

CHART VII WHY YOU NEED THE CHURCH

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. Review previous lessons.

1. Special emphasis upon the last two lessons:

- a. We have found that all of God*s plans and purposes centered in Jesus Christ. All the provision God made for our spiritual welfare and salvation are to be found “in Him”. We are truly “made complete” in Him. e satisfies all of our spiritual needs.

Colossians 2:10 and you have been given _____ in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. that He satisfies all of our spiritual needs.

- b. As Jesus is the savior in whom all these blessings become a reality to man, we have found also that scriptural baptism is the doorway into all these blessings as it puts us:

(1) into Christ

Galatians 3:27 for all of you who were baptized into _____ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

(2) into His death

Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through _____ 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.

(3) into His name

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, _____ them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have _____ you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

(4) into His body

1 Cor 12:13 For we were all baptized by one _____ into one body__ whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free__ and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

(5) into His Kingdom

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the _____ of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

In this lesson we want to emphasize that the church is the realm, or spiritual institution, in which these blessings from God through Christ are to be enjoyed and exercised. We want to divide our study of the church into the following categories:

The singularity or oneness of the church.

The chronology or history of the church.

The essentiality of the church.

II. The Singularity of the Church.

A. The problem of denominationalism.

The picture of the religion of Jesus Christ that many millions of people are confronted with is one of confusion and division. There are more than 2500 religious denominations wearing different names, teaching differing and even contradictory doctrines, having different forms of worship, and presenting different plans by which men might be saved. Yet they all claim to recognize the same God and Father, the same Lord Jesus Christ, and profess to follow the same Bible.

1. To even a casual observer such a system is confusing. How many thousands have felt a need for Christ and His teaching in their lives and yet have taken one look at the divided and unsettled picture presented by denominationalism and have said “if that is Christianity, I don’t want it”?
2. It is obviously a wasteful and extravagant system calling for the expenditure of billions of dollars yearly to oil denominational machinery, to build and maintain denominational institutions (colleges, benevolent and missionary societies, printing houses, etc.), and to promote sectarian loyalty. The efficiency and financial savings that would result if all professing Christians were members of one church, wearing one name, promoting one system of teaching is apparent to any thinking person.
3. But besides being confusing and wasteful, the whole system is divisive. To promote denominationalism is to condone, encourage, and even foster division among those who claim to be the children of God. Some find themselves in the ludicrous position of acknowledging that people in other denominations than theirs are “Christians” and have the hope of Heaven and yet they refuse to fellowship them in the Lord’s Supper because of sectarian barriers.
4. Denominationalism is a system self-condemned. The leaders of the religious world are all agreed that the system of denominationalism is indefensible. In the Second World Conference on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches held in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1937, the following resolution was adopted: “We humbly acknowledge that our divisions are contrary to the will of Christ, and we pray God in His mercy to shorten the days of our separation and to guide us by His spirit into fullness of unity—we know that our witness is weakened by our divisions”(Christian Forum, Feb. 1, 1951).

The irony of the whole thing is that while the leaders condemn division and have councils on unity, they are unwilling to lay aside the denominational creeds, names, organizations, etc., that create the division and return to God’s plan. On a temporary basis they will set aside these sectarian names and creeds in order to have a “union meeting” or “campaign for Christ” in a given community. They grant that this will give them greater strength, more efficiency, and a stronger appeal during this soul saving campaign but they fail to see the obvious fact that the same thing would be doubly effective on a long-term or permanent basis.

B. The Bible teaching on the singularity of the church.

1. In the Old Testament.
 - a. While it is true that the church is a New Testament institution, every prophecy concerning the church, every type or shadow pre-figuring the church, in the Old Testament emphasizes the oneness of the Lord’s church.
 - (1) The Tabernacle or Temple: It is obvious from many passages that these were a picture of the church to come.

Zechariah 6:12 Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD. 13 It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be _____ between the two.

Amos 9:11 "In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be, 12 so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my _____," declares the LORD, who will do these things.

Acts 15:14 Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. 15 The words of the _____ are in agreement with this, as it is written: 16 "After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, 17 that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things' 18 that have been known for ages.

Malachi 3:1 "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his _____; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.

Hebrews 8:2 and who serves in the sanctuary, the true _____ set up by the Lord, not by man.

Hebrews 9:1 Now the first covenant had regulations for _____ and also an earthly sanctuary. 2 A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. 3 Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, 4 which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. 5 Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now. 6 When everything had been arranged like this, the _____ entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. 7 But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. 8 The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing. 9 This is an illustration for the _____ time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.

Ephesians 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the _____ of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

- (a) But there was only one tabernacle, only one temple, only one place where God's name was recorded and where His glory dwelled.

Exodus 40:34 Then the _____ covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 36 In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; 37 but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out _ until the day it lifted. 38 So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and _____ was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.

Deuteronomy 12:5 But you are to seek the place the LORD your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his _____ there for his dwelling. To that place you must go.

1 Kings 8:10 When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the _____ filled the temple of the LORD. 11 And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple. 12 Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud; 13 I have indeed built a magnificent _____ for you, a place for you to dwell forever."

1 Kings 8:29 May your eyes be open toward this _____ night and day, this place of which you said, 'My Name shall be there,' so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place.

- (b) When men built a counterfeit temple God would not recognize it.

1 Kings 12:26 Jeroboam thought to himself, "The _____ will now likely revert to the house of David. 27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam." 28 After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." 29 One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. 30 And this thing became a _____; the people went even as far as Dan to worship the one there. 31 Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites. 32 He instituted a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival held in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. This he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made. And at Bethel he also installed priests at the high places he had made. 33 On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a month of his own choosing, he offered sacrifices on the altar he had built at Bethel. So he instituted the _____ for the Israelites and went up to the altar to make offerings.

- (2) The House of God: Another designation given to God's dwelling place on earth and used to prophetically picture the church that Christ would build.

1 Chronicles 29:2 With all my resources I have provided for the _____ of my God _ gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble _ all of these in large quantities.

2 Chronicles 23:5 a third of you at the royal palace and a third at the Foundation Gate, and all the other men are to be in the courtyards of the _____ of the LORD.

John 2:16 To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's _____ into a market!"

Isaiah 2:2 In the last days the mountain of the LORD'S temple will be _____ as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.

Zechariah 1:16 "Therefore, this is what the LORD says: 'I will return to _____ with mercy, and there my house will be rebuilt. And the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem,' declares the LORD Almighty.

1 Timothy 3:15 if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's _____, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

- (a) But here again, **God has only one house**. It is always "The House of God", never in the plural!
- (3) The Flock (or Fold) of God: Another figure used to represent God's people in the Old Testament and to foreshadow the Church of the New Testament is that of a flock.

Jeremiah 13:17 But if you do not listen, I will weep in secret because of your pride; my eyes will weep bitterly, overflowing with tears, because the LORD'S _____ will be taken captive.

Jeremiah 23:2 Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: "Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not _____ care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done," declares the LORD.

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the _____ of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not _____ the flock.

1 Peter 5:2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers _ not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being _____ to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

But there is only one flock.

John 10:14 "I am the good _____; I know my sheep and my sheep know me _ 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father _ and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

- (4) The way: Another expression that denoted the people of God walking according to, and under, His rule in the Old Testament was “the way”.

Psalms 1:6 For the LORD watches over the _____ of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalms 18:30 As for God, his way is perfect; the _____ of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him.

Psalms 25:9 He guides the humble in what is _____ and teaches them his way.

Psalms 77:13 Your ways, O God, are holy. What god is so _____ as our God?

Proverbs 10:29 The way of the LORD is a refuge for the _____, but it is the ruin of those who do evil.

Jeremiah 6:16 This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the _____ paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'

This term is also used prophetically and actually of the church.

Isaiah 35:8 And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not _____ on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it.

Acts 9:2 and asked him for letters to the _____ in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem

Acts 19:8 Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the _____ of God. 9 But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way.

Acts 19:23 About that time there arose a great _____ about the Way

But again, there is only one way.

Matthew 7:13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For _____ is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the _____ and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

- (5) The Holy Nation, or Purchased Possession: Of all the nations of the world, God separated Israel to be His peculiar (or purchased) possession. They were a holy nation because of their identity with Him.

Exodus 19:5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my _____, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

Deuteronomy 4:31 For the LORD your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the _____ with your forefathers, which he confirmed to them by oath. 32 Ask now about the former days, long before your time, from the day God created man on the earth; ask from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything so great as this ever happened, or has anything like it ever been heard of? 33 Has any other people heard the voice of God speaking out of fire, as you have, and lived? 34 Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the _____ the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?

Ezekiel 37:22 I will make them one nation in the land, on the _____ of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms.

Psalms 135:4 For the LORD has chosen Jacob to be his own, Israel to be his _____ possession.

There was only one nation that wore God*s name, that were HIS chosen people, that had covenant with Him. This “shadow” or “type” is fulfilled in the church today.

- (a) It is the nation born at once.

Isaiah 66:8 Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be _____ in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children.

- (b) It is the “strong nation” over which the Lord would reign.

Micah 4:1 In the last days the mountain of the LORD's _____ will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. 2 Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from _____, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 3 He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. 4 Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken. 5 All the nations may walk in the name of their gods; we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever. 6 "In that day," declares

the LORD, "I will gather the lame; I will assemble the exiles and those I have brought to grief. 7 I will make the lame a remnant, those driven away a _____ nation. The LORD will rule over them in Mount Zion from that day and forever.

- (c) It is the "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people"

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy _____, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

- (d) It is the one nation prophesied of in the Old Testament.

Ezekiel 37:22 I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be _____ nations or be divided into two kingdoms.

2. In the New Testament.

- a. Every figure used to identify the church in the New Testament (besides the five we have already studied from Old Testament prophecy) emphasizes its singularity.

- (1) Kingdom: The terms "church" and "kingdom of God" or "kingdom of heaven" are used interchangeably in the New Testament.

Matthew 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of _____ will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

John 12:23 Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

John 12:28 Father, _____ your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."

Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 15 He is the _____ of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

The term kingdom is always used in the singular when pertaining to God's plan. Christ is the king and He is over the kingdom.

- (2) Body: That the terms "church" and "body" are likewise used synonymously is evident from these passages.

Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the _____ from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in

heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. 21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation _ 23 if you continue in your faith, _____ and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. 24 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the _____.

Ephesians 1:22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the _____ of him who fills everything in every way.

- (a) How many bodies are there?

Ephesians 4:4 There is ____ body and one Spirit _ just as you were called to one hope when you were called _ 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

- i) "There is one body." If the body is the church, then there is only one church.

Ephesians 2:16 and in this one body to _____ both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

1 Corinthians 12:12 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one _____. So it is with Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:20 As it is, there are many parts, but one _____.

The figure itself would demand one head (Christ), over one body (the church). Denominationalism puts Christ in the hideous position of being one head over 2500 bodies. This is a monstrosity!

- ii) What if a person believes in two gods, can he be a Christian? No, because the passage says "one God".
- iii) What if a person believes in two lords, can he be a Christian? No, because the passage says "one Lord".
- iv) How can people be Christians who believe in 2500 churches (or bodies) when the passage says one body? How can they believe in many differing "faiths", when the passage says "one faith" ?

- (3) Bride: The church of the Lord is likewise portrayed as being married to Christ.

John 3:28 You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.' 29 The bride belongs to the _____. The friend who

attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.

2 Corinthians 11:2 I am jealous for you with a _____ jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

Romans 7:4 So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was _____ from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.

- (a) Study Ephesians 5:23 carefully.

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the _____ as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

i) Note the definite article “the”. Just as “the” (one) husband is “the” (one) head of “the” (one) wife, so Christ is “the” (one) head of “the” (one) Church.

ii) One man married to one woman is God*s plan. One man cannot be married to 2500 women neither can Christ be the husband of 2500 wives (or churches). Denominationalism would make a spiritual polygamist of Jesus!

(4) Church: The term “church” is always used in the singular whenever it is talking of the church Jesus said He would build. Matt. 16:18 ... on this rock I will build my church (singular) and the gates of Hades will overcome it (not them) (parenthetical statements added).

- (a) NOTE: In passages such as Rom. 16:16 All the churches of Christ send greetings” or Rev. 1:4, “The seven churches in the province of Asia” the reference is to local congregations, not to denominations of differing faith and order.

C. Appeals for maintaining this oneness or unity and warnings against division.

1. The appeal for unity.

Psalms 133:1 How good and _____ it is when brothers live together in unity!

Romans 15:5 May the God who gives _____ and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one heart and mouth you may _____ the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 4:42 All the _____ were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you _____ with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be _____ united in mind and thought.

Philippians 2:1 If you have any _____ from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my _____ complete by being like_minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

- a. Is that the picture presented by denominationalism? Do they all with “one mind and one voice” glorify God? Do they all “speak the same things and “walk by the same rule? Are they all of “one heart and one soul”?

- b. This is something that Christians are to “endeavor” or “give diligence” to keep. Yet there is no possible way to reconcile the picture of denominationalism to God*s platform for unity.

Ephesians 4:3 Make every _____ to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit _ just as you were called to one hope when you were called _ 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

John 17:20 "My prayer is not for them _____. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

- c. In the dark hours before His betrayal this subject of the oneness of His followers was paramount in Jesus* thoughts and prayers. No way can possibly be found to reconcile the division and confusion of denominationalism to this prayer. Not even the conglomeration or federation of all sectarian churches into some ecumenical body would suffice as the unity Christ prayed for that they all may be one, even as you are in Me, and I am in you.

2. Warnings against division.

Romans 16:17 I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put _____ in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

Galatians 5:19 Th e acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual _____, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the _____ of God.

- a. Notice that in Gal. 5 “selfish ambition, dissensions, factions” are classified in the same category as “sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft”.

- D. To sum up this section, God planned and purposed One Kingdom, One Flock, One Way, One House, One Temple, or One Church. Jesus built but one church. All Christians in the 1st century were members of that One Church. The whole system of denominationalism and religious division is not only a modern innovation but is condemned as contrary to God*s plan for unity.

III. The Chronology or History of the Church.

- A. The church in God*s eternal plan and purpose.

Ephesians 3:8 Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this _____ was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. 10 His intent was that now, through the church, the _____ wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,

1. Just as the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins was planned and purposed from the very foundation of the world so the church or kingdom as the realm in which that salvation might be enjoyed was planned from the beginning of time.

1 Peter 1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without _____ or defect. 20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

Revelation 13:8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast _ all whose _____ have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

B. The church in the prophecies of the Old Testament.

1. As the **house of God** to be established in Jerusalem in the last days.

Isaiah 2:2 In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. 3 _____ peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from _____, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Zechariah 1:16 "Therefore, this is what the LORD says: 'I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there my house will be _____. And the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem,' declares the LORD Almighty.

2. As the **Temple** to be built by Christ.

Zechariah 6:12 Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his _____ and build the temple of the LORD. 13 It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a _____ on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.'

Amos 9:11 "In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be, 12 so that they _____ the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name," declares the LORD, who will do these things.

Malachi 3:1 "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the ____ before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the _____ of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.

3. As the **Kingdom** over which Christ would reign.

Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the _____ will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and _____ it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Daniel 2:44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a _____ that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself _____ forever.

Daniel 7:13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the _____ of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an _____ dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

4. As **Zion**, the refuge of God*s people.

Isaiah 24:23 The moon will be abashed, the sun ashamed; for the LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in _____, and before its elders, gloriously.

Isaiah 33:20 Look upon Zion, the city of our festivals; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a peaceful abode, a tent that will not be moved; its _____ will never be pulled up, nor any of its ropes broken. 21 There the LORD will be our Mighty One. It will be like a place of broad rivers and streams. No galley with oars will ride them, no mighty ship will sail them. 22 For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us. 23 Your rigging hangs loose: The mast is not held _____, the sail is not spread. Then an abundance of spoils will be divided and even the lame will carry off plunder. 24 No one living in Zion will say, "I am ill"; and the sins of those who dwell there will be forgiven.

Isaiah 46:13 I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away; and my _____ will not be delayed. I will grant salvation to Zion, my splendor to Israel.

5. For approximately 4,000 years the spiritual institution referred to by the above mentioned figures existed only in divine purpose, promise, and prophecy. The place of its establishment was set at Jerusalem, the time "in the last days" or "in the days of these kings" (the Caesars), and the nature of it as a universal kingdom "all nations shall flow unto it".

C. The church in the period of preparation during the lives of John the Baptist and Jesus.

1. When the time drew near for the fulfillment of all of these prophecies, there was a period of preparatory work, during which time the kingdom (or church) was announced to be "at hand" or "close by" or imminent.

Matthew 3:1 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea 2 and saying, "Repent, for the _____ of heaven is near."

Mark 1:14 After John was put in prison, _____ went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

2. To see how immediate the prospect of the coming church or kingdom was, consider the following:
- a. It was to be in the lifetime of disciples living then.

Mark 9:1 And he said to them, "I tell you the truth, some who are _____ here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

- b. It was to be when the apostles received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and its accompanying power.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

- (1) An event to take place "in a few days".

Acts 1:4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." 6 So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the _____ to Israel?" 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my _____ in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

D. The Church in its actual establishment.

1. On the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection of Christ, as recorded in Acts 2, we find the culmination and fruition of more than 4,000 years of planning and prophecy.
 - a. From Gen.1 to Acts 2 there are hundreds of references to this spiritual institution, all pointing forward to a coming event
 - b. From Acts 2 through Revelation every reference to this spiritual institution is to an institution in actual existence.
 - (1) The church was in existence.

Acts 2:47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord _____ to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 8: 3 But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he _____ off men and women and put them in prison.

Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, _____ them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

- (2) The house of God was in existence.

1 Timothy 3:15 if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the _____ of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

Hebrews 3:6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our _____ and the hope of which we boast.

- (3) The temple was in existence.

Ephesians 2:21 In him the whole _____ is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to _____ a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit _____ in you?

- (4) The kingdom was in existence.

Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the _____ of the Son he loves,

Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be _____, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

Revelation 1:9 I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and _____ endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Matthew 26:29 I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I _____ it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

1 Corinthians 11:23 For I _____ from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this _____ and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 27 Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 A man ought to examine _____ before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.

- (5) Spiritual Zion was in existence.

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon _____ of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the _____ blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. 25 See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?

- (6) The holy nation was in existence.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy _____, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his _____ light.

- E. The church in perpetuity or the history of the church since Pentecost.
1. Bear in mind that the church or kingdom of God, once established was to continue until the end of the world and the second coming of Christ.

Daniel 2:44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to _____ people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.

Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, _____ God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, _____ and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

- a. The seed that produces the kingdom is the Word of God and Jesus said that this seed is indestructible.

Luke 8:11 "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the _____ of God.

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will _____ pass away.

1 Peter 1:23 For you have been born again, not of _____ seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass _____ and the flowers fall, 25 but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.

- b. Therefore the kingdom can never be destroyed and will be here when Christ comes to deliver it back to God.

1 Corinthians 15:24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the _____ to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, _____ and power.

2. There were warnings of an apostasy.
 - a. While the Apostles were still alive and the church was led by inspired men, it remained true to the pattern God had given. However, there were a number of warnings given about an apostasy, a falling away from the truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or _____ supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. 3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will _____ and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. 5 Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? 6 And now you know what is _____ him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. 7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who

now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of _____ displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, 10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to _____ the truth and so be saved. 11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie

1 Timothy 4:1 The Spirit clearly says that in _____ times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been _____ as with a hot iron. 3 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. 4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be _____ if it is received with thanksgiving,

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage _ with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the _____ will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching _____ want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over _____ and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own _____ men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

- b. The following is a summary of the above passages.
- (a) An apostasy (a departure from the truth) was sure to come.
 - (b) It would be characterized by the following:
 - i) Some would despise sound doctrine and turn to the fables of men.
 - ii) A group would arise who would forbid marriage and command abstinence from meats.
 - iii) From within this group would one arise setting himself forth as God, actually claiming titles and prerogatives that belong only to God.
 - iv) This apostasy would begin within the organization of the church - "from among your own number."
- (2) We identify this apostasy with the Roman Catholic Church.
- (a) Many have been taught that the Roman Catholic Church was the first church. This is not true. The church Jesus established through His Apostles was in existence 600 years before Catholicism as we know it developed.
 - (b) Certainly Catholicism has many of the marks that were to characterize this apostasy.
 - i) It forbids marriage of Priests and Nuns.
 - ii) It commands abstinence from meats on fast days.
 - iii) The Pope of Rome actually occupies (in the mind of true Catholics) the position of God on earth. The official Catholic almanac makes this statement concerning the Pope, "the Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the Vicar of Christ. He is also the divine Monarch, the Supreme Emperor, and the King of Kings."
 - a) No man on earth has the right to such titles.
 - iv) Much of its tradition and doctrine is based on "fables" rather than the doctrine of Christ.
- (3) How this apostasy developed.

- (a) The pattern of church organization in the New Testament calls for:
- i) A plurality of elders (bishops) in every local congregation.

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the _____ and deacons:

Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with _____ and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Acts 20:17 From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the _____ of the church. ... 28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be _____ of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Titus 1:5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint _____ in every town, as I directed you.

- ii) Each local congregation to be independent and autonomous.
- (b) 100 to 200 years after death of the Apostles.
- i) Within an eldership, one man would become known as the ruling elder or presiding elder and gradually the term “Bishop” was used to distinguish these ruling elders from the other elders (the Bible says nothing of this distinction).
- ii) Within a city of four or five congregations, one of these Bishops would come to dominate all the others and finally became known as the City Bishop or “Patriarch” with authority over all the congregations in the diocese.
- iii) These Patriarchs or City Bishops began to meet in councils (likewise unknown in New Testament times). In these councils there was a struggle for authority narrowing itself down to a fight between the Patriarchs of these five major cities: Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Rome. This battle for supreme authority finally narrowed down to the Bishop of Rome and the Bishop of Constantinople.
- iv) In the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., the Bishop of Constantinople tried to have himself appointed the “Universal Bishop” or the head of the church on earth. He was opposed by Gregory, the Bishop of Rome (who has since been sainted by the Catholic Church). Gregory said that to assume the title of Universal Bishop or to seek to be the head of the church on earth was “the spirit of the Anti-Christ”.
- v) However, it was not very long after Gregory’s death (606 A.D. that Boniface III, then Bishop of Rome, succeeded in having himself declared the “Universal Bishop” or Pope, the head of the church on earth.
- (c) During this period when the organization of the church was being corrupted there were also many corruptions in the worship and doctrine, (We have seen in previous lessons the completeness and sufficiency of the New Testament revelation and warnings against adding to or taking from the teaching of the Apostles). The following things were added by the authority of man:
- i) The use of Holy Water.
- ii) Penance.
- iii) Relics (pieces of the cross, bones of St. Peter, etc.)
- iv) Burning of candles.
- v) Burning of incense.
- vi) Infant Baptism.
- vii) Images.
- viii) Counting of beads in prayer.
- ix) Purgatory.
- x) Celibacy of the Priesthood.
- xi) Withholding the cup from the laity.

- xii) Instrumental Music.
 - a) Actually there are none of the things that distinguish the Roman Catholic Church that can be found in the Bible. Such things as a Pope, Cardinals, Archbishops, Nuns, etc., are unknown to the scriptures.
- (d) During this period (and for the next 1,000 years) Roman Catholicism reigned supreme over the religious world.
 - i) It is called the Dark Ages because the light of God*s truth was practically covered up. The Priests were the only ones who had access to the Bible and training to read. The Roman Catholic priests interpreted the Bible in the light of the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.
 - ii) Any opposition from so called “heretical” sects was stamped out by physical opposition. The Catholic Church administered capital punishment against those who did not bow to her authority.
 - a) Galileo, Copernicus, Wycliffe and others were persecuted due to their heresies.
 - iii) Any church history, including the Catholic Encyclopedia, will tell of the violence, the immorality of the Popes, the ridiculous superstitions and fables, etc., that characterized the apostate church at this time.
- 3. Fundamental issue in all this is the matter of authority.
 - a. We have already seen that all authority rests with Christ.

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All _____ in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

- b. He entrusted this authority to His apostles.

Matthew 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will _____ my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

Matthew 18:18 "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be _____ in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

- c. Their writings constitute the only and final authority in religious matters today.

Galatians 1:8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should _____ a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!

1 Corinthians 4:6 Now, brothers, I have applied these things to _____ and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.

- d. The Roman Catholic Church on the other hand recognizes three sources of authority.
 - (1) The Bible is recognized as inspired (with the qualification that it must be interpreted by the Roman Catholic Church).
 - (2) The Pope when he speaks “ex cathedra” on matters of doctrine or morals is recognized as infallible.
 - (3) Traditions of the church are likewise considered infallible.
 - (a) Written traditions, the writings of the so-called “Church Fathers”, men who lived and wrote in the early years of this apostasy.
 - (b) Oral traditions stories and fables handed down for generations by word of mouth are finally accepted as doctrine. (For example, the assumption of Mary, which was an oral tradition for centuries, and was made an article of faith in 1950.)

(4) Actually, in practice, the Roman Catholic Church recognizes tradition above the word of God (as revealed in the New Testament). An example of this is seen in reference to the qualifications of a Bishop.

(a) God said in the Bible.

1 Timothy 3:2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the _____ of but one wife, temperate, self_controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

The overseer (Bishop - KJV) **MUST** be. - the husband of one wife,”

(b) The Pope said a Bishop cannot be married.

(c) It is obvious whose word is respected as final in the Catholic Church.

4. The Protestant Reformation - 1517 to 1800 - The origin of denominationalism.

a. Martin Luther, a Catholic monk and teacher in a Catholic University, nailed to the Church door at Wittenberg Germany 95 thesis (or propositions for debate) objecting to the practices of the Catholic Church. This constituted the first major break with Catholicism. He was followed by men like Calvin, Zwingli and others in a general defection from the yoke of Rome.

b. There are several fundamental considerations that we need to keep in mind concerning this period:

(1) This was a reformation movement, it was an attempt to reform an apostate organization.

(2) Had these reforms been accepted, these men would have remained Roman Catholics.

(3) When these reforms were rejected and these men were excommunicated, they started their own churches, something they had no authority from God to do. (The only one given authority to build a church was Christ. *Matthew 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*)

(4) They naturally carried into these man-made churches many of the corruptions of Roman Catholicism.

(a) While they left out such things as the Mass, the Pope, indulgences, etc., they brought over into these denominations such practices as infant baptism, sprinkling, a clergy - laity distinction, instrumental music, etc.

(5) They wrote human creeds to regulate and govern these churches that once again bound men to human authority and tradition in religion just as they had during the Dark Ages.

c. From Luther*s break with Rome in 1517, there has been a steady stream of human religious denominations:

(1) 1530 - The Lutheran Church established in Augsburg, Germany.

(2) 1534 - The Church of England was created by Henry VIII*s break with the Pope. From this came the Episcopal Church.

(3) 1535 and 6 - The Presbyterian Church was established by John Calvin in Switzerland and John Knox in Scotland.

(4) 1607 to 1611 - The Baptist Church was established by John Smythe in England.

(5) 1609 - The Congregational Church grew out of the Church of England.

(6) 1609 - The United Brethren grew out of a merger attempt between the Congregational and Presbyterian.

(7) 1729 - The Methodist Church was established in England by John and Charles Wesley.

(8) 1844 - The Seventh Day Adventist Church in New England by Ellen G. White.

(9) 1830 - The Mormon Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints) in New England by Joseph Smith.

(10) 1878 to 1990— The Christian Science (or Church of Christ, Scientist) in Boston by Mary Baker Eddy.

(11) Since then the list has continued with the Holiness Church, The Pentecostal, the Nazarene, Four Square, Mennonite etc.

d. At this point it is well to stress:

(1) That the church of Christ, the one body found in the Bible had been in existence for more than 1500 years before these human churches were built.

(2) That God*s word has always condemned division.

1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no _____ among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

John 17:20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will _____ in me through their message,

Ephesians 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit _ just as you were called to one hope when you were called _ 5 one Lord, one faith, one _____;

- (3) That a church built by men is not "as good as" one built by Christ.

Psalms 127:1 Unless the LORD builds the house, its _____ labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.

- (4) That a church that cost efforts of men not "as good as" one that cost the blood of Christ.
(5) That a church that is unknown to the scriptures is not "as good as" one found in the Bible.
- e. Catholicism did not take all this sitting down but began a bloody persecution against all Protestants.
- (1) St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (1574) France. 70,000 Huguenots (French Protestants) were killed in one day.
(2) Many fled to England and eventually to America to escape these persecutions.
5. The Restoration Movement of 1790 to the present time.
- a. NOTE: A history of those not trying to reform either Catholicism or Protestantism but simply to restore the church as taught in the New Testament.
- (1) To take the pattern or blue-print given by inspired men and follow it without addition or subtraction.
(a) Restore any practice or teaching that had been neglected or ignored by men.
(b) Throw out anything added since the days of the apostles by human authority.
(2) To plant the same seed (gospel) that was planted in the last century knowing that this seed of the kingdom would always produce simply Christians.

Luke 8:11 "This is the meaning of the parable: The _____ is the word of God.

- (3) They preached the same gospel, wore the same name, had the same simple organization, engaged in the same work, and worshiped as the early church. They were in reality, the New Testament church restored.
- (4) The plea of the church of Christ today is to come back with us beyond the denominationalism with its division and confusion, beyond Catholicism with its corruption, back to the church as it existed in its purity in the days of the Apostles.
- (a) We do not preach or practice anything for which we cannot give a "This is what the LORD Almighty says".
(b) We do not require of any person as a condition of salvation that which they cannot read for themselves in the Word of God.

IV. **The Essentiality of the Church.**

- A. There is a common misconception in the religious world that the church is a non-essential institution. They attempt to distinguish between "salvation in Christ" and "church membership". But to the careful student of the Bible such a distinction is ridiculous. Christ is "all things in all" to the church— there is no acceptable relationship you can sustain to Christ outside of His church. In saying this we are not teaching "Church Salvation", as we understand clearly that Jesus is the savior, not the church. However, what we are stressing is that the church is that realm or relationship in which this salvation is enjoyed and realized.
- B. This truth can be easily demonstrated by using the different figures used to designate the church.

1. The house of God.

1 Timothy 3:15 if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the _____ of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

Ephesians 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer _____ and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,

- a. Christ is "over" this house.

Hebrews 3:6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our _____ and the hope of which we boast.

- (1) if we are not in the house of God (the church), Christ is not "over us." He is not our elder brother.

- b. Unless we are in this house, or family, we are not heirs of God.

Romans 8:16 The Spirit himself _____ with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs _ heirs of God and co_ heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also _____ in his glory.

- c. Unless we are in God*s house (or family) we do not have the right to "call upon Him as Father".

1 Peter 1:17 Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work _____, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. 18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the _____ blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. 22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. 23 For you have been born again, not of _____ seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall,

2. The kingdom.

Matthew 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be _____ in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

- a. Christ is the "Kings of Kings and Lords of Lords".

Revelation 19:16 On his robe and on his _____ he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

- (1) If we are not in His kingdom (the church), He is neither our King or our Lord.
- b. In Col. 1, those who have been “brought into this kingdom” are said to be:
 - (1) “holy and faithful brothers in Christ” vs. 2.
 - (2) Sharers of the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light” vs. 12.
 - (3) . . . redemption and forgiveness vs. 4.
 - (4) Reconciled vs. 22.
- c. Outside of the kingdom (or church) none of these things could be said of them.
- d. When Jesus comes again, there are a certain class of people who will be delivered up to God. Who are they? They are those in the kingdom (church) .

1 Corinthians 15:24 Then the end will come, when he _____ over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

3. The church.

Acts 2:47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the _____ added to their number daily those who were being saved.

If God adds all the saved to the church, then all those outside of the church are unsaved.

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own _____.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave _____ up for her

Would Jesus have died for a non-essential institution? The value of anything can usually be determined by the price paid for it. If you place any value on the blood of Christ, you should value equally the church that He purchased with His blood.

4. The body.

Ephesians 1:22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over _____ for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

- a. Christ is the head of this body. If we remain out of this body, we deny Jesus the right to rule over us and control our lives.
- b. Christ is the savior but of whom? Not the whole world.

1 Corinthians 11:32 When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be _____ with the world.

- c. He is the savior of the body (or church).

Ephesians 5:23 For the _____ is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

- d. Only in the body (church) are we reconciled to God.

Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the _____ of Christ.

5. Zion.

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to _____ upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of _____ men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. 25 See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who _____ them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?

- a. Divine prophecy said that God would place “salvation in Zion”. But Zion is the church, therefore, out of the church we cannot have that salvation.

Isaiah 46:13 I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away; and my salvation will not be delayed. I will grant salvation to Zion, my _____ to Israel.

- b. Those in Zion (the church) have their names “written in Heaven”. How important it is for us to be in the church and have our names enrolled in God*s Book of Life is seen in the Scriptures.

Revelation 20:15 If anyone's name was not found _____ in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

6. The temple

1 Corinthians 3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's _____ and that God's Spirit lives in you?

- a. Christ is the High Priest in this spiritual temple.

Hebrews 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone _____ the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

- b. Unless we are in the temple (church) we cannot offer acceptable worship through Him.

1 Peter 2:5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a _____ house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

- c. God dwells by His Spirit in the temple (the church).

Ephesians 2:21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to _____ a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a _____ in which God lives by his Spirit.

If we want to walk with God, live with God, feel God*s presence in our lives, we must be in this realm where God dwells.

7. In Christ.

a. That the expressions “in Christ” and “in the church” are synonymous is evident from the fact that it takes the same steps to put us into both.

(1) Faith and baptism put us INTO CHRIST.

Galatians 3:26 You are all sons of God through _____ in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were _____ into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

(2) Faith and baptism put us INTO THE CHURCH.

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the _____ of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ... 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their _____ that day. ... 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their _____ daily those who were being saved.

(3) Faith and baptism save us.

Mark 16:16 Whoever _____ and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

b. Since the “fullness” of Christ is found in the church, it is obvious that all of the blessings that are described as being “in Christ” can be enjoyed only in the church.

Ephesians 1:23 which is his body, the _____ of him who fills everything in every way.

CONCLUSION:

From the beginning of time God has planned and purposed a spiritual institution for man*s development and preparation for an eternal home with Him. Jesus died on the cross to make His church a reality. In spite of the confusion and division that apostasy has created, that one church still exists today. Your salvation, your relationship to Christ, your eternal hope depends upon your being a faithful member of that church.