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Springfield, Oregon 97478

Published by:
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GOD'S PASTOR

**I TIMOTHY 3:1; 4:6,12-16;
II TIMOTHY 4:1-5**

INTRODUCTION:

When God places His omnipotent hand on a man, and places a burning in his heart that can only be satisfied by the surrender to preach and pastor, He does a mysterious work.

Only God can take one of low rank and use him in the Heavenly task of calling men from the sordidness of this life into a walk with God, as Paul said in **I Corinthians 1:26-29**.

Not many bankers, lawyers, or politicians are called into the ministry. God calls common men for a noble task. God calls lowly men for a holy task.

Our text says, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." Paul enforced this state-



ment with the preface: "This is a true saying." It is a good work!

WHAT IS A PASTOR?

>He is a pastor: a bishop, overseer, one in charge. (episkopos - **Acts 20:28**) A presbuteros, an elder, a pastor. (**Titus 1:5-7**) A shepherd, "poimen", a feeder. (**Hebrews 13:7,17**)

>He is an example, (**I Timothy 4:12**) In word, language, and speech. In conversation, and manner of life. People will not do as we say, they will do as we do. An example in charity, and love. (Love God - prove your love. Love the Bible. Love the church.) (**Acts 20:28; Psalm 137:5; II Corinthians 11:2**) (Love the lost.) An example in Spirit. (**Colossian 3:23**) An example in faith; believe God, and be faithful to God. An example in purity, guard your testimony for temptations will come.

>He is a student. (**I Timothy 4:13; II Timothy 2:15**) When he ceases to study, he

ceases to grow. When he ceases to study, his people will cease to grow. It is as much a part of his pastoral duty to study as it is to do anything else.

>He is a teacher. (**I Timothy 4:13,16**) He must teach doctrine. He must teach morals. He must teach truth. (**John 17:17**)

>He is an expositor of error. (**I Timothy 4:1-6**) Many shall depart from the faith. Baptist history is glorious, but we have also furnished the world with heretics. Expose error! Defend the truth! (**Jude 3**)

>He is a preacher. (**II Timothy 3:16-4:2**) Preach the Word. Preach it in season and out. Preach when people "amen" and when they had rather not hear it.

>He is an evangelist. (**II Timothy 4:5**) He that winneth souls is wise. (**Proverbs 11:30**) He must evangelize.

>He will give account. (**Hebrews 13:17**) Watch! (**Ezekiel 3:17**)

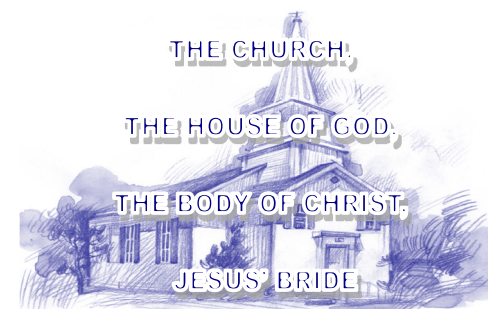
"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle?" **I Corinthians 14:8**

The Original BAPTIST OBSERVER



"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls..." **Jeremiah 6:16**

Sounding Out The Faith Dec. 2013 Issue THE CHURCH



The subject of the LORD's local, New Testament church is one of the most badly misunderstood in the Word of God. I feel there are some who are deceived about this subject. Yet, there are those who don't want to know about this subject because it will conflict with their preconceived ideas.

The local church is the house of God. (**I Timothy 3:15**) A house must be built by someone. (**Hebrews 3:4**) Jesus said He would build His house, His church. (**Matthew 16:18**) A house must be built according to a plan. Everything God has had built, has been according to His plan. (**Hebrews 8:5; I Corinthians 3:11**) The Spirit through Paul said that a man needs to be careful how he builds on the foundation. (**I Corinthians 3:10**) One can choose to build well on the foundation, or shoddy,

not using good materials. A house is a dwelling place. The members of each local body are the temple of the Living God. (**Ephesians 2:21-22; I Corinthians 3:16-17**)

The local church is the body of Christ. As a body, each local body is to be actively working for Him. The commission was given to His local church. It is to "go". (**Matthew 28:19-20**) A body cannot exist without a head. Jesus Christ is the head of each of His local churches. (**Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23**) Head means "authority". A body cannot exist without blood. (**Leviticus 17:11**) The life of the flesh is in the blood. The blood of Christ is the life of each local body. (**Acts 20:28**) A body must have a spirit in order to live and work. (**James 2:26**) The Spirit of God must be the motivating power in both the child of God and each local church body. (**Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 12:13**) A local body must have members. (**I Corinthians 12:14,20,27**) As the local body of Christ who is actively working for Him, the work each does, must be true to the Word of God. (**Acts 13:1-4**)

The local church is the Bride of Christ.

(**II Corinthians 11:2**) The local church is "espoused" or engaged to Christ according to the Scriptures. This word "espoused" is frequently used with reference to a newly married young person, but it also means "engaged". In this verse, "espoused" is used in reference to the period before the wedding takes place. This shows the close relationship to Christ and His local churches. Christ has gone to prepare a place for His bride, the faithful of these local New Testament churches. (**John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:9-10**)

The church that Jesus built is the greatest institution this world has ever known or ever will know. This first church that He started has produced after her kind throughout the years down to today as Jesus promised. (**Matthew 16:18**) The LORD gave His life for His church, (**Acts 20:28**) and He has a great reward in store for those who are faithful. If you want to serve God: be saved, join one of His New Testament churches, and serve Him according to His Word. This will put you in a position to be found faithful and receive the rewards awaiting His bride.



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BACKSLIDING

"The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself." (Proverbs 14:14) Backslider is not a New Testament word and it occurs only once in the Old Testament. Backsliding occurs sixteen times in the Old Testament and not one time in the New. To backslide means to go back. A backslider is one who turns back. It means to fall off or away from.

Some causes of backsliding are:

- *Failure to pray (I Thessalonians 5:17)
 - *Failure to read the Bible (II Timothy 2:15; Psalm1:1-2; John 8:31-32)
 - *Failure to attend church services (Hebrews 10:1:25)
 - *Failure to discharge any known Christian duty (Matthew 6:33)
 - *To indulge in known sins (Hebrews 10:26)
 - *Evil companions (Proverb 22:24-25)
 - *A lack of spiritual vision (Proverbs 29:18)
- The effects of backsliding are:
- *Losing the joy of salvation (Psalm 51:12)
 - *Losing the appreciation of the church and her pastor (Jeremiah 6:16)
 - *Losing your usefulness (I Corinthians 3:15)
 - *At ease spiritually (Amos 6:1)
 - *Critical of the church and her members (Galatians 5:15)
 - *Forget you were purged, or saved (II Peter 1:9)
 - *Shun church members, especially



preachers (Isaiah 4:20)

There are four classes of backsliders. Those who have never truly been born again and are only "play acting". These are not real backsliders. One would have to truly have something before he could backslide from it. (I John 2:19; II Peter 2:22) Many times, such as the above are brought into churches under high pressure evangelism. We should deal very tenderly with them because they need to be shown the truth concerning salvation.

Those who try to live right but just can't seem to do it. They do their best, but fail to live as close to God as they want to. (Matthew 13:22)

Those who have drifted away into sin through willful disobedience and are not ready to return. (Jeremiah 2:5, 13,19) These are like broken cisterns. Their children follow in their steps.

Those who have wandered away in sin, see their mistake, and are ready to return to the LORD. (Hosea 14:1-4) Most of us know by experience how bitter a thing it is to miss the sunshine of God's favor.

The cure for backsliding is II Chronicles 7:14 and John 1:9. Practice what you read there!

RECORD IN HEAVEN

Psalm 87:6,7;II Corinthians 5:10; Luke 10:20; Job 16:19

INTRODUCTION:

It cannot be disputed that God keeps a record of both saved and unsaved. The saved will be revealed at the judgment seat of Christ when they shall be judged for rewards. (Romans 14:10; II Corinthians 5:10) The unsaved will be revealed when they stand before the Great White

Throne. (Revelation 20:11-13)

When my record is revealed, there are many things I want on my record and there are many things I do not want on my record.

THE THINGS I DO NOT WANT ON MY RECORD:

I do not want it on my record that I was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



By common consent and wide acclaim, John3:16 is the greatest verse in the Bible. There are probably two reasons for this. The first is that there is no other verse that is more full of the gospel. Though it contains only 25 words, it contains a complete survey and declaration of God's provision and plan of salvation for sinners.

It declares God to be the source of salvation. It declares love to be the motivating force in God's plan. It declares grace to be the greatest cause. It declares the deity of Christ. It declares faith to be the point at which one is saved. It declares Christ to be the only way of salvation. It declares the damning result of not believing in Jesus Christ. It declares the eternal security of those who trust Christ.

Secondly, John 3:16 is the best know Scripture. It tells of the greatest possible love. It is an eternal love. (John 17:23-24) It is an uninfluenced love. (Romans 8:10-13; I John 4: 19) It is an infinite, inexpressible love. (Ephesians 2:4; 3:19) It is an unending love. (Jeremiah 31:3) It is an unchangeable love. (John 13:1; James 1:17) It is an inseparable love. (Romans 8:35-39)

It tells of the greatest possible gift. God gave His Son that we might become the "sons of God". (John 1:12) He gave His Son that we might receive the adoption of sons for our flesh. (Galatians 4:4-5) He gave His son that we might never perish. (John 3:16-18,36) He gave His son that we might have everlasting life. (Romans 6:23)

It tells of the greatest possible plan. "That whosoever believeth in him. . ." Salvation is by faith. (John 5:24) Salvation is by grace through faith. (Ephesians 2:8-9) Salvation is by faith in Christ.

(Acts 4:12; II Timothy 3:15) Hearts are purified by faith. Salvation has always been by faith in Christ. (Acts 10:43; 15:10 -11) Faith is the only, sure way. (Romans 4:16)

It tells of the greatest possible deliverance. "Should not perish..." Without Christ, you are condemned. (John 3:18) Without Christ, you are under the abiding wrath of God. (John 3:36) Without faith in Christ, you will be cast into the Lake of Fire. (Revelation 21:8) Without Christ, you will perish. (John 3:16) However, faith delivers from perishing permanently. (John 10:28; 5:24; 4:14)

It tells of the greatest possible possession, "but have everlasting life." The believer possesses a life that can never be forfeited (John 5:24; 3:16) The believer has an attachment that can never be severed. (Romans 8:35-39) The believer has a relationship that can never be abolished. (Galatians 3:26; I John 3:1-2) The believer has righteousness that can never be tarnished. (Romans 3:25; II Corinthians 5:21) the believer has an acquittal that can never be reversed. (Romans 8: 29-34) The believer is sealed with a seal that can never be broken. (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; II Timothy 2:19) The believer has an inheritance that can never fade away. (I Peter 1:3-5)

RECORD IN HEAVEN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2
an unfaithful church member.

- *unfaithful in church attendance (Hebrews 10:25-26)
- *unfaithful in Bible study (II Timothy 2:15)
- *unfaithful to the LORD's commands (Matthew 28: 19-20)
- *unfaithful to pray (I Thessalonians 5:17)
- *unfaithful to work (Ephesians 2:10)

I do not want it on my record that I was neglectful.

- *It is not the things that church members do intentionally that do the most harm to our churches, but it is the things that every church member intends to do, but neglects to do it. (James 4:17; Ecclesiastes 5:4)
- *Harm comes in members who intend to get started and attend all services and functions, but they have delayed intentions instead of now. (II Corinthians 6:1-2; Romans 6:16)

I do not want it recorded that I lived an unclean life as a church member. (Psalm 66:18; II Timothy 2:21)

I do not want it recorded that I was a selfish, miserly, discontented, and neglectful church member. (II Corinthians 9:6-8; Galatians 6:7-8; Colossians 3:23)

THINGS I WANT RECORDED ON MY RECORD:

- I was saved by the blood of Christ. (I Peter 1:18-19)
- I was Scripturally baptized. (Acts 19:5)
- I was a New Testament church member. (Acts 2:47)
- I was willing to sacrifice for Christ's sake. (Romans 12:1)
- I worked to see the salvation of others. (Proverbs 11:30)

I want the four things said of me that were said of Levi. (Malachai 2:6) The law of truth was in his mouth. Iniquity was not found in his life. He walked with me (the LORD) in peace and equity. And did turn many away from iniquity.

CHURCH BEGINNING THE LORD'S DAY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

individuals make up the dwelling place of God. So a church must be comprised of individuals joined together for a dwelling place of God.

Next we see that this tabernacle was known as the church in the wilderness but as soon as it stopped dwelling in the wilderness it stopped being referred to as the "church" in the wilderness. The simplicity of this is almost too obvious. The tabernacle was a local, visible institution, and the people dwelled around. It could be moved. When the people scattered across the country they were no longer local. A church must then also be a local, visible institution.

Last of the three points is that Moses built the tabernacle and Jesus built the church. Moses built the tabernacle for a dwelling place of God. (Heb. 3:1-6) Moses used a man to prepare the materials. Jesus built a church for the dwelling place of God. (Matt. 16:18, Eph 2:20-22) Jesus also used a man to prepare the materials. (John 1:6; Mat. 3:1-6)

To put all these together we delve into Matt. 4:12-22. Jesus, the Builder, went to the prepared people, and called them together. The individuals He called were saved (brazen altar), baptized (laver) and Jesus built them together (boards). (vs. 19-20) These individuals were bound together by Jesus. They were local and they were visible. This was the place that God dwelt. (Eph. 2:20-22)

This alone shows us when Jesus started His N. T. church. God being who He is does not just leave us with this only. In fact, what we have just covered is the harder way to establish when He started His N. T. church. There is a much easier way.

Looking into Matt. 4:12-22 and breaking it down in individual parts the LORD



shows us exactly when He started His church. (Matt. 4:12) John was cast into prison. Jesus did

not build His church until the authority that John had no longer existed. (John 3:30) (Matt. 4:13-16) Jesus went into Galilee. (sprung forth light) All important is that this is a prophecy given by God through Isaiah. (Is. 9:1-2) What light actually sprung from the darkness? It was not Jesus, although Jesus is the Light, (John 8:12) but this light was not Jesus. (or perhaps a better phrase not only Jesus) Jesus has always been the Light, the Light of salvation. He was the Light of salvation before the world began. (Rev. 13:8) Matthew speaks of a light starting or springing up. That leaves only a N. T. church (Matt. 5:14). The fact that this is a prophecy that must be fulfilled speaks volumes as to when the church began. So according to prophecy the N. T. church began here in Matt. 4 on the sea shores of Galilee.

Still the LORD is not finished. (Acts 10:36-38) Peter speaking to Cornelius tells us all when Jesus started His work. It began from Galilee.

What more is there except to say when it did not start and why not. This is not as necessary because if you know truth, error is easy to recognize. Nevertheless, to combat the error of humanism we will explain some of the larger errors out there.

The LORD'S N. T. church did not start on the day of Pentecost. (1 Cor. 12:28) God placed His apostles in the church. (Luke 6:12-16) Jesus called the apostles. If there was no church there could be no apostles. (Matt. 16:18) Jesus declares that He will build His church. Jesus was not with them in the flesh during the day of Pentecost. (Matt. 18:16-20) Jesus gives instruction on how to handle a personal offense and in the instructions He tells the people, if need be, to bring it before the church. If the church started on the day of Pentecost then Jesus would not have instructed them to take the differences before the church. (John 14:16) Jesus tells His church that He will give another Comforter, implying the existence of one, and declaring the

coming of another. At the day of Pentecost the church was baptized with the Holy Spirit and at that time He took the office of Comforter. If the church started on the day of Pentecost then the Holy Spirit would be the only Comforter, thus not harmonizing with John 14:16. (Titus 1:2) Jesus cannot lie, so the church could not have started on the day of Pentecost.

A common error is to say that the church started on the Jordan River. (John 2:39) The simple, straight forward answer as to why it did not start on the Jordan River is to look at Is. 9:1-2. The starting of a N. T. church was prophesied by Isaiah and there was no light that sprung up in John chapter 2. Matt. chapter 4 talks about a light being sprung up. (Acts 10:36-38) The church began on the sea shores of Galilee, not at Jordan.

Another error that many have is that the church started on the mountain when He called His apostles. You simply cannot put milk in a glass without the glass. You cannot place first apostles in the church without a church. (1 Cor. 12:28) The primary reason is the prophecy in Is. 9:1-2. We can never emphasize the importance of prophecy enough. When God tells us that He is going to start a church we know that church will be started according to the prophecy. This light being sprung up is the start of a N. T. church and that happened on the sea shores of Galilee in Matt. chapter 4.

When you know the truth about where the church started you can defend it with confidence in the Scriptures. No matter what people may come up with about when Jesus started the first church, you can always have confidence in the Scriptures that it started on the sea shores of Galilee.

In conclusion the LORD'S N. T. church started by Jesus on the sea shores of Galilee after John was cast into prison. This event being testified in Matt. 4:12-20.

The idea that the seventh day Sabbath is still binding today is promoted by "works for salvation" folks. They reject the Bible teaching that all the law of Moses was "blotted out" by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. (Colossians 2:14-17)

The Old Testament Sabbath was instituted before the giving of the law. (Genesis 2:2,3) It is clear that God gave the Sabbath to Israel as a law. (Exodus 20:8) In the law of Moses this commandment is put on an equality with all other commandments. (James 2:10) The Sabbath was done away with the rest of the law. (Colossians 2:14-17; Luke 16:16) It was written in the handwriting of ordinances. The Sabbath was a covenant or a sign between Israel and God. (Exodus 31: 12-17; Romans 3:19)

There are some modern objections to the LORD'S day being the first day of the week instead of the Sabbath. It is objected that a Catholic pope changed the Sabbath to the first day of the week. There is no history to prove this. Even if there was, it doesn't change the fact that Jesus actually did away with the Sabbath and instituted first day of the week worship for His New Testament churches.

It is objected that Jesus kept the Sabbath, so we should too. However, Jesus came to fulfill the law. He observed it in its highest sense so He could then do away with it. (Galatians 4:4-5; Matthew 5:17)

It is objected that Paul observed the Sabbath, so we should too. (Acts 18:4) Paul preached to the Jews who were gathered on the Sabbath, but he preached that the law was done away. (Colossians 2:14-17) Paul went to where the people were to preach to them, but he did not participate in their religious rites.

It is objected that the Sabbath was



instituted by God before the law of Moses, therefore we should observe the Sabbath. It is also true that animal sacrifices were made before the giving of the law, but all of this was done away by Jesus on the cross. If we must observe the Sabbath for this reason, then we must also have the animal sacrifices for the same reason. However, because Jesus' sacrifice on the cross took all those things out of the way, we are no longer under those ordinances, including the Sabbath day of worship. (II Corinthians 3:6-11)

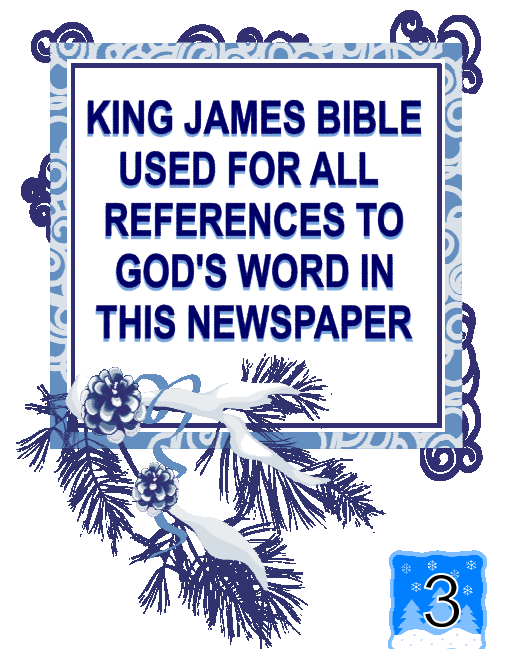
The first day of the week for worship is observed by Baptists because that is what the Bible teaches. Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week. (John 20:19) Jesus appeared to the disciples on the first day of the week as they were assembled. (John 20:19) The day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit baptized the church, the church was assembled on the first day of the week. (Acts 2:1; Leviticus 23:16) Peter preached and 3,000 converts were added to the church on the first day of the week. (Acts 2:41-47) The converts were baptized on the first day of the week. (Acts 2:41) The church in Troas assembled for worship on the first day of the week. The church took the LORD'S Supper on the first day of the week. Paul was preaching to them on the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7) Paul instructed the Corinthian church to make contributions on

the first day of the week. (I Corinthians 16:2) John was worshipping on the first day of the week when Jesus appeared to him and gave the Revelation. (Revelation 1:10) The great commission was given on the first day of the week. (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:9-15)

We honor the resurrection of our LORD each first day of the week by assembling for worship.

He is the first fruits from the dead. (I Corinthians 15:20) The great harvest from the grave, the resurrection, is guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. (I Thessalonians 4:14-17)

If the law is still in force, then we are bound to keep all of it. (James 2:10) We must have animal sacrifices, early priests, a man must marry his brother's widow, disobedient sons must be stoned, Sabbath breakers must be stoned, and many other like ordinances. The keeping of the Sabbath law is impossible on a world-wide scale. It was given to a particular people in a particular place, until a particular time. Sabbath keeping cannot give life. (Galatians 3:19-21) Christ is the end of the law of righteousness to everyone that believeth. (Romans 10:4)



SPIRITUAL FORNICATION

Ephesians 5:23-27 says, "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." These Scriptures are addressed to the local, New Testament church at Ephesus. All other local, New Testament churches can apply these teachings to themselves as well.

These Scriptures show the relationship between Jesus Christ and His church. Each local body is espoused to Jesus Christ. **II Corinthians 11:1-4** says, "Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. 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. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." This word espoused here means "to joint; to woo". This is a covenant that was binding between a man and a woman prior to marriage. This showed their devotion to one another before their covenant of marriage that would make them one flesh. However, their devotion was expected to be chaste and pure toward one another.

In **Matthew 1:18-19**, we have an example given to us of the seriousness of this covenant. It was binding, as was the marriage covenant. Here we see that Joseph was ready to

put Mary away "privily", when he thought she had been unfaithful before their marriage covenant. This putting away was a legal act because the "pre-marriage" covenant was binding. However, we know that the angel, Gabriel, cleared this up for Joseph and he went ahead with the marriage to Mary. Joseph was assured of her "chastity and purity". There had been no fornication on her part and so he was willing to go through with the marriage.

This devotion was expected between those that were espoused. This "engagement" period was a preparation time for the marriage. It was a time for the bride and groom to prove their devotion to one another alone. They were to prove that they had singleness of heart for one another during this time to remain pure between themselves and others. In **Romans 7:4** the Bible says, "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." This shows us that we, as New Testament church members, are to be preparing to marry Jesus Christ. This espousal time spiritually, is for us to show our devotion to our "groom", Jesus, and to Him alone.

In **Acts 20:28**, Jesus shows His devotion and love to us as New testament church members. He was willing to give His life for His New Testament church and all those that would come after her. (**John 17:20**) In **John 14:1-3**, He shows His devotion in His preparation for the marriage to those that are faithful out of His New Testament churches. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

In **John 17:21-28**, Jesus talks about

His singleness for those that are a part of His Bride, His local church then, and the others that would follow. There was no room for any other with the groom. His desire was to be one with His bride alone, no one else. There should be no room for any others with the bride, His local churches, as well.

In **Matthew 18:20**, Jesus has promised those local churches that He would be with her in a special way when they met together in church capacity. His devotion and time spent is with her alone in preparation for the time that they will be united in marriage. For any of the LORD'S, local, New Testament church members to partake in devotion, or worship, with any other is to commit spiritual fornication. He alone is to be the center of our devotion as the espoused bride of Christ. When we partake, or covenant, or devote ourselves to that "intimate" time with others spiritually, we are committing spiritual fornication. Remember the espousal of Joseph and Mary? Do we not enter into covenant relationship with our LORD when we submit to Scriptural baptism and membership in one of the LORD'S New Testament churches? Yes, we do and if we go outside of our devotion and singleness of worship to Him, we are guilty of breaking our espousal covenant to Him. To partake in the "worship" services of false churches, those without authority of Christ through a local, New Testament church, is to break our espousal covenant.

I Corinthians 10:8 tells us that Israel committed fornication. When you read the account in **Exodus 33: 17-35**, you will see that they were not committing "physical" fornication. They were partaking in false worship. This was prior to their "covenant" of marriage with God, so they were committing spiritual fornication because they were espoused. They had agreed to the "espousal", but they were not devoted and single as God had instructed them to be. This was false worship and by committing that which was to be for God alone, and

giving it to another, they were committing spiritual fornication. 23,000 died that day because of their "fornication". How many of the LORD'S local, New Testament church members have to "die" because of their spiritual fornication? How about our children dying and going to Hell because we show them no difference between the "holy and profane"? (**Ezekiel 44:23**) He warned us to learn from Israel. Are we learning?

In **Revelation chapters 2 and 3**, the LORD told some of His, local, New Testament churches to repent of their disobedience. In chapter 2, verse 5, He told Ephesus to repent or He would come quickly and remove His Holy Spirit as Comforter. This shows that they would lose their authority to function as the LORD'S. We may not know exactly when the LORD does this, but do you think "quickly" means 20 or 30 years? I look at the character and example of God in the Scriptures and I don't see that He is mocked. (**Galatians 6:7-8**)

In **Revelation chapter 2, verse 16**, He tells the church at Pergamos to repent or else He would come quickly and fight. This church was guilty of having those in membership that held to false doctrine. They obviously were giving place to these doctrines, Balaam and the Nicolaitans, and God held the church responsible. Again, He told them to repent quickly. This meant that they had to change their behavior, mind, and attitude and then turn back to God. (**Isaiah 55:7**) In verse 20, He tells the church at Thyatira to repent because they allowed, "sufferest", false doctrine to be promoted. They simply didn't stand up against it and so therefore, they were partakers. (**II John 10-11**) This caused a lot of people to be hindered and to fall into false worship. (**verse 20-23**)

In **Revelation chapter 3 and verse 2**, Jesus warns the church at Sardis that there are some "things", doctrines and/or practices, that were about to die if they didn't "strengthen" them. Sometimes a church can just become "lax" and she

must go back to the Word to become strong in the faith once again. However, God says that if they don't repent, they will cease to be one of His churches. In chapter 3 and verse 19, He tells the Laodicean church that they don't even recognize the condition they are in. They are so far removed, that they are blinded to the place they are in. He tells them to be zealous and repent. This did not mean to take their time. Zealous meant with zeal, which means with great energy or enthusiasm.

As we look at the conditions of these churches, we see that they were in serious and grave danger of not belonging to the LORD any longer. God was quick to rebuke them sharply and to warn them of the impending doom that would come if they did not repent. For one of the LORD'S, local, New Testament church members to partake in, and go along with one of these churches in known error would put them in grave danger as well. God has commanded us to be "peculiar", separate, and different. (**II Corinthians 6: 16-17; I Peter 2:9**) We see that God held some of these churches responsible for what they did not do, as well as for what they did do. For us to stand by and partake in error, even allowing churches to think that we go along with error, would also be putting us in danger of spiritual fornication. We are to be devoted to Christ and the things that are His alone. We should not devote the things of God to any other. To do so, is to break our espousal covenant that we have made with the LORD, Jesus Christ. God told the churches at Galatia that they were removed to "another" gospel. As members of the LORD'S, local, New Testament churches we are covenanted together with Christ to insist that we would only partake in that which is in truth. (**John 4:24**) Should we take this seriously? We should if we intend to be married to Jesus Christ one day because He will not settle for less. (**Ephesians 5:25-27**)

CHURCH BEGINNING

The simple and easy answer is that the church began on the sea shores of Galilee after John the Baptist was cast into prison. But how do we come to that conclusion?

First let's begin by looking at the prophesies of a church, and see what a church has to be, and who established it in order to be considered a true New Testament church. (**Acts 8:36-39**) Stephen tells us that Moses was in the church in the wilderness whom also God gave the lively oracles. (**Heb. 8:1-6**) We find out exactly what that church in the wilderness was. It was the tabernacle. We then can look at **Heb. 3:1-6** and find a type of Jesus in Moses. With these verses we can establish a few truths about a N. T. church. The type of a church is the tabernacle. What we see in the tabernacle must be present in a N. T. church. Next we can see that the tabernacle was known as the church in the wilderness. (this is a type of the church, a picture). It was only known as a "church" as long as it remained in the wilderness. As soon as it left the wilderness it no longer remained as the "church in the wilderness". This is fairly self explanatory but important to note. Last thing we can establish is that Moses was an example of Jesus, as Moses built the tabernacle, Jesus would/did build His church.

Taking a further look into just these three points we can establish a solid base of what a true N. T. church must have. The type of a N. T. church is the tabernacle and a church must have the same order set forth in the tabernacle. (**Ex. 40:1-8**) The altar or salvation, is outside of the tabernacle or congregation. You must have that before you can proceed. The brazen laver, or baptism, was set outside the tabernacle or congregation, but after the altar or salvation. By this we see that before you can have a church you must have people that meet these two qualifications: salvation and baptism. The tabernacle itself was comprised of boards. (**Ex. 36:20-30**) These boards show forth individuals surrounded by the righteousness of Jesus with the Holy Ghost as Comforter. These

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