

WHICH CHURCH ?

There are **THREE Churches** in the Bible Are **YOU** in one of them ?
If so, do you know **WHICH** one ?

Many times, when people see something mentioned in the Bible, they tend to think that every time they see that word, it is the same thing but that is NOT the case.

For example, the word “gospel” is a word that is formed by using the two words “God” and “spell” together, that means “words that are God’s words communicated to mankind” “God’s words that are uttered, narrated, or announced”.

Every time you read the word “gospel” ---- you should look to see if it is the same particular MESSAGE ... because there is more than one “gospel” in the Bible. The Bible actually calls the different gospels by FIVE separate NAMES. There is the “gospel of the kingdom” (Matt. 4:23, 9:35, 24:14; Mark 1:14) the “gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24) the “gospel of the circumcision” the “gospel of the uncircumcision” (both in Gal. 2:7) and the “everlasting gospel” (Rev. 14:6).

Likewise, the word “baptism” is another word that is often mistaken. It simply means “to be put into” and that does not always mean WATER. These next three scripture references plainly tell EXACTLY what we are baptized into:

*We are said to be “baptized into Christ” (Rom. 6:3, Gal. 3:27)
“baptized into Christ’s death” (also Rom. 6:3)
“baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13)*

But other times, “baptism” does mean into water, as in:

*John the Baptist said “I baptize you with water”
(Matt. 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:26 & 33)*

Here are two other things disciples will be baptized with:

*Jesus will baptize them with the Holy Ghost (Mark 1:8)
Jesus will also baptise them with fire (Luke 3:16)*

Therefore, it is important to see WHICH baptism the scripture is talking about.

So it is with the word “church.” Tonight, we will see separate entities, all called “the church.” You can recognize the distinctions yourself, and then decide which one, if any, you belong to.

Before we begin, we’ll define the word “church”: The primary meaning is “a collective group of believers who profess to believe in Christ, acknowledging Him to be the Savior of Mankind. Typically, they are united under one form or creed, and join together in a particular place. The word “church” can also mean a house consecrated to the worship of God.

Tonight, we will not be talking about the “building” but rather about the “people” ... who are the “church” themselves.

First, we’ll give the basic outline of the message, then we’ll go through each topic in the scriptures, so you can see it for yourself in the Holy Word of God.

The three churches in the Bible fall into three different “categories.” We will “label” them by the “gospel” that is preached in each one. They are:

LAW

KINGDOM

and GRACE

Each church has its own particular messenger:

The messenger for the LAW is **Moses**.

The messenger for the KINGDOM is **Jesus Christ**.

The messenger for GRACE is **Paul**.

Each church’s message originated by its “giver”:

God gave Israel the LAW.

God ministered through Christ about the KINGDOM.

Christ issued this message of GRACE.

Each church also has its very own commission:

Under the LAW it was “Go in and possess the land.”

In the KINGDOM program, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Under the Dispensation of GRACE, we are to proclaim the “ministry of reconciliation” and “the fellowship of the mystery.”

Each church has its own special calling:

Israel was called to be a “nation of priests.”

The meek shall inherit the “earth.”

We have a “heavenly calling.”

Now, let’s examine them each of in the scriptures:

We'll see the name by which this first church is called. God named it the "Church in the Wilderness". The Bible tells us in Acts 6:8-12, to whom Stephen preached his great sermon before the council of the synagogue, the people, the elders, and scribes:

Acts 7:34-38 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

38 This is he, that was in ***the church in the wilderness*** with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

That passage is talking about the time when God wrote His LAW the 10 Commandments with His own finger on the tablets of rock and gave it to Moses to give to the nation of Israel, which had then recently been delivered out of bondage in Egypt. They are WHO God calls "the church in the wilderness":

Exo. 24:12 And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.

Obviously, you can see that was a specific time in HISTORY, of which we today are not a part.

The messenger was Moses and the gospel that was preached was the LAW:

John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Exo. 19:20 And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

The message came directly from God and next we'll read the 10 commandments which the church in the wilderness was supposed to obey. Since we were not in that church, God did not give these instructions to us:

Exo. 20:1-17 ¶ And **God spake** all these words, saying,
 2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
 3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:
 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
 7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
 8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:
 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.
 12 ¶ Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
 13 Thou shalt not kill.
 14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.
 15 Thou shalt not steal.
 16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
 17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Next, we'll see the commission for the church in the wilderness:

Deut. 1:6-8 The LORD our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount:
 7 Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates.
 8 Behold, I have set the land before you: **go in and possess the land** which the LORD sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.

Now, let's look at the calling for the church in the wilderness:

Exo. 19:3-6 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

6 And **ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.** These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

So they were to "Go in and possess the Promised Land," and they were to be "A Kingdom of Priests, and a Holy Nation in that land."

J E S U S ' K I N G D O M C H U R C H

We'll move now into the 2nd church mentioned in the Bible, which we'll call "Jesus' Church." It was established by Jesus through Peter. It was about the KINGDOM of heaven, which would one day come down to the earth. Jesus called it His church. He would be the King of it, as He was the King of the Jews (John 19:19):

Matt. 16:18-19 Mt 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

They had expected that kingdom for many years. It had been promised to King David:

2 Sam. 7:16-17 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

17 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

The kingdom was also prophesied through the prophet Daniel:

Dan. 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray for God's kingdom to come to the earth in the Lord's Prayer:

Luke 11:2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

One day in the future, they will realize the fulfillment of that prayer:

Rev. 3:11-12 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Rev. 21:2-3 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

God would rule this kingdom church through Jesus Christ:

John 10:30 I and my Father are one.

Isa 9:6-7 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Luke 1:30-33 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

The gospel preached for Jesus' church was the gospel of the kingdom:

Matt 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

Matt 9:35-38 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Those last two verses we just read have often been MIS-applied to us today but you can see they BELONG to Jesus' Kingdom Church.

The gospel of the kingdom was to eventually be spread to the entire world:

Matt 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Mark 16:14-18 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

That "kingdom gospel" carried with it ---- water baptism, signs, tongues, snake-handling, drinking poison, and physical healing. This is NOT the gospel we preach today. The gospel of the kingdom has NO MENTION of Christ dying to shed His blood for the payment of our sins. The cross work of Christ was not even included in the gospel of the kingdom for Jesus' church.

Israel was to rise and shine her light out to the rest of the world, so that the Gentiles could see the true God and come to His light:

Isa 60:1-3 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

The place all this is to take place is on the EARTH. We already read in Daniel that God would set His kingdom up on the earth. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught his disciples:

Matt 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Just like it was prophesied, Jesus will judge the earth when He sets up His kingdom:

Ps 37:11-13 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

12 The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

13 The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.

Isa 11:1-10 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

10 ¶ And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

***Jesus' kingdom church began in Jerusalem.** We read earlier in Acts 1:12 that the disciples returned to Jerusalem after Jesus' ascension back into heaven. They went into the "upper room" there. That was the place where Jesus told them to wait:*

Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Acts 8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Acts 11:22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

Now, we'll look at the THIRD Bible Church:

This is the "GRACE Church"

We learn about it ONLY through the epistles of the apostle Paul.

It is called the "BODY OF CHRIST"

Eph 1:20-23 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to **the church**,

23 **Which is his body**, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Col 1:16-18 For by him (*that is, Christ*) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

18 And he(**CHRIST**) is the head of **the body, the church**: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Drop on down a few verses, and we have it stated again. This "Grace church" is NOW called "the Body of Christ."

Col 1:23-24 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

Paul is the messenger to this "Grace Church" ----- AND -----

that gospel came from the Lord Jesus Christ to Paul for us:

Gal. 1:11-12 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Rom. 11:13 I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

1 Tim. 2:7 Whereunto I am ordained a teacher of the Gentiles

2 Tim. 1:11 Whereunto I am appointed a teacher of the Gentiles.

*The gospel that was proclaimed was the gospel of GRACE ...
and came through Jesus to Paul:*

Acts 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Eph 3:1-4 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,
2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

Telling that 'secret' that mystery is the COMMISSION of the grace church:

Eph 3:9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

The Body of Christ, the Grace Church, has been entrusted with a ministry. We are to “beg” or “beseech” others to listen and believe the gospel of grace that Christ died for their sins and rose again whereby they can be changed from being enemies of God, to being God’s friends and having fellowship with Him:

2 Cor. 5:17-21 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. **(The “old things” of the LAW and commandments are now gone because we have switched DISPENSATIONS and we now live under GRACE)**

18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Now, we can clearly see our calling is a HEAVENLY one ---- BOTH NOW:

Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Eph 2:6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

Col 3:1-2 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

This heavenly calling for the Grace Church is also for the FUTURE the Ages to Come:

Eph 2:7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

1 Thess. 4:15-18 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

