

The Body of Jesus Christ #4 The Church #1

Lyall Johnston—June 21, 2025

Today we want to have a look at this subject, and this is part four of this series, and there's just so much to be said that we can't get it all together, but we can at least give a summary just in these messages. What do we read?

Here we go, Jesus is talking to His disciples, and He had just said to Peter:

Matthew 16:18: "And Jesus answered *and* said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon...'"

Simon had said, when asked, when Jesus was asking all His disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?' And Peter came up with that comment, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'

"...for flesh and blood did not reveal *it* to you, but My Father, Who *is* in heaven" (v 18).

He is the one who revealed that to Peter, showing that God's Spirit was *working with* Peter and the other disciples. Even at this stage, God's Spirit was *not within* him.

So He said, "...but upon this Rock [Himself]..." (v 18)—*the Petros, the Rock!* That word is used a number of times of Jesus Christ, even back in the Old Testament.

"...but upon this Rock I will build My Church..." (v 18)—possessive case^[transcriber's correction per LJ]. It's "...**My Church**..." It's the Church of Jesus Christ, and ***He keeps it in the Father's name!*** The Church of God, as you can read in John 17 chapter in the prayer. These I've kept them in your name.

All throughout the Epistles of Paul, you find he addresses the Church of God at this place and that place. Now there are Churches of God ***that are not part*** of the Church that Jesus is building. And one of the prime examples I can think of are the Pentecostal churches.

- they take the name
- they claim to be following
- they claim to be a Church of God or the Church of God

but they are not! They basically have *rejected* the Commandments of God.

- they're keeping Sunday, not God's day, the Sabbath
- they're keeping Easter and Christmas

which are pagan holidays and have nothing to do with the celebrations of the Holy Days, the Sabbath,

and the annual Feast days that God has given to His Church. So, that's very interesting.

"...and *the* gates of the grave shall not prevail against it" (v 18)—*the Church that I am building, My Church!*

Christ Himself is the Foundation. He's the Cornerstone built on the foundation of the prophets and the apostles. We'll see more of that at a later time. So again, there are many churches today, beginning was the major ones claiming to be Christian, but they don't go by the name of the church. But most importantly, even besides the name:

- they've rejected Christ
- they've rejected His Laws

2-Peter 2:9: "*The Lord knows how to **rescue the Godly out of temptation**, and to **reserve the unrighteous to the day of judgment to be punished**; but particularly those who walk after the flesh...*" (vs 9-10).

You see, so ***any church that has done away with the Commandments of God are walking after the flesh!*** Everyone to some degree...

- we all have the law of sin and death within us
- we all have the law or the human nature within us

that Paul says is destructive, it's carnal!

We are overcoming that because we've repented of our sins, because we have been baptized and received the Holy Spirit, now we have the power to overcome. Anyone who's physically trying to overcome the flesh ***without*** God's Spirit, ***without*** His Law is not going anywhere; it doesn't work that way.

Verse 9: "*The Lord knows how to rescue the Godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unrighteous to the day of judgment to be punished; but particularly those who walk after the flesh in corrupting lust, and **hold in utter contempt the Lordship of God**....*" (vs 9-10).

How do they do that? ***By disregarding the Laws and Commandments of God, which are perfect and can convert the soul!***

- there's nothing else
- there's no other book
- there's no other philosophy
- there's no other teachings of men that can convert the soul

Only the Word of God! But even that is not sufficient.

- we have to have **repented**
- we have to have been **called by God**
- we have to be **convicted of our sins**

like the Jews and all those gathered in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost in the 30^{AD}.

- we have to be **cut to the heart**

It really has to cut deep in our bodies so that were stopped up short and say, ‘God, what am I going to do? Because the penalty of death is on me if I don’t do something.’

Peter told the people what to do, ‘Repent and be baptized!’ *The same is true today!*

Most churches, even where they baptize, *they’re not baptizing them because the people have repented of their sins!* A lot of churches, as we know, just simply don’t even do that! One prayer and you’re saved. Any church taking the name ‘Christian’ that has:

- refused to accept the teachings of the Old Testament
- refused the teachings of the Law of God
- want Jesus Christ **without keeping**:
 - His Word
 - His Laws
 - His Commandments
 - ✓ are masquerading
 - ✓ are false
 - ✓ are deceived
 - ✓ are not the Church of God

So again, that’s an important point! They hold in utter contempt. And we’re talking about all the churches who:

- disregard the Old Testament
- disregard the Sabbath
- disregard the Passover

just for starters!

They “...hold in utter contempt *the lordship of God....*” There’s another Scripture that talks about that same subject.

1-John 2:1: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And *yet*, if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the Righteous.*”

So you see, ***sin and repenting of sin***—through Christ, Who’s the Advocate—***is a mainstay of the Christian faith!*** How many churches do we know that do not understand that; yet, they still call themselves Christian?

Verse 4: “The one who says, ‘I know Him’... [I know Jesus] ...and does not keep His Commandments, is a liar...”

This is the apostle of Jesus Christ—John—the last to live towards the end of the first century to whom God gave the book of Revelation, which helps tie all prophecy together, because he was one of God’s servants that obeyed His Laws and Commandments, and kept them to the very best of his ability with God’s help.

Christ kept John alive so that He could give John that final message to complete the Word of God. No other writing after John’s writing (of the book of Revelation), which God gave to him through Christ, Who gave to His angel to deliver to John, no other writing after that time. Claiming to be Scripture is not Scripture. It did not come from God the Father. It did not come from Christ.

Almost immediately after the death of John and those that were working with him, what happened? ***A dark cloud came over the Church and the Church that emerged after that within just a few years was not the same Church that had been there in the first century.***

So many people just do not see this. One of the reasons is because *God hasn’t called them!* It’s like we said before, you know, they stumble over the truth, have a quick glance, pick themselves up and rush on with the rest of their lives, ***not understanding they’ve just tripped over a goldmine—diamonds and precious stones,*** which describes the Truth of God—***and ignore it!***

The day may well come when they will regret that they didn’t take that up. However, that’s another story.

Here’s a very important point: “...[he] is a liar, and the Truth is not in him...” (v 4).

Now you can take that when looking for the Church of God as a benchmark. ***If they don’t keep His Word, that’s it. Kaput! Finished! The end!***

Verse 5: “On the other hand, *IF* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected....”

In John 8, Christ is in discussion with the Pharisees. They were part of Judaism. Were they in fact, part of the Church? *We’re going to see that they were not!*

When it comes down to the subject of Judaism, we have that very valuable book called *Judaism: Revelation of Moses or A Religion of Men?*

Well, even the Scripture shows that it was a religion of men, because they reject Jesus Christ, the

Savior, the Messiah, Whom they were looking for. Why? ***Because they were so bound up in their traditions!***

We have to be careful, too, that we don't get bound up in the traditions of this world.

John 8:13—*Jesus was addressing the Pharisees:* “Therefore, the Pharisees said to Him, ‘You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true.’”

This the Son of God, the Messiah, and this is what they're saying to Him. These were the Jews, at least the leaders of the Jewish faith. There were many faithful people, even in the days of Jesus, take for example:

- His mother and father (Joseph)
- John the Baptist and his parents
- the disciples; when Jesus called them, they followed Him
- the thousands followed Him

They recognize there was something about Him, even if that stage, they didn't understand He was the Messiah.

Verse 25: “Then they said to Him... [these are the Pharisees and the religious leaders] ...‘Who are You?’....”

I can understand if somebody said that to me, and I'm sure you could do the same.

“...And Jesus said to them... [and they still didn't get it] ...‘The One that I said to you from the beginning’” (v 25).

They were blind, ***spiritually blind!*** They never got it! A lot of people did.

Verse 26: “I have many things to say and to judge concerning you; but He Who sent Me is true, and what I have heard from Him, these things I speak to the world.”

That would have been like a red rag to a bull to those Pharisees. Remember what we said? ***The gates of the grave will not prevail against His Church***—‘My Church,’ Jesus said.

They claim, v 33: “They answered Him, ‘We are Abraham's seed...’” You know, we're not born of fornication. We're not illegitimate, which they accused their Messiah of being illegitimate. They were the ones that were illegitimate, because they were claiming to be followers of God. And they were liars!

Verse 39—*Jesus responds to them;* “...‘**If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me...**’” (vs 39-40).

What does that tell us about what we read earlier? *I will build My Church and the gates of the grave will not prevail against the Church!* And here they were killing the One Who was about to build His Church, as He said, ‘My Church.’

Verse 40: “But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has spoken the Truth to you, which I have heard from God; Abraham did not do this.” *Interesting!*

Verse 41—Here's a very powerful statement of all the Churches claiming to be a Church of God, a Christian Church. Here's what Jesus has to say to them; hard words. ***This is Jesus talking, not a man! These are the words of Christ coming from his mouth, approved by God the Father in heaven above.***

Verse 42: “Therefore, Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love Me...’”

- Do we love God?
- Do we love Christ?

IF we love HIM **THEN**:

- we know the Father
- we know Christ

“...because **I proceeded forth and came from God.** For I have not come of Myself, but **He sent Me**” (v 42).

As we've read in Heb. 10 Christ said, ‘You've prepared a body for Me—the man Jesus Christ—to do Your will, O God.’

Verse 44: “**You...**”—Pharisees—I'm sure this is as good as pointing the finger at them, you Pharisees, Jews, Judaism. Today, what do we have? *Messianic Judaism!*

Verse 44: “**You are of your father the devil...**” WOW!

Can you imagine how these Pharisees felt and reacted to that, what was going on internally?

“...and the lusts of your father you desire to practice. He... [Satan the devil] ...was a murderer from *the* beginning, and has not stood in the Truth **because there is no truth in him.**”

Now because these Pharisees and these Jewish leaders were saying and doing what they did, Jesus is saying ***there's no truth in you either because you are of your father, the devil!*** So, Jesus is telling them flat to their face, ‘**you are liars.**’ And yet, you're the religious leaders of the people.

“...because there is no Truth in him... [Satan the devil] ...whenever he speaks a lie...” (v 44).

All these churches that do not preach the Word of God, they're speaking a lie. Oh yes, there'll be some Truth there. They'll read some Scriptures, which they'll use as a bouncing-off point, but they won't get into the depth of the Word of God, they won't get into the subjects of what is *true repentance*, what is *a true calling from God!* They won't get into the subject of being fully immersed in the water, showing that that is a significant contract with God the Father that we are prepared to die in order to serve Him as living sacrifices.

- ***IF*** we fail, then we die the second death
- ***IF*** we succeed, we may still die, but then we'll be in the first resurrection

"...Whenever he speaks a lie, he is speaking from his own *self*..." (v 44).

This is a statement of all those churches today, masquerading as the Churches of God or a Christian church. ***This statement is of them!***

"...Whenever he speaks a lie, he is speaking from his own *self*; for he is a liar, and the father of it" (v 44).

Oh, so you Pharisees, Satan is your father and he's a liar! He's your father; you're liars. You think they got the point? *Absolutely!*

And because I speak the truth, and this is true of all those churches masquerading as Christian, but not the Churches of Christ is in a building, ***because they have rejected His Lordship!*** They will not have Him rule over them through His Laws and Commandments, ***which He came and magnified and made them even more powerful, even more fitting!***

Verse 47: "**The one who is of God hears the words of God...**"

As we have written There are no other words of God written anywhere else except in the Old Covenant and the New Covenant or the Old Testament and the New Testament. There's a lot being written about it, and some of it is very helpful when we're doing research, directly from a technical point of view.

But when it comes down to trying to explain what it means to live truly as a son and daughter of God, they can have some good messages, there have been many good messages sent, but they never take it far enough. Why? ***Because they never deal with the real problem of sin and repentance, of changing and turning and obeying the words that God has given.***

Verse 47: "The one who is of God hears the words of God..."—***as they're written for us, and God's Spirit, if we have God's Spirit, helps us to understand them!***

Verse 47: "The one who is of God hears the words of God. For this reason you do not hear, because you are not of God."

Jesus Christ is saying that to all churches claiming to be Christian that have:

- rejected His Laws
- rejected the Commandments
- do not want to look at the subject of sin

In fact, because of that, these churches that claim to be Christian, are filled with all manner of pollutions and perversions. The mother of all these churches, we can read about in Rev.17.

Let's go to the last book in the Bible and see what God Himself has said. These words that I'm about to read, come from God the Father, through Christ, through Christ's angel, to John who wrote them down. These words are Spirit and they are Life ***IF*** we obey them.

Rev. 17—this is another WOW! He's talking about ***the church system in this world***, which all the churches claiming to be Christ's are all coming together with all the other religions into one great big melting pot.

- Catholicism
- Protestantism
- every other 'ism and religion'

coming together! This is what it has to say:

Revelation 17:1: "And one of the seven angels who had the seven vials came and spoke with me, saying to me, 'Come here; I will show you the judgment... [of the church system] ...of the great whore who sits upon many waters"—or *many nations, ruling over the nations of the world, as the whole book of Revelation helps us to understand!*

Verse 2: "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and those who dwell on the earth..."

Now this is talking about a church system; ancient Babylon! A system that started 4000 years ago with Nimrod and his wife Semiramis, and all the false doctrines of the church have been passed on down through the ages, even to all the nations of the world.

The teachings were scattered when the nations were scattered, and they took the teachings from Babylon, and they are alive and well today. Right in the center of Rome.

All those churches that follow Rome and are coming to be in contact with Rome, and the harlot daughters coming back to their mother, the Protestantism, the Protestant churches.

Verse 5, which I really want to read, is what God is saying again. If you've got a Bible, this is all caps because this is such a powerful judgment on the Christian churches, so called, that are masquerading as the Churches of Christ or the Churches of God, claim that they are Christian, **but they're not. They're liars!** Here's God's Word. *Powerful!*

Verse 5: "And across her forehead..."—

Verse 4: "And the woman *was* clothed in purple and scarlet..."

This is talking about the church system, and here God names it. God the Father names the system for what it is.

Verse 5: "And across her forehead a name *was* written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS..."

This is talking about the rest of those who are manifesting the name of Jesus Christ, or they're claiming the name of Christ, **but they will not obey Him.**

"...THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS..."
God the Father is calling these churches harlots, because they're worshiping Satan the devil. Not God the Father, not Jesus Christ. They are not the Church of God.

"...AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (v 5).

Why? Because Satan is their God. They worship on his day, which is Sunday. Very interesting, and you can read about Satan himself changing himself into 'an angel of light' (2-Cor. 11), and his ministers as 'ministers of righteousness.' When nothing can be further from the truth. Many of them are like, as Jesus said, of the religious leaders; they're filled with 'dead men's bones.'

- they're arrogant
- they're murderers
- they're God haters
- they love themselves
- they love their teachings and doctrines

Revelation 18:1: "And after these things I saw an angel descending from heaven... [v2] And he cried out mightily with a loud voice, saying, 'Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen... [this church is falling double strength] ...and has become a habitation of demons...' (vs 1-2).

Now, Jesus called the leaders of Judaism in his day, 'children of Satan the devil.'

Can we not say the same for all those who are following the Babylonian system today, which are all

your Catholicism, your Protestantism, and every otherism, because they're doing the same thing that the Pharisees did.

- they're claiming to be followers of God
- they're claiming to know Christ

but they don't know Him!

Let's make that Matt. 7, because here's the conclusion of Jesus Christ about all those churches who have compromised the Lordship, who hold in disregard the Lordship of Christ, His rulership over their lives. Here's the people, these people say, 'Look, we know You, Lord.'

Matthew 7:13: "Enter in through the narrow gate..."

That narrow gate is the Law of God, which is flowing down, not going over the riverbanks, but it's the path to follow. It's the way of life:

- God's Laws
- God's teachings
- God's Commandments
- God's words
 - ✓ everything Jesus taught
 - ✓ everything He taught us through the Church
 - ✓ everything He taught through His original apostles

Verse 13: "Enter in through the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction..."

Yeah, these churches that are fabricating the Truth, they're going down the wide gate.

Verse 14: "For narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it. But beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, for within *they* are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits..." (vs 14-16).

What happens here? To know the churches that claim to be Christian, whether they're Christian or not, Jesus said:

Verse 20: "**Therefore, you shall assuredly know them by their fruits...** [notice carefully what He says]: ...not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord shall enter Not everyone who says to Me "Lord, Lord" shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who *is* in heaven" (vs 20-21).

Verse 22: "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power

through Your name?”” *Jesus doesn’t deny that! But:*

Verse 23: “And then **I will confess to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.’** Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and practices them, I will compare him to a wise man, who built his house upon the Rock” (vs 23-24).

Of course, He also shows what happens to those who are unwise. These are the words of Christ.

So, in understanding where and what form and shape the Church of God is, the Church that Jesus said He would build is all based in the Scriptures, ***not in the teachings and doctrines of men!***

So next time we will look at the Church that Jesus in fact is building and some very amazing and some incredible things in that area.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 16:17-18
- 2) 2-Peter 2:9-10
- 3) 1-John 2:1-4
- 4) John 8:13, 25-26, 33, 39-42, 44, 47
- 5) Revelation 17:1-2, 5, 4
- 6) Revelation 18:1-2
- 7) Matthew 7:13-14, 20-24

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 10
- 2-Corinthians 11

Also referenced: Book {truthofGod.org}

Judaism: Revelation of Moses or A Religion of Men? by Philip Neal

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