

## SALVATION & COUNTERFEIT CHURCHES

It has always been Satan's practice to take God's Truth and corrupt it in order to deceive men. When Moses and Aaron stood before Pharaoh to demand the release of the children of Israel, Aaron demonstrated to him that they were indeed called of God for that purpose by casting down his rod which became a serpent. **"And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods"** (Exo. 7:10-12). The Egyptian sorcerers did not duplicate God's miracle. They counterfeited it. Satan's greatest tools in deceiving man through the ages have been counterfeits of what is true. This was true in the beginning when he deceived Eve by saying, **"Ye shall not surely die,"** (Gen. 3:4). He went on to explain to Eve that God did not really mean what He said and she believed Satan's lie. The wiles of the devil are as effective today in deceiving men as they were in the Garden of Eden and in Pharaoh's court. Satan continues to counterfeit and mutate the Truth in order to destroy souls, and no greater example can be found among men today than the proliferation of man-originated "churches" which dot the spiritual landscape across the world.

As the first great counterfeiter, Satan deceived mother Eve and Pharaoh and continues to use his counterfeit "churches" today to deceive and destroy souls. His oft-chanted mantra throughout the world today is, "One church is as good as another." That is true regarding the churches of men. One man-originated church is as good as another, but none is as good as the one built by the Lord Jesus Christ and purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28). The church of Christ is a distinctive, divine institution, Christ established only one church, and all others are counterfeits designed by Satan to deceive and destroy. The Psalmist wrote, **"Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it"** (Psa. 127:1).

Most churches built by men teach that membership in the church is not necessary to salvation. Their mantra is that, "The church doesn't save" and is therefore unnecessary to salvation. In one sense they are right. Christ is the Saviour, but they refuse to understand that it is the church which constitutes the saved. **"For**

**the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body"** (Eph. 5:23). The church is that which Christ saves and one cannot be saved outside of it.

One may as well argue that Noah could have been saved outside the ark as to say one can be saved without being in the church. On the other hand, if their meaning is that one can be saved without being in a denomination, they are entirely correct. Denominations are not the church, nor a part of it and when one is saved through obedience to Christ he is not added to a denomination by the Lord.

The general order for salvation and "church membership" in the denominational industry is for one to "get saved" in whatever way the denomination prescribes, then "join a church." Those who so teach say salvation is not dependent upon one being in a "church" — that one can "get saved" and go to heaven without church membership. But the apostle Paul said that the church is the **"fulness"** of Christ (Eph. 1:23).

"The idea that one is first saved by some mystical or mystified, unintelligible or intangible process, and afterwards 'joins some church,' is a common religious delusion. Yet there is no truth more plainly emphasized in the Bible than the fact that the process of being saved is the process of entering the church (Acts 2:47). First, it is affirmed in Acts 4:12 that salvation is in Christ. Then, to have salvation, one must get into Christ. But Paul, by analogy, in Ephesians 5:23-32, teaches that as husband and wife are one, so Christ and the church are one. **'I speak concerning Christ and the church,'** he said. Christ and the church being one, how can one be in Christ and out of the church? Second, Paul makes the fact that Christ is **'the Saviour of the body'** (Eph. 5:23) the ground of his exhortation to the Ephesians concerning the church as the bride of Christ (verse 25). He washed it and sanctified it; cleansed it and saved it; purchased it with His blood and redeemed it; reconciles us to God in it and adds all the saved to it. Therefore, out of the church there is no cleansing, no blood, no redemption, no reconciliation to God, no salvation. Third, the relation between Christ and the church is the same as that which exists between God and Christ. Christ is the **'fulness'** of God (Col. 1:19), and the church is the **'fulness'** of Christ (Eph. 1:23). Therefore, no man can come to Christ and ignore the church for the same reason that no man can come to God and ignore Christ" (Wallace, Foy E., Jr., "Christ And The Church," *The Present Truth*, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publications, Ft. Worth, 1977, pp. 26-27).

Denominational thinking can be illustrated by drawing two circles, one inside the other. According to denominational doctrine, the outer circle represents salvation in Christ. Having entered that circle, man must then enter the inner circle which represents the church.

But Paul said the church is the **"fulness"** of Christ. One cannot be saved in Christ without being saved in the church of Christ. The Bible knows only one circle and to be saved is to be in the body of Christ for it is His **"fulness."**

The labors of men like John Wesley, Henry VIII, Martin Luther, John Knox, and others who established their own "churches" through the ages were in vain. What they built was not the church of Christ. Their efforts lead only to eternal loss and those who follow their doctrines are doomed as well. Churches originated by men are devoid of any spiritual power and are an affront to the Son of God who established His church on Pentecost immediately following His resurrection.

Denominations are a stench in the nostrils of God as surely as were Jereboam's golden calves at Bethel and Dan when he changed the true worship of Jehovah into one of convenience (1 Ki. 12:25-33). Jereboam's religion was a counterfeit of the true religion delivered through Moses at Sinai and God rejected it. So it is today. Modern denominations are counterfeits of the church Jesus built. They promise much, but in the end their wages is death (Rom. 6:23).

There is no comparison between the church of Christ, purposed by God, promised and prophesied for 4,000 years, purchased by the blood of Christ and established by Him in the fulness of time (Gal. 4:4). It is our earnest hope and plea that men will seek out the Truth in the New Testament, heed its warnings, obey its commands, and thereby enter into the church which Jesus built.

**Jerry C. Brewer** from *GospelPreceptor.com*

*Mark your calendar for our...*  
**Family Bible Studies**  
July 24-28, 2006  
*Adult class teacher: Jim O'Connor*

## **ILL**

**Wednesday:** Janice Carter. Anne Adams was admitted to the Olathe Medical Center on June 23 to be treated for breathing problems. She is in Room 211, Bed 1. Ron Wood, son-in-law of the Scotts, began chemo treatment on June 19 in Jacksonville, Florida.

**Those battling cancer:** Kim Clark, Diane Cannon, Ledgia Campbell and Ron Wood. Please remember these in your prayers, as well as: Janice Carter, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

## **HOME BOUND**

Bob Adams is in Room D-4 of the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

## **OUT OF TOWN**

Trent Thrasher was working in Des Moines, IA last week. The Tullis family is in Texas visiting relatives this week. The Thomas, Carter and Marcum families are in Colorado on vacation this week. The Nelson family is on a Caribbean cruise this week. Julia Thrasher is in Marietta, OK caring for her mother.

## **POT LUCK DINNER**

Due to the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday and the number of our members traveling and returning from travels, our monthly Pot Luck Dinner will be held on the second Sunday of this month, July 9. Plan to come and enjoy the good food and company!

## **MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING**

Our monthly Men's Business Meeting will be held on July 16 immediately following our Sunday AM worship. All men of the congregation are encouraged to attend this meeting.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Sunday AM, 59; Sunday PM, 45; Wednesday PM, 39.

## **Those To Serve**

June 25, 2006

**BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Nemechek**

### **MORNING WORSHIP**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS..... George Thomas**  
**SONG LEADER..... Joel Nelson**  
**OPENING PRAYER ..... Michael Simmons**  
**PRESIDE..... John Carter**  
**ASSIST.....Allen Scott**  
**ASSIST.....David Adams**  
**CLOSING PRAYER.....Charles Tullis**

### **EVENING WORSHIP**

**OPENING PRAYER ..... Gary Cole**  
**CLOSING PRAYER..... John Dodson**  
**LORD'S SUPPER..... John Carter**

**WEDNESDAY June 28th**

**SONG LEADER.....Ted Thrasher**  
**INVITATION ..... George Thomas**

## **WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

### **Sunday**

Bible Study ..... 9:30 AM  
Morning Worship ..... 10:30 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

### **Wednesday**

Ladies Bible Study ..... 10:00 AM  
Bible Study ..... 7:00 PM

**Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher**

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