

BLESSINGS and PRIVILEGES of the BRIDE

or,

Benefits that the Righteous Church Members have over those people
who are simply Born Again Believers

or,

What You Have with a Good Church

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The **OMNIPOTENT CREATOR** Constructed the **Church**,
and set **HIMSELF** as the **CHIEF CORNERSTONE**.

Introduction:

It is necessary to define a variety of terms before proceeding to the list of blessings. Because of the few people who will object to such *scriptural truth* as presented here in respect to the Bride – because they are on the wrong side – I shall also endeavor to encourage all with this short paper.

The *Bride of Christ* is clearly defined in scripture, and a few verses to show her can be given as follows:

Matthew 16:18 – Jesus promises to build his church. This church is obviously a local assembly as he set in the church first apostles (I Corinthians); and, secondly, Jesus commands the brethren to “tell it unto the church” in Matthew 18:17. The church here has to be a local assembly, and *NOT* just folks who are saved, because Jesus makes the distinction between “two or three witnesses” (v. 16) and the church (two different entities to whom the issue should be judged – a progression of authority and responsibility. He also says that if “he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” This could *ONLY* be performed in the context of a local church. Otherwise, how could the witnesses tell it “unto the church” (v. 17) if that meant all the saved people? The church has the power to bind or loose because Jesus is in the midst.

The word “unto,” as in “unto the church,” is also enlightening and proving the local assembly (as also the Greek word simply means).

These two passages of scripture in Matthew chapters 16 and 18 are the only two places in the four gospels where the word church is

used. In both places the church is tied to the “kingdom of heaven” – which is the visible, physical kingdom the Lord has Kingly authority over. Those who erroneously think there is a “universal” or “invisible” “church” made up of those who are saved (and there is NO scriptural foundation for this) must needs associate the church with the kingdom of God – that spiritual kingdom made up of believers.

The three general definition of the word “church” can be summarized as follows:

The Worldly definition of the word “church” as one would hear on the news or from the minds of the lost usually will refer to the Catholic Institution, portrayed with lavish buildings. I will force myself to restrain from further opinion of this group in this writing, as it would no doubt leave a bad taste to the readers. I lack a lot of charity when opining on this Great Whore as God as she is referred to by God. Suffice it to say that the world thinks “the church” is headed by the pope, and that it is a *universal and visible* body. They say incorrectly that the church was built on the “rock” Peter (or Constantine, more correctly), and that he was the first pope. I say Jesus pointed to himself in Matthew 16:19 when referring to the ROCK, and not to the “stone” Peter.

The Protestant definition of the church, which has unfortunately been adopted by evangelicals and a *few* Bible-believing Baptist brethren, says the church is *invisible and universal*. This was a backlash to the Catholic (katholicos = universal) definition as a result of the reformation. The protestants could neither say the church was “local and visible” or “universal and visible,” because that by definition would exclude themselves – as they cam out of the whore. In order to justify themselves they had to insist the “katholicos” was invisible – in spite of the evidence of 1500 years of Baptists (local and visible churches) being persecuted under the bloody hand of Rome. It is no surprise the Protestants also began to persecute the Baptists, as they were the true New Testament churches, and consequently were evidence of the unscriptural ness of the protestant mess. They say the “rock” of which Jesus spoke is the “profession of one’s faith” – hogwash!

The Baptist and scriptural definition of the church is that which refers to the *local and visible* body (called-out assembly) of *baptized believers*, who have *covenanted* with Jesus to carry out his

commandments. The first church, started by Jesus himself between Matthew chapter 16 and chapter 18, was composed of “baptized” disciples of John the Baptist. Jesus himself was baptized by John. In Acts 1:22, part of the requirement for the one to take Judas’ place was that the candidate must be one ordained who “beginning from the baptism of John” was a “witness with us of his resurrection.” So if Jesus and the first church leadership were all baptized by John the Baptist, it seems very apparent the first church was made up of Baptists, and therefore a Baptist church. Some may hate this thought, but the scriptures are plain – Jesus sought a Baptist preacher when he was to be baptized, and took for the charter membership of his first church, men with this same baptism.

Continuing through the Book of Acts to the Book of Revelation, we shall always find the church to be a local and visible body, and *never* universal or invisible. The church cannot be both invisible and visible, and be both local and universal. One definition has to take preeminence over the other.

In Romans 16:1 Paul commends Phebe, a servant of the church at Cenchrea.

In I Corinthians 5 Paul admonishes the church to judge her own for purity’s sake, and this is to be done by putting away from among them that wicked person (v. 13).

God shows in I Corinthians 12:13, 18, and 28 that he has set each member in the church as it hath pleased him (church here is impossible to be equivalent with salvation without being Calvinistic and throwing half the chapter away). All members are united in rejoicing or suffering. We are not to seek members in our churches other than what God has determined.

In II Corinthians 11:2, Paul says. “I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” We know that John said, “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom (John 3:29), referring to Jesus Christ as the bridegroom. The church, then, is espoused to Christ, and Paul’s work was to present her chaste, undefiled and unbeguiled by a false Jesus, spirit or gospel.

In Galatians 5:12, Paul wishes the false teachers were “cut off” from the Galatian churches so as not to defile the unleavened servants of God.

In Ephesians 5:23 we see, that as Jesus is the Head of the church, so the husband is the head of the wife. This Headship shows authority, ownership, and leadership – not an invisible body on earth with a head in heaven. As my wife is my possession, the church is Jesus’ possession. As my wife’s body belongs to me (I Corinthians 7:4), the church body belongs to Christ. He therefore will sanctify and cleanse it with washing of water by the word (5:26); so that one day he will present the church to himself “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

In Revelation 19:7 we see the “marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.” Her fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. In 21: 9 we see the Lamb’s wife – the bride – in holy Jerusalem with the Lamb.

And lastly, in Revelation 22:17, the Bride says to Jesus “Come.” Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

From these and other scriptures we get a good picture of the blessings of the Bride. What she is like and what she is to attain to.

Some other pictures:

How many other places in the scriptures do we see a picture of the Bride of Christ? In Song of Solomon, there is the Shulamite woman – undefiled, choice, and beautiful.

I can’t help think how Abraham sent his servant to *his own family* to procure a wife for Isaac (Genesis . The bride for his son must come from his family. As Rebekah was especially from the family of Abraham, the Bride of Jesus is especially from the family of God – a holy and obedient people taken from among the family of those who are saved. As Matthew 22:1-14 shows the marriage for the king’s son, there is the Son, the Bride, and the guests. As God showed us the sorrowful picture of his relationship to Israel in Hosea’s relationship to Gomer (an unjust and harlot of a woman), God has also shown us a joyful picture in that he will make sure the Bride of his Son is holy and without blemish.

Jesus wants his bride holy, glorious, chaste, obedient, reverent, faithful. To those children of God who press toward the mark, Jesus has a special place and glorious crowning (head covering – I Corinthians 12) for his wife. Very child of God should make a diligent search of what God requires of him so that he may say as the bride, even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Other Definitions:

Having defined the Bride, we shall further define some other terms as used in the title of this paper:

Righteous church members: Those who are born again, baptized with scriptural baptism (scriptural mode, scriptural administrator, scriptural candidate, and scriptural action), and faithful members in the church as true disciples of Jesus Christ. These are truly holy people who have a spirit of self-judgment, bear the fruit of the Spirit, endeavor to keep the unity of the faith, and honor God with all things.

Those being *Born Again:* In contrast to the righteous church members, these are truly saved, have been washed in the blood, and have the promise of eternal life. We do not use the term Christian, as this was used in reference to disciples who showed Christ-likeness. A disciple is a born again believer who is diligently following Jesus Christ. We therefore see a progression: Salvation, baptism, discipleship, and then displaying Christian attributes. One is *NOT* a Christian simply by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ or professing such. We should reserve such a word for those few individuals that merit the name of Christ.

What, then are the blessing and privileges of the Bride over those who are simply saved? There are many. Some are profitable in this life, and some in the life to come. Please keep reading.

What advantage has the Bride over the Family?

1. First, She has a **COVENANT** with the Bridegroom. This covenant shows a **commitment** between the two. The man will provide for, protect, procreate through, give power to, have pleasure with, and have a partnership with the Bride. Jesus promised he will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13). He is with us always – a **Companion** to the church – even to the end of the world (Matthew 28:20). The

gates of hell shall not prevail (Matthew 16). He hath purchased the church with own blood (Ephesians 5).

2. Next, She has Jesus' **COMMANDMENTS**. Not limited to the preaching of the Gospel in the **Commission**, but also, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20). The duty to carry out the commission belongs to the ones to whom the commission was given – the eleven – the leadership of the Jerusalem Church, and passed down to the other churches that were the result of the obedience to that commandment. As a wife is obligated to obey her husband, the church is obligated to obey the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. The church has a public **CONFESSION** – she has taken an outward and public stand for Jesus in the community that is made a testimony to all. That confession is shown first in Baptism, and then in serving the Lord in unity in the church. When one is baptized and hence becomes a member of the church, they are confessing to follow the Savior and walk in newness of life.
4. She has the special **CARE** of the Savior. The church is watched over and whatever things are truly needed are supplied. The Savior directs his flock by means of the bishop – the under shepherd. Proper and Pure doctrine is taught among the people.
5. She has the **CORRECTION** of the Savior. Judgment begins at the house of God. Whom the Lord loveth he scourgeth. The church is given the authority to loose and bind, to execute righteous judgment among her members for the purpose of maintaining purity and truth. The ungodly are put out (Matthew 18:17). Those without a church home can wander aimlessly, be tossed to and from with every wind, because there is no "Pillar and Ground of the Truth" as a stabilizing and correcting force. The word preached by inspiration of the Holy Ghost will reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine, as all scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, etc.
6. She has a **CLEANSING** – washing by the water by the word (Ephesians 5:27). Clothes have no spot or wrinkle as

the preaching of the word washes the church. She is maintained chaste and righteous through Bible preaching (2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7, 8)

7. She has a special **CALLING** that she offers up to God – “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Let the Bride say come.
8. She has a **COMMUNICATION** directly from the Savior. When Jesus sent his word, he sent it to the churches (see Revelation 21:16). The church has the first word from heaven.
9. She has **COMPANIONSHIP** among her members. They continue in fellowship and breaking of bread (Acts 2).
10. She has sweet **COMMUNION** with Jesus at the Lord’s Table. This ordinance is reserved exclusively for righteous church members, and is done in the church assembly.
11. She looks forward to a **CORONATION** of her faithful servants. Those five Crowns offered by the Savior for various areas of faithful service. As we build on the true foundation we can expect a reward.
12. She has a wedding **CEREMONY** planned in which she is married to the LAMB himself. This will be a great **Celebration** with the faithful and true saints of God. Many guests will attend. There is planned a great supper (Matthew 22:1-14).
13. Then the **CONSUMATION**, she is placed in HEAVENLY JERUSALEM and lives eternally with her HUSBAND – the LAMB OF GOD. He is the LIGHT of the HOLY CITY that is adorned as a bride for her husband.

CONCLUSION: Make your church membership and service the high priority. Be holy and in unity with the church. Support her and be a blessing always. Honor the members, be faithful until death, and say as the Bride, **COME!**

The End.