

## **What is Church?**

### ***God's Church is not a building.***

It is God's Local, Visible, Called Out Assembly of Baptized believers who have covenanted together to carry out the Great Commission.

### ***God Established His church during His earthly ministry, not at Pentecost or the upper room.***

(Matt 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.*

***Not on Peter:*** (1 Cor 10:4) *And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.*

### ***God build His church out of prepared material:***

(John 1:6) *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*

Jesus walked 60 miles to get the right baptism form the only person on the planet with proper authority.

(Mk 3:13-14) *And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. 14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,*

(Lk 6:13) *And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;*

(1 Cor 12:28) *And God hath set some in the church, first apostles,*

### ***He Established it Forever before Pentecost!***

(Matt 26:18) *and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

### ***The Church had Organization build into it.***

Had a treasurer: (Jn 12:46) ***before Pentecost***

Preached the Gospel: (Mk 3:14)

Had Discipline: (Matt 18:15-17)

Elections: (Acts 1:15-26)

***before Pentecost***

***The Church received the holy Spirit:*** (Jn 16:7, 20:22)

***The Church received the Ordinances:*** (Mk 14:22-25)

***The Church received its Commission:*** (Matt 28:19-)

### ***The Church is the Body of Christ:***

The Bible speaks of 3 bodies:

Human: (Col 2:11)

Church: (Col 1:18)

Christ's: (Col 1:33)

Human: (Eph 5:28)

Church: (Eph 1:22-23)

Christ's: (Eph 5:30)

Christ's Body Manifests God to Mankind:

(Jn 14:9; 1 Tim 3:16; 2 Cor 5:19)

Church Body Manifests Christ to the World: (Acts 1:8)

Human Body Illustrates our relationship with God through the covenant of Marriage: (Eph 5:32)

### **The Church is the Bride of Christ:**

Israel is not the Bride:

Israel is God's earthly people.

Israel will receive God's earthly promises

Israel is like the wife of God:

*(Is 54:5-6) For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. 6 For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.*

*(Jer 3:14) Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you:*

*The NT Saints are God's Heavenly People:*

### ***The Church is the Bride of Christ:***

1st: Remember that a Bride, is not a bride until their wedding day!

We Are Betrothed to Christ:

*(2 Cor 11:2) For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

Paul was speaking directly to the church at Corinth specifically.

The Holy Spirit is calling out a bride now.

The Church becomes the Bride of Christ when she is caught up & presented unto the Bridegroom:

*(Eph 5:27) That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

*(Rev 19:7) Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.*

*(Rev 21:9-10) And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,*

*"I drove by your church today" - Really?*

I doubt they drove by a single member of my church. No they drove by the Place where the church meets. This building personifies the people who meet here.

(Heb 12:22-24) *“But”-In contrast to the Israelites trying to approach God at Mt. Sinai*

*Through Jesus, we approach...  
mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,*

*An Innumerable Company of Angels,  
General Assembly = Celebratory event.*

*Church of the 1st Born,  
God the Father,  
To the spirits of just men made perfect,  
The Saved of all time to part of the church,  
And to Jesus*

### **All of this is Illustrated by Isaac & Rebekah**

Isaac is offered on the Altar Gen 22 & returns with the Father,

(Gen 24) Abraham sends his servant to seek out a wife for his son.

Abraham is a type of the Father: Who gave his son.  
Isaac is a Type of the Son: Offered & returned to the Father's house.

Servant is a Type of the Holy Spirit: Now doing the work of the absent son.

Rebekah is a type of the Church:

Willing to return home with the servant.

She is taken away unto the Father's house to be presented to the Groom (Eph 5:25-27)

The church should be ready: (Matt 25:6) *And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.*

### **BUT: What is Church?**

I just gave you a breakdown of all the head knowledge about church you need.

What is Church?

What is it supposed to be?

Are we doing church right?

Just like the story of Isaac & Rebekah illustrate the relationship between Christ and His church.

The Story of their Son Jacob Illustrates what our Church experience should be.

### **(Gen 28:10-22)**

*10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. 11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and*

*put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.*

He rested upon a stone that represents Christ.

*12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven:*

The Ladder pictures Christ as our Access to Heaven

*and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.*

Heavenly Messengers/Ministers interacting with earth

Bring answers to Prayer.

Ministering to us as directed by God.

*Vs 13-19 & he called the name of that place Bethel*

Beth~House of

El~ God

Beth-El~ House of God

Beth-Shalom~House of Peace

Beth-lehem~ House of Bread

Abraham had build an altar here many years earlier.

It was called Luz until Jacob changed its name.

*but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.*

Luz, a place of Springs, it was a good place to camp.

Luz was the crossroads of the promise land.

The Main N,S,E,W highways met here.

2nd most mentioned city in the bible is BETHEL.

What made that the house of God? (Bethel)

What Makes This the House of God? (Our Church building)

What Makes This the House of God? (Our Body)

**I. Church is where we connect with God.**

(Gen 28:12-15)

Not assembling to hear good music, good preaching.

If that is all we do, then we have missed the point.

Jacob Connected with God.

Jacob Experiences God's Presence.

Jacob hears God's voice personally.

Jacob learns God's Word.

Jacob is moved to make a decision based on God's promises. (Gen 28:20)

**Jacob learns about the messiah. (Vs 12)**

*Jacob's Ladder - "on it"*

(John 1:45-51) Jesus was pictured in the Ladder.

(Vs 50-51) Is that all it takes to WOW you! Hang On!

There is a connection between Jacob and God.

A Connection between Heaven and Earth, His name is Jesus!

***Why is this a Connection? (Gen 28:16)***

*16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.*

God is in this place:  
I was unaware of it before, BUT now I do!

***Connection is when I am aware of the presence of God.***

If all you do is come for a good performance, you have not actually come to church!

***Even in the deadest, driest church ever, God is still there.***

**Don't blame it on the church!**

**Did You Make a Connection With God?**

God is bigger than poorly performed music.  
God is bigger than your favorite style of music.

*Illus: Some people come here looking for Hymns Only  
Some people come hear and don't know the Hymns.  
They feel just as awkward during a Hymn as you do during a Worship song!*

If all you do is come looking for a good performance, you have not actually come to church!

God is bigger than no children's ministry.  
God is bigger than no Nursery.  
God is bigger than dry preaching.  
**DID YOU MAKE A CONNECTION?**  
Is your heart open?

Did you connect with the Word of God?  
Did you prepare yourself during the song service?

**Don't come to church just to watch the show.**

Church is not a spectator sport!  
Church is not about exhibiting God, but experiencing God.

We are not trying to put on a good show, but trying to create an atmosphere where everyone can have an encounter with God.

We don't have a Nursery for show.  
We don't have a Choir for show.  
We don't have a Awana for show.  
We don't have a Jr. Church for show.

Lost, Newly Saved, Longtime Christian.  
We are trying to create an atmosphere where everyone can say, "Oh God, you're Here!"

*"Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not."*  
God is in this place:  
I was unaware of it before, BUT I know it NOW!

**I. Church is a Connection**

**II. Church is a Conversation:**

Once you connect with God, He want to talk to you!  
God spoke with Jacob, and Jacob spoke with God.

### **The House of God is where Is & God Speaks.**

(Vs 13-15) God spoke to Jacob

(Vs 20-22) Jacob speaks to God

### **God promised this to Moses**

(Ex 25:22) *And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee..., of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.*

I am Going to Connect with you,

I am going to speak with you,

and We are going to have a conversation.

### **3 Ways God's speaks during Church:**

**1. Correction:** Not bad, but a good thing.

God waves people down to turn them in the right direction.

*Illus: You in an unfamiliar area, you make a wrong turn, and a person flags you down and gives you correct directions to get you going to the right way.*

Is the man that flagged you down a Bad Guy?

Is he a hateful Guy for flagging you down?

*We like this way, its pretty.*

True, but it will not get you to your destiny.

Nothing Wrong with God speaking correction into our lives.

It is very common that God will speak correction in our worship service.

**2. Direction:** Not a bad thing, but a good thing.

Many people are stuck, not sure which way to turn.

*Illus: Someone sees you trying to get direction from your map, or Maps app & its not working, Someone may step up and ask if you need directions.*

God will speak Direction into your life.

When you are in the presence of God,

You make a connection with God,

God speaks Correction or Direction into your life.

**3. Inspiration:**

God's Exhortation to keep going in the right direction.

***when we come together for Corporate worship, its not just to enjoy the show, its to make a Connection & have a Conversation with God.***

Church is a Connection, Conversation,

**III. Church is a Commitment: (Gen 28:18-22)**

Tithe

Abraham also made this commitment.

A True Commitment will always involve your Wallet.  
God doesn't have your Heart until He has your Wallet.

(Matt 6:21) *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

People misquote this:

Where your heart is, your treasure will be also.

NOT TRUE

Your heart always follows your Treasure.

If you want your heart to follow after God,  
If you want your heart to be in the house of God,  
If you want your heart to be in the Word of God...  
then start putting your treasure into God  
& the things of God,  
and your heart will follow.

*Illus: Pick any stock on the NASDAQ,  
invest money in it, & you will find yourself checking  
on it every day to see how it is doing.*

Even though you never cared before how that stock  
performed before.

The reason you care about it now is, part of your heart  
is there.

Why is a part of your heart there?

Because you put your treasure there.

**Do you want to be Faithful?**

**Do you want to be committed like never before?**

**PUT YOUR TREASURE HERE & your heart will follow!**

**Begin Investing in the Kingdom of God!**

I hear people say how they love God.

I hear people say how they meet with God.

*“Oh I wish I could love God and meet with God like that.”*

**YOU CAN!!!!, START TITHING**

If I could legally do it,

I would offer a money back guarantee.

If you tithe for a year & are not fully satisfied, I  
would give you your money back.

No I can't legally, but If I could I would have no fear  
offering it because of God's Promise.

(Mal 3:10-12) *Bring ye all the tithes into the  
storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and  
prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I  
will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour  
you out a blessing, that there shall not be room  
enough to receive it.*

**AND! Like God is saying & If You Call Now &...**

*11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and  
he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither*

*shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. 12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.*

**You don't have to shout down the Devil, God will!**

*"Hey, you cant touch her, she is a tither!"*

From a business standpoint, that's worth a 10% investment.

Church is a Connection, Conversation, Commitment,

**IV. Church is a Place of Change:**

*(Gen 28:10) And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.*

From the Southern end of Israel to across the northern border to Haran in another Country.

***Why?***

Jacob's name meant surplantor, or Cheat.

He stole his brother Esau out of his birthright.

He Cheated Esau out of his Blessing/Inheritance

He had lied to his father to do it.

Esau finds out and says I am going to Kill Jacob.

Jacob asks his co-conspirator what to do.

She says run for your life.

Run to Haran, we have family there,  
that's where your Grandad & Father got his wife,

Aught to work out pretty good for you too.

He runs 40 miles to Bethel, twice the norma daily travel. **Why?**

Because Esau is a man of the field & Hunter.

If Esau's thing was Arts & Crafts, not so much.

***Tracking & Killing was his thing!***

You better go twice as far @ twice the pace.

He is in Haran 20yrs and God speaks to Jacob again

**God tells Jacob, Go back and face your Past!**

*(Gen 31:13) I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.*

**Jacob comes back to Bethel:**

He meets with God

He has a connection with God.

*(Gen 32:9-12) Jacob reminds God of his promise He made to Jacob.*

*(Gen 32:24-25) Jacob wrestled with God over his past*

*(Gen 32:26) Jacob wants God to Bless Him!*

*(Gen 32:27-28) Jacob is Changed!*

*(Gen 32:29) Jacob is Blessed.*



(Gen 32:30) God's blessings were a New Dependence & New Identity.

New Dependence: Jacob was going to have to rely on God's strength from now on.

New Identity: A Prince with God.  
A Person who Struggles, but God Prevails.

**How many of us can relate to that?**

How many of us are still struggling, but God is prevailing?

Church is where we, the struggling, can come & have  
A Connection with God,  
A Conversation with God,

and because God touches you, you can make A  
Commitment to God,

and God will Change you!