

Which Church should I go to?

1. A Samaritan woman asked Jesus this very question in *John 4:20*: “Our fathers (Samaritans) worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

A. Palestine was 120 miles long (north to south). To the extreme north was Galilee, and to the extreme south was Judea. In the middle was Samaria. Just ½ a mile from Sychar, the road to Samaria forks. At this fork is Jacob’s well. The Jews and the Samaritans had a feud going about who owned this well that started back in the time that King Solomon died, and his son, Rehoboam, took over the kingdom of Israel. 10 tribes of Israel rebelled against this new King, and broke off from Judah, Levi, and Benjamin, leaving Jerusalem and the temple of God, and starting their own kingdom, and worshiping their own gods, under their chosen king, Jeroboam (*I Kings 11-13*).

In 720BC, God punished this new northern kingdom of Israel, and allowed the Assyrians to invade, who destroyed it, and transported most of the survivors to Media (*II Kings 17:6*). Those who were left began inter-marrying with the foreigners who came in and settled with them. This is when they committed the unforgivable sin with the Jews (tribe of Judah), and lost their racial purity! **These are the remnants of the 10 tribes of Israel, who later become the Samaritans.**

About 138 years later, Judah (the southern kingdom of Israel, which includes Benjamin and Levi), also sins against God by worshiping other gods; and God punishes them by allowing to Babylonians to invade, and in 586BC they destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, and took the survivors to Babylon. But the Jews (as they were now called by the Babylonians) remained racially pure, and would not intermarry with the Babylonians.

About 47 years later, in 539BC, the Babylonians had been defeated and replaced with the Persian King Cyrus, who allowed the Jews to go back to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple of God.

When they got there, the remnants of the 10 tribes of Israel (Samaritans) who had been intermarrying with foreigners for the past 180 years wanted to help them rebuild the Temple and become a united Israel again. But, the Jews rejected their help, and no longer looked upon them as part of Israel.

So, about 450BC, when Jerusalem and the Temple were rebuilt and the Jews were all back; a feud breaks out between the Jews and Samaritans. Later, a high priest named Manasseh founds a rival temple (accepting only the first five books of the Old Testament) on Mount Gerizim which was in Samaritan territory; and the competition begins as to who is in the right Temple or Church or place of worship, and who is worshiping God correctly.

2. Jesus answered this Samaritan woman in *John 4:21-24*: (21) “Believe Me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. (22) You Samaritans worship what you do not know (they only knew what their family and decedents had taught them); we (Jews) worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews (Jesus came from the tribe of Judah). (23) Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and Truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the

Father seeks. (24) God is Spirit, and His worshipers must worship in Spirit and in Truth.”

A. Jesus said in verse 21 that the Temple or place of worship didn't matter anymore. Why?

(1) *I Corinthians 3:16* says: “Don't you know that you yourselves are God's Temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?”

B. Jesus said in *John 4:23*: “True worshipers worship in Spirit and in Truth.”

(1) *I John 5:6* says: “...the Spirit is the Truth.” In other words, the New Testament Scriptures (*Truth*) are the words of the Holy Spirit (*Spirit*); so, they are the same.

3. So, which Church does Jesus want me to go to? The Church that preaches and teaches the whole *Truth* — the words of the *Holy Spirit* — which is the New Testament Scriptures.

A. But, what if I can't find a Church that preaches and teaches the whole truth? Then, you worship without the building, with those who are true worshipers.

B. Remember, *I Corinthians 3:16* says you are, “God's Temple and that God's Spirit lives in you!” YOU CAN WORSHIP WITHOUT A CHURCH BUILDING IF YOU HAVE TO.

4. THERE ARE THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR WHEN FINDING THE RIGHT CHURCH TO WORSHIP IN, ACCORDING TO *I JOHN 5:7-13*: “For there are three that testify: the Spirit (*Truth*), the water and the blood...(v.11) And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son...(v.13) I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” In other words, to know that you have *eternal life*, you must, as a Christian (*name of the Son of God*) be able to testify that you have indeed experienced the following three things that mark a *true worshiper*:

A. SPIRIT

(1) *Romans 8:9-13* says only those who have the Spirit belong to Christ:

“You, however, are controlled not by your sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness (you are doing what is right by obeying Christ's commands). And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to our sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you

will die; but if by the Spirit, you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.”

(2) Ephesians 1:13,14 says when we obey the Truth, we are marked with the Seal of the Holy Spirit, and guaranteed eternal life:

*“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the **Word of Truth**, the Gospel of your salvation. In Him when you believed, you were marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance...”*

(3) So, are you sure you have the Holy Spirit?

B. WATER

1. John 3:5 says we must be born of the water and the Spirit to get to Heaven:

*“Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of **water and the Spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”*

2. Mark 1:9-11 says Jesus was baptized with water when He got the Spirit:

“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John at the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, He saw Heaven torn open and the Spirit descend on Him like a dove. And a voice came from Heaven: ‘You are My Son, whom I love; with You I am well-pleased’.”

3. John 3:22,23 & 4:1 says that after Jesus told Nicodemus he must be born of the water and Spirit, He left to baptize people in water as He did himself:

(a) John 3:22,23: “After this, Jesus and His disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where He spent some time with them, and baptized. (23) Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptized.”

(b) John 4:1: “The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John...”

4. Matthew 28:18-20 says Jesus later commanded his disciples to “Go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

5. Acts 2:38 then tells us that His disciples told the first 3,000 Christians what Jesus commanded them: Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

6. Acts 10:44-48 tells us Peter commanded the Gentile Christians to do the same: “Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They

have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.”

7. Acts 19:1-5 says even the Apostle Paul re-baptized 12 of John the Baptist’s disciples in order for them to have the Holy Spirit:

“ There Paul found some disciples, and asked them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ They answered, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’ So Paul asked, ‘Then what baptism did you receive?’ ‘John’s baptism,’ they replied. Paul said, ‘John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him. That is, in Jesus.’ On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.”

8. Romans 6:3-5 reminds us that baptism represents our death, burial and resurrection: *“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His **death**? We were therefore **buried** with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. if we have been united with Him (Christ) in His death (baptism), we will certainly also be united with Him in His **resurrection**.”*

C. BLOOD

(1) In John 6:48-63 Jesus said that anyone who eats His flesh and drinks His blood will have eternal life, because He will remain in them:

“I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from Heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from Heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from Heaven. If a man eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, ‘How can this man give us His flesh to eat?’

Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is real food and My blood is real drink. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him.

(60) *On hearing it, many of His disciples said, ‘This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?’*

Aware that His disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, ‘Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where He was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life’.”

(2) A few days after this, Jesus met with His 12 Disciples in an upper room to eat the Passover meal, and in Matthew 26:26-28 Jesus made sure at the Last

Supper that His 12 Apostles knew how to eat His flesh and drink His blood, when He took the unleavened bread and the cup containing grape juice in His hands at the Passover and showed them to them proclaiming: “*this is my body* (while He showed them a piece of unleavened bread)...*take and eat*” and “*this is my blood* (as He showed them a cup full of grape juice)...*drink from it all of you. This is My blood of the covenant (New Testament), which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*”

(3) In Hebrews 9:11-22, Paul explains to the Jews that Jesus came as our new High Priest, and enter the true tabernacle (Heaven), not with the blood of animals, but, according to verse 12: “*...He entered the Most Holy Place (Heaven, not a man made Tabernacle) once for all by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption (no longer any need for a priest to offer animals sacrifices for our sins).*” **And then Paul reminds these Jews in verse 14:** “*How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death...*”

(4) So, now, according to Hebrews 13:10-16: “*We have an altar (Communion Table with the blood and body of our sacrifice — Jesus Christ) from which those who minister at the tabernacle (man made place of worship, not Heaven) have no right to eat (must be a Christian).*

The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies (of the sacrificed animals) are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make His people holy through His own blood. Let us, then, go to Him outside the camp (no longer in the Jewish tabernacle or temple or synagogue), bearing the disgrace He bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but are looking for the city that is to come (Heaven).

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that confess His Name. And do not forget to do good and share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

5. A TRUE CHURCH WILL HAVE ITS WORSHIPERS BAPTIZED IN WATER, IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, TO RECEIVE FORGIVENESS OF SIN AND THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT; AND THEN WILL CONTINUE TO PREACH AND TEACH ONLY THE TRUTH FROM THE WORDS OF THE SPIRIT (NEW TESTAMENT OR COVENANT THAT CHRIST DIED FOR); AND WILL CENTER THEIR WORSHIP AROUND THE ALTAR (COMMUNION TABLE), SHARING IN THE BLOOD AND BODY OF THE ONLY SACRIFICE (JESUS CHRIST) THAT CAN GIVE THEM FORGIVENESS OF SINS, AND THE PROMISE THAT CHRIST WILL REMAIN IN THEM, ASSURING THEMSELVES OF AN ETERNAL HOME IN HEAVEN!

6. SEE “SOME SHEEP HAVE FANGS”