English of The King James Bible is inspired by Him and perfectly preserved by His oversight.

*II Timothy 3:16-17 “**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**”*

*Psalm 12:6-7 “**The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.**”*

2. The Holy Ghost of God is fully able to teach any born again person who will be taught by The Spirit of God in them, every part of the “...**doctrine**...” of “...**the faith**...” Only in submission to Him can a man learn and stay true to the things written in The Word of God.

*John 16:13 “Howbeit when he, **the Spirit of truth**, is come, he will **guide you into all truth**: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”*

*I John 2:19-20 “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But ye have **an unction** from the Holy One, and ye know all things.”*

*I John 2:27 “But **the anointing** which ye have received of him abideth in you, and **ye need not that any man teach you**: but as **the same anointing teacheth you of all things**, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”*

3. The *first* use of a word in God’s BOOK; in placement both in writing and in chronological time, must be searched out and heeded; for that first definition and meaning will remain the same through to the *last* mention of the same word.

*Psalms 119:160 “Thy **word** is true **from the beginning**: and **every one** of thy righteous judgments endureth **for ever**.”*

*Isaiah 46:9-10 “Remember the former things **of old**: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, **Declaring the end from the beginning**, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure...”*

*Revelation 22:13 “I am **Alpha** and **Omega**, the beginning and the end, **the first and the last.**”*

4. All “**...feigned words...**” (II Peter 2:3) and “**...doctrines...**” (Matthew 15:19 and I Timothy 4:1) of Catholic, Protestant, Charismatic, Evangelical, Ecumenical, Dispensational theology, and from Baptists gone apostate, are not to have any part in the influencing of the study of any of the words in God’s BOOK.

*Matthew 15:9 “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for **doctrines** the commandments of men.”*

*I Timothy 4:1 “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall **depart from the faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and **doctrines of devils...**”*

*II Peter 2:1-3 “But there were **false prophets** also among the people, even as there shall be **false teachers among you**, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that*

*bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they **with feigned words** make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."*

5. Each word in God's BOOK has been placed in His sentences; to create the thoughts God wanted us to think back when He first wrote them. When similar words are used; each one has to be taken as given; understanding that related words are speaking about one main word in a particular sentence: to help us understand that particular word.

*Proverbs 22:20-21 "Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, That I might make thee know **the certainty of the words of truth**; that thou mightest answer **the words of truth** to them that send unto thee?"*

*Exodus 34:27 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou **these words**: for after **the tenor of these words** I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel."*

6. A student, teacher, or preacher, must have a "...**mark**..." (goal) to always be learning; and while doing so, not to be right with respect to those to whom he instructs: but to always

be held accountable to **be right** with the words in God's BOOK.

*Philippians 3:13-15 "Brethren, I count not myself to **have apprehended**: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I **press toward the mark** for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, **God shall reveal even this** unto you."*

7. When I cannot understand something written in God's BOOK; I must confess it, and must not allow an assumption or a speculation to be voiced until I do understand.

*Isaiah 55:8-9 "For **my thoughts are not your thoughts**, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and **my thoughts than your thoughts**."*

*Proverbs 30:5-6 "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. **Add thou not** unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."*

I put those things into the beginning of this chapter, because the principles in them must be before us as we look at the words associated with the words “...**the body...**” and “...**the body of Christ...**” Along with the word “...**church...**,” those two terms are probably some of the most misunderstood and misused words in the vocabulary and speech of more Baptists than can be numbered.

As is stated in some way in every chapter so far; this pastor and teacher of God’s Word, believes that the first use of the word “...**church...**” is set literally in *stone*; and that the word means a physical meeting place. That premise now has to be reconciled with The Scriptures which present the word “...**body...**” as a *corporate or collective* thing without in any way condoning the false “...**doctrines...**” of ‘universal church.’

Once it is established in the mind and heart, through the principle of the first mention, that a “...**church...**” is a physical meeting place; then there should be no contradictions when it comes to the use of the words “...**body...**” or “...**the body of Christ...**” for a saved person: who is a Baptist because of principles in The Word of God! It is at the hearing of the words “...**body...**” or “...**the body of Christ...**,” when the devil is hard at work to *unscripturally spiritualize* this subject in an evil attempt to mask the Scriptural physical purpose of a “...**church...**”

Here is a first thought about the word **"...body..."** Doesn't that word first present to the mind the thought of a physical thing? Yes, it does. Yet, you and I, in hearing or reading about **"...the body..."** or **"...the body of Christ..."**, in relation to the word **"...church..."** know it is often used in presenting some kind of a mystical façade: a term of **"...feigned..."** (*II Peter 2:3*) theological religiosity. The same is true with the treatment of the word **"...church..."** I believe it is one of those **"...seducing spirits..."** of *I Timothy 4:1* that stays close by to confuse and deceive the mind when such words as **"...church..."**, **"...body..."** and **"...the body of Christ..."** are spoken. Stop and think about why? Satan hates the fact of the **"...body..."** of The Lord Jesus was sacrificed for sins and rose up from the dead. And, the devil also hates anything to do with the Lord's kind of **"...church..."** because of three main reasons:

1. The **"...body..."** of The Lord Jesus was made **"...to be sin for us..."** (*I Corinthians 5:21*)
2. With the **"...blood..."** shed from the **"...body..."** of Jesus, He **"...purchased..."** (*Acts 20:28*) vindicated the ownership of His **"...church..."**
3. The main purpose of Lord's kind of **"...church..."** is to glorify God by teaching the redeemed about Him from His Word, and to introduce the lost to The Saviour!

Satan constantly fights against all of those parts of the ministry of The Lord. If the devil can get minds away from a clear understanding of the *physical aspect* of the “**...church...**” as a working “**...body...**,” he will hurt The Lord’s purpose.

If more Baptists would think about the reason that may be true, and beware; there would not be so much evil controversy, and negative “**...mystery...**” overshadowing God’s words which relate to the word “**...church...**”

One of the things which has helped me to better understand what the word “**...body...**” in Scripture means; is to remember that when The Lord Jesus was on this planet in a physical “**...body...**,” that being here as man, He could only be and work, in one place at one time. But when He was fully in His *eternal form* after His resurrection; He by The presence of The Holy Ghost of God in public, and also by The Spirit of God sealed in the hearts of all the saved; The Lord Jesus Christ was again able to be everywhere at the same time. That is how God now works through the people in the ministry of each of His local “**...churches...**”

A local “**...church...**” is “**...the body of Christ...**” doing the work of The Lord Jesus as if He was in that particular location on earth. The Lord being ‘everywhere’ is not just in a spiritual sense; but through each individual “**...church...**,” He is in essence also “**...in every place...**”

*1 Corinthians 1:2 “Unto **the church of God which is at Corinth**, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, **with all that in every place** call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, **both theirs and ours...**”*

That Scripture identifies one local “**...church...**” in one “**...place...;**” and, makes reference to the same thing going on in other places. That is how each individual, Scripturally, Doctrinally correct Baptist “**...church...**,” of today, can be spoken of as belonging to, and being a part of “**...one body...**” and as being “**...the body of Christ...**”

I am amazed that such simple understanding of those words is so easily rejected by some Baptists; and the thoughts of a ‘universal’ so-called church are readily accepted! Many Baptists have been deceived by Catholic, Protestant, and apostate theologians and their versions of “**...the body of Christ...**” I do not think it is unjust to state that when those words are heard; that for the most part, people have been led to think they are words signifying an invisible, universal, mystical church made up of all kinds of denominations, no matter what “**...doctrines...**” they hold. That is not what a “**...church...**” as defined by God is!

The LORD writes that His “**...church...**” is a “**...great mystery...**” (*Ephesians 5:32*), but it is not a point of confusion unless God’s inspired words are

thought of as secondary to theology! And the same is true of the word “**...body...**” One of the main problems in not fully understanding this subject of “**...the body of Christ...**,” is that so many Baptists have not learned to *rightly* divide between the family of God and what The Lord calls His “**...church...**”

Consider these next things very carefully.

1. Every person who is born again is immediately “**...grafted...**” (*Romans 11:24*) into the “**...whole family...**” (*Ephesians 3:15*) But that is not being made part of a “**...church...**”

You have to be part of the “**...family...**” before you become part of a “**...church...**”

2. Immediately at salvation, every person is “**...sealed with that holy Spirit of promise...**” (*Ephesians 1:13*) But that is not being made part of a “**...church...**”

Being “**...sealed with...**” The Spirit of God is **not** a **baptism** into some universal, invisible “**...church...**” !

3. There are many who have been genuinely born into the “**...family...**” of God who have never been “**...members in particular...**” (!

*Corinthians 12:27)* in one of The Lord's  
“...**churches...**”

A Scripturally, Doctrinally correct Baptist believes that membership in a local, Independent Baptist “...**church...**” takes place at water “...**baptism...**” in a Scripturally, Doctrinally correct Baptist “...**church...**”

4. When a saved person, who has been “...**grafted...**” into the “...**whole family...**” of God, submits to water “...**baptism...**,” it is at that “...**baptism...**” when they are “...**baptized into one body...**”

*1 Corinthians 12:13* “For by one Spirit are we all **baptized into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

*Ephesians 4:5* tells us that there is “One Lord, one faith, **one baptism...**” No place in The Wording of God’s BOOK will you find the words ‘**baptism** of The Holy Ghost or Spirit.’ Because of not paying attention to only the words as God wrote them, that Scriptural fact shocks a lot of Baptists when they first hear it. The inspired word “...**baptism...**” is a noun. The inspired word “...**baptized ...**” is a verb. And we are told there is now “...**one baptism...**” so it has to be water “...**baptism...**” No less than seven things take place at *being* “...**baptized...**” in water in a local “...**church...**” And one of those things is that

we were “...***baptized into one body...***” It was The Spirit of God Who performed His part when we were “...***baptized...***” in water. That is when we became part of “...***the body of Christ...***” That is when we became “...***members in particular...***” in the only kind of “...***church...***” owned by The Lord Jesus Christ! That is a real thing; an actual corporate, collective institution under the “...***head...***” which is Christ!

To set this in human terms, an illustration of a franchise, as used in the business world, is probably the best way to keep the mind away from being deceived by any form of universal church “...***doctrines...***” Consider this analogy. A corporate retail business on earth has a headquarters. It is run by one CEO which oversees many individual *people and places* of that one business. Each of those individual, *local establishments* also have one manager, one or more assistants; and, then there are the various individual workers. Each person who meets the qualifications and is made part of that local franchise becomes a member *at the location* of that “...***particular...***” place of business; but it is only in a *general or collective sense*, that the individual *places and people* in them, are all part of the one franchise. In the operation and execution of the dictates of the business headquarters; that franchise is only realized as individual places; with individuals adhering to the same written rules of management, and performing the same work as

stated in the plan of the one corporate manual. Together they produce their unique products.

To put this in Scriptural words, Heaven is God's headquarters for His "**...churches...**" on earth. Jesus is the "**...head...**" (*Ephesians 1:22*) of those meeting places. The "**...pastors...**" (*Ephesians 4:11*); *one* in each Independent Baptist "**...church...**," are The Lord's "**...overseers...**" (*Acts 20:28*) The "**...deacons...**" (*I Timothy 3:8*) are the assistants. The "**...members in particular...**" (*I Corinthians 12:27*) are the workers. The "**...scriptures...**" (*II Timothy 3:15-16*) are the inspired, written rules for the management of "**...the Father's business...**" (*Luke 2:49*) That work is to "**...Go...**" (*Matthew 28:19*) and produce a "**... peculiar people...**" for The Lord! This is all accomplished by individual Baptist "**...churches...**" (*I Corinthians 7:17, 14:33*) as "**...the body of Christ...**" (*I Corinthians 12:27*) doing the work under the ownership of "**...the Godhead...**"! (*Colossians 2:9*)

That is the only way any saved, Baptist mind, ought to be thinking when they hear or read the words "**...body...**" or "**...the body of Christ...**" Only the devil wants us to think about a 'universal, invisible body!

*Colossians 2:8-9* "**Beware** lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after **the tradition of men**, after the rudiments of the world,

*and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the **Godhead bodily.***"

We must keep in mind that all of these things are related to "**...a great mystery...**"

*Ephesians 5:32 "This is a **great mystery:** but I speak **concerning Christ and the church.**"*

His definition of the word "**...church...**" is to be thought of and taught as local, independent meeting places, where the born again "**...members...**" are busy doing the work of His "**...body...**" on earth!

*I Timothy 3:15-16 "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself **in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.**"*

In the study of these things, it is good to know, and to constantly keep in mind, that when The Lord uses different words in relation to one main subject; we must study to find out what His reasons for this are and why. Not doing so has been the cause for many of His words being pushed back into the shadows of wrong interpretation; and their light has

often been obscured by the uncertainty of man's wisdom.

The Scriptures record that “...**the church...**” is “...**his body...**” And that “...**the body...**” is “...**the church...**”

*Ephesians 1:22-23 “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be **the head** over all things to **the church**, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”*

*Colossians 1:17-18 “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of **the body, the church**: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”*

Each of these words have got to be understood as God has put them in His BOOK. Here are some simple thoughts concerning those Scriptures and what has been presented so far in this book. We know that the word “...**church...**” means a physical meeting place. We know that The Scriptures are clear in teaching that Jesus has “...**purchased...**” His “...**congregation...**” of old, and His “...**church...**” both with “...**one sacrifice...**” We know there have been and are many such assemblies on earth. We know that the wording in God's BOOK does not speak of there being only 'one' Scriptural assembly in this present day; and will not be so until *all the saved* are together at one time later on. We know

that Jesus is also “...**the head...**” of His “...**church...**” “It,” in the general, collective sense, is *owned* by Him. The words in *Ephesians 1:23* say that the “...**church...**” “...**is his body...**” “It” is! He owns “It”! Ask yourself, “why is it that so many Baptists treat those words like a Protestant theologian does; instead of seeing and understanding those words to be speaking about The Lord Jesus *owning* what He bought??? The “...**church...**” is His! That *collective* “...**body...**” which is made up of many individual, doctrinally Baptist “...**churches...**” ...belongs to Him! The saved are not the “...**church...**” they are **only a part of it**. The “...**churches...**” are a part of “...**the body of Christ...**” in a corporate, collective sense only!

- The word “...**church...**” is the word for the actual, *local*, individual, physical organization.
- The word “...**body...**” is used in speaking about more than one “...**church...**,” and is to identify the *collective organization* of all the individual “...**churches...**” under the Headship of Jesus Christ.
- We must make a Scriptural distinction between the actual *physical* organization in *local* places; and *ownership* of His “...**church...**” in a *corporate* sense.
- Those two views of the same thing must not be combined into things they are not.

- We must also make a distinction between the organization of the “...**church**...” and the “...**body**...” with relation to the saved people who are part of that organization.

Those are not hard concepts to grasp. (That is, unless the theories of *theology* are or have been your teachers.) As an illustration, those who work at a particular place of business are not *actually the* business; they work in that corporate body. It is much more than just the people in that place.

Another way the word “...**body**...” can be understood is when we say things such as: “The lion is the king of the beasts.” Or, “Man is the only being with a soul.” Or, “The Kimber 45 ACP is a smooth shooting weapon.” There is no such thing as *one* ‘universal’ lion, one ‘invisible’ man, or one invisible semi-automatic handgun. Such use of language is meant *only in general terms* which are identifying one of many individual things just like it. Again, only the devil wants this collective sense and use of such words and terms to be confusing!

*I Corinthians 14:33 “For God is **not the author of confusion**, but of peace, as in **all churches** of the saints.”*

What God has written about His words “...**church**...,” “...**body**...,” or “...**the body of**”

***Christ...;***” ought to be understood “***...in all churches of the saints.***”

The definition of the word “***...body...***” needs to be searched out and studied without the influence of universal church “***...doctrines...***” attached to it. It needs to be “***...rightly...***” divided. (II Timothy 2:15) When theological ideas, theories, extra-scriptural words, and assumptions are set aside on purpose; only then will the light of the words in God’s Perfect BOOK reach through to the mind, affect the heart, and only then will the “***...doctrine...***” of “***...the church...***” and “***...body...***” and “***...the body of Christ...***” be taught and practiced as The Lord intended it to be!

If there were never any false “***...doctrines...***” introduced into the thinking of Baptists; and they had read only the English definition of the word “***...body...;***” many Baptist “***...churches...***” (and colleges) in name; would also be Scripturally Baptist in belief and practice. In the studying of single words in God’s BOOK, I have often wondered how many Baptists have actually taken the time to read *every Scripture* where a particular word appears, ***before*** they go to a dictionary, a commentary, or even back to their college notes. I wonder how many false “***...doctrines...***” would have been exposed if they had???

The definition of the word “***...body...***” in English is:

‘The frame of an animal; the material substance of an animal, in distinction from the living principle of beasts, and the soul of man. Matter, as opposed to spirit. A person; a human being. Reality, as opposed to representation. A collective mass; a number of individuals or particulars united; as the body of mankind. A corporation; a number of men, united by a common tie, by one form of government. A general collection.’”

In speaking about the word “**...body...**” in relation to the word “**...church...**” Let’s look at the Scriptures where the words “**...the body of Christ...**” are written. The words “**...the body of Christ...**” are used four times in The BOOK of God. Although many other aspects of “**...doctrine...**” and the practice of it are found in these verses, I will only cover the basics here, and try to keep my comments to thoughts specifically about the word “**...church...**”

1. *Romans 7:4 “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by **the body of Christ**; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”*

Those words are simply speaking about how the actual physical “**...body...**” of The Lord Jesus was part in the sacrificial payment required for all sins. This is not a reference to the “**...church...**” as an

organization or institution. They are talking about the “**...body...**” which was “**...prepared...**” (Hebrews 10:5) to be inhabited by The Eternal Son of God!

2. *1 Corinthians 10:16 “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”*

This verse is also *not* a reference to “**...the body of Christ...**” as being a “**...church...**” Contrary to Catholic and Protestant versions of what they call *communion* instead of “**...the Lord’s supper...**” (1 Corinthians 11:20); that use of “**...the body of Christ...**” is also referring to The Lord’s Physical body of flesh. In proper context, this has to be so because it is mentioned along with the physical “**...blood of Christ...**” That usage is not teaching that “**...the body of Christ...**” is synonymous with the word “**...church...**” It is teaching how that the “**...members in particular...**” (1 Corinthians 12:27) of one of The Lord’s “**...churches...**” need to be respectful of what the “**...one sacrifice...**” (Hebrews 10:12) of the Lord’s physical “**...body...**” and the shedding of His physical “**...blood...**” means. There is no mystical transformation of the bread and fruit of the vine being turned into the actual *body and blood*. That Scripture is reminding us of what is to be *remembered*, and greatly revered, when local

church members partake at what is also called “...**the Lords’ table...**” (1 Corinthians 10:21)

3. 1 Corinthians 12:27 “Now ye are **the body of Christ**, and members in particular.”

Now we come to the words “...**the body of Christ...**” which at their base meaning are referring to the Lord’s kind of “...**church...**” But it must be kept in mind that those words were first written to one, local, physical group of saved folks who met together in that “...**church...**” at Corinth. So many, even Baptists, automatically jump to the confused conclusion that those words are somehow synonymous with a Catholic or Protestant version of ‘universal church.’ They are not! The context of those words is teaching the members of that particular assembly of saved and baptized people, how to interact and get along as “...**one body...**” God does this by the use of an inspired analogy of the function of a healthy physical body, which is under the internal control of its own head! This is an instance of The Lord using words written to one, physical, local “...**church...**” which are to be applied to every other actual, physical local “...**church...**” belonging to The Lord.

4. Ephesians 4:12-13 “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of **the body of Christ**: Till we all

*come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto **a perfect man**, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ..."*

Here it is evident that The Lord is giving instruction and explanation of purpose which applies to all of His collective "...**churches**..." But He first had those words written to be read in one particular local "...**church**..." The general sense of these words is also shown as He writes in verse 13 "...unto **a perfect man**..." That is language speaking about all the members in The Lord's kind of "...**churches**..." growing to be like Christ. Except for Him, there is no "*one*" perfect human on this planet. That one "...**man**..." exists only in a *general* sense.

As you read the words of the next Scriptures, do so with a mind that understands what the word "...**body**..." means in relation to the "...**church**..." being a physical meeting place where saved people assemble to be prepared to do the work of God. Read them just as if God wrote them to the Baptist "...**church**..." in which you are a member. For that is exactly how the "...**members**..." at Corinth first understood these words! As "...**carnal**..." as that "...**church**..." was; they did not have the influence of 'universal' church "...**doctrines**..." corrupting their minds as is the case with so many Baptists of today.

*1 Corinthians 12:12-14 "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. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the **body is not one member, but many.**"*

That last sentence in those Scriptures ought to make this chapter very clear. "...For the **body is not one member, but many.**"

- In "...the body of Christ..." are many individual "...churches..."
- The singular word "...member..." relates to each of those "...churches..." as being a part of "...the body..."
- It is in that context that God uses an example of each part of a human body as being "...one body..."
- The plural words "...members in particular..." in *1 Corinthians 12:27*, are speaking of the people who are part of that "...church..."
- And that local "...church..." is part of "...the body..."

*"For the **body is not one member, but many.**" 1 Corinthians 12: 14*

## Chapter 10

### The Mystery of The General Assembly

*Hebrews 12:23* “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...”

As I read these words again I realize that they are a very large part of this “...**great mystery**...” about the doctrine of the word “...**church**...;” and perhaps more so than any other words about “...**the church**...” I do know that in order for them to be “...**rightly**...” (*II Timothy 2:15*) divided, we must be sure we are using God’s definition of each of the words in those verses in *Hebrews 12*. We must not allow any preconceived ideas, assumptions, personal preferences, or the influence of Protestant theologies to be mixed in with the words “...**general assembly and church of the firstborn**...” If we fail in this, those inspired and preserved words will be misunderstood. And our beliefs about “...**the doctrine**...” (*Romans 16:17*) of “...**the faith which was once delivered**...” (*Jude 3*) to us will be “...**blasphemed**...” (*I Timothy 6:1*) Wrong thinking about those perfect words will affect our preaching, teaching and how the people practice those words in our kind of Independent Baptist “...**churches**...” And more so, this same warning needs to be heeded

by those who are responsible for the placement of the personnel allowed to teach in Baptist colleges. Some of these institutions have been the main catalysts for the “...tares...” (*Matthew 13:25*) of false “...doctrines...” (*1 Timothy 4:1*) concerning the word “...church...” being sown for years; and now, those “...corruptible...” (*1 Peter 1:23*) seeds have grown up, and are overshadowing a great portion of the truth about the word “...church...”

In an attempt to set aside any outside influences for this chapter; we have to begin with the basics. The context of the words in these verses, are obviously speaking about *things in the future*. This is very clear because of the words just prior in *Hebrews 12:22*, “...city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...” Those are real and *physical places* which are *not* here on this planet! In figurative speech, this could be used for things on earth; but here the reality and the order of these words, points the mind specifically to actual things in “...heaven...” Because of this, we have to consider that the entire passage is also being spoken in the same manner. Yes, God was writing to Jews, and to others, who were then members of a local “...church...” on earth. But those words in *Hebrews 12:22-23* are speaking in a *collective, corporate* sense regarding the groups mentioned; and are pointing toward things in the future.

We know that the Book of Hebrews was addressed mainly to born again Jews. Those precious folks were now reading, hearing, and learning, that so many things which they had known for thousands of years prior to the death, burial, and resurrection of The Lord Jesus Christ; was the foundation for all that was to be part of the new covenant. Numerous verses from the days of The LORD'S dealings with Israel, under Moses "**...in the church in the wilderness...**," (Acts 7:38) are quoted and referenced in the book of *Hebrews*. For instance, as has already been covered in previous chapters, The LORD uses *Hebrews 2:12* to quote *Psalms 22:22*. With those two Scriptures, The LORD interprets His words "**...church...**" and "**...congregation...**" to be one in the same thing, which is an organized meeting place.

*Psalms 22:22* "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: **in the midst of the congregation** will I praise thee."

*Hebrews 2:12* "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, **in the midst of the church** will I sing praise unto thee."

That is extremely relevant if the words "**...the general assembly and church of the firstborn...**" are to be understood. And the fact that this is revealed by God in the book of *Hebrews*,

makes it even more significant in the understanding of the word “**...church...**”

Much of the things written to the Hebrew believer’s center on the events in the book of *Exodus* during the giving of the instructions dealing with the “**...tabernacle...**” in “**... the church in the wilderness....**” (*Acts 7:38*) That cannot be ignored. As far as the word “**...church...**” being actually revealed in Scripture, that was the beginning place; and all that they were instructed to do in relation to that organized meeting place was all preparatory for The Lord’s establishing His new testament “**...churches...**”

It is evident that many Baptists have missed or failed to apply the fact, that the book of Hebrews teaches about the transition from the “**...church in the wilderness...**” to the new testament “**...churches...**” And that failure has caused the words “**...the general assembly and church of the firstborn...**” to be used contrary to their meaning and context.

With the words of *Hebrews 10:1-10*, The Lord tells us, in writing, that things “**...concerning Christ and the church...**” (*Ephesians 5:32*) were written *long before* Jesus came into time to be sacrificed for all.

*Hebrews 10:1-10* “**For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the**

*things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is **not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.** Wherefore **when he cometh into the world,** he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but **a body hast thou prepared me:** In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (**in the volume of the book it is written of me,**) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified **through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**"*

The Scriptures prove that Jesus is the center of all that God sent in writing to man! And that includes the things pertaining to the word **"...church..."** It was with that **"...offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all..,"** that Jesus payed the price for *all sins* of every man; but with it **"...the Holy Ghost saith..."** (Hebrews 3:7) through The Scriptures, that Gods' **"...congregation..."** in Moses'

day, and His “...**church**...” of “...**To day**...” (Hebrews 3:7), were also “...**purchased**...” (Psalms 74:2, Acts 20:28) with that “...**one sacrifice**...” (Hebrews 10:12)

*Psalm 74:2 “Remember thy **congregation**, which thou hast **purchased of old**; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.”*

*Acts 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed **the church of God**, which he hath **purchased** with his own blood.”*

Those words must be heard if the words “...the **general assembly and church of the firstborn**...” are to produce the thoughts God intended us to think!

*Hebrews 3:7 “Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day **if ye will hear his voice**...”*

If that same voice will be heard from The Scriptures; the “...**mystery**...” of the “...**general assembly and church of the firstborn**...” will be better understood.

With that said, and proper context established; let’s start by simply defining the words of *Hebrews 12:23*.

1. The word “...**general**...” is used twice in God’s BOOK. Once in referring to Joab as the “...**general** of the king’s army...” (*I Chronicles 27:34*) A “...**general**...” is over an entire military force. And then it is written once in Hebrews. As given in Webster’s 1828 Dictionary, the word “...**general**...” means,

‘Relating to a whole genus or kind; relating to a whole class or order. It is used to express whatever is common to an order, class, kind, sort or species, or to any company or association of individuals. Comprehending many species or individuals; not special or particular. Public; common; relating to or comprehending the whole community. Common to many or the greatest number. Not directed to a single object. Having a relation to all; common to the whole. Extensive, though not universal. This word is prefixed or annexed to words, to express the extent of their application. Thus a general assembly is an assembly of a whole body, in fact or by representation. The whole; the total; that which comprehends all or the chief part; opposed to particular. All the houses or congregations established under the same rule.’

That definition takes a bit of thought to grasp; but at their face value, it is plain to see that God is using that word “...**general**...” to include **all** who have ever come to Him. In reading the very context of *Hebrews 12:18-29* it is seen that God’s

mind is directing us back to when the first part of the “**...fold...**” (John 10:16) was gathered under Moses; and then forward, all the way to when He will destroy all that now exists! The words as written in that sentence are a condensing God’s one “**...dispensation...**” of time concerning His “**...church...**” And it is presented from The Lord’s view from eternity. Read the verses carefully; and as first written to Hebrew believers.

*Hebrews 12:18-29* “For ye are **not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)** **But ye are come unto mount Sion, 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. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much**

*more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I **shake not the earth only, but also heaven.** And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. **Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved,** let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.”*

It is abundantly obvious that that “**...general assembly...**” has not yet been gathered! Stop and think of all that those Scriptures include. The saved of the past, the saved of the present, and the saved of the future; are all represented in those words as one. Just after these verses; in *Hebrews 13:3*, we find the words, written specifically to saved Jewish folks; “*...as being yourselves **also in the body...***” That context is speaking specifically of those Jewish “**...church...**” members of that day, *and* of those with Moses “**...in the church in the wilderness...**” (*Acts 7:38*) of the past; as being part of the ‘corporate, collective’ *physical* “**...assembly...**” which *has not yet been assembled* together as “**...one body...**”! (*Ephesians 2:16, 4:4*)

Look at this progression to the saved being together in that one “**...general assembly...**”

- 1) Some of the saved who will become part of **"...the general assembly..."** have *already been gathered* by The Lord from their graves; which took place immediately **"...after his resurrection..."** (Matthew 27:52-53)
- 2) Those *saved before* the death of Jesus, who's souls and regenerated spirits were in **"...the lower parts of the earth..."** (Ephesians 4:9); were also the *captives* of Ephesians 4:8-9 who were **"...led..."** out of the *good side* of that temporary holding-place: which was at that time called **"...paradise..."** (Luke 23:43) In that place, was **"...Abraham's bosom..."** (Luke 16:22); which was on one side of the **"...great gulf fixed..."** (Luke 16:26); and **"...hell..."** (Luke 16:23), which is still there, was the torturous side of that holding place, which still holds the souls of the lost until **"...the resurrection of damnation..."** (John 5:29)
- 3) The souls and spirits of the saved *in our present time*, who die in Christ, will be gathered in Heaven, waiting for the resurrection of their bodies at the *second part* of the **"...first resurrection..."** (Revelation 20:5-6, I Thessalonians 4:17)
- 4) Some of the saved; with their **"...whole spirit and soul and body..."** (I Thessalonians 5:23), who do not die before The Lord calls them up, will be gathered **"...in the clouds, to**

***meet the Lord in the air...*** (I Thessalonians 4:17) at the sound of the trumpet.

- 5) And after that, those saved during the great ***"...tribulation..."*** (Revelation 7:14) will also be called out.
- 6) And then, even though we are not given much of the details in Scripture; all who are a part of The Lord's earthly kingdom, will also have to be gathered off of this earth before it is destroyed.
- 7) And only when this planet, and all other things in this present universe are ***"...dissolved..."*** (II Peter 3:11-12); only then can there be a ***"...general assembly..."***!

No wonder The LORD recorded the words, in ***Hebrews 13:8***, ***"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever..."***! The words in The BOOK of God are beyond amazing!

2. The word ***"...assembly..."*** means. 'A company or collection of individuals, **in the same place**; usually for the same purpose. A congregation or religious society convened. A collection of persons. A convocation (The act of calling or assembling by summons.) A convention (The act of coming together; a meeting of several persons or individuals.)

That word is used *in conjunction with* the words such as “**...church...**” and “**...congregation...**” While the “**...church...**” or the “**...congregation...**” is the *place*, and the *structured organization*; the “**...assembly...**” speaks of the people who are *gathered for a purpose* in that place. God wrote different words which are *similar to others* in a subject; so that we could learn what He wanted us to think. The definition of each of God’s choice of words, must be considered individually; and we are not to assume or assign the same meanings to similar words. I have read, and hear this error transpire often.

Each individual word in God’s BOOK, was designed and “**...given by inspiration of God...**” (II Timothy 3:16) to produce certain thoughts.

If The LORD has written words, such as “**...congregation...**” “**...church...**” “**...churches...**” “**...assembly...**” “**...tabernacle...**” “**...sanctuary...**” “**...temple...**” “**...house of God...**” and others, which are related; it will be the understanding of the differences of each of those words which will teach the whole meaning of this particular subject; and all other Scriptural parts of “**...doctrine...**”

The word “**...assembly...**” is also used of *assemblies* which do not have to do with “**...church...**” But, of the forty-four places it is recorded before The Lord came to earth; and five times in the new testament part of God’s BOOK; that

word is speaking about a gathering of God's people the absolute majority of the times it is written.

3. The word “**...church...**” has already been amply defined as a physical meeting place organized by The Word of The LORD; where God's people gather together and participate in a specific purpose on this earth.
4. The words “**...of the firstborn...**” are obviously speaking about The Lord Jesus. God's Word further defines this for us in *John 1:14*.

*“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of **the only begotten of the Father,**) full of grace and truth.”*  
*John 1:14*

The Scriptures teach us that the *physical* “**...body...**” of flesh which the eternal The Son of God would inhabit; was “**...prepared...**” (*Hebrews 10:5*) by The Father; “**...conceived...**” “**... of The Holy Ghost.**” The body of the “**...first Adam...**” was *created* from the dust of earth; The “**...body...**” “**...the last Adam...**” (*I Corinthians 15:45*); The eternal Christ was not! That is what makes the birth of The Lord Jesus the “**...only...**” one of its kind! The words “**...of the firstborn...**” attached to the word “**...church...**” signify it being **owned** by Christ.

Please consider these next things carefully; because they will go against most of the theological explanations of the words “...**general assembly and church of the firstborn...**” The combination of the words used here in *Hebrews 12:23*, is not teaching a separation of “...**the general assembly and church of the firstborn...**,” but God is writing of the time in eternity; when and where *that entire list of other things* will all finally meet in one place! I have heard the explanations of those words, by good men, who focused only on “...**the general assembly and church of the firstborn...**,” but did not include the other things, people, angels God. Look at the other things spoken of along with the words “...**general assembly and church of the firstborn...**” in *Hebrews 12:18-29*.

1. “...not come unto **the mount** that might be touched,...”
2. “...sound of **a trumpet**,...”
3. “...**the voice** of words,...”
4. “...**they** that heard,...”
5. “...**Moses** said,...”
6. “...**But ye...**”
7. “...**mount Sion**,...”
8. “...**the city of the living God**,...”
9. “...**the heavenly Jerusalem**,...”
10. “...**innumerable company of angels**,...”
11. “...**the general assembly and church of the firstborn**,...”
12. “...**written in heaven**,...”

13. "...**God the Judge** of all,..."
14. "...the **spirits of just men** made perfect,..."
15. "...to **Jesus** the mediator of the new covenant,..."
16. "...**the blood** of sprinkling,..."

It is very obvious, that with those words, God is taking the past, with Moses and "...**the church in the wilderness...**;" Acts 7:38) and combining all those things together! It is almost too much to take in! That list itself is proof of the context of the words "...**the general assembly and church of the firstborn...**" But now, I want to call your attention to an amazing thing about God's perfect BOOK. And it concerns *the punctuation* God used in the sentences surrounding the words "...**the general assembly and church of the firstborn...**" Read the verses again and see if you pick up on what I am talking about.

*Hebrews 12:18-29 "For ye are **not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that **Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:**) **But ye are come unto mount Sion, 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.***

I have already stated, that the combination of the words used here in *Hebrews 12:23*, is not teaching a separation of “...the **general assembly and church of the firstborn...**,” but that God is writing of the time in eternity; *when and where that entire list of other things* will all finally meet in one place! God has placed a simple **comma**, after each of those *individual things*; but not in-between “...the **general assembly and church of the firstborn...**” This makes that “...**manifestation...**” taught by The “...**Spirit of truth...**” absolutely undeniable!

With those inspired **comma’s**, God is reinforcing the truth of the “...**one fold...**” (*John 10:16*) But it will not be *fully completed and assembled*; until we who are saved are standing in eternity; in the very midst of that collective, corporate and physical “...**church...**” gathering, which is portrayed and foretold by the words in *Hebrews 12:18-29!!!*

I guess a summary is needed here for clarity. And that is, the word “...**church...**” means: an

appointed physical place, ordained and organized by God; to be the place He has chosen to meet with those who are first saved; and then obey His instructions and meet His Scriptural qualifications to be admitted in as “**...members in particular...**” into what He defines as a “**...church...**” on this planet. And, when the last lost soul is born again “**...by faith, ...not of works...**” (*Ephesians 2:8-9*); and assembled with all the rest of the “**...redeemed...**” (*Isaiah 51:11*); that physical “**...church...**”; that physical “**...body...**” of believers belonging to Christ; it will not be until then, when that physical “**...general assembly and church of the firstborn...**,” will be finally convened in Heaven! The simple word “**...church...**” is and will remain a “**...great mystery...**” until then! If we as Baptists had kept that word in mind, as it is first written; in all its “**...simplicity...**”; (*II Corinthians 11:3*) the “**...serpent...**” would not be so free as he “**...beguiled...**” and “**...corrupted...**” so many minds “**...concerning Christ and the church.**”

*Ephesians 5:32* “**This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**”



# Chapter 11

## The Mystery of the One New Man

*Ephesians 2:11-16* “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain **one new man**, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in **one body** by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby...”

The first time I read the words “...**one new man**...” they really made me want to know what The Lord was speaking about. That was years ago; and I still do not have what those words mean all figured out. But The Lord by His Word and His Spirit has pointed me into some things which have been a great blessing to me. They have made the searching out of this “...**great mystery**...” “...**concerning Christ**”

**and the church...**” a very enjoyable journey through The words of The Scriptures. And they have caused an anticipation of wonder as to what will be known when that “**...one new man...**” is finally completed.

Those words of course are related to the words “**...unto a perfect man...**” in *Ephesians 4:12-16*.

*Ephesians 4:11-16* “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for **the edifying of the body of Christ**: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **unto a perfect man**, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom **the whole body fitly joined together** and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of **the body** unto the edifying of itself in love.”

Here The Lord is speaking of all the men that He has placed in His work throughout the times of earth. Even before the first man Adam sinned, God

has written in His BOOK that He has always had a plan to “...**redeem...**” (Exodus 6:6) man. Jesus has always been at the business of “...**redemption...**” This was so with the people of Israel.

*Psalm 111:9 He sent **redemption unto his people**: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.*

*II Samuel 7:23 “And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went **to redeem for a people to himself**, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?”*

*Psalm 74:2 “Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, which **thou hast redeemed**; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.*

Not only did His plan include Jews; but He also has worked to “...**redeem...**” Gentiles.

*Titus 2:14 “Who gave himself for us, that he **might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify** unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”*

Jesus has always had a place on this earth from which He worked to “...**purify** unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Since The

LORD shed the blood (in time) of that sacrifice in the Garden of Eden for Adam and his bride; God has been working toward something only hinted at in Scripture. The LORD has performed this work in and on people in *person*, in “*...the church in the wilderness...*,” through “*...prophets...*,” in the “*...tabernacle...*,” in the “*...temple...*,” through the “*...apostles...*,” and now He works through “*...evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers...*” who are “*...members...*” in His new testament Baptist “*...churches...*”

To help in seeing this “*...mystery...*,” look at the following list of things.

- The LORD created the first individual body.
- The LORD then made that body an individual person.
- The LORD then established a family by creating a woman out of the first body.
- The family started out with Adam and Eve.
- That was one exclusive individual family.
- The LORD established the home where those with those two individuals would dwell together.
- That family began to be divided up as those in that first family married and established other individual homes.
- Each home was a specific, individual meeting place, for those members of the first family.

- Then The LORD established a place for individuals and families to meet with Him; this The LORD called “**...the church in the wilderness...**”
- That was one, individual, local place for the families of God’s people to meet.
- Then that one, individual, transient, local meeting place, was then transitioned into the one meeting place called the Temple.
- From there, God’s people divided up into other meeting places called synagogues.
- These were also individual, local places for The LORD to meet with His people..
- From those first meeting places, The LORD then established the first new testament church at Jerusalem which was made up of Jews.
- Those in that one individual, local meeting place then began to establish other local, individual meeting places as they reached Gentiles with the gospel.
- And one day soon, The Lord will establish a local meeting place “**...in the air...**” of all those ever saved up until that time of the trumpet.
- The LORD will then raise up 144,000 Jewish preachers who will usher in a great revival and harvest of souls during the last half of the seven-year tribulation.

- Those saved during that time will also be called out to meet with the rest of all those ever saved.
- The LORD will then bring all those back with Him to this earth for 1000 years.
- And then, The LORD will gather every individual from that first family back in The Garden who was ever saved; take them off of this planet, to meet with Him at the Marriage of The Lamb; where those from the family of the first Adam will be joined to the “**...second Adam...**” as His wife in the New Jerusalem!
- That will be the “**...one new man...**”
- Those from the first physical body of Adam who have been saved, will then become one “**...body..**” which will become one with The Lamb as His wife!
- That “**...bride...**” was formed as the result of The LORD shedding His “**...blood...**” for three things:
  1. To purchase the “**...congregation...**” before the cross.
  2. To pay for all the sins of every individual in the family of the first Adam; Jews and Gentiles.
  3. To purchase the “**...church...**” after the cross.

As far as people, (the next chapter will explain that qualifying statement), *part* of the “**...bride...**” (*Revelation 21:9*) is made up of:

1. All those individuals saved from the first family before the cross.
2. All those individuals saved from the family of Abraham.
3. All those individuals saved from the first family after the cross.
4. All those individuals saved from the families of the Gentiles.
5. All those individuals saved: Jews and Gentiles, up until the trumpet.
6. All those individuals saved: Jews and Gentiles, during the “**...tribulation...**”
7. All those saved during the 1000-year reign.

All of those will one day in eternity finally be “**...a perfect man...**” We, collectively, will be that “**...one new man...**”! That should not be a strange thing to think about. Do you remember what happened back in the Garden when God performed the first marriage? Pay close attention to the wording of *Genesis 5:2*.

*“Male and female created he **them**; and blessed **them**, and called **their name Adam**, in the day when they were created.” *Genesis 5:2**

God took two people; the “**...first man Adam...**” (1 Corinthians 15:45) and the first woman: “**...Eve...**,” “**...the mother of all living...**” (Genesis 3:20) “**...and called their name Adam...**” God combines plural and singular words here to make His point! He “**...of twain...**” made “**...one new man...**” (Ephesians 2:15)

*“Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, **in the day when they were created.**”* Genesis 5:2

In the last words of Genesis 5:2 God reveals His eternal mind for He writes that that marriage was done ‘before’ it took place in time! Look at it..... “**...in the day when they were created.**”

- This shows that the eternal plan of God has always been: that He would join all the saved; *birthed* from “**...Eve...**,” “**...the mother of all living...**” (Genesis 3:20)
- They are all said to be “**...in Adam...**” (1 Corinthians 15:22)
- And when those are “**...born again...**” and “**...grafted...**” into that one family of Abraham; thereby making them a part of the “**...one body...**”
- Those are then in “**...the last Adam...**” (1 Corinthians 15:45) which is Jesus Christ; “**Which were born, not of blood, nor of the**

***will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:13)***

- Today, God is continuing what He began in the Garden: He has always been making “**...one new man...**”
- And that “**...body...**” will be joined together as “**...one...**” with God!

This makes the words of *John 17:21-23* even more special than they already are!

*“That **they all may be one**; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that **they also may be one in us**: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that **they may be one, even as we are one**: I in them, and thou in me, that **they may be made perfect in one**; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”*

Now read *Ephesians 2:15* with understanding about what the “**...one new man...**” really means!

*Ephesians 2:15 “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain **one new man**, so making peace...”*

It is no doubt that this will remain a “*...mystery...*” through time; until we who are born again are actually there with the Lord Jesus on His wedding day in eternity!

# Chapter 12

## The Mystery of The Bride

*Revelation 21:9 "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee **the bride, the Lamb's wife.**"*

This chapter is not an attempt to solve the "**...mystery...**" of who or what "**...the bride...**" is. In fact, I am sure it will only add to the wonder of this "**...great mystery...**" This chapter is meant to be a blessing; and it can be if is read through. But first there must be some time taken to "**...mark them...**" (*Romans 16:17*) involved with a certain teaching which is "**...contrary to the doctrine...**" (*Romans 16:17*) of the "**...church...**" and to the "**...doctrine...**" of "**...the bride, the Lamb's wife.**"

There are those who have their own opinions and "**...doctrines...**" about the meaning of those inspired and preserved words. I would like to believe and think that they are probably sincere, and that they mean well. But being saved does not exempt any of us from being deceived. But I know that all who are, can be recovered from error, and restored to the truth. If someone is born again, and has been deceived into teaching false "**...doctrines...**" about the words "**...church...**" and "**...bride...;**" I believe

that when they are confronted with the words of the truth; as written, defined, and used in God's BOOK, that they; by the help of The Holy Spirit, will see the error of their way. And then, **if** they choose to swallow their pride for being involved in such error; they will repent. And, as a result of repentance and proof of it; they will follow through to make the necessary corrections in their beliefs. To do this, it will be necessary to admit it to those they have hurt, and ask for forgiveness from them, and from The Lord Who gave us the words "**...church...**" and "**...bride...**"

With that said; the subject of this chapter is first being presented from thoughts produced by the definition of the words as they are written in The BOOK of God. But please keep in mind, that The LORD has written that this very subject, which is directly related to the word "**...church...**," is a "**...great mystery...**" And it is in this subject that we read words attached to it, speaking about The Lord Jesus finally presenting what He calls "**...the bride...**" to Himself. With those things in mind; please be willing to test your present understanding of the subject of this chapter with only God's words. And as has already been stated; this may only *enhance* this "**...great mystery...**" But the desire, prayer, and the goal in this study; is that it will lead to thoughts which do not "**...add...**" to or "**...take away...**" (*Revelation 22:18-19*) from the words of God's BOOK.

I am convinced, that a tainted view of the meaning of the word “**...church...;**” has been, and will be, the cause of the majority of false “**...doctrines...**” This should be of no surprise, seeing that we are speaking about one of the two parts of “**...the faith...**” (Jude 3) directly connected to what was “**...purchased...**” with the sacrifice of The Son of God. His blood paid the price “**...for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.**” (1 John 2:2); and, with that *same sacrifice*, Jesus secured ownership of what He calls “**...the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.**” (Acts 20:28)

Consider some other reasons why “**...Satan...**” and “**...his ministers...**” (II Corinthians 11:15) so hate the words associated with the “**...doctrine...**” of “**...the church...**”

1. It is His organization of “**...the church...**” on this earth, which is to be “**...the pillar and ground of the truth.**” The devil hates truth!
2. That organization which was first mentioned “**...in the wilderness...**” (Acts 7:38); has now in the “**...churches...**” of the new testament; been given the responsibility to teach the members in it; to obey the command to “**...preach the gospel to every creature...**” (Mark 16:15) The devil hates soul winning!

3. Those who are saved are born into the family of God; “**...grafted...**” (*Romans 11:23*) in with the family of Abraham. The devil especially hates that one family!
4. Those born into the family, who are afterwards baptized into membership; are identifying with “**...the likeness of...**” the “**...death...**” (*Romans 6:5*) of Jesus Christ. The devil hates all of what being Scripturally baptized in water does for and to the believer!
5. It is The Lord’s kind of “**...church...**” that is also commissioned with the task of helping to prepare the saved to be part of what *will be* “**...the bride...**” The devil wants to taint and stain the pureness of all that The Lord’s “**...bride...**” is to be!

*II Corinthians 11:2 “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have **espoused** you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”*

No wonder the “**...seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils...**” (*I Timothy 4:1*) are so rampant concerning the words “**...church...**” and “**...the bride, the Lamb’s wife.**”!

One of the first things that has to be established, is that the saved who will one day be a part of the “**...bride...**” are now only “**...espoused...**”

**“...to one husband...”** (II Corinthians 11:2) That **“...bride...”** is not yet at the altar! And furthermore, that **“...bride...”** has not yet been made **“...the Lamb’s wife.”** I think some who take unscriptural liberties with their own **“...private interpretation...”** (II Peter 1:20) of **“...the bride...”** are not thinking; that that day in the future of eternity, is not so much a day for us; but it is more for **“...The Lamb...”** of God *presenting* the prepared **“...bride...”** to be a **“...wife...”** to Himself. Those words are a **“...great mystery...”**! As The LORD has done with other subjects in His BOOK, God has chosen not to fully open our understanding to those precious words.

It is a very unscriptural stretch to actually refer to those in a **“...church...”** as being **“...the bride...”** right now! Figuratively, yes; but not in actuality on this earth. Practically speaking; the **“...church...”** by God’s definition, has been the tool that the Lord has been using to *prepare* His future **“...bride...”** to be His **“...wife...”**

Let’s stop here for a moment and think hard about this. We read those words about **“...the bride...”** and **“...the Lamb’s wife...;”** but try to tell me that those words do not present to the mind, so many unknown, and unexplained things? There is no room for theological assumptions and the reasoning of human speculations here. We had better allow such precious parts of this **“...great mystery...”** (Ephesians 5:32) to remain such until *we ourselves* are standing there with **“...the Lamb...”** !!

There are some who think the “**...bride...**” is made up of only those who have been saved and baptized in a new testament Baptist “**...church...**” But, Scripturally speaking; that means they who think like that, have got to find a way to eliminate or explain away the words in *Acts 7:38*. With them, God wrote with the inspired, preserved, and *interpretive* words; of “**...Moses...**,” and “**...the church in the wilderness...**”

Those God-breathed words identify the saints in those days, with the word “**...church...**” That really causes a theological nightmare in the minds of such doctrinally erring dreamers. Yes, I know that sounded a bit harsh; but we are dealing with another Man’s “**...bride...:**” the future “**...wife...**” of “**...the Godhead...**”!!! How do you suppose He feels about this?

I admit that this particular subject is a “**...mystery...**” But that does not give any man permission, to pose “**...feigned words...**” (*II Peter 2:3*) for the meaning of the word “**...church...**” or “**...bride...;**” which causes such glaring contradictions with the words in God’s BOOK.

When a born again believer actually sits down with The Word of God, and allows The Spirit of God to speak to them through the words of God’s BOOK; just the smallest glimpse of this “**...great mystery...**” “**...concerning Christ and the church...**” will mark their hearts and minds forever!

The word “**...bride...**” itself is written fourteen times in God’s BOOK: nine times before Jesus came to earth; once in the book of John, and again recorded by him four times in the Book of the Revelation. As far as identifying “**...the bride, the Lamb's wife...**,” God has given us only a very narrow preview of that subject. This is one of those topics of which can be classified with words such as “**...hard to be uttered...**” (*Hebrews 5:11*), “**...hard to be understood...**” (*II Peter 3:16*), and may even verge on not just being a “**...great mystery...**,” but one of the “**...secret things...**” spoken of in *Deuteronomy 29:29*. As with many of such things written in The Scriptures; men have attempted to assign their own thoughts and ideas as to the full identity of “**...the bride...**” But we must not allow our minds to *lean* toward assumptions or speculations in this. We must start and stay with only the words written by The LORD about “**...the bride, the Lamb's wife.**”

Other related Scriptures are found in *Revelation 19:7-9*, and *Revelation 21:1-2*.

*“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for **the marriage of the Lamb** is come, and **his wife** hath made herself ready. And **to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.** And he saith unto me, Write, **Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the***

**Lamb.** *And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.” Revelation 19:7-9*

*“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared **as a bride** adorned for her husband.” Revelation 21:1-2*

To gain only a Scriptural view of “**...the bride...**” we have got to deal with the obvious first. And that is what The LORD had “**...one of the seven angels...**” say to John in *Revelation 21:9*.

*“...Come hither, I will **shew thee** the bride, the Lamb's wife.”*

The words which follow “**...shew...**” the Apostle, and teach us that “**...the bride...**” is not just made up of people. In fact, God goes on to “**...shew...**” us far more about “**...the holy city, new Jerusalem...**” than He does of the people who are there with Him. Do not miss that Scriptural fact. That truly, only serves to intensify the wonder of this part of that “**...great mystery...**”

Theological scholars can say what they will about this “**...bride...;**” but their *suppositions and theories* about ‘who’ “**...the bride...**” really is, only tend to diminish the anticipation of the blessing it will be, just to be a part of that glorious event! As

already mentioned, one of the most prevalent conjectures and guesses of who and what makes up “...**the bride**...” is that she is made up of only saved and baptized Baptist church members. Such as these tie a part of their human reasoning to the words of “...**John the Baptist**...” in *John 3:29*.

*John 3:29 “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.”*

In the first place; that is not an easy Scripture to understand. But the obvious has got to be brought into the understanding of those words. (That should not have to be said to those who claim to believe in one BOOK of inspired words!) The first known facts about these words cannot be left out.

- These words were spoken **before** the covenant of the new testament began.
- For those who split God’s One BOOK into two; those words were written in ‘old testament’ times. The death of “...**the testator**...” (*Hebrews 9:16-17*) had not taken place on earth as yet.
- It is also a fact, that these words were being spoken *to Jews; not to Gentiles!*

And even then, unless this pastor has completely missed the truth in those words; how can anyone

attach those words to what they call a Baptist bride? They can't! I am a Baptist because of the words of The Scriptures; and because of the importance of the "...**doctrine...**" of water baptism in the life of The Lord Jesus, and as it relates to how a person who has been born again becomes a member "**...in particular...**" (1 Corinthians 12:27) in one of The Lord's new testament Baptist "**...churches...**" But you cannot ignore that "**...John the Baptist...**" was speaking to **the Jews** about Jews. He was not talking about Gentiles and their place as a part of the "**...bride...**"

Then there are the words of The Lord Jesus in *Mark 2:18-20*. These must also be carefully considered.

*Mark 2:18-20 "And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can **the children of the bridechamber** fast, while **the bridegroom** is with **them**? as long as they have the bridegroom **with them**, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when **the bridegroom shall be taken away from them**, and then shall they fast in those days."*

It is obvious that The Lord; as John did, is also speaking to Jews about Jews. He calls them "**...children of the bridechamber...**" The word

**“...bridechamber...”** means that in the mind, and in the words of **“...the bridegroom...”** Himself, that the Jews (saved Jews) were already considered; in English, to be included literally ‘in the nuptial apartment.’ The word **“...bridechamber...”** also speaks of another **physical place** relating to this subject of the **“...great mystery...”** Those words may not be the easiest to understand; but they do lend to thoughts saying that the saved Jews are a **part** of the **“...bride...”** I believe the reason some have excluded the Jews from being part of **“...the bride...”**, goes back to how those same folks do not see that the word **“...church...”** as a meeting place; which was first used in the case of a **“...congregation...”** of *Jewish people*. They have failed to understand, or to except by faith; that the first use of the word **“...church...”** predates the Gentile **“...churches...”** of the new testament of God’s BOOK.

Just before The Lord Jesus revealed **“...the bride...”** to John, He has John write in *Revelation 21:3*,

*“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, **the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.**”*

Those words sound an awful lot like they include **all** who have ever been saved; “...to **the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**” *Romans 1:16*)

*Romans 1:16* “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to **every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**”

*Romans 2:10* “But glory, honour, and peace, to **every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile...**”

There are those who teach that “...**the bride...**” is only Gentile. There are Baptist Dispensationalists, and others, who twist those words into meaning what has been called ‘the baptist bride.’ But they detrimentally miss the significance of the word “...**also...**” which follows the words “...to the Jew first...” If you want to get Scripturally technical; the Gentiles are only the **add-ons!** The Jews are “...**first...**” and it is the Gentiles who are as those “...**dogs...**” who “...eat of the crumbs which fall from...” a Jewish Master’s “...**table...**” (*Matthew 15:27, Mark 7:28*) There is no place in the Word of God where The LORD says that “...**the bride...**” is ‘only’ used in speaking about Gentiles.

And then, when The Lord has further shown John all about the “...**the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as**

***a bride adorned for her husband...*** (Revelation 21:2), He goes on to write in Revelation 21:27,

*“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: **but they which are written** in the Lamb's book of life.”*

Sounds to me like **all those** who have been *“**written** in the Lamb's book of life...”* and who have not tampered with the words of The BOOK of God, will be there as *a part* of that *“**...bride...**”*

There are some wonderful passages of Scripture which give us some *hints* about this *“**...great mystery...**”* of *“**...the bride...**”* These words need to be not so much scrutinized and analyzed; but just plain enjoyed!

*Isaiah 61:9-11) “And **their seed** shall be known among the Gentiles, and **their offspring** among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that **they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed**. I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the **garments of salvation**, he hath covered me with the **robe of righteousness**, as **a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments**, and as **a bride adorneth herself with her jewels**. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD*

***will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”***

Scripture such as that often *shows us* that this “***...mystery...***” of “***...the bride...***” has always been on the mind, in the heart, and before the eyes of The LORD. I have no doubt that as God made Adam and Eve “***...one...***” as husband and wife in the garden; that He was thinking of His own “***...marriage...***” and wedding day! This wonderful event in *The Revelation* was on The LORD’S mind back in *Genesis 2:21-24*.

*“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, **made her a woman, and brought her unto the man.** And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and **they shall be one flesh.**”*

There was no earthly father or mother of that first human couple! Something far in the future from that day was then on the mind of The Lord!

It is not a coincidence that the first earthly miracle performed by The Lord Jesus was at “***...a marriage...***”

*John 2:1-2 "And the third day **there was a marriage** in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to **the marriage.**"*

As I read that account, The Holy Spirit reminded me that these words about a "...**marriage...**" were recorded by the same man whom The Lord would later use, to pen the words about the "...**mystery...**" of "...**the bride...**" in *Revelation*. In reading about the miracle at the "...**marriage in Cana of Galilee...**," it is easy to get caught up with the things which happened on that one day; but then miss a small statement in *John 2:11*. A miracle is a wonderful thing. The sights on that day were grand. The things that were said that day were good things to hear. But that whole account had one main purpose!

*John 2:11 "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, **and manifested forth his glory**; and his disciples believed on him."*

Go back and read those words underlined and in the bold print. In those inspired words; I have no doubt that The Lord Jesus was thinking about the "...**glory...**" which was *to be shown*: "...**manifested forth...**" way past the times of earth; up in eternity. It was back there at that first miracle at a "...**marriage...**," where Jesus points the hearts and minds of all those who will be *part* of His future

**“...bride...”** forward, to another wedding day which is not of or on this earth. He, being the all-knowing God; already saw *us* standing next to Him at **“...the marriage of the Lamb;”** joined to Him by salvation; which is the miracle of all **“...miracles...”**! That will be the day of the revealing of the greatest **“...glory...”** of the **“...great mystery...”** **“...concerning Christ and the church...”**!

I am glad and peaceful in *not* knowing all the aspects of this **“...great mystery...”** for now. It will most likely not be fully revealed to any of the saved, until that day in eternity comes to be reality. And besides, we have to keep in mind that the **“...marriage...”** of that day is more for The **“...Lamb of God...”** anyway! That day is **all because of Him**; and it should be **all about Him**! We will only get to enjoy being there because He as **“...the Lamb of God...”** paid our price, died in our place, and rose up from the dead so we could. Furthermore, it will be **all of His work** which prepares the saved to stand with Jesus, as **“...the bride, the Lambs wife...”** Amen!

In the meantime; we who are born again; and in fellowship with The Holy Spirit of God and The BOOK of God, had better get busy attempting to win the lost; so they too can be a part of The Lord’s wedding day! And we as pastors, teachers, and evangelists had better do all we can in the fulfilling

of our calling, to help The Lord prepare His “...**bride**...” to be ready for Him on that day!

*Ephesians 5:25-27 “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 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 5:31-32 “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be **one** flesh. This is a **great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**”*



## Final Thoughts

In this book, I have focused mainly on the meaning of the word “**...church...**” There are many other things associated with this particular part of “**...the faith...**” which were not covered much or at all. Some of those parts were hinted at; but no real doctrinal details were given.

For instance; the “**...doctrine...**” of water baptism was mentioned; but needs to be fully studied out as to its association to the “**...doctrine...**” of being “**...members in particular...**” in a local Baptist “**...church...**”

If a Baptist is in the error of thinking that “**...the church...**” is now in any way *universal*; he will not be correct in his thinking and in the practicing of “**...church...**” membership.

The “**...doctrine...**” of the Lord’s Supper, formerly practiced by the first part of the “**...one fold...**” as “**...the passover...**,” and how it is to be practiced today is greatly influenced by what a man believes about the word “**...church...**” *If* it is a *specific, physical, local meeting place*; then **all** the “**...members in particular...;**” of that “**...particular...**” part of “**...the body...**” owned by The Lord, and *only those*, should have enough Scriptural knowledge to know not to partake of it in another local Baptist “**...church...**” of which they are not a member.

The “**...doctrine...**” of tithing was not taught in this writing, although it has always been The LORD’S only method of financing the ministry of His “**...house...**” before the cross; and for His “**...churches...**” after the cross.

The “**...doctrine...**” of separation was not discussed. But it is to be practiced by all the saved “**...church...**” members: so not to look like, act like, speak like; and not to live like they are still a part of this world. Those in the kind of “**...church...**” “**...purchased...**” with the priceless, precious “**...blood...**” of Jesus Christ, who will not be “**...separate...**” from the ways of this world, ought to be ashamed if they do not *honour The Lord* Jesus in this: *they have been* adopted, into His family, as a child of a very Holy, Heavenly Father; and He is worthy of some children who conduct themselves *like* they belong to Him! And they need to understand that the “**...doctrine...**” of separation, is that part of “**...the faith...**” which is most significant in preparing those of the future “**...bride...**” to be a “**...wife...**” which is pure and “**...unspotted from the world...**”! (*James 1:27*)

An individual’s *attendance record* at one of The Lord’s “**...churches...**” was not specifically covered in this book. Faithfully assembling with the other “**...members...**” of their local “**...church...**,” is the *only place* a saved person ought to be, *every time* the Lord comes to meet with that “**...church...**”!

It is only, a local, called out assembly; by use of the “**...office...**” of a God-called and ordained pastor; and by the help of the “**...gift...**” of the God-called and ordained evangelists; which is God’s place on this earth for the training of God’s saved ones, to learn of Him; glorify Him with their entire being, and to have a part in the winning of lost souls and guiding them into “**...church...**”

The organization of The Lord’s kind of Baptist “**...church...**” must continue on in its purpose of the Teaching and Preaching of God’s One BOOK, Altar calls, Regenerative Salvations, Baptisms into membership, Paying God His Tithe, and the Giving of Offerings, Being separate from this world, Going Soul Winning and Establishing more Independent Baptist “**...churches...**”! All of the “**...doctrine...**” and the practice of the people in a local Baptist “**...church...**” is for the preparing of “**...the bride. The Lamb’s wife...**”!

The Lord’s kind of “**...church...**” must be understood and respected for what it is, when it meets, and how those in it are to conduct themselves as being “**...in this world...**,” but not “**...of this world...**”!

If you will think about it, every doctrinal error, and practical problem in a “**...church...**,” can be traced back to the word “**...church...**” being *privately interpreted*. Do not simply dismiss that statement without testing its validity. When a problem begins to show itself in any aspect of the

ministry of a “...**church...**,” the pastor needs only to identify which part of the “...**doctrine...**” of “...**the faith...**” is being neglected, disobeyed or violated; whether by himself, deacons, staff, or the other “...**members in particular ...**” Once the problem is matched with the part of “...**doctrine...**” which The Lord designed to control that issue; set pride and excuses of circumstance aside... teach and preach what The Scriptures say about that offence; admit the wrong and the need to fix it; and restore the practice of that doctrinal error back to being in line with God’s Word!

Everything in this world, and in the next, depends upon the proper understanding and the Scriptural practicing of the word “...**church...**” The members of an **invisible** church show no visible works for The Lord. A **universal** church has members with no heavenly responsibilities while they are on this earth! No part of such carnal attitudes is to be condoned or ignored, in the leadership, and in the membership of the Lord’s kind of Baptist “...**churches...**”

God’s Word has recorded that the word “...**church...**” is a “...**great mystery...**” But He has also written in *I Corinthians 2:9-16*,

*“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God **hath prepared** for them that love him. **But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit:** for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the*

*deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. **Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."* I Corinthians 2:9-16

When only the **"...spiritual..."** words of God's BOOK are used to teach us His **"...pure words..."**, about the word **"...church..."** as written and defined in His BOOK; the **"...feigned words..."** of mere human theology are revealed for *what they are not!*

As Independent Baptists, we of all those who name the Name of Christ; and who claim to believe in One BOOK of inspired and perfectly preserved words; ought to be much more diligent to know what the words in God's WORD mean; and how they are to be practiced.

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