

THE CHURCH AND ITS CALLING

THE TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST

IDENTIFYING AND BEING THE TRUE CHURCH

You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death.” The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, “I am trembling with fear.”

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

THE EXTRAORDINARY STATUS OF THE CHURCH

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

EPHESIANS 1.22-23

- ▶ Christ is the “Fullness of Deity in bodily form” (*Colossians 2.9*), for the reconciliation of all things through his blood shed on the cross (*Colossians 1.19-20*), the full payment for all sin (*Hebrews 10.12*).
- ▶ The Church, complete in Christ, is his fullness (*Colossians 2.10*), his body, the visible manifestation of all that he is and all that his fullness encompasses (*Ephesians 1.23*), of which he is the Head (*Colossians 2.19*).

THE EXTRAORDINARY CALLING OF THE CHURCH

What is the Church? What is its purpose and calling? Does the Church even know and understand its calling and purpose as the visible representation of Christ on earth? Is the Church (we/me) living up to its calling and to God's intended purposes for it? How do we identify those who are part of the true Church and who understand its calling?

- ▶ The Church is comprised of those who have been redeemed from under the power of sin, the sinful fallen nature, and their slavish obedience to the influence of Satan; who have been made alive in Christ and brought into union with him (*Romans 6.6-7, 11-13; Ephesians 2.1-5*).

- ▶ The Church is comprised of those who have been covenanted to God as His children and called by His name, that is, by His identity (*John 1.12-13; Romans 8.14-17; 1 John 3.1-3*).
- ▶ The Church is comprised of those who have been called out of the system and patterns of this world (*Ephesians 2.1-3; Romans 12.1*). Only those who have made that separation are usable to God for His purposes (*2 Timothy 2.19-21*).
- ▶ The Church is called to reveal the glory, love, and righteousness of God on earth; they are called to walk in the authority of Christ and his victory (*1 Corinthians 1.30; Matthew 28.19-20; John 13.35; 1 John 2.13b; 5.4*).

- ▶ The Church is called to fulfill God's purposes for the salvation of the nations before the Day of Wrath (*Acts 26.17; Ephesians 3.10-11*).
- ▶ The Church are those who understand that they are called to be God's ambassadors, sent by Him to reconcile the world through Christ (*2 Corinthians 5.18-21*).
- ▶ The Church is the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ—called to be holy and set apart, called to be his presence and ministry on earth, and living with focused and urgent expectation for his coming (*Ephesians 1.23; 4.12; 5.23; 2 Corinthians 11.2; Revelation 19.7-8*).