

A Part of Christ

Neil Girrard

It is a common perception that the people who are “the Church” are a part of Christ and this idea is used to excuse all manner of carnality and even apostasy and to place the label of “believer” on anyone who attends “church.” Certainly it is a truth that “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...” (Eph. 2:4-6) and Paul clearly said elsewhere that there is only one body. (Eph. 4:4, 1 Cor. 12:12, etc.)

This clinches the argument only if all one has is an overly-simplified view of what “church” means. Placing all who attach themselves to a “church” as being “in Christ” is an easy misconception to fall into. But when one comes to recognize the layers of deception that have accumulated around our understanding of that word, something entirely different comes into view.

First, Jesus, being a Hebrew living a millennium before the English language even came into existence, never once used the English word “church” so, at the least, He never intended anything like what we say when we say the word “church.” “Church” in any worthwhile dictionary refers to the “Christian” 1) building, 2) clergy, 3) religion and 4) people. King James in 1611 insisted that his translators use “certain of the old words, viz a viz church” in spite of how William Tyndale (whose work comprises about 90% of the KJV New Testament) had used “assembly” or “congregation.” These are documented pieces of historical fact and the linguistic switch has been a tool of deception ever since.

Second, the Greek word that is poorly translated “church” in KJV and following English versions is “ekklesia.” [1577] The word simply means people, specifically the people called out of this world’s darkness to attend to and live in Christ’s kingdom of light. But right off the bat, between “church” and “ekklesia,” we have three parts of deception with only one part truth. That’s not a good balance and we must wonder how this discrepancy has remained unnoticed and so blindly and widely embraced for so many centuries. Nor has anyone (except God) paid any attention to how much blood has been spilled and lives oppressed and even destroyed just to preserve this deception.

But in this light, if we say that the people who are the *ekklesia* are part of Christ, then we have spoken a truth. But just because someone attends a “Christian” building, is a member of the “Christian” clergy and/or agrees with various parts of the “Christian” religion, that does not mean they have been genuinely born again (Jn. 3:3, 5), are bearing the fruit of God’s Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) and are serving the kingdom of God. (Rom. 8:14, etc.) Almost every modern “church” is a mere fiefdom of some man, usually the “pastor” (another “theological” aberration that has no legitimate place in the New Testament but to explain how this deception came to be so prevalent is beyond the scope of this article) who keeps *his* people from truly serving the kingdom of God. The “church” is the apostasy, a carnal mixed multitude influenced or even directed in whole or in part by demonic teachings (1 Tim. 4:1) – it is the *ekklesia*, wherever there are genuinely born again, spirit led sons of God, who are God’s people. If these truths are beyond the reader’s ability to discern, such a one truly needs to seek the Spirit of truth so as to find out what the Scriptures do really say. At the least, such a blind “church”-ite desperately needs spiritually opened ears and eyes.

It is also a truth that Jesus, being a Hebrew called only to deal with the house of Israel (Mt. 15:24), probably did not study or speak any Greek. It is only Matthew (in 2 verses – Mt. 16:18, 18:17) who puts the Greek word “ekklesia” into Jesus’ teachings. It’s not really a bad thing that Matthew did as there are valid applications here but it’s just not an historically accurate thing. Jesus probably used the Aramaic word for “temple” in those passages but because the Way (see Acts 19:23) had already become influenced by Greek ideas, ekklesia, especially since the temple of God *is* the people of God (1 Cor. 3:16, etc.), holds many similarities. But it is a simple truth that Jesus did not proclaim the “church” nor did He even proclaim the ekklesia – instead, He proclaimed the kingdom of God. (Mk. 1:15, etc.) The kingdom and the ekklesia are indeed closely related things but they do differ one from the other and the latter must serve the former or it is, at best, out of order, and, at worst, a counterfeit.

Thus, it is a deception to presume that those who belong to the “church” also belong to Christ’s ekklesia just as it would be foolish presumption to assume that every tare that proclaims itself to be wheat is what it claims. Jesus said that the sign of His near return was rampant deception and warned us, “Take heed that no one deceives you.” (Mt. 24:4) Christ and God gave grace (power and favor) to certain people so that they would manifest certain traits. This is God’s method of equipping and producing people who are doing work of service to the body of Christ and even to the world and it is those who are so equipped (don’t confuse “being equipped” with the “church’s” counterfeit of “being fed”! – see Isa. 28:13, etc.) who will in this way “come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...” (see Eph. 4:11-13) That the vast majority of people who claim to belong to Christ 1) are not doing work of service (but rather let the professional clergy class take care of that dirty business), 2) are divided into nearly uncountable sects and divisions, 3) have multiple ideas about who and what Christ is and 4) display more emotional immaturities and carnal characteristics than spiritual maturity, is only the evidence that they are partaking of something other than God’s grace (power and favor) and are instead being deceived.

Paul’s letter to the Ephesians stands as the highest peak of the New Testament because it is his clearest presentation of the heights of the gospel of Christ. The letter is in some ways Paul’s attempt to fore-warn and fore-arm the genuine ekklesia of Christ against the apostasy of the last days. (To “prove” this to a skeptical reader is beyond the scope of this article.) Paul provides two main remedies to the apostasy:

- We need to know what God did for us *in Christ*. “In Christ” or some equivalent appears some 35 times in the first three chapters of Ephesians. This is no accident.
- Be faithful to obey what God requires of us in response to the work done in Christ. There are some 35 commands given in the second half (the last three chapters) of Ephesians.

This near precise balance between our knowledge of Christ’s truth and our obedience to our personal responsibility before God is not a coincidence. It is Paul’s prescription against the apostasy of the end times that God had revealed to him. (see 2 Ths. 2:3, 2 Cor. 12:4, etc.)

This is the same picture we see presented in Jesus’ parable of the wedding maids. The five wedding maids who were unable to refill their lamps were forced to run off to find their ear-scratching spiritual guru (those who “sell or deal in oil” – Mt. 25:9) and were summarily

excluded from the wedding feast of the Bridegroom. (Mt. 25:12) But the five wedding maids who were able to refill their lamps were faithfully waiting for the Bridegroom when He returned and they entered into the joy of their Master. (Mt. 25:10) There is no special knowledge that can only be gained at some seminary or at the feet of some eloquent, charismatic professional “Christian” speaker (whether “pastor,” “apostle,” “prophet,” “pope,” whatever) that is needed to remain in the kingdom of God. One need only submit to the Spirit of God and live in obedience to His guidance. Only those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (Rom. 8:14) and only the sons of God are those whom the New Testament also calls saints, those people set apart for God’s purposes. When these saints obediently attend to the kingdom of God, they are the ekklesia, what might be called the executive arm of the kingdom of God among men.

This higher mission of the ekklesia, far and away very different from the notion of routine “church” attendance, is not common knowledge. But it becomes very attainable for anyone who is seeking to know and worship God in spirit and truth and who is diligent to be faithful in those things that God requires of us. Jesus said that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God (Mt. 4:10) – note well that He did not say that we would live by words that come from the mouths of men, no matter how eloquent, polished, educated or even gifted such a man might be. His sheep hear His voice and He knows them and they follow Him and it is to those who match this description that He gives abundant and eternal life. (Jn. 10:10, 27-28)

It is not enough to claim to be a part of Christ or to attach oneself to some organization of mere men – one must demonstrate something of truly being changed into being like Him or one’s claims are simply fictitious lies. Even now, many people are not fooled by such fabrications but certainly, on judgment day, Christ and God will not be fooled for even one millisecond. Unless one actually is a part of Christ, one cannot hope to belong in either God’s kingdom or His ekklesia. Rather, one can only belong to the counterfeit “church” that usurps the role and function of the body and bride of Christ. Don’t let any man deceive you into thinking otherwise.

Let he who has ears hear.

Neil Girrard
Paidion Books
P.O. Box 327
Capitan, NM 88316

Website – www.paidionbooks.org
Email – paidion@paidionbooks.org
This article - <http://paidionbooks.org/girrard/gospking/apoc.html>