

THE
CHURCH
OF
GOD



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by

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THE CHURCH OF GOD

I like to read church signboards whenever I travel. I've seen many signboards with the name indicating that that particular congregation is a **Church of God**. These include: THE Church of God, the ORIGINAL Church of God, the TRUE Church of God, the Church of God (Seventh-day), the Church of God (Anderson, IN), the Church of God (Cleveland, TN), the Church of God in Christ, the World-wide Church of God, the (universal) Church of God and I could go on and on.

Attaching the name '**Church of God**' to a congregation is usually a sectarian designation. A few groups using this label make the claim that they alone are **the true** church. Other groups using this label take a different view and **do not claim** to be the only true church. In this folder we are taking a look at **the Church of God** as revealed in the New Testament.

God views humankind in **three distinct categories**. The divisions that we humans have erected are somewhat **superficial**. Divisions based on race, color of skin, economic or educational standing, religious labels, sexual identity, ethnicity, etc. **are all secondary** in view of the three basic categories recognized in the New Testament. These three categories are **the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God**. Paul issued the following exhortation,

"Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks [Gentiles] or the church of God." (1 Cor. 10:32)

- **The first category are the Jews.**

The promise God gave to Abraham, father of the Jews, **has not been withdrawn**. The the Jews are God's special covenant people.

The Abrahamic Covenant promise is,

"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Genesis 12:2-3)

Prophetic Scriptures teach that **God is not through with the Jews**. Despite their failure to acknowledge Jesus [Y'shua] as **the** Messiah, God has not abandoned them. God has plans and purposes for the Jews that have yet to be fulfilled. Christians are to bless the Jews.

Anti-Semitism is sin and has no place among Christians. Those groups who advocate 'Dominion/Kingdom Now' theology, i.e., *Reconstructionism*, are in error when they teach that God is finished with the Jews. The Jews figure prominently in biblical prophecy. The land of Israel is **pivotal** to unfulfilled Last Days prophecy. I do not believe that the Church is the New Israel but Israel is Israel and the Church is the Church; two distinct and separate entities. God has a divine purpose and plan for both.

- **The Gentiles are the second category.**

Gentiles are the people [nations] of earth who are not Jews. Gentiles are without God and without hope. They have developed an assortment of religions. Religion **is not** God's way. Religion **is the attempt** of humans to reach God or a god of their making. Religion without Christ is vain and offers no hope. Both Jews and Gentiles are invited to come to Christ. See: John 3:3, 7; Matthew 11:28-30.

- **The third category from God's perspective is the Church of God.**

The Church of God is made up of **both** Jews and Gentiles who have received Christ as Savior and Lord. We read,

"You are all sons [and daughters] of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek [Gentile], slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:26-28)

ARE YOU IN CHRIST?

If you have personally trusted in Christ then **you are in Christ** and are part of **the Church of God**. In fact, **all Christians are members of this Church**. No one joins this body. It is **not** a humanly devised organization. Every believer is **added** to the Church of God when he or she is reconciled unto God through Christ. Acts 2:47 sets forth this premise,

"And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

The Scriptures further teaches,

"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. . . Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. . . Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." (1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 17)

When a person receives Christ into his/her life that one is spiritually baptized by the Holy Spirit **into** the Body of Christ which is **the Church of God**. To be baptized means to be placed into. All believers are placed into the spiritual Body of Christ. This has **nothing** to do with water baptism, it is the work of the Spirit.

Christians need no longer build temples of stone and mortar. God is now in the process of building a spiritual temple. God's temple of the New Testament is **made up of all Christians**;

believing Jews and believing Gentiles. The foundation of God's temple is that

"of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself the chief cornerstone" (Eph. 2:20).

It is in Christ that

"the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21).

Every believer in Christ is a building stone in this temple that God is building. Paul wrote,

"And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (Eph. 2:21).

WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF GOD?

As already noted the Church of God is made up of all Christians. **See: Rom. 1:16-17.**

The Church of God has no headquarters this side of heaven. It has evangelists, pastors, teachers and other called-out ministers. Their ministry is servant ministry and it entails equipping the Body of Christ. No earthly organization can rightfully claim that it alone is the true Church. This Church transcends all of our humanly devised schemes and organizations. It alone is the Body of Christ; the Bride of the Lamb. It is the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic church" affirmed in the ancient creeds.

This Church was prophesied by our Lord in **Matthew 16:18, "I will build MY Church!"** This prophecy began to be fulfilled when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost. **See: Acts chapter 2.** It will continue to be fulfilled until

Christ calls the believing Church to be home with Him. **See: 1 Thess. 4:13-18.**

WHERE IS THE CHURCH OF GOD TODAY?

Whenever and wherever a company of Christians adhere to apostolic teaching there you will find part of **the Church of God**. These local churches adhere to the New Testament faith. It matters not what label is affixed to the church signboard. It does not even matter that there are differences in practices, understanding and interpretation on issues outside of the faith of the apostles. These companies of faith preach the Gospel of Christ to everyone.

WHO DOES THE CHURCH BELONG TO?

The Church belongs to God and Christ is its only rightful head,

"And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the Church; he is the beginning and the first-born from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy" (Col. 1:18).

ARE YOU A PART OF THIS CHURCH?

You can be! How? By repenting of sin, believing the Gospel and personally receiving Christ into your heart and life as Savior and Lord. With this act you will be automatically joined to His Church; **the Church of God!**

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