

WHERE is that one true Church that Christ built?

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By Philip Shields

www.LightontheRock.org

All scriptures are NKJV unless noted otherwise.

Summary:

Yeshua (Jesus) said he would build his one church (ekklesia) and it would survive the ages. So where is it? Are all Christians a part of that body? Is it a particular group you can go worship with? WHAT is the true church? WHERE are its people? Is it any one organization led by a man or woman someplace? I hope this will make you think and ponder. Should God's children become friends with people of the world? Find out!

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Warm welcome from Orlando, FL to the House of God in Yeshua our Messiah. This is to a group of people, the *ekklesia* of the Highest, not a church organization.

I will normally refer to Jesus as Yeshua; the Father as Abba; and "the LORD", when quoting in the Old Testament, as YHVH – Yahweh.

Going into a topic today that I hope will make you think along lines you may not have for a long time. (This is one sermon I highly recommend you hear with the audio on, as I cover it so much better in the audio; this is just the rough notes. Please hear the audio on this vital topic even as you follow along with the printed notes; THIS sermon especially.)

Look at a promise by Yeshua (Jesus):

Matthew 16:16-18

"Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter (*petros*) and **on *this* rock (*petra*) I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**"

Note: HE would build *His* church. One church. Singular. Death would not prevail against it. That church **MUST** be out there somewhere! So where is it? Can you go attend with it? Gates don't attack, they defend. We – the church of God that Christ built – is on attack against Hades, the death.

My story of "going to church" in the 1960's as a teenager (on audio). In a rush – and confident we were a part of the "one true church". After all, if other believers in other churches were really being called, they'd be attending with *us*, right? Or so we thought. You attend where you attend, with the denomination you do, because you feel that group is the chosen group. Maybe you're not as exclusivist in your thinking as we were years ago – but still, where is that true church?

Many are called, few are chosen. A highest honor to be among the chosen of God.

WHY am I covering this: If there are other true believers, true children of God outside your organization/fellowship, and you're refusing to meet or get to know them, are you refusing to meet and worship with the full family of God?

- And can the true church be having problems spiritually and *still* be HIS church?
- Can true believers believe in *some* wrong doctrines and yet *still* be true believers? At what point does doctrine define a true believer? And are you so sure YOU have all the right doctrines down pat? And if you don't feel all your beliefs are guaranteed to be 100% correct, then if you're a true believer – then you're living proof that one could have incomplete doctrine and still be a true believer? Just a thought...
- Why do so many groups forbid the believers from visiting other groups? Is that really of God? We know technically there must be true believers scattered in various groups, and yet so many *BEHAVE* as if their group was the only true church of God.
- Who are the true children of God? We are all God's children by creation – true. *But spiritually speaking, there are children of God and there are children of the god of this world, Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4).* That's shocking, but Yeshua himself says so in John 8:44.

John 8:42-44

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 **You are of your father the devil**, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." (Also – if you want more: 1 John 3:8-12; Gen 3:15)

To be a child of the one true living God, you have to have his Seed, His Spirit -- and be born of God (John 1:12-14), as I'll talk about more later. The god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4) also has his children. I know you don't hear that a lot in the pulpits across America, but that's what Scripture teaches.

Those led by God's spirit are God's children (Romans 8:14). They are also those who have accepted Yeshua as their Messiah (Galatians 3:26-28). More on all that later. Also be sure to hear my sermon on "Signs of True Disciples" (Oct 25, 2013 on this website).

We'll see today too that the one true church is composed of people of all backgrounds, colors, habits, quirks – but they have God's SEED: the Holy Spirit – that makes them God's children. And I think too many of you are missing out on other children, because you insist they must be a part of just YOUR man-made organization.

(I give my story on audio of meeting my cousins and nephews on my father's side in TX whom I had never met.) I found it exciting. There were similarities and a lot of dissimilar things – but we were family. Are there spiritual children of God you haven't met yet and don't even know are out there – because we are limiting in our minds who could possibly be a child of God.

Don't put God's children – or God himself – into a box. He doesn't tend to like that too well. This sermon is to help us “unbox” the children. Yeshua made it clear in John 4 that you can't limit where can be worshipped to this place or that – not this mountain, not that city or temple – for God wants to be worshipped in spirit and truth. (John 4:

Who and where are “God's chosen people”?

ORTHODOX JEWS? The Bible does say Israel was the chosen nation – **Deut 7:6; 26:18** and dozens more. *Result: they have dismissed the possibility of Gentiles and non-Jews being God's people.* But its obvious God is now also calling Gentiles as “his people” today, and not limiting it to Jews. Romans 11 explains how we all are grafted in to Israel – but an “Israel of God” (**Gal 6:16**), that has accepted the Son of God as their Savior. Even Jews in the flesh will have to accept this to be considered the “Israel of God”. Romans 9 and 11 are all about that. I'll give scriptures later in this message. Is it enough, today though, to just be born a Jew or Israelite in the flesh – and be the true “chosen of God” spiritually?

Catholics? They believe Peter was their first pope and that they have the authority of antiquity. (More detail in the audio)

Ephesians 2:20 – Peter was but a part of the foundation of apostles and prophets; Christ the chief cornerstone.

Peter – “petros” – stone.

ROCK – petra – the big granite cliff that would be picturing Christ.

A wise man builds his house upon a ROCK. And God the Father is now building HIS house upon THE Rock, and that Rock was Christ (**1 Corinthians 10:4**). The true church is built on Christ, not Peter. Christ is the “petra” the cliff-like huge rock, not just a small stone.

Protestants: are they the true church? Which denomination then? Reformers like Martin Luther, Bullinger, John Knox, John Wesley, John Wycliffe, Ulrich Zwingli and Calvin and the many early reformers came to see that the doctrine of salvation by works in the Catholic Church simply wasn't biblical. Other doctrines also: infant baptism by sprinkling instead of immersion, keeping the scriptures out of the hands of the general populace, role of the priesthood, etc. etc. Many Protestants were burned alive for their protesting. But if they are the true church – which of their thousands of offshoots?

But many Protestants started following a man instead of the Word – so they were called Wesleyans, Lutherans, Calvinists – or other men and movements – the Arminians, etc.

Other off-brand groups – Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists.... Could one of these be the one true church?

Hebrew Roots? Messianic Christians? Splinter groups of the Church of God groups? Are they the one true church Christ came to build? Which “splinter group”? And we see leaders of various groups prohibiting any visiting to other groups. Why? Is Messiah in any of this confusion? He did say He would build ONE church, not many.

So where is that church Yeshua promised to build?

Or is it possible that within those many thousands of denominations – that there could be individual true believers with God's spirit sprinkled here and there?

Even Elijah complained that he was the only one left of all the prophets. God straightened him out; there were 7,000 who had not bowed to Baal. But why didn't they get with Elijah so he could be encouraged by them? (See **Romans 11:1-5**). Paul uses that to show there are children of God out there that others aren't "seeing".

Or would you forbid God from giving His spirit to certain ones who don't quite fit your/our mold of what a child of God "should" act like, look like and the doctrines they would believe? Ponder that. And now notice what our Master himself says:

John 10:16

*"And **other** sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd."*

This implies there are true scattered sheep of his who not yet part of one flock – but are HIS sheep, HIS people, nonetheless. Then in v 27-28 he goes on to teach that men may throw you out of their organizations, but if you are a true child of God, no human can snatch you out of the hand of God – if you are one of His.

John 10:27-28

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand."

Are you seeing more clearly that the "one true church" perhaps is not an organized corporation led by men but more of a spiritual organism or body?

The one true body, the true church is an organism rather than an organization. It is out there -- someplace – but it's a body of people who may not all be in "one flock" right now.

WHAT is "the Church"? (Greek "*ekklesia*")

The word translated "church" comes from Greek word "*ekklesia*" – referring to a body of PEOPLE called to meet for a particular purpose. Could refer to a legislative body or other groups, though in scripture it came to refer to those called out by God to be set-apart for holy use. It can mean "assembly" or "congregation".

So the *ekklesia* is a group, an assembly of people called to meet for a purpose.

The "church" is not a building, but an assembly.

We are the church, we don't "go to church".

So when I speak of "where is the church" – I really am asking – where is the *ekklesia*, the called-out body or group of people. The "church" is a group of people, not a building.

Who comprised the earliest *Ekklesia* (called out ones) of God?

Adam and Eve were kicked out of the garden after they sinned. YHVH starting calling a few back to himself – Abel, maybe Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac-Rebekah and then Jacob (renamed Israel) and his 12 sons.

Abraham and his descendants through Isaac (Jacob – 12 tribes) were the original chosen “group” or nation by God. Called out of Egypt – but they could not get Egypt out of them, so they rebelled, lost faith and therefore disobeyed – and they died in the wilderness. See Hebrews 3-4 for detail.

Only the new life (those 19 and younger) were allowed in. Our old nature has to die and it’s the new self, the new birth, which goes into OUR Promised Land as we follow our Joshua – a type of Yeshua.

The newborns and youth going into the Promised Land were a picture of the new birth WE must have to be in the kingdom of God.

Yeshua (Jesus) was very clear about that. “*Unless a man is born again, he shall not see the kingdom of God*” (John 3:3).

This is all about what scripture calls “the new creation”, the “new man” – we have to become something we weren’t before, to enter the true Promised Land. For Israel, the “old man” – the old self—literally had to die out first, for 40 years of testing, before the new born ones could enter in. There is but one Creator. He created the physical creation and He is the only one also creating the new creation. *You are not the creator of your new creation* any more than you had that much to do with being conceived and born physically.

Stephen, in Acts 7, calls Israel the *ekklesia* (church, congregation) in the wilderness.

Acts 7:38

“This is he, that was in **the church (“*ekklesia*”;** NKJV – “**congregation**”) in **the wilderness** with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us...”

Israel was the original chosen race, the chosen people, the first “*ekklesia*” or church of God.

Gentiles: God is “God of all the earth” (Isaiah 54:5; Revelation 11:4; Zechariah 4:14) – and He gave hints that the time would come when GENTILES would also be called HIS people at some point, if they too, came to accept their Savior. Any Gentiles would do well to hear my **2 sermons about the GENTILES – given in Sept 2012.**

But in the Old Testament, we see how YHVH loves the Gentiles also and promises their day is coming when they too can become the children of God.

- His kindnesses to GENTILES – Naaman the Syrian; widow of Zarephath. 1 Kings 17
- His forgiveness of Nineveh – a most evil and violent city-state (See book of Jonah)
- His promises in Hosea and elsewhere that even those who are called “not a people” will become people of God. And Paul refers to all that also in Romans 9, 10, 11.
- Christ grew into his adult years in “Galilee of the Gentiles”.

Paul speaks of the “Israel of God” - **Gal. 6:16** (I may have wrongly said Gal 4:19 in audio)

So is the chosen today JUST the nation of Israel? There are 2 views.

1. **Many do believe Israel is strictly still the chosen people/nation.** Hence many “Hebrew Roots’ folks and “Messianics” try to embrace national Israel, become Jewish in attire and speech. They point to scriptures that God’s promises, future wedding to Israel, and future covenant in Jer 31 is to House of Israel and House of Judah. Conferences can focus more on a “love for Israel” even more than on a “love for Messiah” or Christ. They tend to distance themselves from Greek words or English equivalent – like Jesus, Christ, God, etc. and they prefer Yeshua, Messiah, Elohim. (I can use both) Some feel we have to become a part of Israel and they select some few verses from Romans 11 to support that.
2. **“REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY”** – in strictest form teaches the “church” (including Gentiles) has replaced Israel as the “chosen”. The church, or chosen ones they say, is now the “Israel of God” – Galatians 6:16. BUT this movement also teaches God has rejected Israel. But there are indeed many scriptures about there being a spiritual Israel today, and someone is a Jew who is one spiritually (Romans 2:27-28), etc. Also Gal. 3:26-28 is very clear.

So what is the truth? You can’t read Paul’s writings especially without realizing that Gentiles can also be part of the elect, the Israel of God.

The problem lies in isolating it to just physical or spiritual – and forgetting that the physical is a type of the spiritual. We are to think spiritually and learn from the physical.

Indeed God has not rejected Israel. See Romans 9-10-11. There are indeed prophecies of Israel and Judah coming back from a future captivity together and becoming one again (so the “lost 10 tribes” will be revealed for all to see). And Paul says to the Gentile Corinthians – “I espouse YOU as a bride, a virgin to the Messiah!” (**2 Cor. 11:2**).

How? *Because in Christ we all become spiritual Israelites.* That’s all explained in my **2 part sermons in Sept 2012 about Gentiles**. I recommend you all hear it.

In the New Jerusalem, all 12 gates into the city, are the 12 gates named after the 12 tribes of Israel. So we enter through Israel – but it’s a SPIRITUAL Israel today.

And from now on – get this –whether you are physically a Jew or physically a Gentile – **every single one who will be saved will have to accept Yeshua to become a spiritual Jew and have access to the City of God.** Even physical JEWS will have to accept Christ in order to continue to be one of the chosen of God – the Israel of God spiritually.

But it’s also true that God will continue to work with national/physical Israel and Judah – even as he develops the spiritual reality, the church! So I don’t espouse Replacement Theology, though Paul is very clear in Romans 9-11 that even Jews are no longer SPIRITUAL Jews in God’s eyes unless they first accept Yeshua.

Romans 9:6-8

"But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. **For they are NOT all Israel who are of Israel, 7 NOR are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham;** but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." 8 That is, those who are the children of the flesh, **these are NOT the children of God; but the children of the PROMISE are counted as the seed.**"

So there you have it. The children of the PROMISE – those who accept Yeshua – are counted as the Seed of Abraham today. And as explained in **Gal 3:26-28** – that can be any Gentile also. Gentiles who accept Yeshua are now included among the "Israel of God" (**Gal 6:16**). Even the NEW JERUSALEM above – we all enter through one of the 12 gates named after each TRIBE of Israel (Revelation 21:12-13). We become spiritual Israelites (Romans 2:28-29).

EVEN JEWS who may be physically circumcised now need the spiritual circumcision that comes from accepting Yeshua and having faith in him, proven by a walk of obedience as well as HE lives anew in us. Even Jews must become SPIRITUAL Jews to be a part of this body of Christ. This is not "Replacement Theology". It's correct theology. I'm thrilled to see Jews in Israel coming to this site, btw.

The whole thing becomes clear when you realize there is a PHYSICAL pointing to the SPIRITUAL type and anti-type being taught in scripture.

I haven't gotten off my topic – but explaining carefully what is the CHURCH – the *ekklesia* of GOD – and WHERE it is.

So in the New Testament, God calls both Jews and Gentiles "My Children"

So – we've seen how in the Old Testament, God referred to *Israel* – all 12 tribes – as "My People".

Deuteronomy 26:18

Also today YHVH has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments..."

Remember Exodus 3:7-10, and all the places where YHVH demands that Pharaoh "let MY people go". It's all thru Exodus 5-12. Then in Leviticus 26:12 He clearly says "I shall be your God, and YOU shall be *my people*." There are dozens and dozens of references of God calling Israel "My People".

But then the door is opened to GENTILES to have that same honor and privilege!

Romans 9:25-26

As He says also in Hosea:

**"I will call them 'My people', who were NO 'My people',
And her 'beloved', who was not beloved."**

26 "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them,

' You are not My people,' There **they** shall be called sons of the living God."

Peter had to learn first that God was now accepting and calling Gentiles to be included in the "chosen people" and "My people" category. That was shocking to him. *All 12 apostles*

were Jews. Even Yeshua was a Jew. Even Yeshua had said “salvation is of the Jews” – John 4:20. As shocking as it might be for some of you to really believe there are “chosen people” out there who are not part of your religious heritage! (Peter’s story is in Acts 10).
(The audio version on this point is much better and more detailed.)

The last people Peter thought would ever be “in the church” were the evil Romans (from a Jew’s perspective), the conquerors who also crucified their Master. So God had to shock Peter into realizing that he should no longer call ANY MAN unclean any longer.

AS difficult as it was for Peter to accept that Romans could be God’s people may be as difficult for you to accept that God is working with people outside of your church organization, who aren’t exactly like you. Put yourself in Peter’s mind. But once Abba sent the Holy Spirit and gave it to the Romans there, he had no choice but to accept them as fellow brothers and sisters! HE was shocked, thrilled. But some of the Jews weren’t so sure.

Acts 10:24-29

And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. 26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man." 27 And as he talked with him, he went in and found *many who had come together*. **28 Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.** 29 Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?"

Yeshua was raised in a very GENTILE area. It was called “Galilee of the Gentiles” (Isaiah 9:1). He died for all sinners the world over, who would accept him.

We can’t be racist, or thinking God today has a preference for Jews, whites, educated or any such thing. We are all ONE in Christ. I pray God would call every person on the earth to his glorious good news – whether black or white or brown, whether Mohawk American Indian or one of royal blood, whether rich or poor, whether upper class (not many of those are being called) – **or my favorite: may God call, touch and open the minds of India’s “untouchables” – the Dalit or the Harijan** -- and call them to the GLORY that can be, and will be, even theirs someday – in Yeshua.

May you in India no longer regard anyone as “untouchable”, below your dignity, or any such thing. God was now calling anyone He so chose. The apostles are commanded to go make disciples of ALL nations, starting in Jerusalem.

Praise Yeshua’s holy name and praise Abba, our wonderful FATHER!

Look how Peter explained about Gentiles at the Jerusalem Conference convened to discuss the matter of requiring Gentiles to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses (Acts 15:5):

Acts 15:5-11

But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to **circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.**"

6 Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.

7 And when there had been much dispute, **Peter rose up and said to them:** "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the **Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.** **8 So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit,** just as He did to us, 9 and **made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.** 10 Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But we believe that ***through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ WE shall be saved in the same manner as THEY.***"

Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost and his message all through Acts 10 to the house of Cornelius – was all about what Christ had done for mankind. Go back and read those messages in Acts 2 and the last third of Acts 10. You'll see that's what Peter was talking about. (Also on the audio of this sermon) And now in Acts 15:7 he is calling his message "the word of the gospel".

So YES, people of God, members of the Body of Christ, members of the ONE TRUE CHURCH that Jesus built -- can be brethren from Jamaica, or Kenya, or New Guinea or Haiti or Bolivia. We're all ONE. No one is better or higher or lower than anyone else, though we all do have different functions, as a hand has a different function from a toe or tongue.

And if we in America and Israel and Britain – or wherever you live -- will accept Christ by FAITH, maybe he'll let even us be part of that group he calls "MY PEOPLE" – his *ekklesia*.

The church- *ekklesia*—of God is a work in progress

One more big point: **that one true church that Jesus built is a work in progress.** He's not done with finishing touches yet! This is a HUGE point to grasp.

Paul spoke of "**UNTIL Christ is formed in you**" –a work in progress (**Galatians 4:19**).

Ephesians 2:19-22

"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, **being fitted** together, **grows** into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also **are being built** together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

Notice how the wording is ongoing in its TENSE. It's a work in progress. (Being fitted, grows, are being built) The foundation has been laid. No other foundation can anyone lay than what's been laid, but the SUPERSTRUCTURE is a work in progress.

I'm sure someone else has said this, but I haven't heard this before: that the church Yeshua built is a work in progress.

The individuals in this body are also works in progress – as you and I and all of us are a part of HIM, part of HIS body, part of HIS righteousness. Now when we come before holy, holy, holy Father Most High, we come in the name of Messiah. I don't come in my name, or what I was in the past, but I come in what I am today: as a part of my Messiah. So now when I pray and say "I come in the name of your holy perfect son, Yeshua, who pleases you perfectly, I come as part of HIM before you. I come as part of Him. He covers me. See Him, not me."

(See Colossians 3:3 – "our lives are hidden in Christ, in God", and that's the only way we can come boldly before the throne of grace—Hebrews 4:16 – through Christ!).

Just as "Solomon's Temple" was not a visibly finished building until all the pre-finished stones and precious stones came together – neither will the SPIRITUAL temple, the true church be visibly seen, until *all* its LIVING precious stones come together. So stop looking for just one organization.

The physical is a type of the spiritual. The PHYSICAL tabernacle and temple pictured the spiritual temple – the church, the *ekklesia*. When all the living stones, resurrected and changed into glory at the return of Christ, come together – this latter temple will be glorious indeed, each shining as bright as the sun!

Notice 1 Corinthians 3 also focuses our attention to the fact the Church is a building under construction.

1 Corinthians 3:9-13

"For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, **you are God's building**. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. [Do you see the ongoing-work nature of this?]

11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

SINCE it's a work in progress, it's full of people who are ALSO works in progress. If you don't want to attend services because they're a bunch of hypocrites who can't do everything they preach...

Well, yes, the ekklesia, the one true body or church-- is a hospital for the sick, not a resort for the already perfect. Come join us. We can use another. "I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" – Yeshua said.

THE CHURCH is also the BODY OF Christ

So Gentiles were having the door opened to them to also be called "My People". So the Church – the *ekklesia* – is the spiritual nation of Israel, those called out of the world. It is also represented as a building – as the TEMPLE of God's presence, of his Spirit, and we are the "living stones" of that temple. Paul also teaches us that the "*ekklesia*" is also the "BODY

of Christ". The *ekklesia* is part of HIM, or "IN Him", as Scripture says. It's about total faith in Yeshua and looking to him to start and end your spiritual life – from faith to faith, he is the author and finisher of our faith, because it's all about us being part of HIS one body. T

Colossians 1:18

"And He is the **head of the BODY, the church** (*ekklesia*), who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence."

Ephesians 1:22-23 Whose body?

"And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to **the church, (*ekklesia*) which is His body**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

Colossian 1:24

"And now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, **for the sake of His body, which is the church.**"

If it's HIS body, we are a part of Him – NOT a part of ANY man-made organization. No organization can own you. Messiah bought you, HE paid for you, He owns you and you're a part of HIM. Paul states all this to the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 1:11-13**, as some were starting to follow a man – and Paul asks "was Paul crucified for you?" Knock it off. You're not a part of any man or organization.

So please get this: the church, the *ekklesia*, is the "body parts" of Messiah.

So when people ask me "what church do you belong to?" – I smile a bit, and then answer, "I belong to Christ. I'm part of HIS body of believers."

Mark 9:41

"For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because **you belong to Christ**, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

In many other places, notably 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12, Paul makes the point that just as our human bodies are made up of body PARTS – and each is vastly different from other body parts – so is the Body of Christ! We're not all the same. We're not all a hand, or a tongue, or a fingernail, or a kneecap – but the body needs all of those parts. Christ is the HEAD. We're the rest of the body of Christ.

Once again, that BODY won't be in its full functioning state until all the parts come together – notably in the resurrection. And body parts should not be pummeling other body parts!

Romans 12:4-5

"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so WE, being many, **are one body in Christ**, and individually **members of one another.**"

Start noticing how many times the New Testament talks about having to be IN Christ.

When one body part thinks it's the one main thing – if that one body part (a human in this case) gets to the point it feels everyone has to do what he says -- and demands all others be just like it – we call that CANCER. And it destroys the

body. It takes over a body and kills it. NO, we need functioning different body parts in a healthy body – all coordinated by the brain, the Head - - which is Christ.

Even Christ – He's the Head of his Body. But the Head needs other body parts – though we are ruled by our Head Yeshua, not any man. But even Yeshua wants us to do our function and not try to be the head of the body. He likes our diversity and how we work together. We work with one another and with the head, while a hand is distinctly different from a lung or colon. But we need all of you, all the body parts.

1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 is all about how even our one body has many parts: we have a head, eyes, hands, feet – and knees, and a tongue, liver, intestinal tract and so on – and to have a perfectly working body, all the different and various body parts have to be present, accepted by the others, and working together. The bladder may feel the lungs are quite different, but both are being coordinated by the brain/the head and the autonomic parts of the body. **Romans 12:4-5** says all what I've just said – that we are many, with differing functions, but we are IN Christ and individually a part of one another.

Think about that in terms of the Body of Christ, the church. In the analogy, if you're a liver, you might think the tongue and mouth are allowing too much into the body, but you still work with them. The whole body can't be a liver, or a tongue, or a hand as Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 12. But to have a perfect body, all the body parts are needed.

HOW can you be part of the One True church?

Now the good part – how do we become a part of this exciting group called the *ekklesia*?

Neither you nor I can decide to join the *ekklesia* of God. God the Father personally decides whom He wants in the body, and when. I believe ultimately *almost* everyone will be part of it (2 Peter 3:9) in the next thousand-plus years – but some are called first.

- NO ONE CAN come to Christ unless the Father who sent Him draws you – **John 6:44**. The Greek word there for “draws” is used elsewhere for “drag you”. No kidding. Yeshua said to his disciples, “You have not chosen me; I chose you” (**John 15:16**).

John 6:44

“NO ONE CAN come to Me UNLESS the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Then Yeshua in turn introduces us to the Father (Matthew 11:27).

Once the Father starts to draw us, we have to respond. We have to accept the wedding invitation, if you will. Don't make excuses for why you can't. We accept the call, we repent, we accept Yeshua and receive him as our Savior.

John 1:10-13

“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 **But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of**

God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

- OUR hearts are naturally evil and against God and his ways (Romans 8:6-7). When God’s spirit starts to work with us, the goal is to give us a NEW heart – one that is no longer deceitful above all things and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9). The new heart loves God, loves His laws – but as long as we’re flesh and blood, we have both natures. Hence the conflict we feel. GOD is the one who gives us a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Ezekiel 36:26-27 – YHVH speaking!

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; **I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.** 27 **I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.”**

Notice this is God’s work, not ours. We accept and receive. He is the giver.

It is YAHWEH who is calling you and leading you by His spirit to repentance. It’s HIS doing, not yours. I suspect if you’re being drawn to God’s word and to messages like this, the chance is HIGH that you’re being called by Abba, our dear Father. But it’s all HIS doing.

Peter told the crowd gathered to hear him preach on the Day of Pentecost that they needed to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:37-38).

God’s spirit was obviously leading Peter and was obviously working with the crowd because they responded. If God’s spirit is not working in the hearts of the listeners, they won’t “get it” – not even the best speaker with the best sermon!

Romans 2:4 – “...that the GOODNESS OF GOD leads you to repentance?”

Titus 3:4-7

“But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 NOT by works of righteousness which **WE have done, but according to His mercy **HE** saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified [deemed righteous] **by His grace** we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”**

So Father is the one who draws us. Christ then works with us and brings us to repentance by HIS goodness (Romans 2:4).

SO to be part of this *ekklesia*, God the Father selects you to be called and drawn to Yeshua. His goodness leads you to repent and be baptized. His righteousness in Christ is imparted to us by His spirit. The new birth is the doing of the parents – not the fetus! It’s HIS goodness, HIS grace, HIS calling, HIS spirit, HIS mercy.... So HE gets all the glory!

“For it is GOD who works in you both to will and to do according to His good pleasure” – Philippians 2:13.

This repentance leads you to understand that you and I must totally, 100% change. Nothing of the old carnal way can remain. Paul called it being crucified with Christ. And in Baptism, we are immersed to symbolize the death of the old self and the rising out of the water pictures the risen Christ living in us. A new man. It's a process; it's a work in progress. We still stumble, we fall, because we still also have the fallen nature as well as the new nature.

Someone who is not committed to repenting, changing, overcoming and looking more and more Christ-like each day – is a fraud. We cannot claim the new birth and live a life of intentional sin.

Are you committing adultery or fornication? It has to stop. Even those just in your mind and on the internet. Are you living together but unmarried? You must stop. You must get married or separate, immediately. Are you in the habit of speaking many "White lies"? It has to stop. We have to always speak truth. We have to start keeping the sabbath and start honoring His name – and stopping all profanity.

We cannot claim we know him unless we walk as He walked, and keep his commandments – according to 1 John 3:3-6. Because I speak also a lot about God's grace, God's gift of his righteousness, some misrepresent me to say that I preach we don't have to change. GOD changes us, GOD works in us both to will and to do according to HIS good pleasure (Philippians 2:13)—but we have to let him do it!

We have to let Him clean us up. It is Christ who cleanses the Bride – according to **Ephesians 5:26-28. HE has the spot remover. HE has the iron to iron out the wrinkles – but we must be presenting ourselves to him to let Him do his work of TRANSFORMING us. It's HIS work.**

Ephesians 5:25-27

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that **HE might sanctify and cleanse her** with the washing of water by the word, 27 that *HE might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*"

OUR role is to do the work of God – which is to believe in Yeshua! Focus on Him – not on yourself; look to Him, rejoice in Him, Praise His name, talk about him, and let him LIVE again in us. Grow in love for our Beloved Messiah. THOSE are the children of God, those are the members of the true church Yeshua built – who have RECEIVED Christ (John 1:12).

"...THIS is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent" -- **John 6:29.**

We have too many so-called believers who spend oodles of time in the scriptures, for in them they think they have life, but don't come to YESHUA directly that they MAY have life! Sing of Him, speak of Him, praise Him... LOOK, Yeshua says so himself!

John 5:39-40

"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. 40 **But you are not willing to come to ME** -- that you may have life. "

After baptism (full immersion into body), picturing our burial of the old self and being resurrected anew in Christ (**Romans 6:3-6**), we then have hands laid on us by a true servant of God for the receiving of the Holy Spirit. Peter laid hands on those in Samaria and they received the Spirit (**Acts 8:17; Acts 19:6** – Paul also)

We repent, are put into the body by immersion first in water – and then you are immersed into His Spirit with the laying on of hands.

Receiving and being led by God's Holy Spirit is what makes you a child of God and places you into His body. And that comes after repentance and receiving and loving Yeshua.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14

“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.”

Are you getting it? Are you with me? Hallelujah! We become a part of the body through faith in Yeshua and this in turns makes us a child of God and an heir of all the promises promised to Yeshua. Since we are now part of his BODY – we ALSO are part of all those promises and are co-heirs with Christ of all things!

This one spirit makes us CHILDREN of God, by which we now call the HIGHEST BEING in the UNIVERSE “Abba” - - dear Daddy!

Romans 8:14-17

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the **Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”** 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together”.

In the old covenant, there was a great deal of fear in the relationship. In the New covenant, we are told that we did NOT receive that spirit to fear, but adoption so we can cry out “DADDY, Abba, Father – God most High is my Abba, my Daddy!” Hallelujah!

And if you're IN Christ, you're of course a child of God, a part of the first children of God. And if children, an HEIR OF GOD himself! And that puts us into the HOUSEHOLD of God, which is the TRUE CHURCH!

1 Timothy 3:15

“...but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in **the house of God, which is the church of the living God**, the pillar and ground of the **truth**.”

Are you seeing, it's not an organization of man, not a corporation. The one true church that Yeshua is building is a spiritual group people, called precious “living stones” (1 Peter 2:5)

that are being prepared to someday soon come together as the glorious new temple of living stones at the resurrection. That's when the living temple of God, the CHURCH, will be complete as we come together in glory. THAT will be the ONE TRUE CHURCH – finally complete, finally it has come together in glory.

Those who want to continue to live a life as they are, without any change, without any overcoming, without letting the Holy Spirit lead them—those are frauds. They're not a part of the true ekklesia. Many will come to him in the end saying "Lord, Lord, did we not do all these things in your name?" – and he'll say "I never knew you, you workers of iniquity". (Matthew 7:21-23).

Matthew 7:21-23

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 ***And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'***"

We can't say we know him and refuse to obey him. NO, we're saved by grace to now live as He lived – righteously, obediently – but it's HIS doing, HIS life, HIS righteousness now, and not our imperfect walk.

1 John 2:3-6

"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. 6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."

How? By "the life I live, I live now by the faith of Christ" – Gal. 2:20. WE no longer live, but HE lives anew in us. We become partakers of HIS resurrection so he can live in us.

Time is so short. We MUST be repenting, coming back to our Maker, letting Christ clean us up as we seek him Diligently and eat of our daily manna and daily seek him earnestly in prayer as our FIRST duty and priority – and our first love. He's our daily morning date, as we get up early to pray and study with our Beloved, and let Him speak to us and mold us and shape us.

Hallelujah, amen. I'll have to finish all this in the next sermon. Please tell others about this message. I felt an extra dose of God's anointing as I preached this message. He wants this message to go out there. Help me get this message and the next one out.

And thank you dear Daddy, Abba God our Father in heaven. Thank you. Thank you. IN Yeshua you've opened the Way, the DOOR into your presence and into your family. Thank you, in Yeshua's holy name, Amen.

(There's so much more to cover. So listen to part 2. WHERE is that church Yeshua built? Is it possible that some who don't believe just exactly like we do can also be God's children with God's Spirit? What about doctrinal differences? When do we finally separate over doctrine? Who and where are those other believers? When will be all be one, finally?)