

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“. . . Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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THE PATTERN FOR THE BLOOD BOUGHT CHURCH

by Ted J. Clarke

INTRODUCTION

Two previous lessons have illustrated the relationship of Christ's blood to the gospel plan of salvation and the purchase of the church (cf. Matthew 26:28; Acts 2:38; 20:28; Ephesians 5:23, 25). No one can be saved without contacting the blood of Christ through faith, repentance, confession and baptism (Acts 2:36-38; Romans 10:9-10; Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:1-5). Neither can one be in Christ without being in the church Christ purchased with His own blood, as the Scriptures above indicate (cf. Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

Since there are hundreds and hundreds of religious groups all claiming to be the church that Christ promised to build, is it possible to know if any church can be identified as the real church of Christ? The answer is, "Yes!" If one agrees to let the Bible be the final standard of authority, we can know which church belongs to Christ and which ones are counterfeit. God gave us a pattern to follow, with marks of positive identification for the Lord's church.

A PATTERN TO FOLLOW

A pattern is "a form or model proposed for imitation; something designed or used as a model for making things" (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition). Does the Bible claim to give a pattern for Christians to follow? Indeed it does. The apostle Paul's last letter before his execution admonished the evangelist Timothy, "**Hold fast the form [pattern, ASV] of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and, love which is in Christ Jesus**" (2 Timothy 1:13). A

few verses later Paul reinforced this command, saying, "**And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also**" (2:2). In the mind of the inspired apostle there was a "form" or "pattern" of sound words, "things . . . the same" of which needed to be passed on to others who would repeat them to still others. This body of teaching would be self-perpetuating, from the faithful to other faithful men down through the centuries. We have that body of teaching in the New Testament.

The chart, on the following page, "The New Testament Church" demonstrates the pattern for us to follow from the Scriptures. These are all essential elements of what it takes to be a New Testament church. We do not need a historical line of churches from the first century down to the present time to be certain that we are a true church in the eyes of the Lord. We just need to follow the pattern set forth in Scripture.

IDENTIFYING THE LORD'S CHURCH

How can we identify the church Jesus promised to build out of the hundreds that are not truly the church? Suppose you go to a large shopping mall for the first time. You park your car in the parking lot, but in your excitement you forget which door you entered into the mall and cannot remember the number or color of the row on the parking lot you used. Could you find your car out of the hundreds on the lot? Yes, it might take some time, but you could do it. How? By checking each car for the identifying features of your car.

Let's say you owned a 2001 Ford Taurus, white, four doors, with blue interior, with an American Automobile Association (AAA) sticker on the back window. Further, you know your license plate number is Arkansas ABC 789. Of course you also have the special electronic key which will unlock your door and start your car. There may be a number of Fords in the parking lot, but only one is yours. While the right name is essential, it is not the only identifying feature of your car. So it is with the Lord's church. Some may wear a Scriptural name (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 16:16), but they must possess the other marks of identification to truly belong to the Lord. You search until you find a white, four door 2000 Ford Taurus with an AAA sticker on the back window, but it is the wrong model year and has a brown interior, so it cannot be yours. In another row you see a 2001 white Ford Taurus with all of the identifying features of your car, except the license plate is Alabama BCD 456. Finally, after searching you find through most of the huge parking lots, you see one last white car. As you look closer you see it has all the features of your car, you insert the key in the door and it opens. You get in the car and turn on the ignition and the car starts. You have succeeded in a rather difficult job. Without knowing the identifying marks of your car the job would have been nearly impossible.

By the process of elimination, passing by all the cars that had no identifying features (for example, green Buicks with Texas license plates), and by the process of positive identification, further examining only white Fords for the rest of the identifying marks, you finally achieved your goal. No one wants to lose a brand new car, so you searched diligently for it. In a more serious and intense

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matter, no one should want to lose one's soul, yet some are satisfied to be religiously involved with a church other than the one Jesus died for. But Jesus is not the Savior of any church but His (Ephesians 5:23, 25; Acts 20:28).

CONCLUSION

Study carefully the chart below, accompanying this article. Look up every Scripture reference in your own Bible. We believe that if you do so that you will form an understanding that will lead you to want to find and be a member of the church Jesus died to save. If you desire further study we will be happy to study with you personally or to send you some additional literature to assist your search for truth regarding the church of Christ. Since Jesus shed His blood to purchase only one church, and since He is Savior of only one body, which is His church, you surely want to be a part of that blood bought family of God (cf. Ephesians 1: 21-23; 4:4).

HOW DO YOU VIEW JESUS?

by Eddy Gilpin

John R.W. Stott made the observation, "If the basic Christian thesis is true, and Jesus is the Son of God, then you can never be the same after the discovery as you were before. You cannot fit Jesus at the end of a microscope or at the end of a telescope and say, 'How interesting!' Jesus Christ is not interesting. He is profoundly, morally and spiritually disturbing and challenging. If there is anybody who forces us to get off the fence and to enter the field of moral commitment, it is Jesus Christ. If he is God, he deserves our worship, not just our patronage. Not just our admiration, but our adoration."

How do you view Jesus? Do you see Him as a historically significant character? a legend in the same vein as Santa Claus or the Lone Ranger? a being that has accomplished much in His day but who has no real significance in our modern society? a good man who merely takes His place alongside other good men?

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

FOUNDER-CHRIST Matthew 16:18	WHERE-JERUSALEM Isaiah 2:3; Acts 2:5,47	WHEN-AD 33 Acts 2:1-47	HEAD-CHRIST Ephesians 1:22
ORGANIZATION Philippians 1:1	ELDERS - Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7 DEACONS - Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-13 MEMBERS - Acts 2:41-47; Colossians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 12:18,27		
NAME (OF CHURCH) Ephesians 3:15	CHURCH OF GOD - 1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 20:28 THE BODY OF CHRIST - Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:23 CHURCHES OF CHRIST - Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16 BRIDE OF CHRIST - Romans 7:4; Revelation 21:9		
NAME (OF MEMBERS) Ephesians 3:15	DISCIPLES - John 15:8; Acts 11:26 SAINTS - Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Philippians 1:1 BRETHREN - Luke 8:21; Galatians 6:1 CHILDREN - Galatians 3:26; 1 John 2:1 CHRISTIANS - Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16		
CREED Acts 4:12	JESUS CHRIST - Matthew 16:16-18; 10:32-33; Acts 8:37		
WORSHIP John 4:24	SING - Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19 PRAY - 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Timothy 2:1-8 TEACH - Acts 2:42; 20:7 COMMUNION - Acts 20:7; Matthew 26:26-30; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 GIVE - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9: 13		
WORK Ephesians 2:8-10	EVANGELIZE - Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16 EDIFY - Ephesians 4:12 HELP NEEDY - Galatians 6:10; James 1:27		
MEMBERSHIP Acts 2:47	FAITH - John 3:16; Romans 5:1 REPENTANCE - Acts 2:38; 17:30-31 CONFESSION - Acts 8:37; Romans 10:9-10 BAPTISM - Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21		

As Stott has stated, if Jesus is who the Bible claims Him to be, that fact should change every aspect of our lives once the discovery has been made by us. Jesus' life and words challenge mankind ethically, morally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. Has your life been changed by the knowledge of Jesus? If it hasn't, it might just be that you have not really come to know Him as you should. It might well be that you have come to patronize Him and not to personify Him. You might look at whether you have adoration for Him, or merely admiration for Him. Peter preached to those on Pentecost "that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). As Lord He is to be respected as the supreme authority in our lives. As Christ He is to be revered as the supreme sacrifice for our sins. When once we see Him as He truly is, our lives will be changed forever. How do you view Jesus?

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THE SALT OF THE EARTH

Bible Lesson Number Eleven

Matthew 5:13 "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

Salt is a symbol of purity, a preservative and an enhancer of good flavors. To call one "the salt of the earth" is to pay a great compliment. Jesus said to His disciples: "Ye are the salt of the earth." They not only are a preservative of the earth, but, they are also that which makes it acceptable in the sight of God. Where there is a complete void of righteousness, the wrath of God shortly follows.

Because of a prevalence of wickedness, God determined to destroy the antediluvian world.

Genesis 6:5-7 "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the

thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."

Had there been ten righteous people in Sodom and Gomorrah, the entire cities would have been spared (**Genesis 18:32**). Apparently there is an extent of sin beyond which God will not let man go. This may be that to which God refers concerning the Amorites when he tells Abram that he would not destroy them at that particular time "for their iniquity is not yet full" (**Genesis 15:16**). Nineveh had reached the point at which God would have destroyed them had they continued in their ungodliness, but they repented at the preaching of Jonah (**Jonah 3:10**).

"Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (**Genesis 6:8**). This was his blessing because he, with faith, did that which God instructed him to do (**Hebrews 11:7**). The same is true for men today who believe God and do what is commanded. They are saved by the grace of God (**Ephesians 2:8,9**). Being a follower, a disciple of Jesus, one is saved and becomes a teacher of the message of hope, the good news, the gospel. Paul instructed Timothy: "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee" (**1 Timothy 4:16**).

Many nations have reached a peak of development and then become so corrupt within that they have fallen. The great empire of Rome is said to have fallen, among other reasons, because of the internal wickedness and corruption. It may well be that our own nation will either continue or fall because of the life any one of us lives. If God is counting the righteous persons in this country with a number in mind below which he will not let it go without

destroying it, will he include you among the good and righteous people?

Being righteous involves both the avoidance of evil practices and the doing of right things. Some consider themselves righteous because of all the bad things they do not do. Such is not adequate.

1 John 3:7 "Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."

Matthew 25 provides three pictures of the judgment. In each case, those who are depicted as condemned are not those who did so many evil things, but rather, those who did not do the right things. **Galatians 5:19-24** lists a number of sins to avoid and other things to be sure to do.

The greatest thing you can do in life for yourself, your family, the nation, and even the entire world, is be a faithful Christian. In so doing, you will be "the salt of the earth." Those who are living contrary to God's will are those whom Jesus describes as being "good for nothing." Uselessness is a tragedy. Whether you are useful or useless is entirely up to you personally. Jesus, his exemplar life and his masterful teaching, is the way of righteousness.

John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Questions

1. What is the value of salt?
2. Who did Jesus say was the "salt of the earth"?
3. Why were the people, in the days of Noah, destroyed by the flood?
4. Why were the people of Nineveh spared?
5. What is grace? What is mercy?
6. How can our own nation be preserved?
7. Who can help preserve it? How?
8. How does one become a part of the "salt of the earth"?
9. Is there any other way?

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WHICH AM I?

A strong horse-shoe magnet may be held over an old rust eaten, shapeless nail without meeting any response. A bright, ringing nail will leap to the magnet, attract another and through it draw yet another until several are attracted.

That is how Christians are. A really genuine, active, shining Christian has a tremendous attraction to Christ, is magnetized by His love and purity, attracted by His power. And through that Christian, Christ can draw others to Him to share the same power and attraction.

But a rusty, unpolished, corroded Christian, cranky, defiled and selfish, has very little attraction, and through him the power of Christ to win the world cannot flow.

God has enough power to wipe out every vice and every evil doctrine in this world, but first of all, there must be conductors. And rusty, un-taught, unprepared, and unpracticed church members neither draw others near to God nor are drawn near themselves.

Our religion must be intensive before it can be extensive.



GOD IS STILL LOVE

A man traveling through the country noticed that the weather vane on the roof of a farm building bore the phrase "God is Love." He was troubled about it and asked the farmer, "Do you think God's love is as changeable as that weather vane?"

You miss the point, sir," replied the farmer. "It's on the weather vane because no matter which way the wind is blowing, God is still love."

"And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in Him." (1 John 4:16)

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GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP - COLOSSIANS 3:17

- LORD'S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-34; 16:1-2).
- PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17-18).
- SINGING** - God's word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
- GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
- PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men's doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 1:18-23).

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