



# Where Do I Worship?

*Kola Adegoke*

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## **DEDICATION**

To the only wise God, who has committed himself to raise again in these last days, the tabernacle of David that was broken down - Amos 9:11.

To his Son Jesus Christ; who left all the glories of heaven to seek for himself a glorious church; which shall be without spot, wrinkle or any such thing - Ephesians 5:26-27; Hebrews 10:5.

To God's numerous children, who seek to conform to the standard and image of Christ, amidst the present decay sweeping across the church world - Romans 8:29.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## INTRODUCTION

The contents of this book, came as a result of a series of messages on the KINGDOM WORD TELEVISION series, and have therefore been transcribed into readable format.

These are the closing days of the church age.

The church has traveled a very rough road since the reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the laudable landmarks of the Christian faith have been tampered with and especially in the present day Pentecostal system, are gradually being eroded!

The book of Lamentations 1:4 captures the present day scenario in the church of Jesus Christ: *"The ways of Zion do mourn..."*

Revelations 19:10 states: *"...for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"*

God has never left Himself without a witness. The prophetic spirit is God's witness in this final hour; first in the church and then to the nations.

Revelations 10:1-2 says: *"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud...and he set his right foot upon the sea and his left foot on the earth"*

The 'Mighty Angel' in the above scripture is the revelation of a body of anointed messengers of God scattered all over the world, operating by the prophetic spirit; to make God's mind known, first in the church(which is living in carnality and apostasy) and then to the nations that has lost it's bearing and direction.

It is hoped that this little piece will assist the 'lost sheep' in the Father's house to discover themselves and return to the Lord; and yea, we all repent and return to the *old paths*, as the Prophet Jeremiah recommends in Lamentations 3:40;

*"Let us search and try our ways, and return to the Lord"*

Shalom. Maranatha!

KOLA ADEGOKE

Abuja, 2014.

# Chapter One

## The End Of An Old Era

**T**he Lord has been so good to His people. We live at the time of the end; when the Lord is visiting the world, His church and His children individually, in tremendous ways, all to the end that His plans and purposes might come to good consummation.

This book is expected to be of much enlightenment to an average believer, and also to those who are yet to give their lives to Christ. In the following chapters we shall be considering the topic:

### ***"Where do I worship?"***

This question is quite interesting and very important. I have been to many places to minister the word of God, and I have had people ask me this question:

*'You are telling us the mind of God for this end time. What you are*

*saying to us does not seem to be available or realizable in many of the places where we are! So where do we worship?'*

Now we want to look at the word of God from the book of John 4, and by the grace of the God, I believe that by the time we go through these series of teachings on this all important topic, many of us will be so blessed that we will be able to conclude that God has really visited us! The Bible says that the entrance of the word of the Lord brings light (Psalm 119:30). We trust the Lord that He will give so much light and understanding that you will not be the same. I want to state that, to be profited by these ministrations, it will be better if you read this book to the end without skipping any of the chapters because the question is *'where do I worship as a child of God and as a true servant of the Lord Jesus Christ?'*

We may not tell you, go to this church or go to that church, no! We want to go into the Scriptures, have detailed study and look at the mind of God, consider where we are coming from as God's children, where we are in the church and where the Lord is taking us to.

Let us turn to John 4; we shall read from verse 1. It says,

*1 When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,*

*2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)*

*3 He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.*

*4 And he must needs go through Samaria.*

*5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.*

*6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.*

Jesus Christ had so much light to pass across. The religious order in His days was into so much of deceiving the people and they had so little or no light. The little light there was with them, they did not walk in it; so the Lord Jesus Christ came with much light as the embodiment and the full representation of the Father. However, the Pharisees were always at logger-heads with Him because they felt that He had come to upstage them and take over. But that was not the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ because He said "*I did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfil them*"-(Matthew 5:17). The Bible says *the Law came by Moses; grace and truth came by the Lord Jesus Christ*-John 1:17.

But at this time, Jesus Christ was on a journey and the Bible said that He needed to pass through Samaria. If you look through the Old Testament, historically speaking, you will notice that there has been so much hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans. Jesus Christ got to that place where the Bible tells us that there was a well. It was on a parcel of land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. That well was referred to as 'Jacob's well'. Whether he dug it or he bought is not important. What is important was that the well was referred to as Jacob's well. When Jesus was by that well, the Bible tells us that He was wearied from His journey. That was the physical dimension to it. Next, the Bible says that He sat on the well.

giving light and truth about spiritual worship. He was therefore saying, as it were, that '*what I am about to go into now is a new phase*'. The phase of the sixth hour, the hour of man, was over. So Jesus Christ sat upon that well. He later spoke about another water.

Now, there were some significant aspects to the encounter with this Samaritan woman. The first aspect, as enumerated in verses 1 to 6, is that Jesus Christ sat upon the well, symbolizing an end to an era. So Christ came to open another chapter in the plans and purposes of God. The second aspect begins from verse 7. The Bible tells us in this verse that, *There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water*. Jesus Christ sat on that well before that woman came. He was therefore saying an end has come to this era; there is another era that is coming forth now.

Prophetically speaking, the encounter He had with the woman by the well was to bring the light and understanding of Jesus Christ to the church in a new way. Note that there were never coincidences in the movements, plans and purposes of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said at a time: '*I do not do anything of my own. What I see the father do, that I do*'. At this time, He saw that the time had come to make a public declaration that an end had come to an era, and that a new era was opening up. The Lord in His divine providence brought this woman to the place. Jesus Christ saw her and '*saith unto her, Give me to drink*'.

Now the disciples were not around. They had gone into the town to find some food to buy. They were hungry and weary from their journey. Jesus Christ's request for water stirred up a conversation. The woman was shocked. She said, 'Please Sir, how can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for water?' The Bible says that at that time the Jews and the Samaritans had no dealings at all. (John 4:9). The Jews believed that the

Well, you could say He was physically tired, exhausted as a man. He was God. The man in Him needed some rest. But we see here, two aspects of spiritual truth being passed across just by this singular action. Firstly, the Bible says it was about the sixth hour; and secondly, Jesus sat on that well.

What do wells symbolize? One major thing that comes from a well is water.

A well is meant to bring water. In John 7:37-39, where Jesus Christ was giving a prophecy of the coming of the fullness of the Spirit on the believer, He said *those who believe in Him, out of their bellies shall flow rivers of living water*. So when you we talk about well, the most significant thing about it is water. Nobody is interested in digging a well that has no water. Now, water symbolizes the word of God. It could also symbolize the understanding of the word of God. Water, in another dimension, depending on the situation at hand, could also refer to the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Suffice it therefore to say in the case at hand that there was a well the people were drinking from as at that time. Jesus Christ now came and sat on that well, as it where, putting an end to that order. Remember, grace and truth came by the Lord Jesus Christ. Note also, that the number '6' is believed by many Bible scholars to refer to man. It is the number of man (Revelations 13:18). It was about the sixth hour and Jesus Christ came to fulfil this particular prophecy. His whole life and ministry was to fulfil prophecy. As He sat on that well, He was saying: *the time of man is over*. The time that man has been on the stage is over. The time that man has been having his way is over. Jesus Christ at that sixth hour, the hour of man, sat on that well. More or less, He was putting a closure to that particular *phase* of the worship of God because He was about to enter into another phase of

Samaritans had demons. The Samaritans believed that the Jews were proud and pompous. When the woman protested, Jesus Christ said if you know anything about the gift of God, and the Person asking you for a drink of this physical water, you would ask Him to give you not just the physical but the living water (John 4:10).

The discussion became more interesting for the woman. The woman said, 'No, I cannot ask you for water because you do not have anything to draw with; the well is very deep. And here you are talking about living water that I do not even know of?' Jesus Christ began to speak prophetically. Remember that He was sitting on the well, saying to her that this water that you have come to fetch to drink is old water, an old well to operate in. He then said anyone that drinks water from this well of Jacob will thirst again.

***This means that anyone that keeps living by an order that has been put aside in the things of God will keep longing for more and will never be satisfied. This is because whenever God moves from a phase to another phase and you remain dwelling in the old phase, you will discover that all manner of terrible, dirty and dissatisfying things will come into your life.***

I love the song that says: *"The cloud of glory is moving, move with the cloud"...*

Whenever you see the cloud of glory move, it is better you move. In the Old Testament times, when Israel was moving from one encampment to another in the wilderness, anytime it was time to move, everybody moved. When the priest blew the trumpets, all the families would be at work knocking down tents, and everybody would move forward. Woe betide

anybody who lagged behind whenever the Tabernacle moved forward because the tabernacle symbolized the presence of God. The Ark was in the Tabernacle. It is very interesting for us to note that anybody that drinks from an old well will never be satisfied. Anyone that drinks from an old well will always have problems and issues with his life.

And that is the problem with the church now. The Lord is a God of plans and purposes and He moves from age to age, from phase to phase, from glory to glory. Anytime the Lord ends an era, and people are tempted to stick to that era, it would always bring confusion in the church. So right now at this time of the end, the Lord is *symbolically* speaking, telling us that this is the sixth hour. The end of the era of man has come, and the Lord is moving into another dimension; because after the day of man, the next is the day of the Lord. Man was created on the sixth day. The seventh day, the Bible says, is the day of the Lord thy God. Man has been running the show for six days, six symbolic and prophetic days. On the day of the rest of the Lord, the haughtiness, and the pride of man shall be brought low, and God alone shall be exalted.

The Samaritan woman became very excited. She said 'If there is such water, and then give me this water let me not have to come ever to this well again!'

*Who is interested in partaking of water, or anything, that does not satisfy?*

*Who is interested in partaking of a phase that does not really bring the purpose of God out for you?*

*Who is happy being in school without making progress?*

The truth is this: The woman became even more interested. Then of course, the Lord went into another phase for her. Not forgetting what the overall objective was, He said, "Go and call your husband". Then another chapter in the life of the woman opened. The woman said 'I do not have a husband'. Jesus said, Fine. "*You have spoken well. You have had five husbands. And the one you have now is not even your husband*".

The woman was so surprised and said: *Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet*. Then she seized the advantage. You see, something had bothered this woman for a long time. Mind you, the Jews and the Samaritans had no dealing. This woman, like any other Samaritan, had burdens in her heart. Once she recognised that this Person speaking to her was not an ordinary person but a Prophet, a Man of God, she said let me take advantage of this opportunity and ask a question that has bothered me for so long.

And I want to say that the question this woman asked is a question that has bothered so many Christians, especially in the light of what we see in the church today.

***The church has moved from the purposes of God unto mundane things. There is so much buying and selling in the church. The house which the Bible says should be a house of prayer has been turned into a den of robbers. So many sincere people in the church are asking so many questions, fundamental questions.***

And when these questions are asked, you can sense that these people are really concerned. These are people that really want to worship God but do not want to move from 'frying pan to fire'.

Many are presently asking the question within them:

**'Where do I worship God'?**

That was the question this woman asked.

In verse 20, when she realized that Jesus was a Prophet, she said, *'Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship!'*

'You people are confusing us!' That was what she seemed to be saying.

'You people are confusing us. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain of Samaria and got results. But you Jews are saying it is only in Jerusalem that men ought to worship God if they want to be heard on high!'

Jesus Christ said to her in verse 21, *'Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. He went further to enlighten her,*

*22 Ye worship ye know not what:*

This is very true! Many people today are worshipping a God they do not know. Many are worshipping a God they do not understand. Many people today just go to church on Sunday morning and come back and follow routine. Many dress up and go to church every Sunday morning. By the evening, they put their Bible on the shelf where it will gather dust. At times some will dust it once or twice a week in a family devotion. But is that all Christianity entails? It is not more than that for many people. Jesus Christ said you are worshipping what you know not!

Remember in the days of Paul, there was a time in his itinerary ministries that he came to a place and saw engraved on an altar in Athens: *'To the unknown God.'*

He seized the opportunity then to talk to the men of the place about this 'unknown God'. The point is, there is a longing in every man for religion, for something or someone to worship. However, God is not interested in religion but in life, obtainable only from His only begotten Son. Jesus said: *'I am the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except by Me'* (John 14:6)

Jesus continued and said to the woman in John 4:22: *We (Jews) know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.* Of course the Bible says in Romans 1:16 and 2:10: *to the Jews first, then to the Gentiles.* The reason was because God had decided to use the Jews as a pilot picture to make people know what He had in mind; but the truth remains that God has always had the salvation of the whole of mankind in mind. But of course the Jews got it and missed it; so Jesus Christ turned to the Gentiles (Matthew 21:43).

Now, Jesus said something very important in John 4 verse 23. He said: *23 'But the hour cometh, and now is,*

Each time He used that phrase; *the hour is coming, and now is,* it was always to mean that 'A new phase that is setting in; but it has set in already'. Remember, He sat upon that well of Jacob to signal the end of an era, and another one opened up immediately. He said, *...when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*

He was saying the hour would come. That means up till that

time, much of what was around was false, fake, flesh worship, in contrast with spirit worship. The hour had begun because He came to usher in that new phase where men will no longer worship 'the unknown God'; when men will no longer worship a God they do not know. Rather, men will begin to worship a God they had a personal relationship with. Personal relationship with God was not available in the Old Testament. It was ushered in by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ who preached the gospel, died and rose again and released power to His church.

Many people today go to church but they are just worshipping the God they do not know. Some would go to church without a Bible, without a hymn book. They will just be looking around, and be day-dreaming about the rice they are going to eat after service. Some are thinking about somebody that owed them. Some even go to church to pray that God will kill their enemies. They are worshipping the God they do not know. God wants us to have a relationship with Him. Jesus Christ therefore came to birth an era of the worship of God on the basis of a personal relationship. Remember He said a time cometh, and it had begun, when it did not matter whether you worship God in Jerusalem or in Samaria. He said,

*24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

Here, the Lord Jesus Christ gave a clear revelation of spirit-borne worship. There are certain elements of this spirit-borne worship we should look at. Number one; it is not a factor of geographical place or location. I know that there are many Christians today, washed with the blood of Jesus Christ who travel to Jerusalem on pilgrimage to worship, as it were. But let me say this, and it is necessary for us to make it very clear. If

anyone desires to go to Jerusalem to see what is going on there, 'Oh, this was where Jesus was born. This is the Sea of Galilee where Jesus Christ walked', fine, no problem!

But let it end with the purpose of tourism and sightseeing! We can be emphatic to state that prayers are not better answered in Jerusalem than in your room.

You can be in Jerusalem, you can pay half a million Naira to go Jerusalem and your heart may not be after the God of Jerusalem. This was one of the things that confused this woman. Is it Samaria, is it Jerusalem? Jesus Christ said, none of the two.

Let us read what the bible says about the present, physical Jerusalem: *"Jerusalem which now is...is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above (i.e the spiritual Jerusalem) is free..."*-Galatians 4:25-26.

The Bible is simply saying in the New Testament, that there is the (physical) Jerusalem that genders to bondage; but there is the (spiritual) Jerusalem that comes from above, i.e, born of the Spirit, which is the Mother of us all. This is speaking about the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the New Jerusalem.

Now, let us understand this because we cannot afford to allow certain things to make the people of the Lord blind. If you want to travel to Jerusalem, physically speaking, for tourism purposes, there is no problem. Sometimes it may even give you good memories of what you have read in the Scriptures. But never think that your prayers will be better answered. Do not go to Jerusalem because you want God to kill your enemies; or because you want God to bless you and give you the desires of your heart. Right there in the toilet, in your room, in your car,

those that worship the Father must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Once your heart is given over to the Lord; once your heart is set upon the Father; once you have made up your mind that this Jesus is your Saviour and this Jesus Christ is your Lord, then you are a good candidate of good spiritual worship. And the Lord will answer your prayers wherever you are.

We need to emphasize on this because there are many people today; they go to church, they go to fellowships, they go to Christian crusades and conventions. They are going there just because they want to key into the paraphernalia and the environment of the place. I know that a servant of the Lord can carry an anointing; however, the anointing of the servant of God can carry you only to a point. A point will come beyond which the anointing of another person cannot carry you. You have got to encounter God on your own. It is just like Jacob. In Genesis 32, the Bible tells us that Jacob had an encounter with that Angel and he wrestled with the Angel till morning, until he prevailed. Everyone that wants to live for God, and worship God, and wants the best that God gives must have a personal relationship with God.

I want to end this chapter on this note, that it is not the name of the church or the denomination you attend that matters, no, no, no! It is your encounter, your personal encounter and relationship with the Lord that matters. *The hour* started in the days of Jesus and now is when you shall neither in Samaria or in Jerusalem worship the Father. It is not a factor of geographical location. What is the emphasis? Let your heart, let your spirit man reach out to God. Let your whole life be an offering. Do not worship God part time. Worship God full time and the Lord will bless your heart.

In subsequent chapters we shall unveil some dynamics and indices of true spiritual worship.

## Chapter Two

# Who is Jesus Christ to You?

**W**hen we consider worshipping God, one pertinent question will be:

### **In which congregation do I worship the Father?**

This is because the congregation where you settle to worship God makes a whole lot of difference to you now, and at times, in your life to come. We shall therefore consider the promise that Jesus Christ made to build His church. We shall examine Matthew 16.

In this chapter, as it was in the manner of Jesus, He stirs up a conversation. You remember in the last chapter when Jesus Christ wanted to bring forth a revelation about true worship in the spirit, He stirred up a conversation with the woman at the well. In this instance, He stirs up the discussion with His disciples who had been with Him for a while. These were the

people He could call His own at that time. The passage reads from verse 13,

*13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, whom do men say that I the Son of man am?*

*14 And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.*

*15 He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am?*

*16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

*17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*

*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.*

*19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

Jesus Christ posed a lead question to provoke a conversation that will lead to passing across an eternal truth. He said, who do men say that I am? The disciples began to give various answers as they have heard people say: some say you are this, some say you are that. Jesus said: *That is okay. You have followed me for a while now. Who do you (My disciples) say that I am?*

That question is coming to you now as you are reading these words. You have heard about Jesus. You have heard about God from other people. The preacher has spoken to you about God. You have read books about God. Others have spoken about Jesus to you. You have heard other people's impressions about Jesus. But who do **YOU** say Jesus is? Who is He to you? It is a question the disciples had to answer. It is a question you will need to answer at one time or the other in your life. My prayer and desire is that before you finish reading this book, you would answer that question properly. Who do you say that Jesus Christ is? Is He a stranger to you? Is it one man that came and walked the shores of Galilee? Is it one man that went about performing miracles? But who is He to you today? It is a very important question.

So Jesus Christ threw this question to His disciples. Now, Simon Peter answered. Probably the other disciples were taken by surprise and they did not recover fast enough to volunteer an answer. Or maybe they too spoke and their answers were not relevant but the Bible picks Peter's answer: *And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* The word *Christ* means the anointed one. You are the anointed One. You are the One the Father had sent to the world to perform a mission. You are the Father's Commissioner. You have come to carry out a redemptive work at the behest of the Father. You are Christ, the Son of the living God.

Jesus Christ was so refreshed: at least their following Him has not been in vain. A revelation of who He really was coming from within; oh, it was so wonderful! Jesus Christ told him that flesh and blood did not reveal this to him. If you have had a personal encounter with Jesus, and inside your heart Jesus Christ is Saviour and is Lord, then it is not your academic research that

brought that to you. It was a revelation by the Father in heaven. Remember Jesus Christ said no man can come to me except the Father draws him. You can read all the books of religion in the world; you can read the Bible from cover to cover; if the Father in heaven does not give you a personal one-on-one revelation about Jesus Christ, it will profit you nothing.

One of the reasons why it is important to have a personal revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ and be in a relationship with Him is because the Bible says every one of us shall give an account of himself before God. You may have a Pastor. But let me make it clear to you. Your pastor cannot answer on your behalf before God. Your Pastor can assist you right now, while you have breath. While you have life, your Pastor can encourage you. But a time comes when you face your eternity alone.

So who do you say that the Lord is? What would you say that Jesus Christ is? If you have never had a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, you must settle it today because you will face God alone one day. Others may assist you but you have questions to answer before God that no one else can answer for you.

The next utterance of Jesus was not to Peter any more but unto the church. He said:

*"...and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it".*

This always excites me. Satan's headquarters cannot prevail against the church. No matter how well it tries, there is a point Satan can never pass. The plans and purposes of God can never

be disrupted in your locality or in the local church by Satan. If you are going through a crisis right now, remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, I will build my church... and you are a part of that church if you have given your life to Him. He said the gate of hades, the stronghold of Satan can never ever prevail against you or against the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord has committed Himself so much; He can move all the armies of heaven on your behalf if it becomes necessary; but it is not necessary. Just a mention is sufficient to overpower and overrun the forces of evil that are terrorizing and tormenting you or your local assembly. The most important thing is turn around, and know what you are doing.

He said I give unto you the keys of the kingdom. You know what keys are? Keys are for locking and unlocking. The keys were given not to Peter as a person but to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter only functioned as any of the other apostles. The only thing that can be said is that probably you have an assignment and you gather the apostles together, Peter probably provided a measure of leadership. But later, at one time or the other in the history of the early church, different personages played one leadership role or the other. The point here is that the church of Jesus Christ is not meant to be ruled by one person. Some say Peter is the one in charge of the church, no sir! Jesus Christ is the foundation of the church. He has ministries that He raised up. Peter was just one of such ministries as himself acknowledged in 1 Peter 5 from verse one. He said, to the elders I say unto you, I also being an elder. The *elder* of Peter and the *elder* of the other apostles were not different Greek words. They are the same Greek word. So there is nothing like a super elder, a senior elder or a superior elder. An elder is an elder. They are all servants of God with spiritual

ministry of oversight over the house of God.

The word 'church' (of the Lord Jesus Christ) is taken from the Greek word *ekklesia*-meaning '*A Come out People*'. Now why are we going into this? If you want to know where you ought to worship you ought to know what Christ had in mind. Many people do not know what Christ had in mind so they find themselves in places that are nothing but the synagogue of Satan. They may think they are worshipping the Father but they are actually in places where they are being deceived and they may end up deceiving others. But when you know the foundation, the mist begins to clear. That is why we are going to the root.

Jesus Christ had it in mind to build a church. This church is not a building. It is not a physical structure, no, no, no! A physical structure, if need be, is only to be functional and serve the purpose of protection against the elements. The essence however is a people, a people that gather. As stated earlier, the word church is translated from the Greek word *ekklesia*. And it means a called out people.

In the previous chapter we saw that Jesus sat upon that well and ushered in a new phase. Now, all those who come to Him, who hearken to Him must come out. You cannot remain where you are and answer the call of Jesus. Some people just want Jesus to just take them as they are, fine. But the moment you have made up your mind to follow Christ, you must move from where you are. You must come out of whatever you have been that did not glorify God. It is very important.

The Lord told Abraham to come out of his nation, of his kindred, of his father's house, because He has a plan for him. And the

Bible says Abraham obeyed God. That was a spiritual symbolism, a type of the people that will follow the Lord all through the ages.

When Jesus Christ met Andrew and Peter, He called to them and the Bible tells us that they left their father, their possessions including all their fishing gear and they followed Jesus. The same thing happened with James and John, the sons of Zebedee. The Bible says they were called. And what did they do? They left their father, the nets and the boat and followed Jesus. Same thing happened when He met Matthew. Another name for Matthew is Levi. He was a customs officer. He was at the table of custom making all the money by crockery and whatever means. Jesus Christ called him. He left that table of customs and followed Him.

This is however different from what we have in our midst today. It is different from *the other gospel* that is being preached from many pulpits today. Somebody is living in sin. And then he comes to Christ. Then you tell him: 'all that it takes is for you to repeat after me. I want to give my life to Jesus ... Lord, come into my heart!' You tell him, you are born again; you are candidate of heaven. And the man is not told to separate himself from his old life.

Now, let it be very clear, that there must be a *coming out* before you can become a part of the church of Jesus Christ. There are some people who have said *the sinner's prayer* over television or on crusade grounds and in many churches who are still keeping their retinue of girl friends; and are still looting and stealing millions and billions from their offices; they go to church and some of them are elders and deacons in their various churches. Some are even preachers. If you are in that

category, the judgment that is awaiting you is more than someone who has not given his life at all to Christ. The Bible says it is better for you never to have known the way of life than for you to know it and pervert it-(2 Peter 2:21-22).

There is serious perversion going on. Let the true gospel be preached.

The meaning of the word church is a called out people. You must come out from wherever you are. If you are living in sin, you must leave the realm of sin and come out. If you were a trickster like Levi who was at the table of custom and growing rich fraudulently, you must leave it and come out to meet the Lord where He is. This is very important.

The church of Jesus Christ has local expressions; it also has a universal expression which means that there is only one Lord, one faith and one baptism. If you are a Christian in Ajegunle and you come to a body of believers at Abeokuta, you are a Christian. You do not have to be baptised again to be a member of the Abeokuta body of believers. No, you are baptised once, provided that baptism is not to a denomination but in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall revisit this issue later.

Once you have given your life to the Lord Jesus Christ, you are a child of God and you are a part of the universal church. Now, let me say this: nobody has, or can keep the register of the body of believers. The Bible tells us in the book of Hebrews 12:23 of the general assembly and church of the first born. Other translation says the general assembly and *church of the first born ones*. That first born is the Lord Jesus Christ and we are all first born after Him. There is a body of people that are queuing after Jesus the pattern Son. These are those who have come to

God; they are in Christ Jesus. These are the Christians, the believers.

All over the world, there is just one church, one universal church. But there are local expressions of this church. There are expressions of these people who come out in the locality where they are, where they join other believers to worship God and serve Him. And then anywhere you are, you should be able to fit in as a child of God, as a part of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no need for a new registration. When you are moving from the Yaba church and you are moving to a church anywhere in Ghana, you will not need to register.

What we have today however, is a clear perversion of what we have in the word of God. Many of the *walls* we have built to divide the people of God are not of God; and we are at that point where God is breaking down every wall that men have built, because the Lord shall have just one fold and one Shepherd.

There are many events and activities in the church of Jesus Christ that do not reflect that a people have been called out. There are many Christians whose lives have nothing really to show that they have actually repented and come out from their past ugly lives. Many Christians claim they have repented.

But what is repentance?

***Repentance is to be truly sorry for a wrong done, and to purpose never to do that wrong again.***

Many people, who have given their lives to Christ so to say, have said the sinner's prayer, are ushers; some are even pastors

and General Overseers of churches. But their old lives remain the same. Many of them are involved with some secret sins they have been committing at one time or the other. But it is wrong.

Many of these things do not attest to a new life in Christ Jesus. And there are many of our congregations and local assemblies where people go to worship that there is nothing to show that they are filled with people with a new life in Christ Jesus. Many only identify with Christ by name. It is like just having a tag or a signboard proclaiming affiliation with Jesus Christ. But many deny Him in their personal lives, in what they do. Now, we see in Romans 2:24, the Bible says the name of God is blasphemed because of you. One of the reasons why the heart of God is heavy about the end time truth is because His name is being blasphemed all over the place. People that claim to be God's children, and even profess to be pastors, will call for prayers and yet will rape young and innocent girls. That is what was done in 1 Samuel 12 from verse 35 when the sons of Eli who were meant to be priest that carried the ark representing the presence of God were raping the women at the door of the Tabernacle.

We have things like that happening today also. Because of God's people are asking, is there any true faith in Christ? Are there any body of people all over the world, or in Nigeria, that one can have confidence in and say these ones are the people of God? I want to comfort your heart. There are. You may have come across so many fake people. But I assure you, the fact that there are fake means there are also original. I can let you know that today, there are scattered all over the world, a body of people who are holding unto their faith in Christ; who have not soiled or defiled their garments. They are the 7,000 of God that have not bowed the knees to baal!

And the Bible says they shall walk with God in glory- (Revelations 3:4).

In Ephesians 4:17, Brother Paul counselled the Ephesian church. He said I testify to you in the Lord; do not live again like the Gentiles. Do not live your life like those who have not met the Lord. There are many believers today who conduct their lives as though they have never, never met the Lord. It is sorrowful, it is evil; it is pathetic. Our encounter with the Lord is meant to change us. That woman by the well of Samaria was changed. The moment you say the sinner's prayer, you need to go back and meditate and take a decision. Saying the sinner's prayer and receiving the Lord Jesus into your heart is just the beginning and not the end of the matter. It is just to introduce you to a new life in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul said do not live your life like those who have never met the Lord. Don't live your life like the gentiles.

In 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, Brother Paul was writing, admonishing the Corinthian church. He said do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. What is the agreement, what is the relationship between light and darkness? What agreement does the temple of God have with Belial? You are the temple of God. Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate. Come out. We have said it before that when you come to Christ you do not remain where you were. You must come out. There must be a change of decision. There must be a positive shift in your life. He went further to say,

*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

There is something significant in Revelations 2:9 and 3:9. Jesus Christ addressed seven churches in Revelations 2 and 3. Five of them did not pass the inspection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Two passed; the church in Smyrna and the church in Philadelphia. He was speaking to the church in Smyrna in Revelations 2:9. He said,

*9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.*

To the church in Philadelphia He said in 3:9,

*9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*

Synagogue was a place in the times of Jesus where the Jews worshipped God. But Jesus said they were not worshipping God in this particular place; they were worshipping Satan! In these two passages the Lord Jesus Christ was saying that these people are blaspheming. And today, no matter the name your congregation goes by, if you are not worshipping the only true God not only with the lips but by what you do, you are worshipping in the synagogue of Satan. And sad to say, many Christians today claim to be serving God but only God needs to open their eyes and they will see the environment where they are; that whatever is happening there is anything but the worship of God: where there is so much of evil, abominations, immorality, un-chastity and unrighteousness.

## Chapter Three

# Assembly Of Christ Or Satan?

**E**very believer in Christ needs to identify with a local assembly of God's people, to join such in *giving witness* to the life and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a place now becomes the local church you are said to identify with.

**It is not advised or profitable for a believer in Christ not to have a body of believers he or she identifies and also associates with, *on a regular basis*. The 'whole world' cannot be your parish, as some erroneously claim. You are there to contribute to the spiritual life and growth of the place. You are also accountable to the local church regarding your lifestyle and general conduct and be in readiness to receive comments and inputs from them if and when necessary.**

The choice of such a place therefore, where your present life

and perhaps your life hereafter shall be greatly influenced, is not to be done with any degree of levity!

If you want to know where to render such true worship, you must be in a position to distinguish between assemblies that profess Christ and the assemblies that do not profess Christ. We have seen in the book of Revelation 2:9 and 3:9 that the Lord called certain assemblies that gather ostensibly to worship God as synagogues of Satan. You can see from that appellation that the matter is serious. Like the churches in Smyrna and Philadelphia of old, there is also a remnant of the Lord today, which holds on to God while others are doing their own things. They have been able to recognise whether God is being worshiped, and where man or Satan is being worshiped. In many places, man is being worshiped. And *by their fruits we shall know them.*

We shall therefore consider in this chapter, features of assemblies that profess Christ. We will read two Scriptures to begin with. We read the book of Matthew 7:21,

*21 Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

Many Christians are going to be disappointed after this life because the Bible says in verse 22

*22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

*23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you:*

*depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

Of course by alluding to prophesying in His name, and cast out devils in His name, they may be people who identify with some local assemblies of the church of Jesus Christ, but at the end of the day will discover that all they have done, as it were, in the name of the Lord was in vain. It beats my imagination how someone who probably knows the Lord, can know that he or she is living in sin, deceiving oneself, doing terrible and abominable things, and then the same person goes and preaches about Christ! Such a person is bringing curses and coals of fire upon his/her head. If you are reading these words today and you are a deceiver, you are deceiving the people of God, it is better for you never to have known the way of truth than for you to know it and to pervert it. Hope is not lost, however. Even now, you can change your mind. You can call upon the name of the Lord and say Master, save me. I perish!

Jesus Christ said in verse 21 that not every one that says unto me Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. But only those that do the will of My Father which is in heaven. So if you are not doing the will of the Father in heaven then you are not His own. If there is an assembly, no matter how sophisticated, even if the toilet of the church has air conditioners, or even if the car parking spaces look elegant, decorated, and sophisticated and glamorous, if the will of the Father is not being done there, then the Father does not recognise it as a local expression of His body. It is very important for this to be stressed!

We are not expected to give life to anything or place that grieve God's heart.

We shall consider another Scripture that Apostle Paul gave in the book of 2 Timothy 2:19. Paul was concerned about the state of the church even in his own time. Be it known that corruption and perversion of the faith is as old as the church itself; because even during the first century the Lord said the mystery of iniquity doth already work. This letter to Timothy was also in the first century and in verse 19 he said,

*19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*

*20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.*

*21 If a man therefore purges himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

Now why was Paul writing this to Timothy? At the time in question, Timothy was a son in the faith to Brother Paul; and he in turn, sent Timothy to Ephesus to oversee the work of God. He was young but very much endowed with spiritual gifts and graces. While he was overseeing the work of God at Ephesus he encountered so many difficulties. He encountered many people who claimed to be Christians and they were not. There were many local churches and people that met in houses that were under his spiritual oversight. And what did Brother Timothy discover? He discovered that there were many deceivers; there were many fake people even as we have today.

And he must have communicated with Paul his frustration and his discouragement; just as many servants of God are frustrated and discouraged today. Probably, the more you minister, the less of the life of Christ you see in the life of the people you provide ministry to. Do not be discouraged. A time is coming when the tares shall be separated from the wheat. The most important thing is that you do what the Lord has asked you to do. And do not be a part of that abomination. So in verse 19 Brother Paul was reiterating that nevertheless, the foundation of God stands sure. It has a seal. He said the Lord knows those who are His own. And what is the mark? Those who are God's own will depart from iniquity. Anywhere you find anybody, even if he carries fire on his head, even if he wakes up the dead, even if he calls down fire and thunder from heaven; if he is living in sin, if he is living in immorality, if his tongue cannot attest to the fact that he has met the Lord; if the ways of his life and his relationship with people falls short of God's standards, then he is deceiving himself.

In as much therefore, as this principle applies to individuals have so also it applies for local expressions, for churches. Now look at verse 20. It says, *But in a great house*. That great house is the church. That church is the universal church. It is not even talking about your local church, no; because your local church is a part of the great house. He says in a great house, the larger body of Christ, you should expect all manner of vessels, speaking about individuals. So also we should expect all manner of local assemblies.

Now, there are people who were never called by God but they are pastors today and they have a lot of people following them. There are some people who discover some times in life that they do not have viable jobs; and they cannot fit into any

profession. They now go to Bible school. Probably they have a measure of intelligence and eloquence and they are orators. Then they manage to raise some money by whatever means and set up a place. Some even go to some powers of darkness to get power so that miracles will happen in their churches, and they begin to perform lying wonders. But Brother Paul said to Timothy, just note this: That in a great house there are all manner of vessels. The vessel here could symbolise an individual. It could also symbolise a local expression. Some of these vessels are unto honour while some are to dishonour. He said however that those who name the name of Christ should depart from iniquity.

Let us now look at the church that Jesus Christ and the Apostles had in mind. It is very important for us to note this. In Matthew 16:17-19 the Lord Jesus Christ said after Peter confessed Him as the Christ that flesh and blood did not reveal this to Peter. He then said, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church*"; meaning; upon this confession I will build my church. What is the confession? It is the confession that Christ is the Son of the living God. That is the foundation of the life of the church. Take Christ away and there is no church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore the church that Jesus Christ had in mind when He was communicating His mind to us in this passage was a church that will be strong, that will be reliable, that will be stable and that will be powerful.

But what do we see today? I know we still have local assemblies that fit into this; because if you want to look at the church universal, the Lord has His true and faithful people scattered all over the surface of the earth. And there are people that are doing their best to be anything that God wants them to be. And we thank God for that. But now we are speaking about those

who are spoiling the name of the Lord; who are causing the name of the Lord to be blasphemed; those who can be referred to as charlatans, the jobless people who have found the church as a place to hide in. The Lord is saying to such that time is running out.

So the church that Jesus Christ had in mind was a reliable church; a strong church, a stable church, a powerful church, a church with character. That is the reason why in Matthew 5, 6, and 7 Jesus talked about character. That is the passage popularly referred to as the Sermon on the Mount or the Constitution of the Kingdom of Heaven in which Jesus Christ was teaching on character. Let it be made very, very clear: If anybody claims to be in the Lord and his character nullifies what he says, then he is not in the Lord. Jesus Christ said by their fruits, not their words; by their fruits, not by their miracles; by their fruits, not by their elegance or their eloquence; by their fruits you shall know them.

I am sure many of you true seekers after truth reading this today must have been receiving ministrations from the Lord about people who have no business being shepherds in the house of God that are shepherds. And we know that the time has come that judgment must start in the house of God.

Jesus Christ gave a parable of the kingdom of heaven. He said it is like a man that casts a net into the sea and it gathered all manners of fish. He comes to the sea shore and separates the good fish from the bad fish. Thus shall it be at the time of the end. He said at the time of the end the Father shall send reapers who shall separate the good fish from the bad fish. We are in that time right now.

The ministry of the word of God, the uncompromising and prophetic ministry of the word of God is actually separating the good fish from the bad preparatory to what the Lord Himself that Messenger of the Covenant will do in His house. If you look at Acts of the Apostles 2, from verse 41 we also see the church that was handed down to us by the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ who were those that had first-hand experiences with Him. We know that on the Day of Pentecost there was a declaration of the mind of God through Apostle Peter. Peter did not do it alone. Others were there with him. The Bible tells us Peter stood with the Eleven. Peter never did it alone. He did it alongside other disciples. The Holy Ghost came as recorded in chapter 2:1-4 and they were baptised with the Holy Spirit, they were anointed. That day three thousand people were converted and gave their lives to Christ.

But when these three thousand people were converted and gave their lives to Christ, a community of believers began in Jerusalem. It was in Jerusalem that the church actually began. It was first in the Upper Room where the Holy Ghost came, and then the people spoke in other tongues; then it went down to those who were observing the physical feast. There was therefore the spiritual Pentecost. The Holy Ghost came. But there was a feast of Pentecost going on, the physical one. And people came from every nation; and all manner of buying and selling of rams and pigeons were going on. But the real business was going on in the Upper Room. But the Lord had mercy, and because the time was ripe He moved the 119 others and they stood with Peter who was endowed with grace, eloquence and the unction that the Holy Ghost alone gives, he made clear the word of the Lord. He declared the message of salvation.

From verse 41 we can see the character of people that came to Christ on that day in Jerusalem. We have seen in *Matthew 16* the church that Jesus had in mind. From verse 41-47 we are seeing the church that the apostles handed down to us.

They practised what Jesus Christ told them. And it aches the heart that in our generation when there is so much light of technology and so much light of the word of God that we are finding so much perversion of the word of God. Acts 2:41-47 reads:

*41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

*42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

*43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.*

*44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;*

*45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.*

*46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,*

*47 Praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

So what was the daily lifestyle of these people who had come out? Remember we said the word 'Church' is taken from the Greek word *ekklesia*, a people who have come out. These people who have come out, what was their daily routine, their daily preoccupation? Verse 42 says they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. That means the apostles who received the oracle from God taught the people the way to go. And there was fellowship. That fellowship was not just to gather together, sing and go. The word fellowship there is taken from the Greek word *koinonia*. *Koinonia* is a very powerful word. It means that you enter into one another. You know me; I know you. And based on that, because of the love over us we have a glorious and a sweet relationship. They were together in breaking bread. That is communion. They were also together in prayers.

All these were features of the early church. And because of these features the Bible says that there was fear; because the world had never seen that kind of people before. The next verse says: *and fear came upon every soul; those without the church and those within the church.* Those without had never seen such level of bonding. The people were so bonded together. Remember they were bonded with power. So the level of power that was seen was unprecedented. The following day another five thousand were converted when Peter and John were going at the hour of prayer to the temple and they met a man at the Beautiful Gate who was lame. The man expected money from them but he got more than he bargained for. They gave him what would turn his life around totally. The man was now walking and leaping and praising the Lord. People were surprised. Peter preached again and another harvest of five thousand souls followed.

These people that came together also came out of the religious

system. They were referred to as the body of believers. The factor that brought them out was the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says these people had so much love for God and for one another and of course God blessed them. Many signs and wonders were done by them. So it was a church that was living and operating in the supernatural and the miraculous.

Let us know that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is not physical but spiritual. Of course it has a physical expression where they gather and worship God, but let us understand that the Bible says in Hebrew 12:23 that it is the general assembly and church of the *first born ones* that are written in heaven. If any man is keeping a register of the church, God help you, because some of the people in the register in your congregation may not be in the register of the Lord. Some people that may not be in your register may be in God's own register. So we need to emphasize the spiritual. We need to emphasize the divine. I am not saying what we see does not matter because it can help us to bring correction to one another, particularly for *shoppers* in God's house.

The Bible says all that believed were together and they had all things in common. This is the church; this is the character of the assembly that professes the Lord Jesus Christ. There was so much love. The Bible says they believed in one another. They had all things in common. Those who had properties, or inherited properties like lands and houses sold them and brought the proceeds for the general use. Material things did not matter to the early church. And that is a major contrast with our time. There is so much of materialism in the present day church. There is so much of love of money: the kind of clothes you wear, the kind of car you drive, the kind of house you live in. How did the church get to this point? Where did she get this one from? How did we get to this low point, whereby things

that never mattered to the kingdom suddenly take centre stage?

In Colossians 3, Brother Paul said set your affection on things that are above not on things that are on earth.

I am aware and know of some churches, where if you come on Sunday morning, the kind of car you drive will determine the kind of place where you will park the car in the church premises. If you come with a brand new exotic jeep, you will be showed where to park, but if with a 'rickety' one, to park in those places where some old 'jalopies' are parked. They direct you to a place they feel you belong. If you drive an old jalopy, that God is helping you to maintain, you will not be allowed to park by certain cars. Where did we get this class distinction from? It is alien to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

At this time of the end the Lord is sweeping away the refuge of lies (Isaiah 28:15-17). The fiery ministry of the word of God is going forth and is sweeping away the refuge of lies. Many people are already beginning to discover that they are in the wrong location, in the wrong congregation. But you see it is the spirit of the congregation that is very important. When you go to a place of worship, discern *the spirit of the place*.

You may presently be in a place where things may not be working well physically or there is little or no aesthetics or glamour. That is not the question. The most important thing is the spirit in that place. Some places have no business attaching themselves to the name of the Lord. They are merely 'business centres'.

The early church loved one another; they sold their

possessions; they broke bread from house to house; they praised God daily. And the Bible says every day the Lord was adding unto them such as should be saved. There is another translation that renders Acts 2, verse 47 as follows:

*"...they were praising God, and they were having favour with all the people; and the Lord added onto the church daily such as were being saved".*

**The problem with the present church, the problem with our local assemblies today is that many are being added to the churches that are not being saved; and neither are they ready for salvation, but enjoy the feeling of belonging to a local church.**

This is the problem!

A mixture of the wheat and the tares, a mixture of the precious and the vile, a mixture of the good fish and the bad fish; that is what you find.

But the day of harvest has come; and the Lord God is going to separate the good fish from the bad.

Now, because the early church was walking in love, in the supernatural and the miraculous, those who had no business being there stayed away. The Bible says they were afraid of the church. They sensed the anointing and stayed away. But what do we have today? Those who have another spirit not only come inside the church, they set up their shrines (spiritually speaking) at the altar. There are many churches today that if the Lord opens your eyes in the spirit and you see what happens even on the pulpits where persons of presumably high godly

## Chapter Four

# Ten Features of Assemblies Professing Christ

**M**any of God's people have come to the realization that the Christianity they see now is not the same as the one they read about in the Bible. The Christianity that people are practising is different from the one the Spirit of the Lord inside them is telling them. It is necessary to assess the spiritual condition of where you worship, whether it is professing Christ or someone else, so as to be sure you are not wasting your time! At the end of your life, let it not be said unto you, *'get away from me; I do not know you!'* Now, there are ten features that characterise a place that is professing Christ and we shall list them.

### **1. CHRIST IS THE HEAD**

Any assembly that professes Christ must have Christ as the Head and the Chief Corner Stone. Let us read from 1 Corinthians 3:11. It says:

*"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"*

This is very clear. You cannot lay any other foundation. These days you hear of people calling themselves Presidents and Founders. I know that many have a mind to convey the fact that they began the work. But the question we need to *ask one another is:*

***'Who really began the work?'***

Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega. He began it and He will perfect it.

Now, this is not to condemn us. This is not to castigate us, but to let us know that we have travelled away from the light and from the truth. No other foundation can any man lay. The person that laid the foundation of where you are privileged to serve as a shepherd is the Lord Jesus Christ. You are only an *under-shepherd*. You are only raised up by the Lord to provide leadership, if indeed you have been called by the Lord to provide leadership and direction for His flock. And you shall give an account before Him for what you are doing. In Ephesian 2:20 the Bible says that the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone. So in any assembly that you get to and the Lord Jesus Christ is not in charge then run from the place.

It is being discovered now in many of our assemblies that man is taking over. Man has gradually taken over so many of our assemblies. Man is being worshiped. There are servants of God today; you cannot address unless you kneel down. You are not kneeling down because you are respecting them. Rather you are kneeling down because they demand it; and you must do it.

This is alien to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the Head and the only head of the church. He has people that He has placed as leaders and superintendents providing spiritual oversight under Him. But any assembly that does not give the Lord Jesus Christ His place you must run from it because it is not the place of God for proper worship. It is a citadel of man or Satan.

## **2. LOYALTY TO GOD**

Any assembly professing Christ must have a characteristic feature of loyalty to God before a state, or before any man. The church is known to possess historical record and account of uncompromising loyalty to God. Let me say this to you as a child of God: Your loyalty as a child of God is to God first of all. Your loyalty to man, or to your office, or your state can not override your loyalty to God. That is the reason why if you work in an office that is involved in shady deals, the fact that the system provides your salary which meets your daily need, does not even justify you should remain there. You can speak out if you are in a position to; or you quietly leave the place.

If you are in a place where you are being encouraged to act contrary to the righteousness of God, then you need not wait longer there. I know of someone who works in a place where whenever he voices objections to some of the things done there, he is told,

“Look, your church matter doesn't come near here. You either do what we ask you to do or you get out!”

Who is your Lord? To whom do you owe perfect and final allegiance? Your primary loyalty should be to the Lord Jesus

Christ and not to a man. You can respect, and honour man. But you never worship man. The Bible is very emphatic about that: thou shall worship only the Lord thy God. Thou shall have no other God beside Me. Our loyalty to God must never be in question. Any local assembly, any congregation or any church that is loyal to the state more than loyal to God or that is loyal to an individual; and it does not matter who the individual is, even if he was the one that built the church. Or if he was the one that received the vision for the church, it makes no difference. There must be no loyalty given to any other person. Nobody must be worshiped but God. Today we have men that are worshiped in the Church: Pastors, Bishops, General Overseers, Etc.

In Revelations 19:3 we see the messenger that brought the revelations to John. When John saw him, he fell down to worship him. He said do not do it. I am also one of your brethren the prophets who keep the testimony of God. Worship God.

***Any true servant of God will always direct you away from himself unto God. Any servant of God that enjoys being worshiped, or having his ego massaged has never really met the Lord. And that assembly can never lead you to the fullness of God. You need to leave the place.***

In Acts 4 from verse 14 to 21 we notice that when the apostles were arrested, they were maltreated and beaten. Then they were commanded that they should no longer speak in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. What did they say? They said, 'you claim to be religious leaders. You judge this matter yourselves: who would you obey in situations like this? Would you rather obey God or man?' They then concluded they would obey God rather than man. They suffered for it but it is better. The Bible tells us in 1 Peter 4 that if you have to suffer for

righteousness sake, you will be blessed for it. Do not suffer as a cheat. Do not suffer as an adulterer; do not suffer as a murderer; do not suffer as a fornicator. If any man suffers, let him suffer for righteousness sake. There are times, because you refused to give allegiance to an earthly man or to a state, you may suffer.

I am not saying that you should not recite national anthem or the pledge. Those ones are okay. But if anybody is demanding from you an allegiance that overrides your faith in Christ Jesus like it happened in the days of Emperor Nero, then you should quietly tell the person I will obey God rather than man. And any local assembly where you want to worship must hold perfect loyalty and allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ. They must preach it and must encourage it. Any assembly that encourages loyalty to any other thing, any other person apart from Christ, you must run away from the place. They are not bringing forth a characteristic feature of an assembly that is professing Christ.

### **3. ZEAL FOR GOD AND HIS PURPOSES**

There must be zeal for God and for His work and purposes. In Matthew 28 Jesus Christ commissioned the church to take the gospel and it preach to all creatures. Every church, every local assembly must bind itself to the purposes of God. And you know the Bible tells us in Titus 2, that God wishes that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. There are many of the programs and agenda of many of our churches that are far from what God has in mind. As the Lord God is seeking to bring enlightenment those who are His own will actually repent and catch it. There must be zeal for God in every believer. And every local assembly must encourage you to have zeal for God

I am aware that in some assemblies where people have so much zeal for God, expressed through fasting, and prayers. They do night vigils; they go on evangelism. They are winning souls for God. Miracles are being done through them and people are coming to them for help counselling. Maybe the Pastor, the Overseer or the Superintendent of the church feels jealous and they post such away to a quiet or more remote location. The man is trying to serve God and learning ministry as it were. He will now be posted to one remote branch. At other times, they are told to shut up and keep quiet; don't talk, because the man is becoming more popular than them. This is alien to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Anybody that curtails your zeal, provided your zeal is with knowledge, and your zeal is in the right direction; you are doing what the Lord has shown you to do after you have sought Him with fasting and prayer; and if anybody comes, no matter who he is, or any church constitution and law come to clip your wings and clamp you down, then you leave that place because it is not showing forth a characteristic feature of an assembly that is following the Lord Jesus Christ.

Zeal for God and zeal for the purposes of God must override church by-laws and constitutions. Anywhere you are that you are not encouraged to bring out your best for God is not professing Christ and you need to leave the place.

#### **4. TOTAL SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD**

There must be total separation from the world. Any assembly where you are not encouraged to separate yourself from the world should be deserted!

The Bible makes us to know in 1 Peter 2:9;

*"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people..."i.e., a specie of being that never existed before. That is what the church is. If you are not encouraged to live a separated life (because we earlier indicated that the word church in the Greek is *Ekklesia* which means; those who have come out of the world and have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into God's marvellous light) then there must be a positive shift and change of position from such.*

If you worship in a place where separation from the world is not believed and taught, then you need to leave the place. If you worship in a place where it is encouraged that people should be one with this present world, *'it makes no difference, let us talk their language, let us wear their clothes'*, then you need to run for your life, because your soul is in danger.

In John 17:16; the Lord Jesus Christ said sanctify them by thy truth. Thy word is truth. He also said, I am asking that these ones that you have given to me separate them, keep them from the evil one. James 1:27 says: *"pure religion that is undefiled is to visit the orphans and the widows and then to keep oneself unspotted"*. Separate yourself from the world, and don't spot yourself. The Bible speaks about *'those who have garments that are spotted by the flesh'*.

Any congregation, any assembly therefore where you worship, and you are not encouraged to separate yourself from the world and the things of the world, is a dangerous place. The Bible says *love not the world, neither the things that are of the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him*. There are many assemblies today, when you get there, if it were not for the signboard showing it is a church, you would

wonder if it were a place of worship: The kind of miniskirts, mini dresses and transparent dresses you see are astonishing. You would think you were in a disco hall! Even the dancing steps in some of these places are anything but edifying. If the Lord opens your eyes in the spirit you would see all manner of terrible demons dancing there. If you are in such a place and there is nothing you can do to change things then the other available option is to leave the place. Ask the Father to show you where Christ is being professed in deed.

## **5. BONDING OF THE BELIEVERS IN LOVE**

A good place to worship must be a place bonded in love. Love is a characteristic feature of an assembly that is professing Christ. In John 15:12 the Lord Jesus Christ said this is my commandment that you love one another as I loved you. Greater love has no man than this that a man lays down his life for his friends. The Lord has admonished that we should be bonded together in love. He said: "*by this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another.*"

There must be a bonding together in love. We must be able to lay down our lives for one another! Brother John writes in his epistles: *if Christ died for us we too should be able to lay down our lives for the brethren.* We must be ready to inconvenience ourselves. If someone has a need, has a problem there should be a readiness to assist. Even if you cannot assist, you join the person to pray. One thing you cannot but be able to do is pray. You can arrange to pray, and at times, fast with the person.

***If a brother or sister is going through trials, pains and crises, do not add to the pains. Join the person to seek the face of the Lord. Ask that the Lord should come and intervene for the***

***problems and the crises in the person's life.***

This was a characteristic feature of the early church as we saw in Acts 2 from verses 44 to 47. The Bible says that they broke bread from house to house. All they had was shared in common. But what do we see today? We see in many congregations Christians are ready to show off: *'look here, just because we are gathering together, and sitting together does not mean that we should not know where we belong.'* There are some Christians that as it were, want to pass a message to you, that *'look here, we are not the same.'*

There is class distinction in the church. It ought not to be!

God can and does bless His people. I am not saying God cannot bless us. But the Bible says in 1 Cor. 4:7; *what is it you have that you have not received?* There is nothing you have that God has not given you. We are merely custodians or caretakers of whatever God has blessed us with; and we shall render account to Him how we dispense of them! But you don't have to do as though you never received it. You don't have to behave as though you fell from heaven. Even if you fell from heaven, as a brother once said; at least, someone threw you down from heaven! Don't be puffed up. The material things of this life cannot get to heaven; they are not useful there. So if in this life you cannot use what God has endowed you with to bless others and to remove poverty and shame from the lives of others, but rather you want to add to their burden, then you are not professing Christ.

*Any assembly that encourages class distinction is not professing class. You should run away from there!*

## **6. POSSESSION OF GODLY CHARACTER**

There must be a possession of godly character. Any assembly that is professing Christ must encourage godliness. The Bible says; *godliness with contentment is great gain*. This is the reason why the Lord Jesus Christ spoke in Matthew 5, 6 and 7; in the Sermon on the Mount, largely about godly character.

*Godliness* is having a character trait that is like God's, so that when people see you they can say this is a *godly* man. This man *behaves* like he belongs to God. That is how it should be. Where such is not encouraged, the opposite begins to operate. Any assembly, where wickedness, carnality and all works of the flesh are encouraged, is a place you must run away from.

## **7. NON MATERIALISTIC BUT MODEST LIFESTYLE**

Any local assembly that professes Christ must be non-materialistic and very modest!

The Bible tells us that we can be blessed. Deuteronomy 8:18 says:

*"it is the Lord thy God that giveth thee power to get wealth".*

God will bless His people with material things.

***May you discover God, before you discover wealth!***

Whoever is blessed with material things and has never met the Lord will misuse it; and that is the problem we have in many of our churches today. We have people who are preaching blessing! Blessing! 'God will bless you; you will be a millionaire; you will be a billionaire.' But they do not teach character. If you

have so much of the goods of this life and you have no character, you are gunning for hell. Jesus Christ said: *What shall it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?* You must not lose your soul; you must not exchange your eternity for the material things of this present life.

Brother Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 6:17:

*“Charge them that are rich, not to be high minded. Warn them not to trust in uncertain riches”.*

I can tell you that riches are uncertain. Anything can happen to them. In Matthew 6:19,

Jesus Christ said: *“Do not lay your treasures on earth where moth and roth corrupt them, but lay your treasures in heaven”.*

Keeping millions and billions unused (in your bank account) when you already have all the necessary things of life is wasteful! You may just be gathering them for people who may even misuse them. They may not know how much you have sweated. Why don't you invest in the life to come? Ask the Lord;

*'Lord, you have blessed me with these material things. How do I use them?*

*How do I promote the cause of the kingdom?*

*How do I extend the frontiers of your Kingdom? How do I lay up treasure for myself for the life to come?'*

These are very important questions. Many people misuse what God has blessed them with. I pray that as you receive these ministrations you will not be among such! If you have done it or

doing it, you will desist from it.

Do not bring class distinction into God's house.

Anytime you become one with whatever God has given you, you will be in trouble.

The Bible says that we should not love the world. The Bible tells us that we should not become one with the things that God has given unto us. You should not be *attached* to them! Anything that He has blessed you with, and your soul is attached to, becomes a snare unto you. You have to separate yourself from it. Anything God has blessed you with and you cannot give away at the instance of the word of the Lord, has become another god in your life-Matthew 19:16-24.

Each of us at one time or the other shall have to pass *the test of Abraham*. Remember that Abraham had an only son. And God told him go and sacrifice that son to Him. When God did that, He wanted to break every *unholy attachment and tie* Abraham had towards his son. You can get attached to a good and legitimate thing in an unholy manner! When Abraham obeyed God, it was a clear message to God and also to Abraham that he was truly a friend of God.

## **8. A CHURCH WALKING IN DAILY VICTORY**

A church that walks in victory and exercises mastery over Satan is professing Christ in deed. Every local assembly that professes Christ must walk in victory. Oh, it must not walk in defeat. God is not a God of defeat. I can tell you that. Even if there are challenges, we must be victory conscious. We must be able to seek the Lord, fast and pray, do all kinds of intercessions and bring Satan under our feet. Such is a church that is having

mastery over Satan. There is no local assembly that Satan will not try. There is no child of God that is walking in the light that Satan will not try. But you are bound to walk in victory and exercise and exhibit mastery over satanic forces. Jesus Christ said:

*"I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"-Matthew 16:18-19*

He also said:

*"Behold, I give unto you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the powers of the enemy and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19)*

Every local assembly that is professing Christ must walk in the victory of the conquest of Calvary, the victory of the finished work of Calvary, and victory and mastery over the works of Satan.

## **9. LIVING IN THE MIRACULOUS**

The church that lives in the miraculous. The church was birthed in the miraculous; the church must live and be sustained by the miraculous.

Any church that does not encourage you to believe that God can do all things is not a place where you should stay. Any church that tells you, well, God can do some things but there are some things that God cannot do, run from that place; because when challenges of life come your way, you will be disadvantaged.

There are challenges that come in a man's life that he may not be in a position to handle alone. You need those around you to join hands with you and stay the enemy's hand lifted against you. But if where you are, is a place where they believe God cannot do all things, where they believe that the days of miracles are passed, *'Oh, God doesn't work miracles again; He worked miracles during the days of the apostles.'* Then your case becomes very serious indeed!

God is a God of miracles.

The church was birthed on a note of the miraculous.

The church is sustained by the miraculous.

The church shall attain the *fullness of God* by the miraculous.

In Acts 3:1-2, Peter and John got to the beautiful gate. The crippled man there expected money from them in alms. They said; *'No, we don't have that. But we have what is even more important. We don't have silver and gold. But what we have we give unto you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!'*

The man had more than fish to eat for that day. He had what will sustain him for life. He was now able to walk, and leap and praise God. This is what the church of Jesus Christ should be. This is what the church of Jesus Christ should operate and live by; a church that lives in the miraculous.

## **10. A LOCAL CHURCH AWAITING HIS RETURN**

A church that is awaiting His glorious return!

Every church that is professing Christ should live with the consciousness of the fact that Jesus Christ is coming back again. But also, that in His coming, back again, it is not to deal with sin but to bring full salvation-(Hebrews 9:28).

A local expression that teaches you only about this present life is not in the interest of your soul, believe me. Any local assembly, or shepherd, or pastor or overseer that only makes you to gravitate towards the earth, that is only teaching you about things of this present life, how to acquire money and houses, how to be the managing director of companies and own chains of companies, but does not feed your soul, and does not tell you that there is a life that is to come, and does not tell you that Jesus Christ is coming again to set up His kingdom, Oh, that is not in the interest of your soul. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:19: *"If in this world only, we have hope in Christ then we are of all men most miserable"*

There is a question that was asked in Luke 24:4-6, some people went to where Jesus Christ was buried and they did not find him

*4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:*

*5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?*

*6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,*

Now, there is a phenomenon I want to conclude this chapter

## Chapter Five

# Where You Worship Matters

The Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 21:13:

*“My house shall be called a house of prayers for all the nations...”*

The nations of the earth that are in trouble, and are dying, should come to the church to seek for solutions. But when they come with their heavy hearts seeking for spiritual solutions and we give them what just feeds their eyes, what just makes them to laugh and their problems are not solved, then it calls for questioning. We shall progress in this chapter by considering in this chapter, the theme:

***Where you worship matters.***

We shall begin by looking at Luke 24:4-6. This passage speaks of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the first day of the week some went to the sepulchre to check on the body of the

Lord Jesus Christ.

*4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout...*

This is because they could not find the body of Jesus Christ. They had gone there to look for His body with relevant spices to anoint it and to preserve it because of the love and affection they had for Jesus when He was alive. Even when He was physically dead, they were still very much affectionate towards him. But by the time they got to the tomb they could not find His body.

*Behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:*

*5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, why seek ye the living among the dead?*

Another translation goes thus:

*Why are you seeking for the one that is alive among those that are dead?*

This brings out two things:

1. There are those that are alive and there are those that are dead.
2. Those that are alive and those that are dead should really have nothing serious in common.

Revelations 3:1 speaks of a *local church* in Sardis, with a reputation of being alive, but from the Lord's

assessment, was dead!

If anyone goes to a mortuary for example where corpses are kept, it must be for a purpose. It is either you go to a mortuary to identify a dead person or you go to a mortuary to collect a dead person for burial, but I don't think there is anybody who is alive and well and in his right senses that will go to a mortuary and lie down; or is living in a mortuary and he is not an attendant or a worker there. People will ask whether all is well with him.

So these two men asked: *'Why you are looking for the living among the dead?'* The one that is alive should not be in the midst of the dead.

When we were in sin before giving our lives to Christ, the Bible says we were dead in trespasses and sin. And that is the reason why we can say that the moment a person comes alive by the life of Jesus Christ he is alive.

Can you imagine a situation where a corpse is kept in the mortuary as has happened a few times, it comes back to life (either by miraculous work or by the reason of mistakes of a medical practitioner who certified a person dead erroneously). Let us assume that the dead man suddenly comes back to life in the mortuary, probably feeling the coldness of the morgue and sneezes himself back to life. Now, once such a person comes alive the person cannot say, 'I so much love this mortuary! This place is very comfortable. I like it here. Please bring my bed here so I can make it my home.'

The moment the person comes alive, what do you expect him

to do? He will leave the place where the dead are kept. I am aware that there are many people who have as it were been dead in trespasses and sins. They have been going to church (a place of worship) so to say as a ritual. But the moment the Lord opens your eyes to the truth of the fact that this is not the house of prayer, this is not the place where the presence of the Lord is, what to do is what any right thinking person who probably comes alive in a mortuary would do. That is you go away from the abode of the dead and begin to live among the living.

So we establish the fact from this Scripture that there are those who are alive, and there are those who are dead. We can also say that one of the reasons why many people who get born again continue to *feel* as though *dead* is because 'they remain in the mortuary after coming to life'.

Many Christians give their lives to Christ and end up going back to be among the dead. They end up *feeling* dead. They make efforts, but still feel dissatisfied with their lives. However, life in Christ Jesus is meant to be sweet.

Life in Christ is glorious. But when a person who has given his or her life to Christ begins to drag feet; feeling so sluggish, and not enjoying the spiritual life, as though nothing serious has taken place, then such may have returned to the *condition* of the dead. Much of the times, such occurs when one associates with a congregation that cannot be said to be alive in Christ Jesus.

There is really no business between the living and the dead. Whoever therefore comes alive comes to a consciousness of the reality of what Christianity and faith in Christ Jesus ought to be, although he may have been involved with just rituals, then one of the things to do is to seek the Lord and find out:

*'Have I been in the congregation of the living or the congregation of the dead?'* The Lord is always faithful. God loves our souls more than any other thing. The Lord can always be trusted to open our eyes, make Himself known to us and lead us to where so ever the living are gathered.

Looking at the book of **Proverbs 21:16**, the wise man, Solomon said:

***16 The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.***

This is very simple, but it is quite prophetic and symbolic. It speaks of a man who has been in the way of understanding (of course that way of understanding is the congregation of the living) and then such wanders away. The word used is: *wandereth*. We know that word *wandereth* is not used here in a positive sense. Actually, it is in the negative. It is somebody who is confused, perplexed and roams around; and somewhere while he is of no fixed location or address, finds himself in the congregation of the dead.

The Bible speaks of one wandering out of the way of understanding...

What is the way of understanding?

The way of understanding is the way of Christ, the path of Christ. Jesus Christ said I am the way, the truth and the light. It can speak about the way where your spirit is alive. You are bubbling in the spirit. You wake up with a song. You wake up with a Scripture. Oh, when you are going to the church you are

so glad. David said I was glad when they said unto me let us go to the house of the Lord Psalms 122. You are so ecstatic, you are glad because you are in the way of understanding. But if a time now comes (probably because somebody hurts you in that same place, or somebody offends you, or you ask for help and help is not granted) you wander away from the way of understanding. And after sometime, you just want to satisfy yourself that you go to church as a Sunday-Sunday ritual, you may find yourself in the congregation of the dead. How would you know? You will know because the place where you are has no life, and may not truly satisfy the inner longing in your soul. So the Bible makes it clear that whoever wanders from the way of understanding shall find himself in the congregation of the dead.

Now I believe I may be touching one or two persons who are reading these words now, who have previously been in the congregation of the living and in the way of understanding. But due to one or two issues (which could be interpersonal) you have wandered away and you now find yourself in the congregation of the dead; what should you do?

We now return to our previous meditation on Luke 24, why are you looking for the living among the dead? Why is the living mingling and meddling with the dead? What the living should do is to pack all his bag and baggage, leave the mortuary and then go to where the living resides!

***At times, some may not be aware that where they worship is not alive, especially as it takes a living person to identify a living place. It also takes a living person to recognise a dead place.***

We are not saying these to deride any place or 'whip up' sentiment. We saying it because the time we are in right now at a very crucial time in the program of God. God is reordering things because the time of restoration has come upon us and all things that are not in their proper places, the Lord is putting such a right!

In Revelation 17, John had a vision. In that vision he saw a woman clothed with beautiful apparel; not just beautiful but enticing and alluring apparel. The word *woman* in the Scriptures is symbolic of *church*.

However, this woman in Revelation 17 cannot symbolize the true church because the Bible says she has been responsible for the blood of saints and of the martyrs of the Lord Jesus Christ. She has been the mother of all abominations of the earth. So this woman obviously is not symbolizing the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. If she symbolizes a church then she must be symbolizing a fallen church, an apostate church, a false church, a church that is not serving the purposes of God. So you can say that the *woman* in Revelation chapter 17, symbolizes a church that is not serving the purpose of God. She is called Mystery Babylon, the Mother of all harlots. And the word harlotry in the Scriptures symbolizes unfaithfulness. She is therefore the Mother of all unfaithfulness, the Mother of all the abominations of the earth.

In Revelation 18 however, there is a counsel for anyone who is associated with this woman in chapter 17. The counsel of the Lord in chapter 18 is a follow up of Revelations 17. When God gives you a revelation that where you are worshipping is not serving His interest, there should be no sentiment, because no man shall answer for your soul before God. The Bible says *every one of us shall give account of himself to God*. So when you

discover that you are not in the congregation of the living, when you discover that you are associated with the symbolism of Mystery Babylon the unfaithful church, the harlot church, she is the mother of harlots, the mother of unfaithfulness, you have got to make a positive change. She is dead in spite of the allurements and all the paraphernalia. Outwardly fine, good and ecstatic, but inwardly Jesus Christ said she is full of dead men's bones-(Matthew 23:27)

Revelations 18:1;

*And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.*

*2. And he cried mightily with a strong voice...*

The word *angel* in the Bible, particularly in the book of Revelations most of the time symbolizes *human messengers*. The word simply means messenger from the Greek text. A lot of the times, the messengers are human messengers. Therefore when he says in chapter 18 that I saw another angel, it could well be: I saw another messenger. And what is the ministry of this messenger? Remember the book of Revelations is a book of symbols. The messenger is seen as coming down from heaven; that meaning he is coming with a message from the presence of God. That is the implication of coming down from heaven. When you are in the presence of God as a servant of God you have arisen to His presence in heaven. Then when you leave the presence of God as it were to minister to men, you have 'come down'.

That is why the Bible says in Ephesians that He that ascended is

the same that descended. When you 'ascend', you go to the presence of God to receive. When you 'descend' as it were, you go before men. So this messenger has come descending from heaven, having obtained a message from the presence of God. And I believe that this is symbolic of a corporate, plural, many-membered body of *human* messengers who have a word from God for the church at this closing age. They are scattered all over the world. They do not have a particular name or any attachment to such. They are not a denomination. But they have a word from the Lord.

This body of messengers *cried* mightily with a strong voice. That means what was portrayed in Revelation 17 requires a strong cry. And what is the cry? It says **Babylon is fallen**. This woman is a mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of all harlots. He now says this Babylon that you see is fallen and is become the habitation of devils. *It is become*, meaning that probably it was initially not the habitation of devils. I perceive strongly it is speaking of the church that has fallen from its first estate. It is speaking about the apostate church, the church that is not or no longer representing the interest of Christ, but the interest of self, the interest of man and sometimes the interest of Satan because the Bible says it is now the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit and the cave for every hateful bird. That is very profound and interesting. It was once a faithful city, **Isaiah 1:21**,

*21 How is the faithful city becomes a harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.*

Isaiah was crying against apostasy in his day. This angel is also in the New Testament crying against apostasy. Verse 4, Revelation 18,

*4 And I heard another voice from heaven,*

That means this angel has made a declaration. But another voice was heard. And what is the voice saying?

*"...saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues..."*

Come out of what? Come out of Babylon, come out of this mystery woman, come out of this apostate church, come out of this congregation of the dead, come out of this environment that professes Christ in words but denies Christ in deeds. Come out of her so that you will not be partakers of her sins, and you will not receive of her plagues. It means there is sin in the place, and there are plagues. The Bible says don't partake of the sin; don't be partaker of the plagues. The reason is given in verse 5.

*5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.*

We can dare say that there are many places that profess Christ in words; but in action, in works, in daily living, they deny Him. And because of them the name of the Lord is blasphemed. Some people don't want to hear about the name of the Lord. They don't want to hear about church. Some people detest and hate church. The reason is because we have some charlatans, some bad eggs. There are many people who would have come to know the Lord Jesus Christ earlier, that have been driven away like the sons of Eli did. Some of the places have driven people away from the Lord. The Bible says *come out of her* my people.

We see this re-echoed in 2 Corinthians 6 from verse 14.

*14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

*15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?*

*16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

*17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,*

*18 And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

Be ye separate. This is the word of the Lord to God's remnants and overcomers now!

There are some so called places of worship that we have no business being in. Nobody can particularly tell you and give you a list of such church or organizations. If you are truly born again, the Bible says in 1 John 2:20, 27; that *"We have unction from the Holy One..."* You have an anointing. Every child of God has an anointing from the Holy One and that unction, that anointing, that presence of Christ within you teaches you all things, and tells you that you are in a wrong place; that where you are now is not a place where my name is.

1 Corinthians 15:33 tells us:

*"Be deceived; for evil communications corrupts good manners"*

Let us conclude this chapter with Revelations 2:9 and 3:9:

In Revelations 2:9, the Lord was speaking to the church in Smyrna. In Revelations 3:9, He was speaking to the church in Philadelphia. Of the seven churches that He inspected at the end of the first century in Revelations 2 and 3, these were the only two churches that passed the test of divine inspection. In each, He commended them, and said,

***"I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan"***

Synagogue was a place where people congregated in pockets to worship God in the days of the Lord Jesus Christ. So they portrayed as it were a congregation of God's people but they were not. They were synagogue of Satan. They are a congregation of Satan. This is because the things done there did not glorify God. Satan, as it were, dwelt within them and also among them. What goes on there do not glorify the Lord.

Because of them the name of the Lord is blasphemed. Anyone can go by any name. It makes no difference to the Lord.

In Isaiah 4:1 the Bible says,

*And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, we will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.*

We said *woman* speaks about *church*. And the number seven is not literal seven women. Seven is the number of perfection. So

## Chapter Six

# Where The Eagle Saints Are Gathered

In Revelation 3 we read about the Lord Jesus Christ, inspecting the seven churches in Asia Minor. He said to the church in Sardis, one of the churches that were not approved,

*And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; these things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*

'You have a name that you are living, but you are dead!' What does this portray? That gives us the idea that it is possible for a place to have a name of being alive, while in actual fact it is dead. A *name* simply implies reputation or impression. You have an outward impression to many people that you have life in you; that you are alive. Oh, there is the spectacular; so much noise, so much activity. People come there and they reckon that it is alive. But it takes only one who is in the spirit to know

that it is dead.

What is the life in a place where there is so much decoration, beautifully arranged choir with very good orchestra; but the ministers there are either into sorcery, witchcraft, immorality, shady money making ventures, swindlers and dupes? What is the life there?

There are many places today that have a name; they give an impression they are alive, but in the real sense of it they are actually dead. This was the comment of the Lord Jesus Christ concerning Sardis. Sardis must have been a church that was proud of itself. 'Oh, just come to our church. You will know that our church is the in-thing. When you come to our church you will meet the God of Zion there. You will meet the God of Jerusalem there. You will meet the God of heaven there!' But Jesus Christ says I have inspected you; you have that name, that reputation. People have a wrong notion of you.

Honestly speaking, the assessment of the Lord is what is most important. I care less what you say about me. What I care most about is what the Lord says about me. I don't want to give an impression to people around that I am a good Christian whereas I am another thing *behind the door*. There are many people today who are good Christians before people. There are many good pastors before their congregations. But before the Lord who sees what is going on in secret, they are adulterers and adulteresses, fornicators, ritualists and murderers. They are all but what they claim to be.

For the church in Sardis, the Lord Jesus Christ gave a ray of hope in verse 2. He said, '*Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die*! That means it is not all together

everything bad. This church in Sardis still had certain things, certain commendations from the Lord. The Lord seemed to say to them: You have a name that you are living but you are dead; but I tell you, even though my overall assessment is that you are dead, yet you can salvage a few things. He said; recover what remains so that everything will not entirely go bad.

We have said also that there are congregations of the living. In Luke 17 the Lord Jesus Christ was speaking about the end of the age. He gave two illustrations of what will happen at the end of the age. He gave the illustrations of the time of Lot, and the time of Noah.

*26 And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.*

*27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.*

He said the normal life on earth went on until the day that Noah who preached for one hundred and twenty years against unrighteousness entered the ark and the flood came and swept the people away. He gave the second illustration of what will happen at this time of the end.

*28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;*

And Lot was a preacher of righteousness and he kept preaching to them against sexual sins of sodomy, bestiality and the like. Nobody listened to him until the time that their cup

was full, and even the intercession of Abraham could not recover them at that time. The Lord had made up His mind. He rained down fire and brimstones upon them and destroyed them but rescued Lot.

Let us note:

***The Lord never leaves Himself without a witness. As bad as it was in the days of Noah, the Lord had a witness. As bad as it was in the days of Lot the Lord had a witness. As bad as it is at this time, as corrupt and as perverse some congregations are, there are still some that hold the integrity of Christ and hold the name of the Lord.***

In *Luke 17:34-35*; Jesus Christ began to say that at the time of the end there shall take place. There shall be a work of separation to separate the precious from the vile; to separate the tare from the wheat. Remember the Lord Jesus Christ spoke another parable in another situation about the man that planted good seed in his field. But after some times, it was discovered by him and his servants, which said,

*'Master, did you not plant good seeds in this place? How come we are seeing tares along with the wheat?' The master said; leave it until the day of harvest.*

In the same way people have expressed such sentiments, 'if I were God I will destroy ... I will send fire to all the places that are spoiling my name!' God is not a panicky God. He is never taken by surprise. He knows that there are many people who are spoiling His name. He knows that there are many charlatans in the church, even some of them who are presidents/founders. But the Lord says let the two of them go on. I know what I am

doing. Let the day of harvest come. On the day of harvest there shall be a separation of fish from the fish. And that is what it is. And so shall it be at the end of the age.

And many believers believe that this is the end of the age of the church. So this is the time when the Lord is going to move in a very swift judgment, that Messenger of the covenant shall come (Malachi 3:1-3). He shall do a great work of separation in His church. He shall separate the tares from the wheat; those who are making the Father's house a house of merchandise, who have turned the Father's house into a money making machine or venture. The Lord says He will do something. There will be a work of Separation. He said in verse 34,

*34 I tell you, in that night*

*Night* indicates the *condition* of the time the separation will take place. We can say we are in the night time now. Nobody will say we are not in the night time. Night does not only speak of the physical darkness. But it speaks of the symbolic darkness where there is sin, there is unrighteousness and other evil works. There is even environmental degradation. Then you can say that there is darkness. So we can say that it is night time now. The time is dark now. The Bible says in Isaiah 60 that darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness shall cover the people, but the Lord shall arise upon you and His glory shall be seen over you.

So he said in that night when the Lord shall carry out the work of separation,

*"There shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left".*

The word *men* there is in italics which mean it was not likely there in the original. Translators supplied it. So the passage should read 'there shall be two in one bed'. That *one bed* means they are doing things in common. One shall be taken, the other shall be left. The *two* could be two friends. It could be two congregations. It could be two ministers of the gospel. Two are doing things in common-i.e., *bedfellows*. The word *two* also does not necessary mean that they were literal two. It speaks about a body of people who are doing things in common. But a time comes when one is taken, and the other is left. Something shall suddenly happen that shall separate them. He went further,

*35 Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*

The word *women*, here again is in italics so it should be *Two shall be grinding together*. The translators supplied the women. Grinding has to do with activity. The one shall be taken and the other left. So it speaks also of a body of people involved in some common activities. It could be business activity, a Christian project; it may even be two friends who are in partnership. Something shall happen. Then one shall be taken and the other left behind. That means there shall be a separation. Thirdly, He said,

*36 Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*

The word *men* here, also in italics so it should read *Two shall be in the field* because *men* was supplied by the translators. Field is symbolic of ministry or spiritual service. The disciples became very concerned and they questioned the Lord,

*37 And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord?*

The Lord's answer is very important.

*And he said unto them, whosoever the **body** is, thither will the **eagles** be gathered together.*

The word **body** in this passage is also taken from the Greek word **soma**. The word 'soma' means a living and healthy body in contrast to a corpse, or a lifeless, dead body. Jesus was certainly not in the business of storytelling. He was speaking about the things that pertained to the purposes of God. He was speaking about the activities and operations of the church at the time of the end. So He was speaking about the church which was His primary concern because the Bible says in Hebrews 10:5;

*5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me:*

This *body* is also taken from the same Greek word *soma*, meaning a living and healthy body. The body that Christ came to the earth for, a living, sound body is the body that is meant here.

The Lord in His foreknowledge had foreseen that the way of the cross; the way of Christ shall be so perverted that we shall see all manner of charlatans. There shall be a mingling of all sorts of people; the good and the evil shall be mingled together. But there shall be a great work of separation. There shall be a great shaking. But what did He say? He said that these ones that are being taken are being taken to *soma* where the body that is living and healthy is.

## Chapter Seven

# Denominationalism

**W**e are moving to another issue that is quite significant and important. There is a word that is very important in the times that we are in. That word was never in the plan of God. That word was never in the early church. Historically speaking, that word came somewhere in the course in the life of the church. We want to consider that word for some time. And that is the word denominationalism. This is a phenomenon that we have found in the church of Jesus Christ. It was not there when Christ was around. It was not there in the early church. It came somewhere after the first few centuries. It was not there when the Lord was inspecting the seven churches.

In Revelations chapters 2 and 3, when Jesus Christ was inspecting the seven churches, there were bodies of believers that gathered together to give witness to the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ in their environment, in their vicinity, in their locality. That is why you find the church at

Ephesus, the church in Pergamum, the church in Sardis, the church in Thyatira, the church in Philadelphia. So the gathering and meeting together was by reason of geographical affinity, not because of a grouping or segregation by the reason of a special belief, or a common way or style of operation.

**The word *denomination* is defined as a grouping in a faith, a sect within a faith that answers to a peculiar way of operation or life within that same faith.**

Denomination was not a part of the life of the early church, nor in its historical record. It began when the church went into **apostasy**. And by the time it was coming out of apostasy after the ministry of Martin Luther in the sixteenth centuries; denominationalism began. That was when groupings and segregations began in the church.

One of the things that give rise to denominationalism is disagreement, when God's people disagree. But we discover that it is possible to disagree and yet not form a denomination. We find that in the book of Acts that Paul and Barnabas were separated unto the work of the ministry. But at a time they had disagreement on principles; not on personality issues but on principles-(Acts 15:36-41)

There was a young boy called John-Mark, who was taken along with them on missionary trip. This John-Mark after sometime could not cope with the rigors of the missionary field, and he ran back home. He deserted them. A time came that Barnabas felt like bringing him along on another mission trip, but Paul felt, 'no, we cannot bring John-Mark. This young man is too fragile for missionary work. He will be a distraction to us. The Bible says there was a sharp disagreement between them.

You can see that the disagreement was on principle because the two of them had good reasons, good ground for their stand on John-Mark. It was not a personal thing. It was not because Paul did not like the face of John-Mark; nor was it because Barnabas was making money from John-Mark. No, it was not on personality issues. It was on principles. And we dare say that it is truly possible for God's children to disagree on principles but it should not bring factions. It should not bring segregation. It should not bring denominationalism.

We all agree that the Corporate Affairs Commission is registering so many church organizations and denominations at a very fast rate. If you go and delve into the root of these spinning denominations, coming out at a very fast pace and proportion it is because of differences and disagreements. The assistant pastor disagrees with the pastor, and he leaves to form his own so-called 'church'.

***But whatever is not founded on righteousness and pure motive can never stand. It is like a house that is built upon the sand.***

However, denominationalism was never in the mind of God for His church, but what was in the mind of God for the church was what we saw in Revelation 2 and 3 whereby a body of believers would gather together in a community, bonded together by the work of the Lord and by Christ alone. Going by what we see today, we can say emphatically that these denominations were not in the plan of God. But then God has made use of it. Oh yes, it has been a tool in the hands of God. There were many things that were never in the mind of God but He used as tools until the perfect would come.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13 that when the perfect is come then the imperfect shall pass away. God has tolerated denominationalism. It has really divided the church.

The present practice is that people who belong to a particular denomination cannot worship in another denomination. In many denominations even if a vessel is so anointed and with fire, such may not be allowed to minister or function in their denomination, in their grouping, in their sect until he goes through the initiation into the sect, through the membership process, and at times, through their own Bible college. It is so bad in some places that after finishing from a certain Seminary or Bible college one cannot function in another denomination. This tells us the seeming confusion in the body of Christ. But at this time of the end, the perfect is setting in!

The Lord is doing away with the imperfect-(1 Corinthians 13). Denominationalism was an imperfection that God has tolerated, because it has divided His people. It was introduced because of the weakness and frailty of man; this was because of the problem in the character traits of the servants of God who were not able to function together because of minor disagreements. The Lord allowed it for a while. But this is the day of harvest. The precious and the vile must be separated. The tares must be uprooted from the wheat.

There are certain marks that identify every denomination. We shall take time to identify these marks of denomination in the coming chapters. Suffice it to say for now that when you go to *Genesis 11:1-4* we see the episode of the building of the Tower of Babel. This explains one of the reasons why we have denominations today.

The whole earth was of one language, one speech and one people until there was a confounding of languages. It was God that confounded the languages because there was a building up, there was a coming together, a rebellion against the plans and purposes of God. Genesis 11:1 says,

*1 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.*

*2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.*

The *east* symbolises the presence God in the Scriptures.

We know from geography that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. In the Tabernacle arrangement we see that the tribe that ministered encircled the Tabernacle; and the tribe of Judah was located on the eastern part. They were also to move first during their journeys. The Bible calls the east, the place of the rising of the sun. The passage we are considering is therefore speaking symbolically that men journeyed from the presence of God. The reason why we have denominations today is because men have journeyed from the presence of God and they found a plain in contrast to a height. A plain is a low land in contrast to a mountain or hill. Whenever a people journey from God's presence, there is a spiritual fall and we have denominations.

Any Christian group, any work of the spirit that is birthed by the anointing that later goes into splinters, into denominations, it is because there is a weakness and failure in the system. This is what is referred to as a journey from the east, a withdrawal from the presence of God and a settlement in the plain.

The Lord discourages denominationalism today; but those

## Chapter Eight

# The Marks that Identify Denominations

In Isaiah 4, we see what is happening today being portrayed. It was a prophecy. Isaiah had an insight into the mind of God and into the operations and life of the church at the time of the end. It says in verse 1;

*And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.*

We have heard some who have preached and said that this passage is alluding to the shortage of men at the end times. No, no, no! See, the God that created men and women has created them with a balance. This erroneous interpretation has made some men to go into polygamy. It has also made some women to go into prostitution, saying:

*'Well the Bible says seven women ... I don't want to be among*

the seven women that will struggle over a man.' So, some go into prostitution. And some of the men are now so happy, puffed up, and as it were, the ladies are at their mercy.

But you see, even statistically speaking, what they say is not true. But let us leave statistics aside. Besides, all men were not born at the same time. Neither were all women. Because of the possibility of marrying at variations of ages, so you cannot say that it is talking about men being in short supply at the time of the end, no. The Bible is not a story book; it is not a jesting book. It is a serious book of prophecy.

We have said previously that the word *woman* symbolises the church, either the true or the false church as we saw in Revelations 17. Here in Isaiah 4 it is talking about seven women, seven expressions of Christ or the church age, as it were. They shall take hold of one man. That one man is Christ the Husband of the church. And what will they say? They are not only saying with the word of their mouth but also with their actions. It is said that actions speak louder than words. So what are they portraying? What message are they passing across? We will eat our own bread. These prophetically and symbolically speak of congregations of God's people in their numbers that at the time of the end will have their own bread, not the bread of Christ. They will wear their own apparel, and not the apparel of Christ.

In order not be confused, bread in biblical symbolism, speaks about the word of God. No one should be in doubt about that. The Bible speaks about the bread of life. When Jesus Christ spoke about the bread of life in John 'I am the bread of life. If you eat this bread you will never hunger,' He wasn't talking about physical bread because if you eat the physical bread you

will hunger again. He was talking about the spiritual bread of the word of God. Of course we have devotionals today that are called daily bread. So he is not talking about physical bread.

He is therefore saying at the time of the end, some groups of believers will seek identification with Christ. But they will want to do their own things. They want to attach themselves, they want to have a tag of Christian name, Christian association, Christian ministry, Christian church, Christian organization but they do not have works and practices to back it up. What would they say? *We shall wear our own apparel.* Apparel speaks about character. Apparel speaks about life, lifestyle. By their fruits you shall know them. When you see me and see the dress I am wearing, if somebody else is not seeing me, you can say that person that is wearing that particular colour of coat and having that colour of tie. That is to let you know that apparel or dress symbolises character.

He said these shall take place at the time of the end. And this is really the plight of denominationalism, where many identify with Christ outwardly, but they actually deny Him in their works. Paul said it. He prophesied about it. He spoke it in Philippians 3:17-19. He said,

*17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.*

*18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:*

*19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)*

He said their belly is their God. That means what they worship is their 'stomach' or *appetite*. Of course we know today that there are many worship places so to say that are set up to feed one man, to provide for one man, to attend to his needs, to attend to his ego. But you see also at the time of the end, the Bible says that the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful.

Now we shall consider four marks that identify denominations. With these four marks you will not have any doubts as to whether where you are a denomination or not. As has been said before, it is not as though God is not using denominations, but it was never in His plan for the church and the system of denominationalism can never lead the church to fullness or perfection. There are many today that have seen the shortcomings of denominations and thereby operate what is called *non-denominations*. Some even say *inter-denomination*. Inter-denomination is an amalgamation of denominations and has it's own problems. But a non-denomination means 'we do not care where you come from, provided you are in Christ.' There is a song we used to sing so many years ago in the church,

*I don't care what church you belong to...*

*...If by grace through faith you have been saved*

*You are my brother so give me your hand... (Of fellowship)*

But it is not so today. Everyone is seeking to beat the other. Everyone is competing. How shall my congregation be larger than your own? So Christ is no longer the interest but the belly, the offerings, the tithes and the things that shall come in. Most assemblies that emphasize the need for 'growth' in their local churches do so, mostly not because of passion for the souls, but

possibility of increased offerings. The reason then, why some souls classified as 'the big fishes' are granted preferential attentions and treatments. In as much as it is expected that believers should give regularly to support God's work, that should not be the reason for setting up a place of worship. There are many people today that are out of job. And the only thing they can think themselves to do is to set up a worship place. Take a loan; borrow money. And at times, in order to make the place spectacular, they go into sorcery. Get charms. Do things that will make people to come in, plenty of people. This is the time of harvest. The Lord our God is coming, thrusting in the sickle, reaping His own harvest, separating the chaff from the wheat.

The following are marks that identify a denomination, irrespective of the name it goes by.

### **1. THERE IS AN ERECTED WALL.**

One of the high points that mark out a denomination is that it has a wall erected by it. A wall makes for security. A wall makes for defence from danger, from encroachment. For example, it is wise when you have a parcel of land you have bought, even before you start to build, you build a wall; you have a fence. And because you have a fence, somebody will not come and uproot your block from the fence and then make another one or shift it. Once you have a fence in place, it at least secures your parcel of land. So walls are for defence and for security.

To the common man, the average carnal man it is okay to have a fence. It is safe. But hear what the Lord says in Zachariah chapter 2; which is also a prophecy in the time of restoration. We are in the days of restorations now, and these prophetic

books are finding their place. From verse 1,

*I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand.*

Meaning an inspection, a measuring line is a plumb-line, a tool that is used to gauge, to assess, to inspect. Remember this is a vision and it has a prophetic or a symbolic meaning.

*2 Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof.*

*3 And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him,*

*4 And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein:*

The Lord here was speaking about the character of the spiritual work of the church and the manner of administration that He had in mind even from the Old Testament times, regarding the work of the kingdom of God at a time when the perfect shall set in. He said Jerusalem shall be inhabited as a town without walls. How many of us have ever known of a town without walls? Even if a town has no physical, real wall it has an imaginary one. The reason is because it is for security. So the Lord was saying here, that in as much as men shall seek security by what they know and preserve the work of God, He says; I don't need your security.

*5 For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round*

*about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.*

If you seek to secure a physical of land, it is by the use of blocks and cement. No matter how fortified, it is still possible to jump it, no matter how high. It is only a matter of getting a ladder. It can be jumped. What armed robbers even do these days is to use a grenade to breach the wall. It happened some time ago in a part of this country. So the wall only has a limited protection. But when the Lord Himself is a wall, how is such expressed? It is expressed as fire! He said:

*I the Lord will be a wall of fire round about Jerusalem...*

And you know, the fire of the Lord can be very great.

So the Lord was saying, 'look, all attempts you have by your constitutions, by your laws, by your by-laws to secure my work are inadequate, at it's best!' In some places they say this is our own place. When you are coming to our own church, to our own denomination you don't wear this. And somebody says, of course when you go out you are free to wear it again. It is an attempt to just ensure you protect your empire. This is because God is far much more able to enforce security over whatever He does. The Lord can keep His own work, so He does not really require us to keep His own work alive for Him. All He requires of us is to obey His instructions!

The Lord our God is alive, and He is able to keep His work alive.

## **2. SO MUCH HUMAN CONTROL**

There is so much of human control in every denomination. Whenever you have a denomination, another phenomenon

that comes to mind is control, real psychological control! And the leaders go all out to learn it.

A book seller of motivational books was interviewed about his best customers. He said: Church people (And the Pastors).

The control is also for security. Yes, it is for security. It is part of the wall. The wall can speak of human measures that are carried out in order to protect the territory. And this is denomination. There is so much of human control. By that we mean that man is in charge. And at times, it is not only that man is in charge on a positive note, man is also worshiped! We have seen so many of our places of worship that man is deified. Man is exalted more than God. Can you imagine a situation where a body of believers have gathered; Sunday school is going on; they are singing and worshipping; or maybe there is an announcement being made. And then the General Overseer, or the Senior Pastor, the Apostle or the Prophet of the church comes. And then they promptly stop everything they are doing and raise an anthem! They raise an anthem and usher the man in. This is apostasy. It is the abomination that maketh desolate that Daniel spoke about, standing in the Holy Place!-Matthew 24:15.

It is abomination. There is no Scriptural reason for such. They simply deify 'the man of God'. It is like this man coming in is not like any other person. He is special. He is peculiar. What they are saying in short is: He is our g-o-d!

And many people actually behave like gods in these places. And in apparent attempts to sustain the atmosphere of reverence around them, there has to be much of psychological control. Some assume that if they are able to lift themselves up

above the others, exercise psychological control, then they will 'command high level of respect'! You know, when you have someone who makes you to believe that you are not at the same level, and he makes you believe it, then you act out by 'submitting to him' even in very private matters that ordinarily should not concern him: 'look here, I am not your mate! We can be worshipping God in the same church but let us understand that we are not all the same. I am better than you. I am senior to you.' We discover that this poses a psychological threat upon you. You look up to that man. Whatever he tells you to do, you do. And that is what happens. That is a mark of denominations. But, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone. He is the President and Founder.

Other foundation can any man lay than that which has already been laid-*1Corinthians 3:11*.

Yet we find many of these foundations being laid by men. And so we have many *foundations* and they cannot be traced to God or His divine purposes. Man is in charge; and man is at times even worshiped.

In *Revelation 19:10* we see an example for the church to follow- The messenger that brought the message of the visions to John on the Island of Patmos, when John was so excited and ecstatic, he wanted to worship the messenger. What did he say? He said, don't do it! I am also one of your brethren the prophets that keep the testimony of this book (of the word of God). He said, worship God.

Now pay good attention to this:

***Any true servant of God will distract you from himself and***

***direct you to God. I want to repeat it. Every true messenger and servant of God will always seek to distract you from himself and will seek to direct you to God.***

John the Baptist was a fore runner of the Lord Jesus Christ. He came with a mission to prepare a way for the Lord Jesus Christ, so that the ministry of Christ might take off. In preparing the way for the Lord Jesus Christ he came with a fiery message. He did so many wonderful things. He came when there was darkness in Israel and his ministry brought a measure of light, waiting for the fullness of light by the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. They came to him and said who are you? Are you Elijah? Are you Jeremiah? Are you one of the prophets? Tell us who you are.

What did he say? He did not say, 'Oh, yeah, I am one of those prophets you have been waiting for! I am the champion of the hour, the man of God for the hour'. No, he said 'I am a voice in the wilderness crying, prepare ye the way for the Lord'. More or less he was saying I know my mission. I know my limitation. I am here to only prepare the way of the Lord and to make his path straight. He said 'the One that is coming is mightier than I; the latchet of His shoes I am not worthy to untie. I baptize you with water but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. His fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly *purge His floor*.'  
–Luke 3:15-17.

John the Baptist did not arrogate to himself what he was not.

In many denominations today, there is so much of the influence of man, and so much of control of man; so much of man to make himself the all-in-all, exercising psychological control upon the people, in order to prey upon them and have them in perpetual control.

## 1. THE VISION IS OF ONE MAN

A characteristic of denominations is that the vision of one man.

But we see from the Scriptures that the New Testament pattern, which is the mind of God for us now, is that His church be administered by a plural body of ministers. And it is for checks and balances.-Acts 20:17; Phillipians 1:1; 1Peter 5:1).

In the days of Paul, he saw Peter who was even in the faith before him doing what was not proper. Peter was eating with the Gentiles and withdrew himself when the Jews came. Paul rebuked him, and corrected him, because there was plurality of ministry. Paul was able to correct him.

***When Barnabas and Paul disagreed, other apostles came and the issue was resolved. But we have lone ranger ministries today. It is not the mind of God. God does not have the vision of one man for the church. Somebody will say, 'look, I am the man with the vision for this church!' No sir, the visioner is Christ.***

Christ alone has the vision.

## 2. ATTEMPTS TO PUT A SEAL ON GRACES UPON EMERGING LIGHTS

The functioning and the heights of attainment of a child of God are curtailed in an average denomination. One is not expected to excel in grace or spiritual gifts more than 'the man in charge'

If you are doing well, by seeking God very well and you are becoming more popular than the General Overseer, Senior

## Chapter Nine

# What to Look for in a Christian Place of Worship

Because there are many places of worship that call themselves by the name of the Lord but are not following the laid down pattern of God in His word, then there is the need for the spirit of discernment. Many places merely name the name of the Lord. They are advertising themselves, advertising their wares, but we have really no other person to advertise but the Lord Jesus Christ.

So in summary, what should you look out for when considering a Christian place of worship? There are six necessary and honest questions we need to ask ourselves.

***At the end of the day, you take responsible before God for where you settle to worship him now. Such decision can affect your level of devotion to God now and also influence your eternal placement in Him!. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says evil communications corrupt good manners.***

If you choose to settle to worship in a place where the name of the Lord is blasphemed, or is not named, or where 'the bed is too short for you to lie upon', it will affect your spiritual walk in this present life and may even affect your life in eternity.

Every one of us shall give account of himself before God.

## **1. WHO IS IN CHARGE HERE?**

This writing will be useful both to those who have previously chosen a place to worship, (and may even have been there a long while); or just about to choose a place.

Remember that you are a human being with a free will, to be exercised under God-Who alone is the true and final assessor of man.

God has given you free will as a protective weapon. So do not say,

'Oh, I would have looked for a place where Christ's name is glorified but somebody has bound me!'

Nobody is binding you. You are a vessel of free choice. You can choose, but ask yourself some honest questions and arrive at honest answers that you can defend before God. The first of such questions is:

Who is in charge in this place where I choose to worship?

By asking who is in charge, you are saying is it Christ or man? Is it Christ or Satan?

In Revelation 2:9 and 3:9, the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to the

churches in Smyrna and Philadelphia;

*I know the blasphemy of them who say they are Jews but they are the Synagogues of Satan.* It was a place where people congregated to worship God, as it were, but not serving the purpose of God. It was serving the purpose of Satan.

As has been said before, any man, any ministry that directs you to it is not of the Lord. Every minister must direct you away from himself unto God, because Christ is the foundation, the Chief Cornerstone of the church. We saw how John the Baptist fended off the attention from himself and directed people to one coming after him. This is what every true ministry should do. By the time a man wants to be worshiped, he wants to be accorded a special place; he wants a special anthem to invite him to the church. You want men to kneel down while talking to you even if they are as old as your father or your mother. You want them to give you a name that is deifying you, then you are not doing the work of the Lord and it is time you repent. The scriptures say, because of you the name of the Lord is blasphemed among the unbelievers-*Romans 2:24*. Because of you, some people that would have come unto the Lord Jesus Christ are running away from Him. You shall answer to the Lord for all such lost souls by reasons of 'running a local church' outside of God's laid down instructions.

Anointed servants of God, as it were, are 'called to carry the Ark of His presence'. Don't be like the sons of Eli who though called to carry the Ark, drove people away from the Lord-*1 Samuel 2:12-35*.

Remember we are in the days of harvest. We are in the days of restoration when the Lord is putting faulty issues in the church in their rightful places.

## **2. WHAT PLACE IS GIVEN TO THE WORD OF GOD?**

What is the place given to the word of God, relative to the words of man or the tradition of men?

In the days of the Lord Jesus Christ's ministry in the flesh, He had so much issue to sort out with the religious order of His days. He had lots of problems with the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Scribes; with the people who were as it were in charge of the religious life of the people, but leading them astray. The Lord knew that they could not lead the people to the purposes of God. He said they were like the blind leading the blind. The two of them would fall into the ditch-*Matthew 15*.

So Jesus Christ came, heralding the truth, but had it rough with the religious order of His day. We are not unmindful of the fact that, what we are saying, some may find quite offensive. God is rather calling the church to repentance!

Those who have the unction of the Holy One, those who have the Spirit of God will know that these things are true; for they confirm the concerns that you have nursed for a while about the church of Christ. God may have through this medium answered your prayers such that you can be in a position to know where to place the confusion and the issues around you... also reach out to others with such concerns!

So what place is given to the word of God? There are many places today that the word of God is relegated; and the word and the traditions of men are exalted. We look at Matthew 15:1,

*1 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,*

*2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread.*

*3 But he answered and said unto them, why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?*

Jesus Christ now listed a few of the traditions they had. Between Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament and John the first prophet in the New Testament, there was a period of about four to five hundred years. During that period, God wasn't talking to His people. It was the period referred to as the 'prophetic silent period' when God never spoke by dream, by prophet, by vision or by any means. It was as though God was cut from His people by the reasons of what He said in Malachi 4:5-6. He said He was displeased. He called for repentance which He did not see. So the Lord allowed silence to set in. Generations upon generations died not hearing God's word.

During the period, because succeeding generations had been accustomed to religion, there were institutions that developed when there were no prophets of God. That was the period that saw the advent of the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Scribes. These were people that sought to keep the religious life of the people going with human methods. But what do we see? God allowed that silence to purge the place so that a new order heralded by John in the person of Christ might come forth. A body of traditions was generated by these groups of people over time. And these were the traditions they confronted Jesus Christ with.

They asked Jesus why He and His disciples were not following *their* traditions. These were not the traditions of the nation but a body of religious and ceremonious traditions. *Why is it that*

*your disciples don't do as we do? They don't wash as we wash.* This was a ceremonial washing before eating bread. Jesus Christ asked them, why are you also transgressing the commandments of God by your traditions? That means it is possible for commandments of God to be transgressed against by the traditions of men. Jesus was saying in other words that your traditions don't matter to me. What matters to me is the Word of God.

There are some messengers and servants of God who started well but right now they are lords and gods. They are veritable institutions in the places they set up. Such cannot be said to be serving the interest of Christ. They have built empires unto themselves, because they are directing people to themselves; and through their activities, people are being driven away from the Lord.

### **3. WHAT PLACE IS ACCORDED THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS LEADERSHIP?**

This is very important. We look at John 16:7. It says,

*7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

And there are so many things that the Lord Jesus Christ said that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit will do. John 7, Verse 13 says,

*13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

*14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

He shall glorify Jesus, not man. Implicit in this provision is that the church cannot function properly or exist without the life and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And mind you, the Holy Spirit is very gentle. The Holy Spirit will never force or bulldoze His way. So, we must give in, we must give way to the Holy Spirit. That is why it is imperative to ask, what attention, what place is accorded the Holy Spirit and His leadership and His guidance in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:14 says

*14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

So, the true mark of son-ship is leading by the Holy Spirit.

#### **4. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL ENVIRONMENT LIKE?**

Remember, there are indices for every environment. Be the place a disco hall, a party, a market, a classroom, there are indices that will tell you, Oh, this is a library, or a party, or a market. If you entered a hotel or a hospital, there are certain things that will identify where you are. A bed, an air conditioner and reading table will indicate hotel room. When you go to a brothel you will see some loose girls with corresponding dress code and loose men and eating and drinking that will tell you that you are in a brothel. So you must ask yourself the question, this place that I call a church, a local assembly of Jesus Christ what is the environment like?

What is the attitude to sin? What is the attitude to godliness?

In answering the question of the spiritual environment, two things come to mind: The attitudes to sin and the attitudes to godliness. Is sin frowned at? Is godliness encouraged? There are some local assemblies and even entire church organizations you get to and you can literally 'smell' sin.

Yes, you can smell sin. A lady once went to her pastor to discuss her matrimonial problems. She had issues with her husband and had discussions with her pastor, awaiting 'Pastoral counsel'. The Pastor tried to take advantage of her plight and ended up making open passes at her. He plainly made it clear to her, 'I want you to come and sleep with me.' The lady was flabbergasted but did not want to assume anything, so she asked point blank: "Pastor, are you asking me out?"

"Sure, I am asking you out," he responded! "And when you try me out you won't regret it." A-B-O-M-I-N-A-T-I-O-N!!!

I am not referring to a former pastor. I am talking about a serving pastor. How many young ladies and even married ladies have been abused and defiled? From the pulpit to the pews, from the leadership to the congregation, it is corruption and sin.

Sin is now being justified in the light of grace!

***Jesus, they say, paid for all your sins: Past, present and future. Even the ones you have not committed and may not even have in mind to commit, Jesus paid for them all. So God, they say, does not look at you in the light of your sins and short comings, but in the light of Christ.***

SUCH IS OPEN LICENCE TO SIN!

***I recently heard it said: When you fall into sin, it is your flesh that sins and not your 'spirit man' which has never sinned and can never sin. At death, your flesh goes to the dust and your spirit man, the real you, is still guiltless before God and so goes to heaven.***

In 1 Corinthians 5 Paul was very troubled about fornication being commonly reported about the church at Corinth. Somebody reading this can probably say: Then, no place is totally clean. The doors at the local assemblies are opened so anybody can come in. But we are speaking here rather about the *attitudes* of the place in question to sin. What is accepted? If a local assembly, by its words, gestures, attitudes or mannerisms of the leadership condones sin; if it is a place where it is suggested that 'anything goes', sin is acceptable, you can do whatever you like, you can wear whatever dresses you like, your skirt can be as mini as possible, it can be even three, four inches short, it doesn't matter. It is the heart that matters, they say!

Such careless messages passed across by servants of God, especially during preaching, will make the people gravitate towards the carnal living.

This does not encourage godliness.

## **5. WHAT ATTENTION IS ACCORDED MATERIALISM AND WORLDLINESS?**

A place that is lax to worldliness and materialism is not a place where the people of the Lord should call or regard as a place of worship.

1 John 2:15 says,

*15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

*16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

*17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

You ought to ask yourself the question, what attention is given to materialism. In Philippians 3:17-19 Paul said,

*17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.*

*18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:*

*19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)*

It is what they will eat they are looking for. If you are in such a place it does not satisfy the desires of the Lord. It does not seek the interest of the Lord Jesus Christ. From such, the Bible says, turn away.

## **6. WHAT IS THE BED LIKE THERE? AND WHAT IS THE COVERING LIKE?**

Isaiah 28:20 says,

*20 For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.*

He was using the language of prophecy to signify one in a place of worship that does not satisfy his inner longings. The bed I slept upon when I was six years old I cannot sleep upon now, because the more a child grows, the more the parents ensure a bigger bed is arranged for him. There would be a time the child would be sleeping in the arms of the mother. The mother would lay it in a small pram, basket and later on into a cot which is bigger. Later still, the child is transferred into a small bed, and later into a bigger bed.

***A situation where a place of worship does not satisfy your aspirations and longings for God, is a phenomenon whereby your spiritual growth is faster than the place of worship. The place is 'shut in' and not advancing: Then the bed has become too short for you to lie upon; and the covering too small for you to cover yourself with.*** That means you have overgrown the nourishment that the place can offer you. The danger of this is that you might find yourself stagnated. You may just find yourself moving around in a circle. You are not growing. And remember, you can never operate beyond the spiritual height, growth, and life of a place you have submitted to and settled for worship.

By this we are saying that many of God's children have decided to settle for the things of this life. The place may have previously served God's purpose in your life, but not again! Then, there be no sentiments about it. Everyone must strive for the utmost in

Christ Jesus. It may still be a Christian congregation, but it has settled in *complacency*; it has settled to lethargy. It is no longer advancing the purposes of God in your life, while you are interested in moving on with God. The bed has become too short for you!

When as an adult, one lies on a bed that is meant for a two year old, there can be no good night rest.

There are many Christians reading these words now who are *restless* where they worship. They are aspiring for the utmost in Christ. They are seeing great things from the word of God. And the place where they are has diverted and degenerated to worldly things. There are many servants of God that instead of feeding the sheep concentrate on shady methods to raise offerings and running after contracts. They busy themselves all over the place, fighting one another and seeking to build the bigger cathedral. The emphasis of *feeding the flock* is no longer priority. So the place may have satisfied the purpose of God in your life for a time, but because it ceases to advance the purpose of God and you are thirstier for God, then it may no longer serve your purpose. The bed there has become too short for you and the covering too small.

As we conclude the question you may still ask yourself is:

### **So where do I worship?**

I shall leave with you three Scriptures.

In **John 4:21-24**. Jesus Christ said,

*Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall*

*neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.*

No one should compel you to a particular geographical location, denomination or place. Prayerfully seek out for those who worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. When you meet them in the course of daily interactions, you will know. Their lifestyle will challenge you.

**Zechariah 8:23** reads;

*In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all the languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a jew (indeed) saying, we will go with you: for we have heard (or seen) that God is with you.*

And in **Revelations 18:4**,

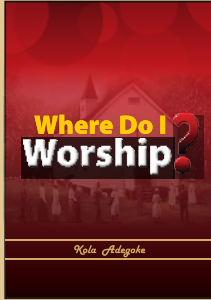
*4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

There are certain places, that if you have the Spirit of Christ, you have no business worshipping there. Remember that the place you choose to settle to worship God matters a whole lot. And a place that does not meet your spiritual needs and aspirations will affect your eternity; because right now you are expected to gather so many good works for the life to come. But if the place you worship is drags you down instead of lifting you up, then you may have only yourself to blame if you remain there. Go before the Lord and ask him questions and He will answer you. You have the unction of the Holy One.

There is a present work of the Spirit in the church to gather and direct God's *eagles* to where so ever the living body (*soma*) is- *Luke17:37*. There are living bodies of Christ. There are healthy bodies of Christ, and there are unhealthy bodies of Christ all around.

***Romans 8:14*** says;

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*



*"And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, it is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them"-Matt 21:12-14(KJV)*

In the days of his flesh, the Lord Jesus Christ on a certain day, went into the temple (A place specially separated for the worship and service of God). What he discovered was quite disgusting: people buying and selling different wares in God's house, exchanging money and selling doves! He did one thing: **Whip** those guilty of the atrocities and **cast them out** of the temple.

All the activities he condemned in the temple could very well go on ...outside the temple, without his blinking an eyelid, but **NOT IN THE TEMPLE!**

There is a repetition of the above episode today, howbeit, in a symbolic sense. There are chains of ungodly activities going on in God's house now, the church, where he has desired to dwell; especially the art of making money virtually of every 'holy' thing-From Jerusalem oils, handkerchiefs and even charging fees for prayers and deliverance sessions.

These are 'church robbers' in God's house today, although dressed in cassocks, well-cut suits and religious robes. The time for judgement on these atrocities and those who perpetuate them is very nigh! The first line of judgement is through the *uncompromising* voice of truth and prophecy, sharply directed at exposing the evils of materialism, immorality and occultism in God's house. Shortly, this shall be followed by the Lord 'casting' them out of his house (divine plan).

Amidst all the abominations presently going on in the church of Christ, giving occasions to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, those who *strayed* into these 'business centers and synagogues of men and satan', shall receive help of the Lord. They are those made blind and lame by these religious systems:

*"And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them"-Matthew 21:14.*

How shall this be?

They shall **come to him in the temple**, i.e., through identifying with the prophetic words of correction currently being heralded in the church by those concerned for the afflictions of Zion; and their battered and wounded hearts, pockets and lives shall be healed!



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