

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

Winter Bible Studies

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

Yahweh's Church

Reading:

1 Corinthians: Chapters 1- 3

1. Introduction

There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of religious denominations on earth: each claiming to be the *Church of God*, the *true church*, the *Remnant church*, the sole channel of truth. Their leaders will allow that the Saviour has "**other sheep**" that are not of **their** fold: but they are quick to add, that those "other sheep" are "**lost sheep**" and that **the Almighty is currently only speaking through them**. Others, they will tell you, are sincere - but they are sincerely wrong. Pathetic, farcical, self-deluding, obnoxious, dangerous, call it what you may, that is the current picture of Christian denominationalism and leadership of our day. Anyone with half an eye can see that there is something radically wrong with that kind of reasoning. It is tantamount to saying that the Almighty is working through only one farm on earth and that farm is *my farm!* The Bible plainly tells us that **sectarianism is carnal**. The word "carnal" means of the flesh, prompted by human reasoning, something that is not of the Holy Spirit. It adds: to be carnally minded is death. That is why so many denominations are bankrupt and falling apart. **Pride goeth before a fall.**

Romans 8: 6: *"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be **spiritually minded** is life and peace"*

1 Corinthians 3: 3: *"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?
4: For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"*

In Scripture the church is likened to **Jehovah's wife!** It follows that if the Almighty frowns on polygamy He must Himself only have **one wife - one church**. To be sure the church will have many members, who meet in many congregations: but together they comprise **one church, one body**, not the hundreds of sects, cults and denominations we see on the religious stage these days. This single entity, Yahweh's church, has existed since the foundation of the world. Depending on circumstance its members may assemble in their thousands or in their twos and threes. Also it matters not whether that place of assembly is a magnificent Temple, a village synagogue, a chapel, a private home or a cave in the wilderness: the church is there. The word '**church**' comes from the Greek word '**ekklesia**' which means 'called out ones.' In other words Yahweh's church is not a building of bricks and mortar. Instead it consists of believers who have been called out of human society to trust and obey His commandments. These believers may, of course, live and work in human society, most of us have no other option, but 'we are called out, morally speaking, to live lives of faith and obedience.' Or, as the Master put it in John:17:16

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

This calling identifies us as members of the Almighty's church: **the only church that He recognizes**. Here are a few texts concerning Yahweh's church. Notice that its members can be found anywhere on earth, in the wilderness or in a person's home.

Acts 7: 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:"*

Romans 16: 5: *"Likewise greet the **church that is in their house**. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ."*

2. The Head of the Church

Neither the Pope, the Queen of the United Kingdom nor any other mortal being is the head of the church. According to the Scriptures **Jesus Christ, Yeshua the Messiah, is the head of Yahweh's Church**. Popes, prelates, arch-bishops and human dignitaries of whatever title delude themselves and others if they vainly imagine that they are the head of the church. They may lead large or small congregations, but most certainly they are not the head of the church. The true church has only one head and that head is Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5: 23: *"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."*

Colossians 1: 15: *"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:*

16: For by him 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 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 pre-eminence."*

Matthew 16: 16: *"And Simon Peter answered and said, **Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God**.*

17: And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

*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."*

3. The Church Building

We often refer to physical buildings (cathedrals, abbeys and spire-topped temples where believers worship) as the church. In reality the church is not a physical building. The church is a spiritual structure made up of true believers in whom the Spirit of the Most High has taken up residence. These believers comprise the **Temple of God**, the **Household of Faith**, the **Church of the Living God**. They are the church, they are the **Temple of the Holy Spirit**. The building in which they meet for worship is, by comparison, of minor importance.

Acts 17: 24: *"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;"*

1 Corinthians 3: 16: *"Know ye not that **ye are the temple of God**, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"*

1 Corinthians 3: 17: *"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, **which temple ye are**."*

4. The Church's Name

Many volumes have been written about the **church's name**; with scores of denominations jostling with each other to prove that the name they have adopted is the correct one. This reasoning is carnal: because even were a group to hit upon the correct name, that wouldn't necessarily mean that they were the true church; or that all their members were true believers. A name is a proper noun by which a person, an organization or object is known. Designations such as the church of God, the church of Scotland, the church of England, the church of Ireland etc. are, strictly speaking not names, but descriptions. "The Queen's house," for example is not the name of the building in which the queen lives. This term simply describes the building in which the queen lives: it's her house. The correct name of the building is **Buckingham Palace** or **Windsor Castle**. These are names not

descriptions. It is the same with the name of the church. The body of believers in various places are mostly called by the name of that place: i.e. the church of Ephesus, the church of Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philidelphia, Laodicea, Babylon etc.; or the church in thy house. These descriptions simply tell us which body of believers were being referred to. They are not names. What, then, is the church's name? I do not know. I am unable to find in Scripture a proper noun which tells me the church's name. What I do know is the church is described in various ways. such as:

1 Peter 5: 13: *"The **church that is at Babylon**, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son."*

Revelation 1: 11: *"Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto **Ephesus**, and unto **Smyrna**, and unto **Pergamos**, and unto **Thyatira**, and unto **Sardis**, and unto **Philadelphia**, and unto **Laodicea**."*

Philemon 1: 2: *"And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the **church in thy house**:"*

Colossians 4: 15: *"Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and **the church which is in his house**."*

5. The Church Register

The only church register recognized in the court of heaven is the Lamb's Book of Life. Only those whose names are on that divine register will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. It makes absolutely no difference whatsoever - to your prospects of eternal life - whether your name is in a denominational register or not; no matter how big or powerful that denomination may be: because the only spiritual register heaven acknowledges is the **Lamb's Book of Life**. This mind-jolting fact must be recognized if you wish to be saved from eternal death! Another astonishing fact is that only the Saviour can enter your name in that **Book**. It belongs to him; and only he can blot out a name once it is has been entered. The **Lamb's Book of Life** has been in existence since the foundation of the world. It will be seen for the first time by our eyes on the great **Day of Judgment**. **These are unassailable facts.**

Philemon 4: 3: *"And I intreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the **book of life**."*

Revelation 3: 5: *"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the **book of life**, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."*

Revelation 13: 8: *"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the **book of life** of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."*

Revelation 17: 8: *"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the **book of life** from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."*

Revelation 20: 12: *"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the **book of life**: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."*

Revelation 20: 15: *"And whosoever was not found written in the **book of life** was cast into the lake of fire."*

Revelation 21: 27: *"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the **Lamb's book of life**."*

Revelation 22: 19: *"And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the **book of life**, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."*

6. Positions In The Church

When people put their faith in God and begin to obey His commandments, they become members of **Yahweh's Church**, part of the spiritual body of Christ. Their names are entered in the **Book of Life** and they are allocated

positions in the church. These positions are not a matter of human choice any more than your eye had a choice in becoming an eye; or your hand a choice of becoming a hand. Yahweh decides your position according to His own will. It has nothing to do with an individual's preference. This fact must be recognized if you are to be of any use in the church.

- 1 Corinthians 12: 27: **“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.**
28: *And God hath set some in the church, first **apostles**, secondarily **prophets**, thirdly **teachers**, after that **miracles**, then gifts of **healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.***
29: *Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?*
30: *Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?”*

Multiplied millions of believers have absolutely no idea what function they are supposed to fulfil in Yahweh's church. False teachers and human pride has resulted in spiritual chaos in many congregations; as believers vainly try to do tasks for which they are not equipped. They are hands trying to be tongues, ears trying to be eyes and feet trying to do the work of hands. This confusion is a sign of ignorance or pride or both. The Bible tells us that Yahweh appoints to each believer a given position and duty. He also equips that person with the ability to carry out that duty.

- 1 Corinthians 12: 10: *“To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:*
11: *But all these worketh that one and the **selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.***
12: *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.*
13: *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*
14: *For the body is not one member, but many.*
15: *If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*
16: *And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*
17: *If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?*
18: **But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.**
19: *And if they were all one member, where were the body?*
20: *But now are they many members, yet but one body.*
21: *And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*
22: *Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:*
23: *And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.*
24: *For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:*
25: *That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.*
26: *And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*
27: *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*
28: *And God hath set some in the church, first **apostles**, secondarily **prophets**, thirdly **teachers**, after that **miracles**, then **gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.***
29: *Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?*
30: *Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?*
31: *But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”*

7. Your Work

Having received and recognized one's position in the church and one's ability to do a particular work: a believer

should make every effort to carry out that duty. Yearning after gifts or positions with which others are endowed is no way to please God or the rest of the church. It is tantamount to saying, Yahweh doesn't know what He is doing. I'm qualified for better jobs than those He has given me. I deserve better! This is self-deluding pride. Drop it! Your responsibility is to recognize your own strengths and **limitations** and to finish the work the Master has given you to do: not to hanker after the positions, privileges and powers of others.

Mark 13: 33: *“Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.*

34: *For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.*

35: *Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning:*

36: *Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.*

37: *And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.”*

John 17: 4: *“I have glorified thee on the earth: **I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.**”*

The Rebellion of Korah

he rebellion of **Korah**, **Dathan**, and **Abiram** as recorded in Numbers chapter 16 is an awesome warning about leaders in Israel who were wiped out by the Almighty for trying to assume a position of authority to which they had not been called and for which they were totally unqualified. Read that chapter - all of it and be warned.

True Prophets

The rebellion of **Korah**, however, should not be used as a gag to stifle the message of the genuine servant of God. Why, the Master himself, not to mention the long list of prophets, apostles and reformers of old, were all rejected by the mainstream church hierarchy as being unfit to understand and proclaim truth. Had these genuine messengers of God waited for the church's official sanction before proclaiming the truth, the Gospel work would not have gotten very far. Thank God they pressed ahead knowing within themselves that they were called of God. The true servant of God will have the following credentials:

- **He will be divinely motivated.** He will know within himself what he is expected to do and he will do it - come what may. This is an extremely difficult qualification for others to assess or even accept; especially as there are so many religious cranks around these days; all believing that they have a special message from God.
- **He will be divinely enabled.** In other words he will be qualified to do the job. He will have the inherent ability, time, helpers and equipment for the task. This is an easy credential for others to assess.
- **He will be divinely blessed.** In other words the work he has been called to do will bear visible fruit in the lives of the members of Yahweh's church. They will be blessed and all the families in the church will benefit.

8. Women's Place in the Church

According to the holy Scriptures women are not allowed to **preach sermons** or **teach** in the official gatherings of the church. I quote the Scriptures to support this **increasingly unpopular** but, nevertheless, inspired directive.

1 Corinthians 14: 34: *“**Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.***

35: *And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.*

36: ***What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?***

37: ***If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.***

38: *But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.*

39: *Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.*

40: ***Let all things be done decently and in order.”***

Many believers will challenge this stand. It was challenged in Paul's day. The Apostle anticipated a rejection of this

truth view when he said:

Verse: 36: *What? Came the Word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?*

He then goes on to reason that believers who profess to have the Spirit of God should recognize and acknowledge that what he is writing is in fact at the **law of God**.

Verse: 37: *If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that **the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.***

Paul's conclusion is that believers who ignore this commandment of God, will themselves be ignored. One can hardly imagine a more fearsome outcome than to be disregarded or not recognized by the Almighty God.

Verse: 38: *But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.*

When writing to Timothy we find the Apostle saying virtually the same thing.

1 Timothy 2: 11: ***Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.***

12: But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

13: For Adam was first formed, then Eve."

All this does not mean that women are inferior to men and that they have no place in the work of Yahweh. The holy Scriptures provide several examples of women prophets (**Deborah**, Judges 4-5; **Miriam** the sister of Moses and the **four daughters** of Philip the evangelist. Acts 21:8-9). These women obviously used the gift of prophecy to benefit the church; and their messages were listened to by all who cared to hear the Word of God spoken through them. But they did not **preach** or **teach** in the official Sabbath assemblies. That is the point Paul is making in (1 Corinthians 14:34-35).

In that passage he plainly points out that women are not allowed to teach or preach in the church. It is against God's law! Bear in mind that Corinth was a city of Greece where democracy was born. But even there the Greeks had to be taught divine levels of authority, of which our misguided society is so ignorant. By divine command men have been given more authority than women in spiritual matters like teaching and preaching. They will also be held more responsible for the errors in the churches.

This does not mean that men are more intelligent than women. We all know that is not the case. Nor does it mean that men have better characters. We all know that neither sex has a monopoly on intelligence or holiness. What it does mean, however, is that Yahweh has authorized men to teach and preach His Word. **He has not given this authority to women, however qualified they may consider themselves to be.** I repeat, it is a matter of divine authority not personal preference or choice. Bear in mind that in this matter we are dealing with Yahweh's commandments, not the fickle fashions of a deceived and wayward generation.

What then may dedicated women do in the church? There are many things dedicated women may do in Yahweh's work; for it is an absolute fact that women are every bit as intelligent, talented and spiritually strong as men. In certain areas they are probably more able than the men folk: but this is no battle of the sexes. I will now list areas where **A Voice In The Wilderness** - women are active in Yahweh's work.

Young unmarried Women

- Help in Church offices (Filing / Word-Processing / Accounts / Database)
- Help teach the young children on the Sabbaths
- Providing musical accompaniment at Sabbath and social meetings. (Piano, keyboard, guitar, violin, banjo, mandolin and flute, etc)
- Doing special items (choir items, testimonies, poems etc.)
- Help their mothers in their own homes
- Help at Feasts - laying tables, flower arrangements etc.

Older Unmarried/Married Women

- Teaching the children on the Sabbath
- Teaching younger women how to bring up their families
- Providing music in church services (choir, piano, violin etc)
- Senior secretarial work in the office
- Despatch literature: setting aside letters for the elders to answer
- Word-Processing letters on the school's computers
- Organizing the catering facilities at the Feasts
- Keeping Church Accounts.
- Community Service: Welfare Work. Helping the aged, the young, the lonely, widows, orphans, the sick. Others also serve on school boards and administrate on various community committees.

Women may rise to great heights in the social or political field. Remember one of Britain's greatest Prime Ministers (Margaret Thatcher) was a woman!

Yes, there is no doubt, women can do a lot in Yahweh's church. But I repeat: they are not allowed to **preach** or **teach** in church gatherings when adult males are present. That is Yahweh's law. Church leaders, misguided women and Christian denominations ignore this law at their peril.

9. Messages to the Seven Churches

In the book of the Revelation the Most High has a message to His church. The number seven signifies the whole church all over the world in every age. If you read chapters one to three you will notice that these messages are all vital. I will very briefly summarise them:

- The **Speaker is the Saviour**, the one who holds the fate of the entire church in his hands.
- He knows the **works** of every believer in every church. Yes good works are important.
- He praises those who have done well; especially those who have suffered tribulation for his sake.
- But he rebukes those who have fallen away from their first love - for him: warning them to repent or lose life everlasting. His strongest rebukes are for congregations which tolerate the teachings of **Balaam** and **Jezebel**, the prophet and prophetess who encouraged idolatry and sexual sin: fornication and adultery. An awful fate awaits believers who indulge in these sins.
- He encourages all believers to hold fast till he comes. Those who do so will rule the nations with him during the millennium.
- He promises protection during the **hour of temptation** which shall come upon all the world.
- Those who overcome the temptation to sin at this testing time are guaranteed an important position in the Temple of God and in the new Jerusalem.
- He ends with a poignant plea to those in the church who imagine that they are fine, spiritually rich and in need of nothing: when all the while they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. How self-deluded can one get!
- These are the words of the **Head of the Church**, of the one who loves the church, **Yeshua the saviour of Mankind**. Those whom he loves, he rebukes and pleads with them to repent - ere it is too late.
- He now stands at the door of your heart and knocks. Do you hear him? Will you let him in?
- His final promise is stunning to say the least. It is an invitation to join him on the throne of the mighty universe. I quote it:

Revelation 3: 21: *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*
 22: *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”*

10. Summary

This then is the Church of Almighty Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: the church against which the gates of hell cannot prevail (Matthew 16:18). It is a mighty spiritual organisation that is about to take over the government of the whole earth. Are you a member of this church? I say, you cannot afford not to be. I now summarize this sermon:

1. Denominationalism is not of God. It is the outcome of human pride - carnal and fatal.
2. The head of the church is not the Pope, the Queen or any mortal being. The head of the Church is **Jesus Christ**.
3. The church, the ekklesia of God is a body of believers "called out" to lead lives of obedience.
4. I do not know the divine name of the church; but I'm sure it's not the name of a denomination.
5. The official church register is the **Lamb's Book of Life**: and the Master is the only one who can enter or delete names in that book.
6. Every believer in Yahweh's church is given a position and duty to perform. He/she is enabled (gifted) to perform that duty. Hankering after the position or gifts of others will accomplish nothing. At its best it results in confusion. At its worst it's evidence of pride.
7. Every believer must finish his/her work; however humble it may appear to be. Every member of the church - the body - is important: as important as every part of your own body is to you.
8. Women are not allowed to preach or teach in church meetings. They do not have the authority to do so: however talented or otherwise they may be. That is what the law of God says.
9. Divine messages to the whole church are detailed. They are messages of praise, rebuke, warning and promise. We do well to heed these messages: applying every one of them to ourselves before we apply them to others.

AMEN!

In the Son's Name - For the Father's glory.
Elder: *Max W. Mader*

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