

Rom. 14:19
So then let us
follow after
things which
make for
peace, and
things
whereby we
may edify one
another.

John 8:32 And
ye shall
know the
truth and the
truth shall
make you
free.

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FINDING CHRIST'S CHURCH

by Chuck Bartlett

With all the religious division that exists today, how does a person go about finding out which church is the right one? Is one church as good as another? Does it really matter where you attend?

Such questions deserve answers. First, since Jesus promised and built His church (**Matt. 16:18**) with the price of His own blood (**Acts 20:28**), every effort needs to be made to belong to His church. Here are some ways to go about finding a church that belongs to Christ.

Search for Biblical proof in these areas:

1. **Its name.** Saints in the First Century were identified as the church of God (**I Cor. 1:1**); the church of the firstborn (**Heb. 12:23**) and churches of Christ (**Rom. 16:16**). Since Jesus is God, identifying Christ as the owner is a must.
2. **Its organization.** Since Christ is the head of His church (**Col. 1:18**), there is no board of directors. There are to be elders (**Titus 1:5**); deacons (**I Tim. 3:8**); and evangelists (**II Tim. 4:5**). Each local church is independent of other churches of Christ. There is no head church. If a local church ventures off into false ways, they cannot force other congregations to do the same.
3. **Its work.** The Lord made it clear to the church that they ought to carry out the work of evangelizing (**Eph. 3:10**); edification (**Eph. 4:12**); and helping needy saints (**II Cor. 8:18-21**). Local bodies of Christ are to be busy doing the work that has been given to them. It is not their duty to oversee another church.
4. **Its worship.** Whatever is done in worship must be done in spirit and in truth (**Jn. 4:24**). The acts of worship are as follows: Singing (**Eph. 5:19**);

praying (**Acts 2:42**); partaking of the Lord's Supper (**Acts 20:7**); giving (**I Cor. 16:2**); and hearing and proclaiming the word of God (**Acts 2:42**).

5. **Its entrance.** Getting into Christ's church is accomplished by obeying Him. Those who submit to His will are added to the church by the Lord (**Acts 2:47**). To not obey the gospel is to be in danger of the judgment (**II Thes. 1:8**). The invitation is to believe (**Jn. 8:24**); repent (**Lk. 17:3**); confess (**Rom. 10:9-10**); and be baptized for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38; 22:16**).
6. **Its teaching.** Instruction must be from the word of God (**II Tim. 3:16-17**). We are to avoid creeds, manuals, and the like. Doing things by the authority of Christ is a must (**Col. 3:17; II Jn. 9**). Man is often guilty of abiding in the doctrines and commandments of men (**Matt. 15:9**).

If being scriptural isn't necessary, then it shouldn't matter at all whether or not we even acknowledge Christ. If we can reject some truth and be okay, then we can reject all truth and be accepted. Beware, such surmising will leave you in a lost state in more ways than one.

Having a scriptural name doesn't make everything else automatically correct. All that we do must be by the authority of Christ (**Matt. 28:18**). The question may arise, "What if I cannot find such a group doing these things (points listed)?" The alternative is to do what the saints did in **Acts 8**. When they were scattered, they went everywhere preaching the word (**vr. 4**). Starting a local church may be what is needed. Remember, beginning a congregation is not the beginning of the church. Jesus built His church close to 2000 years ago

when He died and resurrected (**Acts 20:28**). Are you comfortable being part of a “church” that is not following the Biblical pattern for Christ’s church? Why not belong to the church that Christ built?

TWO MEN FACE THEIR LIMITATIONS

by Bill Hall

Two men are rather inept in areas of public leadership. Neither is really talented in leading singing, preaching, teaching Bible classes, or fulfilling other roles that are so essential to effective worship periods. Both have tried, but their inabilities in such realm are apparent, to themselves and to others. But while they share this limitation, their attitudes differ dramatically.

The first man draws back into a shell, manifesting all the symptoms of an inferiority complex. He feels that he doesn’t belong, that others don’t appreciate him. He does nothing for the benefit of the Lord’s cause except to attend. He rarely visits the sick or speaks to a visitor or invites a newcomer into his home. “Can’t” becomes the prevailing word in his vocabulary. He complains because “only a few are running things.”

The second man recognizing his obvious inabilities in leadership roles, looks about for other areas in which he can be helpful. He volunteers to keep the grass mowed around the building and to see that the building is opened early at every service. He is there to extend a warm greeting to the first arrivals. This is just typical of him. He is constantly observing a need and is working in his own quiet way to take care of that need. No other man in the church is more active in the work than he is.

The first man struggles to be faithful. His feelings are so easily hurt. Every lesson that deals with greater diligence in the Lord’s service, he is sure is preached directly with him in mind. He doesn’t like himself and his attitude is a barrier to good relationships with others.

The second man is appreciated by all who know him. His influence is great. He is perfectly suited to the work of a deacon. His death will leave a void in the church that no one man will be able to fill.

The difference in these two men can be clearly seen in the exhortation of **Ecclesiastes 9:10**: *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might*. What the second man has and the first man lacks is **vision** to see what needs to be done (his hand finds something to do) and **initiative** to do it with his might. These two qualities enable the one to be happy, busy, useful, pleasant, influential; a lack of them leaves the other miserable, limited, sensitive, stifled by self-pity.

To our many readers who are limited in “leadership” roles we would ask: “Which of these two men present a true picture of you?” Open your eyes! There are needs all about you! Get to work! “There is room in the kingdom.....for the small things you can do.” Everybody can’t be the quarterback; everybody can’t be the chief; but everybody can contribute. Let each person find his own role, work diligently in that role, and rejoice in the contribution he can make to the welfare of the Lord’s work.

OBADIAH: Servant of Jehovah

“The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom—We have heard a report from the Lord, and an envoy has been sent among the nations saying, ‘Arise and let us go against her for battle’” (**Obadiah 1:1 NASV**). Obadiah, the shortest book in the Old Testament, still packs a powerful punch. Scholars speak about the “Book of the Twelve.” There are twelve “Minor Prophets,” so-called, but the word *minor* does not describe the message of these books; rather, it is thought that these twelve books could be bound in a single scroll. All the prophets spoke at various times, with the same message: God loves you and wants you to repent. The LORD God speaks to His creation; in this case, the nation of Edom receives a much-needed lesson.

Edom was judged because of her pride. Her lofty dwellings in the high plateaus just southeast of the Dead Sea, gave these descendants of Esau a feeling of safety and invincibility. The antagonism between two brothers, Jacob and Esau, was perpetuated when the Israelites tried to move past the land of Edom in trying to reach the Promise Land. *“Edom, however, said to him, ‘You shall not pass through us, or I will come out with the sword against you.’ Again, the sons of Israel said to him, ‘We will go up by the highway, and if I and my livestock do drink any of your water, then I will pay its price. Let me only pass through on my feet, nothing else. But he said, ‘You shall not pass through.’ And Edom came out against him with a heavy force and with a strong hand. Thus, Edom refused to allow Israel to pass through his territory; so, Israel turned away from him”* (**Numbers 20:18-21**).

Edom, for a time, soared like an eagle; she lived among the stars (**vv. 4-5**). She had no fear of invaders. Yet, Edom would be “ransacked” (**v. 6**). The safety of the clefts, the highest of the heavens, were no match for Jehovah. Pride is deceitful; Edom would be

judged. *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling” (Proverbs 16:18)*. Edom would not escape the consequences for violence done to Jacob. Edom would reap as she sowed. Judgment always follows then we turn away from the Lord’s holiness. What Edom did to others would be done to her. *“A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his words, and the deeds of a man’s hands will return to him” (Proverbs 12:14)*.

The connection between Edom and Israel goes beyond the behavior of two brothers. Edom was not the only nation to fall under the stinging indictment of Jehovah. *“For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head” (v. 15)*. God’s just judgment will come upon all. Edom stands for all who array themselves against God. The prophet Isaiah pictures the Lord coming with redemption; He comes from Edom with *“red apparel” (Isaiah 63:1-6)*. Let all the nations take notice. As Edom was judged, so would all nations fall under the gaze of a just and holy God.

Well, that was Edom, and that was a long time ago. So what? We need not worry about such things today. We are safe in our lofty palaces, situated in the clefts of unparalleled prosperity, education, and respectability. Our kingdoms provide all the safety we need.

Randy Harshbarger

Many people today speak of the signs the end is near.

The Scriptures do not teach there will be signs for man to use in determination of the end of time, when the Lord shall come to judge men in righteousness.

Much of this comes from a misunderstanding of verses in **Matthew 24**. Jesus has an exchange with His disciples on that occasion and says to them, ... *“Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.”* (**Matthew 24:2**) They follow up with the question, ... *“Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”* (**Matthew 24:3**)

Jesus then begins to answer them about two separate events. First, He speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman Army that took place in 70 AD. This event, He says, will have warning signs. *““You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is*

not yet the end.” (Matthew 24:6)

Later, He identifies the value of giving attention to these signs when he says, *““Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. “Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. “Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.” (Matthew 24:15–18)*

He, then concludes this portion of His answer by saying this, *““Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.” (Matthew 24:34)*

He then begins to discuss His second coming when *He will judge the world in righteousness*. Of this day, he says, *““But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. “For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. “For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.” (Matthew 24:36–39)*

What then should a wise man conclude from this message? That one must be prepared for the coming of the Lord. For He will come when least expected, *like a thief (2 Peter 3:10)*.

As the prophet Amos said to the nation of Israel, we should heed as well,*Prepare to meet your God, O Israel (Amos 4:12)*

Jim Stauffer

We offer either in home studies in person or by way of Correspondence Courses.

Call me, Jim Stauffer at 913-620-0563, Evangelist at the Lenexa church of Christ.

We believe in worshiping and serving the Lord as He has instructed in His word.

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

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SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:
**WHO WILL FOLLOW
JESUS?**



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10