

Brand Name of Christ's Church

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Did the church, given to Jesus Christ by his heavenly Father, have a name that can be recognized today? If so, what is it called?

Before answering these questions, it is important to establish that Christ's church is not a building. Instead, it is a collective body of believers who have repented of sin and been baptized, which includes having hands laid upon them (Ac. 8:18; Heb. 6:2). God's Holy Spirit is then granted to these repentant individuals with the understanding that they are to continue living a new life of obedience to every word of Almighty God (Mt.4:4),

Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission (forgiveness) of sins (1Jn. 3:4); and you shall receive the gift of *the Holy Spirit* (Almighty God's power; cf. Lk. 24:49) (Ac. 2:38; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses).

And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is **the Holy Spirit which God has given to those who obey Him** (Ac. 5:32; cf. 1Pet. 1:2; emphasis added).

Therefore we (repentant sinners) were buried with him (Christ) through baptism into death (cf. Rom. 6:6), that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so **we also should walk in newness of life** (Rom. 6:4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace (forgiveness) may abound? ²
Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? (Rom. 6:1-2; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

You (members of Christ's body), as living stones, **are being built up a spiritual house** (not a physical building), a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God (Almighty) through Jesus Christ (1Pet. 2:5; cf. Rom. 12:4-5; 1Cor. 6:15; 12:12, 18, 20, 22-23, 25-27; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Peter's statement confirms that Christ's church is a spiritual body. It is not a physical building with a name on it, nor is it a man-made organization. In fact, the early church had no name. Instead, it was identified as a group of people worshiping God in various locations,

To the **church of God which is at Corinth**... (1Cor. 1:2a; cf. 2Cor. 1:1; emphasis added).

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to **the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**... (1Thes. 1:1a; cf. 2Thes. 1:1; emphasis added).

And **to the angel of the church in Thyatira** write... (Rev. 2:18a; emphasis added).

And **to the angel of the church in Sardis** write... (Rev. 3:1a; emphasis added).

And **to the angel of the church in Laodicea** write... (Rev. 3:14a; cf. Ac. 20:28; 1Cor. 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; Gal. 1:13; 1Tim. 3:5, 15. emphasis added).

So God's obedient servants are not identified by a physical building or a brand name. Instead, they are identified by their conduct and geographical location. The original Greek word that is translated into the English word "church" means a collective group of people,

Church - from the Greek *ekklesia* meaning: "gathering of citizens, called out to assemble." In a religious sense – "whole body of Christians scattered throughout the world."

Following Christ's death, some of God's true servants were able to attend synagogues for a while (Ac. 18:1-6). However, this did not continue for long due to persecution from the Jewish religious leaders who wanted to deny Christ's resurrection from the dead. Therefore, it was commonplace for God's people to congregate in someone's house,

Then Paul dwelt two whole years **in his own rented house**, and received all who came to him, ³¹**preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ** with all confidence, no one forbidding him (Ac. 28:30-31; emphasis added).

Likewise greet **the church** that is **in their** (Priscilla's and Aquila's) **house**... (Rom. 16:5a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with **the church that is in their house** (1Cor. 16:19; emphasis added).

To the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to **the church in your house** (Phm. 1:2; cf. Ac. 2:2, 46; 5:42; 12:12; 20:20; emphasis added).

Unfortunately today, many people believe a church is the building where people congregate, or it's a man-made organization with a specific brand name. Both these interpretations are incorrect. Consequently, applying a brand name to a spiritual body is misleading and a form of sectarianism that was denounced by Christ, and his apostles (see study: Did Christ Appoint Peter as Chief Apostle?). God's people cannot "speak the same thing" if they are divided among numerous church brands, each with its own human leadership and doctrines,

Now I (Paul) plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing (have a uniform testimony), and that there be no divisions (schisms or dissensions) among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same *judgment* (SGD 1106; opinion of what ought to be done) (1Cor. 1:10; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Shortly after Christ's death and resurrection, the early church began experiencing quarrels related to sectarianism. This trend continued after the death of Christ's apostles and it eventually lead to the many church brands that are extant today,

For it has been declared to me (Paul) concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions (quarrels) among you. ¹²Now I say this, that each of you says, 'I am of Paul,' or 'I am of Apollos,' or 'I am of Cephas,' (a doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church) or 'I am of Christ.'¹³Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized

in the name of Paul? (1Cor. 1:11-13; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Paul asked some very important questions regarding whether the brethren thought he was crucified for them, or if they were baptized in his name as opposed to Christ's. In other words, it was Christ alone who was sacrificed for them, and they were baptized into his spiritual body. Therefore, no human leader has any authority whatsoever over those individuals that Almighty God gave to Christ (Jn. 6:44, 65). Some can be helpers within God's church, but nothing more than that,

Not that we (Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy) **have dominion** (rule) **over your faith**, but (instead) **we are fellow workers for your joy**; for by (your) faith you stand (2Cor. 1:24; cf. Rom. 16: Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

I (Paul) commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is **a servant of the church in Cenchrea**,² that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed **she has been a helper of many and of myself also** (Rom. 16:1-2; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

According to the following statement from Paul, people who think they are more inspired, or gifted, than other brethren need to be careful because it is God who provides spiritual growth. Human instruments can be used in this process, but they are not capable of producing spiritual growth in anyone,

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers (servants) through who you believed, **as the Lord gave to each one?**⁶ I (Paul) planted, Apollos watered, but **God gave the increase** (spiritual growth).⁷ So then **neither he who plants (Paul) is anything, nor he who waters (Apollos), but God who gives the increase** (1Cor. 3:5-7; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Paul spared nothing when it came to describing the spiritual and physical effects of allowing human leaders to rule over Christ's church,

For you (brethren in Corinth) put up with fools gladly, since you yourselves are wise!²⁰ For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage (by various control methods including intimidation), if one devours you (takes away everything that would allow continued spiritual growth), if one takes from you (even the truth that an individual did have), if one exalts himself (to maintain control), if one strikes you on the face (verbally and perhaps even literally).²¹ To our (Christ's true servants) shame, I say that we were too weak for that! (Paul could not entertain these forms of abuse) (2Cor. 11:19-21a; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Almighty God made it abundantly clear that His people are to follow the lead of Jesus Christ and no one else, under any circumstances,

These are the ones who were not defiled with women (symbol of religious systems; in this example false ones), for they are virgins (symbol of a church waiting for her true husband, Jesus Christ). **These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes**. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God (Almighty) and to the Lamb (Rev. 14:4; cf. Mt. 17:5; Mk. 9:7; Lk. 9:35; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

There is only one true church of God and it is not a building, or human organization with a brand name. Consequently, it is not easy to identify except by its fruits (Mt. 7:17-20) and its adherence to the law and commandments of our Heavenly Father (Mt.22:36-40),

There is **one body and one Spirit**, just as you were called in **one hope** of your calling: ⁵ **one Lord, one faith, one baptism**; ⁶ **one God and Father of all**, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (Eph. 4:4-6; emphasis added).

Let your (God's true servants') light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven (Mt. 5:16; cf. Lk. 8:16; 11:33).

The "good works" mentioned in Matthew 5:16 are directly connected to the "light" as confirmed by comparing the following scriptural references,

Not everyone who says to me (Christ), 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but **he who does the will of My Father in heaven**. ²²Many will say to me in the day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name?' ²³And then I will declare to them, '**I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness!**' (Mt. 7:21-23; cf. 13:41; 25:1-12; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light... (Prov. 6:23a; cf. 119:105; emphasis added).

Therefore, the church that Jesus Christ leads will be a light that shines by teaching the law and commandments of God (good works) in a world that is darkened by Satan's many deceptions (Jn. 3:19; Ac, 26:18). By their obedience to these laws and commands, the works of God's true servants will be seen by men,

Do all things without murmuring and disputing (arguing), ¹⁵that you may become blameless and harmless (innocent), children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, **among whom you shine as lights in the world**, ¹⁶**holding fast (to) the word of life...** (Php. 2:14-16a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added; cf. 1Pet. 2:12).

Any religious group that does not recognize Jesus Christ as their only leader is deceived (Rev. 12:9). They may be sincere about what they are doing, but they are nonetheless misled. They may perform many wonderful works but their reward will not include the gift of everlasting life unless they repent of sin, begin living a new life in accordance with the law and commandments of Almighty God, and recognize Jesus Christ as the Passover Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29) and **only leader**. Any group led by a human being, and/or incorporated as a church with a "brand name" is not a group that Jesus Christ is leading. In fact, Christ is pictured as being outside these structures, and calling to individuals to come out of them,

Behold, I (Christ) stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me (Rev. 3:20; Ed. note in parenthesis).

One of the methods Satan uses to deceive this world's Christianity is to acknowledge the existence of Almighty God and Jesus Christ while denying that obedience to God's law and commandments is necessary for everlasting life (2Tim. 3:5; cf. Jude 1:4),

Now the serpent (symbol of Satan; cf. Rev. 12:9) was more cunning than any beast (SHD 2416; living being or thing; not necessarily a physical animal) of the field (SHD 7704; land, plain, or field) which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "**Has God indeed said**, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" (Gen. 3:1; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

And **the evil spirit answered** and said, '**Jesus I know**, and Paul I know; but who are you?' (Ac. 19:15; emphasis added).

It is not part of Satan's plan to attack the churches in this present evil age (Gal. 1:4) because none of them correctly teach or observe God's law and commandments. Therefore, he is more than happy for them to talk about God and Jesus Christ. However, anyone seeking to obey God will be targeted by Satan as the next scripture confirms,

And the dragon (symbol of Satan; cf. 12:9) was enraged with the woman (symbol of God's true church), and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, **who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ** (Rev. 12:17; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Even those groups that believe that God's law and commandments should be observed are often adding or deleting various aspects to suit their agenda. This is contrary to God's word,

You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you (Dt. 4:2; cf. 12:32; Mt. 4:4).

The churches of this present evil age are described by Almighty God as being the same as harlots because they take money from people and lead them to sin. They are all under the influence of "the mother of harlots" which is Satan's church that operates in the realm of the fallen host,

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me (John), saying, 'Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many *waters* (symbol of nations; cf. 17:15), ²with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.' ³So he carried me away in the Spirit into the *wilderness* (symbol associated with Satan's realm; cf. Lev. 16:10, 22). And I saw a *woman* (false religious system in Satan's realm) sitting on a *scarlet* beast (scarlet is symbolic of sin: cf. Isa. 1:18b) which was full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls (cf. Eze. 28:13), having in her hand a golden cup (symbol of rulership) full of abominations and the filthiness of the fornication of the earth. ⁵And **on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH** (Rev. 17:1-5; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

It is Almighty God who writes this name on the forehead of the scarlet beast. This scarlet beast symbolizes Satan and his false religious systems in both the physical and spirit realms. By association, everyone who follows any of these systems carries this same "mark." It is not something that can be seen with human eyes. Instead, it can only be seen by those in the spirit realm,

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them, and the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and **had not received his mark on their foreheads** or on their hands... (Rev. 20:4a; emphasis added).

Sadly, there are precious few that do not have this mark and it will remain on them until

genuine repentance of sin occurs. This “mark” identifies every brand of religion that is under Satan’s influence. Today there are approximately 39,000 denominations (brands) in Christianity alone. This is a great mystery because religious organizations appear to be righteous and do good works when in reality they are deceived about God’s law and commandments and are living in sin (Mt. 7:21-23; 13:41; 25:10-12). This has been the case since Satan lied to Eve resulting in her rebellion against God’s command in Genesis 2:16,

...For **Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.** ¹⁵ Therefore **it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness**, whose end will be according to their works (2Cor. 11:14b-15; emphasis added).

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence (unrighteousness) (Mt. 23:25; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Those who come out of this false religious system, and have only Jesus Christ as their delegated leader, can expect to be in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6). This is strongly emphasized in the following scripture,

And I (John) heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘**Come out of her, my people**, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues’ (Rev. 18:4; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The scarlet beast mentioned previously committed fornication, which means having unlawful relationships with false religious practices. This is the fornication that God’s true servants are to avoid,

Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand (1Cor. 10:8; KJV).

In the scripture above, Paul was referring to ancient Israel when they immersed themselves in pagan customs as most of Christianity does today when they observe Christmas, Easter, New Year’s Day, etc. Substituting Sunday as the weekly day of worship, instead of God’s true Sabbath on the seventh day - Saturday, is also a pagan custom,

They (Moabite women) invited the people (Israelites) to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods (Nu. 25:2; Ed. notes in parentheses).

God’s true servants are not to assimilate into the false doctrines and pagan customs associated with Satan’s numerous religions. Instead, they are to remove themselves just as God removed ancient Israel from Egypt with its multiple gods. Ancient Israel was supposed to follow the lead of the Angel of God but their hearts were entrenched in the pagan customs they had adopted from the Egyptians (1Cor. 10:1-4). Sadly, this situation has not changed because most people, who regard themselves as “religious”, prefer to accept the teachings of their particular church brand and/or whatever their religious leaders tell them, without much question or examination. In contrast, God’s true church is composed of people from around the world who recognize Jesus Christ as their only leader, and this body of believers will not have a brand name because

following Christ's death and resurrection there was no brand name given to God's church.

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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