

A Warning To Church Members

Consequently, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved; through which, because of underserved favor, we do service to the Living God as an associate; let us hold on to that undeserved gift of royalty with thankful joy, with reverence and careful devotion. Hebrews 12:28 (translation by Robert Tanner)

FOREWORD

Before we get into the word of warning to church members that we find in the book of Hebrews, please allow us to state that we believe that every person, born of woman, has two bodies. Only one of them, the spiritual body, will live forever. The other body, the material body, will one day expire and decompose unless that body is still alive and functioning when the catching up of the saved, up to that moment, takes place.

If that material body is still alive and functioning when the catching up of the saved, up to that moment, takes place, the Living God will change that material body, in the twinkling of an eye, into the same type of heavenly, glorified body that Jesus Christ had **after** His resurrection.

⁴² *So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:* ⁴³ *It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:* ⁴⁴ *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. **There is a natural body**, and **there is a spiritual body**.* ⁴⁵ *And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.* ⁴⁶ *Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.* ⁴⁷ *The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.* ⁴⁸ *As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.* ⁴⁹ *And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.* ⁵⁰ *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.* ⁵¹ *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,* ⁵² *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* ⁵³ *For this corruptible must put on*

*incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*⁵⁴ *So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.* " 1 Corinthians 15:42-54 (The King James Version)

Salvation, of course, is dependent upon whether or not a person, during their lifetime, has prayed, repented of their sins and has requested that Jesus Christ pay their sin debt by His death on the cross, Each of us owes the Living God a debt, a sin debt, and that debt has to be paid. We can pay for that sin debt through eternity in torments in what the Bible calls "the Lake of Fire" or "The Pool of Fire" if we choose that everlasting torments is better than eternal bliss. "¹¹ Next I saw a large White Throne and the one who was sitting on it. The earth and the sky fled from his presence and there was no place for them.¹² I saw the dead, the great and the lowly, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. Then another scroll was opened, the book of life. The dead were judged according to their deeds, by what was written in the scrolls.¹³ The sea gave up its dead; then Death and Hades gave up their dead. All the dead were judged according to their deeds.¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the pool of fire. (This pool of fire is the second death.)¹⁵ Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the pool of fire." Revelation 20:11-15 (New American Bible - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

The Greek New Testament says that Jesus Christ referred to "the Lake of Fire" as γέεννα (pronounced in English, "ghch'-en-nah") in Matthew 23:33. On the other hand, according to John 3:16-18, the Living God has provided a way of escape. "¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." (The New International Version)

If we choose to, we can pray, repent of our sins and request that the sacrifice of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, pay our sin debt. What is our advice to a person who chooses to reject the sacrifice of the Messiah? Our advice to them is to sin as little as possible since each sin they commit increases the debt and will, one day, exact a greater degree of payment.

"²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, though testified to by the law and the prophets,²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction;²³ all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God." Romans 3:21-23 (New American Bible - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

"²³ For the wages of sin is death. But the grace of God, life everlasting, in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23 (Douay-Rheims Version, New Catholic Edition)

The second fact we would like to share is that only the spiritual body is changed at the moment of salvation. Only the spiritual body is "born again". The material body is not "born again". Even after the spiritual body is "born again" or restored back to fellowship with the Living God through salvation, the material body still has an old sin nature. Our material body has never wanted to do the will of God, it does not want to do the will of God now and it will never want to do the will of God in the future. That is why our material body will never get out of this present world alive. That is why the spiritual bodies of those who have asked Jesus Christ to pay their sin debt will, one day, receive heavenly, glorified bodies to dwell in through eternity.

⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God: neither shall corruption possess incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall all indeed rise again: but we shall not all be changed. ⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again incorruptible: and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? ⁵⁶ Now the sting of death is sin: and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and unmovable; always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 (Douay-Rheims Version, New Catholic Edition)

In the beginning of the conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus Christ, Nicodemus did not understand this truth. "¹ There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: ² The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art

a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. ³ *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* ⁴ *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"* John 3:1-4 (The King James Version)

The third fact we would like to share is that the evil one cannot touch or tempt the spiritual body that is "born of God" and therefore the spiritual body that is "born of God" cannot sin.

¹² *But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: ¹³ **Which were born,** not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but **of God.**"* John 1:12-13 (The King James Version)

⁹ *Whoever has been born of God **does not sin,** for His seed remains in him; and **he cannot sin,** because he has been born of God." 1 John 3:9 (The New King James Version)*

¹⁸ *We know that **no one begotten by God sins;** but **the one begotten by God, He protects,** and the evil one cannot touch **him.**" 1 John 5:18 (New American Bible - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)*

According to Strong's Concordance, one of the meanings of the Greek word "σφραγίζω" (pronounced "sfrag-id'-zo" in English) is to stamp (with a signet or private mark) for security or preservation. ³⁰ *And beware of grieving the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you have been sealed (σφραγίζω), in preparation for the day of Redemption."* Ephesians 4:30 (Wuest New Testament: An Expanded Translation)

The fourth fact we would like to share is that once the spiritual body is "born of God", the Living God adopts that person into His heavenly family and they become a joint heir with their Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹ *And I say, so long time as the heir is a babe, he differeth nothing from a servant--being lord of all, ² but is under tutors and stewards till the time appointed of the father, ³ so also we, when we were babes, under the elements of the world were in servitude, ⁴ and when the fullness of time did come, God sent forth His Son, come of a woman, come under law, ⁵ that those under law he may redeem, that the **adoption** of sons we may receive; ⁶ and*

because ye are sons, God did send forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, `Abba, Father!' ⁷ so that thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son, also an heir of God through Christ. ⁸ But then, indeed, not having known God, ye were in servitude to those not by nature gods, ⁹ and now, having known God--and rather being known by God--how turn ye again unto the weak and poor elements to which anew ye desire to be in servitude? ¹⁰ days ye observe, and months, and times, and years! ¹¹ I am afraid of you, lest in vain I did labor toward you."
Galatians 4:1-11 (Young's Literal Translation)

When our material body sins after the adoption, the Living God deals with us as a loving father would discipline a child who is doing something they are not supposed to be doing. In fact, if our material body can continue to habitually sin **and we are not disciplined**, it is a sure sign that the spiritual body was never born again. " ⁵ *And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, ⁶ because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son."* ⁷ *Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as His children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? ⁸ **If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.** ⁹ Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! ¹⁰ They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in His holiness. ¹¹ No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace **for those who have been trained by it.**" Hebrews 12:5-11 (The New International Version)*

The fifth fact we would like to share is that the Living God has never changed His plan of salvation since the Garden of Eden to the day you are reading this paper. If we want to know what that plan is, all we have to do is find the answer to one question. How were to people in the Old Testament saved?

They could not have been saved by keeping the Ten Commandments because James 2:10 says if we only commit one sin during our entire lifetime, God holds us accountable as if we broke all His laws. "For whoever keeps the whole law, but falls short in one particular, has

become guilty in respect to all of it." (New American Bible - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

In Galatians 3:10-11 we find "For all who depend on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not persevere in doing **all** the things written in the book of the law." 11 And that **no one is justified before God by the law** is clear, for "the one who is righteous by faith will live." (New American Bible - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

They could not have been saved because they lived in a different dispensation because we are all living in the dispensation of Grace. Everyone who will be saved from Adam and Eve to the last person who will be saved, will be saved because of the grace (unmerited favor) of God. "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." Genesis 6:8 (The King James Version)

In fact, we find in Galatians 3:8 "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached **the gospel** to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed". (The New King James Version)

In Acts 15:11 we find, "No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are". This fact is also taught in Romans 3:24-31, Romans 4:1-25, and Romans 5: 1-21, just to name a few.

We find in Hebrews 10:1-7 that the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins. It did not pay their sin debt nor will it pay our sin debt. " ¹ The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. ² Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. ³ But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. ⁴ **It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.** ⁵ Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; ⁶ with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. ⁷ Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, my God.'" Hebrews 10:1-7 (The New International Version)

They did not “join a church” because there was no church to join.

They did not “get baptized” because there was no one to baptize them.

Their good works did not save them because, in God’s eyes, all their good works looked like filthy rags. “...*all of us have become like unclean men, all our good deeds are like polluted rags; We have all withered like leaves, and our guilt carries us away like the wind.*” *Isaiah 64:6 (New American Bible - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)*

God shed the blood of an innocent animal in the Garden of Eden in order to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve. “²¹ *Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*” *Genesis 3:21 (The King James Version)*

Obviously, the Living God had to kill an animal in order to clothe their nakedness with skins. Could Jehovah have clothed their nakedness without sacrificing an innocent animal? Of course He could. However, God was giving them a reality picture of their need for the sacrifice His Son, Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, would give one day in the future. From that day forward, every Patriarch testified about the coming Messiah each time He offered a sacrifice to the Self Existent, Eternal, Three Mighty Ones, Jehovah God .

The people in "Old Testament" times knew that a messiah was promised who would offer them a payment for their sin debt by providing Himself, a Lamb. “¹ *Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed?*” ² *For he shall grow up before him as a tender sapling, and as a root out of dry ground: he hath no form nor lordliness, and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.*” ³ *He is despised and left alone of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and like one from whom [men] hide their faces;—despised, and we esteemed him not.*” ⁴ *Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; and we, we did regard him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*” ⁵ *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.*” ⁶ *All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all.*” ⁷ *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, but he opened not his mouth; he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and was as a sheep dumb before her shearers, and he opened not his mouth.*” ⁸ *He was taken from oppression and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of*

the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. ⁹ And [men] appointed his grave with the wicked, but he was with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was there guile in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath subjected [him] to suffering. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see a seed, he shall prolong [his] days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹ He shall see of [the fruit of] the travail of his soul, [and] shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant instruct many in righteousness; and he shall bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore will I assign him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong: because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and was reckoned with the transgressors; and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."
Isaiah 53:1-12 (Darby)

As the innocent animal was dying, the people of the Old Testament went to God in prayer and asked forgiveness of their sins. While looking forward in faith, they asked that the sacrifice the innocent Son of God would give one day, pay the sin debt they owed God. Every sin has to be paid for by either the Messiah or by us. Each time the Patriarch was asked by his friends and family why he was sacrificing animals and birds, he was to explain the gospel to them. He was to tell them about the death of the coming Messiah and he was to invite them to repent of their own sins and accept the coming Messiah as their personal Savior. It did not take them any more faith to believe He **would** die then it takes us to believe He **has** died. All are saved by faith in Christ because of the grace (the unmerited favor) of God.

*" ¹ What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? ² For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. ³ For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. ⁴ Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of **grace**, but of debt. ⁵ But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. ⁶ Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, ⁷ Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. ⁸ Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. ⁹ Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. ¹⁰ How was it then reckoned?*

when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. ¹¹ And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which **he had** yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: ¹² And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. ¹³ For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: ¹⁵ Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. ¹⁶ Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by **grace**; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. ¹⁸ Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. ¹⁹ And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: ²⁰ He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; ²¹ And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. ²² And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. ²³ Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; ²⁴ But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; ²⁵ Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Romans 4:1-25 (The King James Version)

The age or Dispensation of Grace will last from the time of Adam and Eve to the last person who will take advantage of God's glorious plan of salvation before we go back into unmeasured time, that is to say, eternity.

These facts will be very important for us to keep in mind as we examine the third and fourth chapters of the book of Hebrews. Most readers pass right through those two chapters and never really understand what the Holy Spirit is sharing.

WHO AUTHORED HEBREWS?

We can offer many proofs of the fact that Paul wrote a very long letter which was divided into the two books that are titled Galatians and Hebrews. When Paul wrote in Galatians 6:11, *"¹¹ Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand"*, he was not referring to the fact that he was using large letters as he wrote the letter. One of the proofs of the fact that Paul wrote a very long letter which was divided into the two books that are titled Galatians and Hebrews is found in 2nd Peter 3:14-16. *" Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. ¹⁵ And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; ¹⁶ As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."*

The ministry of the apostle Peter was to the circumcised, that is to the Jews, including the two letters that we title 1st Peter and 2nd Peter. In the verses quoted above from his second letter, Peter referred to a letter that Paul had written to the Hebrews (the Jews). If the book of Hebrews was not the letter Paul wrote to the circumcised (the Jews), which one is the letter Paul wrote to the circumcised? Or, do you think that it is possible that Paul did not write the letter under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and therefore, the Lord did not want it included in the library of books we call "the Bible"? As we pointed out above, the ministry of the apostle Peter was to the circumcised, that is to the Jews, including the two letters that we title 1st Peter and 2nd Peter. Paul wrote in Galatians 2:7-9, *" On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised. ⁸ For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. ⁹ James, Cephas (Peter) and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised."*

Peter addressed his first letter to the Jewish members of local New Testament churches, strangers residing in the land we refer to as Galatia even though their homeland was Palestine. We know Peter was writing to members of local, scriptural churches because he mentions in 1st Peter 3:21 that they all had scriptural baptism. We know Peter was writing to members of local,

scriptural churches because in 1st Peter 5:1-4 Peter addresses part of the letter to elders in the group like the elders Paul and Barnabas ordained in Acts 14:23, " ²³ *And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*"

We know Peter was writing to members of local, scriptural churches because, according to 1st Peter, he admonishes the elders (1) to feed the flock, (2) to take oversight of the flock of God, (3) to serve the flock willingly, (4) not to serve the flock for personal gain, and (5) not to use their position to exercise domination over the flock but rather to lead the flock by example. We know Peter was writing to members of local, scriptural churches because in 1st Peter 5:4, Peter identifies the faithful elders as under shepherds who would receive a crown of glory when the Chief Shepherd shall appear. In addition, we know Peter was writing to members of local, scriptural churches because the church in Babylon sent salutations to the members of local, scriptural churches to whom he was writing, " ¹³ *The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.*" 1 Peter 5:13 (The King James Version)

LAWS FOR THE JEWISH THEOCRACY

Many of the ceremonial laws we find in the first books of the Old Testament were applicable to the members of the Jewish Theocracy and applicable **only** to the members of the Jewish Theocracy. For instance, the Living God did not require all of the saved in the Old Testament to be circumcised. We cannot find any reason to believe that the Midianites, the nation that traced themselves through Abram's third wife, Keturah (Exodus 2:16-21), ever practiced circumcision as the descendents of Abram through his grandson Jacob (or Israel) were commanded to do.

" ¹ *Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah.* ² *And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah.* ³ *And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim.* ⁴ *And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Ephher, and Hanoch, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.*" Genesis 25:1-4 (King James Version)

" ⁸ And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD (YEH-HO-VAW-THE SELF EXISTENT, ETERNAL ONE) had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them on the way, and how the LORD (YEH-HO-VAW-THE SELF EXISTENT, ETERNAL ONE) had delivered them. ⁹ Then **Jethro** rejoiced for all the good which **the LORD** (YEH-HO-VAW-THE SELF EXISTENT, ETERNAL ONE) had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. ¹⁰ And **Jethro said**, "Blessed be **the LORD** (YEH-HO-VAW-THE SELF EXISTENT, ETERNAL ONE), who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. ¹¹ Now I know that the LORD (YEH-HO-VAW-THE SELF EXISTENT, ETERNAL ONE) is greater than all the gods (EL-O-HEEM-THE THREE MIGHTY ONES); for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them." ¹² Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and other sacrifices to offer to God (EL-O-HEEM-THE THREE MIGHTY ONES). And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God (EL-O-HEEM-THE THREE MIGHTY ONES)." Exodus 18:8-12 (New King James Version)

We repeat, we cannot find any reason to believe that the Midianites, the nation that traced themselves through Abram's third wife, Keturah (Exodus 2:16-21), ever practiced circumcision as the descendants of Abram through his grandson Jacob (or Israel) were commanded to do. In fact, Moses got into trouble with the Living God because he seems to have adopted the practice of his wife's people, the Midianites, and failed to have his two sons circumcised before leaving and returning back to Egypt. " ²⁴ And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met him and sought to kill him. ²⁵ Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses' feet, and said, "Surely you are a husband of blood to me!" ²⁶ So He let him go. Then she said, "You are a husband of blood!"--because of the circumcision." Exodus 4:24-26 (New King James Version)

Again, many of the ceremonial laws we find in the first books of the Old Testament were only applicable to the members of the Jewish Theocracy. Even so, it is also important that we always keep in mind that many of the letters in the New Testament were addressed only to the members of local, scriptural New Testament churches. Some of the things written were not necessarily applicable to all the members of the Family of God. Some of the promises and some

of the admonitions were not necessarily applicable to all the members of the Family of God. Perhaps the reason some people embrace **the theory** of a great big universal church is because they hope to claim the promises that Jesus Christ made to His Bride, the members of local, scriptural, New Testament churches. **Yes, we said theory.** Almost every time you find the word "church" used, it referred to a local, visible, scriptural congregation. The few times that the word church was not used to refer to a local, visible, scriptural congregation, it was used to refer to all the local churches in an **institutional** sense just as the word "school" can be used in an institutional sense. Did you attend school? I also attended school. Did we attend a universal school to which everyone who attended school was a member? **NO!** Each person who has attended school, attended and was a member of a local, visible school. Sometimes the word "school" is used to refer to the composite of all local schools in an institutional sense just as the word "church" was occasionally used in the scriptures to refer to the composite of all local, scriptural churches. But please bear in mind that most people who have asked Jesus Christ to pay their sin debt have never experienced **scriptural** baptism and consequently they are not a member of a local, scriptural congregation. Therefore, although they are a member of the Family of God, they are not a member of the institution of "the church", the composite of all local, scriptural churches. They will be wedding guests at the wedding feast which will occur in the Third Heaven during the Great Tribulation. They will not be members of the Bride.

*" And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. ⁶ And I heard as it were the voice of **a great multitude**, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. ⁷ Let **us** be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. ⁸ And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. ⁹ And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are **called** unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." Revelation 19:5-9*

Please note that the great multitude mentioned in Revelation 19:6 did not expect to be the Bride of Christ but, rather, they expected to be called wedding guests. Also, please bear in mind that most people who have asked Jesus Christ to pay their sin debt, **such as John the Baptist**, have never experienced **scriptural** baptism and consequently are not a member of a local,

scriptural congregation. They will be part of the nations that will be living outside of the Holy City Jerusalem on the New Earth that the Lord will create when we go back into eternity.

" Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, **prepared** as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." Revelation 21:1-4 (The New International Version)

Continuing with verse 22 of Revelation chapter 21, we read, " ²² I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶ The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷ Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. Revelation 21:22-27 (The New International Version)

Did you note that Revelation 21:2 said that the Holy City Jerusalem, the abiding place of Jesus Christ and His Bride for eternity, was a prepared place? We find in John 14:1-3, Jesus Christ had made a promise to **His** disciples that He was going to prepare a special place for them to dwell. This promise was not made to the saved disciples of John the Baptist who remained with John the Baptist. It is important to note that the saved disciples of John the Baptist were just as saved as those who became Christ's disciples. But Jesus Christ only made a promise to **His** disciples that He was going to prepare a special place for them to dwell. "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. ² In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be." John 14:1-3 (New American Bible - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

If the Father has many dwelling places, why is it necessary for Jesus Christ to prepare a special place for **His** disciples to dwell on the New Earth? Who will be living in the other dwelling places? The wedding guests will be living in the other dwelling places. If everyone will be living inside the city, why will it need to have gates in order for people to enter? The wedding guests will be citizens of the nations who will be living outside the Holy City Jerusalem. Please have a second look at Revelation 21:22-27. They will enter the city to worship and give homage to the Three Mighty Ones, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. " *And I saw no temple in it; for the Lord God Almighty is its temple, and the Lamb.* ²³ *And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon, that they should shine for it; for the glory of God has enlightened it, and the lamp thereof [is] the Lamb.* ²⁴ *And the nations shall walk by its light; and the kings of the earth bring their glory to it.* ²⁵ *And its gates shall not be shut at all by day, for night shall not be there.* ²⁶ *And they shall bring the glory and the honour of the nations to it.* ²⁷ *And nothing common, nor that maketh an abomination and a lie, shall at all enter into it; but those only who [are] written in the book of life of the Lamb." Revelation 21:22-27 (Darby's Translation)*

Can Salvation Be Lost?

Isn't it amazing how we can read over the same passage many times and still not notice what it says? Hebrews chapters three and four teach us only **one** of the following three things:

(1) All those who came out of Egyptian captivity were lost.

or

(2) The saved can lost their salvation.

or

(3) The members of the local, scriptural churches to whom Paul was writing could lose the privilege of living in the eternal abode of the Living God on the New Earth, the Holy City Jerusalem, and would then become part of the wedding guests living outside the city.

Were Those Who Came Out Of Egyptian Captivity Lost?

Do you believe that those who came out of Egyptian captivity were lost? In Hebrews 3:7-13, the Holy Spirit is quoted as saying that the disobedient, unbelieving Jews who came out of Egyptian captivity would never be allowed to enter His abode. If the abode that was referred to was Heaven, the Holy Spirit is quoted as saying that generation of Jews would never be allowed to enter heaven. " ⁷ *Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,* ⁸ *Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: ⁹ When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. ¹⁰ Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. ¹¹ So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest (κατάπαυσις-abode). ¹² Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."* Hebrews 3:7-13 (The King James Version)

We find that Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon has the following to say about the Greek word κατάπαυσις.

κατάπαυσις [See Stg: <G2663>]

katápausis; gen. *katapaúseōs*, fem. noun from *katapaúō* <G2664>, to make to cease. The act of resting, ceasing from labor, **or the place of rest, dwelling, fixed abode.** Used as a dwelling in Acts 7:49 in allusion to a temple, quoted from Isa. 66:1. See Ps. 132:14 where God is represented as searching through the earth and selecting Zion as His dwelling place. Also of the rest and quiet abode of the Israelites in the promised land after their wanderings (Heb. 3:11 quoted from Ps. 95:11; Heb. 3:18; 4:3, 5, the rest which God promised, see Deut. 12:9, 10). Hence, figuratively, the quiet abode of those who will dwell with God in heaven, in allusion to the Sabbath rest. (Heb. 4:1, 3, 10, 11).

In addition, would the Living God make a contract or covenant with a generation of lost people? The Living God made a contract or covenant with that generation who came out of Egyptian captivity when they were on Mt. Sinai. " ¹ *In the third month of the departure of Israel out of the land of Egypt, on this day they came into the wilderness of Sinai: ² For departing out of Raphidim, and coming to the desert of Sinai, they camped in the same place, and there Israel pitched their tents over against the mountain. ³ And Moses went up to God: and the Lord called*

unto him from the mountain, and said: Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ⁴ You have seen what I have done to the Egyptians, how I have carried you upon the wings of eagles, and have taken you to myself. ⁵ If therefore you will hear my voice, and keep my covenant, you shall be my peculiar possession above all people: for all the earth is mine. ⁶ And you shall be to me a priestly kingdom, and a holy nation. Those are the words thou shalt speak to the children of Israel. ⁷ Moses came, and calling together the elders of the people, he declared all the words which the Lord had commanded. ⁸ And all the people answered together: All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do." Exodus 19:1-8 (The Douay-Rheims Version)

Can The Saved Lose Their Salvation?

Again, how can the spiritual body that is "born of God" lose its salvation since 1st John 5:18 tells us (1) the evil one cannot touch or tempt the spiritual body that is "born of God" and (2) the spiritual body that is "born of God" cannot sin?

¹⁸ We know that **no one begotten by God sins; but the one begotten by God, He protects,** and the evil one cannot touch **him.**" 1 John 5:18 (New American Bible - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

¹² But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: ¹³ **Which were born,** not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but **of God.**" John 1:12-13 (The King James Version)

⁹ Whoever has been born of God **does not sin,** for His seed remains in him; and **he cannot sin,** because he has been born of God." 1 John 3:9 (The New King James Version)

¹⁸ We know that **no one begotten by God sins; but the one begotten by God, He protects,** and the evil one cannot touch **him.**" 1 John 5:18 (New American Bible - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

According to Strong's Concordance, one of the meanings of the Greek word "σφραγίζω" (pronounced "sfrag-id'-zo" in English) is to stamp (with a signet or private mark) for security or

preservation. " ³⁰ *And beware of grieving the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you have been sealed (σφραγίζω), in preparation for the day of Redemption." Ephesians 4:30 (Wuest New Testament: An Expanded Translation)*

Could The Members Of The Local, Scriptural Churches To Whom Paul Was Writing, Lose The Privilege Of Living In The Eternal Abode Of The Living God On The New Earth?

If the people Paul was writing to lost the privilege of living in the Holy City Jerusalem, they would be part of the nations living outside of the city on the New Earth. You will notice in the following scriptures that Paul was warning the members of the local, scriptural churches to whom he was writing that they could lose the privilege of living in the eternal abode of the Living God on the New Earth, the Holy City Jerusalem. As you read the following scriptures, please bear in mind that every husband is supposed to be the head of his house just as Jesus Christ is the head of His house (His Bride). Also, every husband's wife is to be his associate or partner and he should respectfully recognize her as such just as Jesus Christ recognizes His Bride as His associate or partner.

*"...but Christ was faithful as a son placed over his house. We are his house, **if (only)** we hold fast to our confidence and pride in our hope." Hebrews 3:6 (New American Bible - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)*

Paul wrote to the members of local, scriptural churches, " ¹⁴ *For we are made partakers (μέτοχος - an associate or a partner) of Christ, **if** we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end..." Hebrews 3:14 (The King James Version)*

Paul also shared the same truth when he wrote to the local church in Corinth, " ⁹ *For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building." 1 Corinthians 3:9 (Revised Standard Version)*

Paul wrote to the members of local, scriptural churches, " ¹ *Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest (κατάπαυσις-abode), any of you should seem to come short of it.*" Hebrews 4:1 (The King James Version)

Again, Paul wrote to the members of local, scriptural churches " ¹¹ *Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest (κατάπαυσις-abode), lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.*" Hebrews 4:11 (The New King James Version)

Paul also shared the same truth when he wrote to the local church in Rome "See, then, the kindness and severity of God: severity toward those who fell, but God's kindness to you, provided you remain in his kindness; otherwise you too will be cut off." Romans 11:22 (New American Bible - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

Paul wrote to Timothy, " ¹⁴ *I write these things to you, hoping to come to you soon.* ¹⁵ *But if I should be delayed, [I have written] so that you will know how people ought to act in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.*" Timothy 3:14-15 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

Galatians/Hebrews

We shared earlier that there are many proofs that Paul wrote a very long letter which was divided into the two books that are titled Galatians and Hebrews. The book of Galatians has only six chapters. That is less than the letters written to the church at Corinth. Why, then, did Paul say the letter he was writing was long? Because it was, indeed, a very long letter. But, somewhere, sometime in the past, someone divided the letter into the two books we now call Galatians and Hebrews. In that long letter, Paul emphasizes his concern that the Galatians finish their service to Jesus Christ just as they had started it. Those he wrote to included the Jewish members of the New Testament churches.

Why was it necessary for Paul to write such a letter to the members of the churches in Galatia? Because as Paul left one mission field and went to another area of Asia Minor (the country we also call Galatia), religious Jews would move in to fill in the void created by Paul's absence. They were teaching that salvation did, indeed, come through the Messiah but afterward, service was only accomplished by following all the ceremonial laws as well as the moral laws

that were given through Moses. It seems that some were even teaching that salvation could only be secured by being a member of the Jewish Theocracy. Therefore, Paul wrote in Galatians 4:8-11, " ⁸ *Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.* ⁹ *But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?* ¹⁰ *Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.* ¹¹ *I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.*

Note in Galatians 1:2 that the letter begins with a greeting to church members, " ²*unto the churches of Galatia.*" Paul reminded them that sometime in the past, they had committed themselves to serve Jesus Christ in a local, scriptural, New Testament church. Otherwise, why would they have applied for scriptural baptism, the key to membership in one of the local churches? It certainly was not for salvation. If baptism was necessary for salvation, everyone mentioned in the Old Testament will not have eternal life since no one in the Old Testament was baptized except, perhaps, worshipers in that damnable false religion that was begun in Babylonian soon after Noah's flood.

In this long letter, Paul urged them to serve Christ as part of the Bride of Christ instead of being future guests at the wedding feast which will occur in the Third Heaven during the Great Tribulation. " ⁵ *And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.* ⁶ *And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.* ⁷ *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.* ⁸ *And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.* ⁹ *And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."* Revelation 19:5-9 (King James Version)

When Paul wrote the second letter to the church at Corinth as well as to all the church members who were in all Achaia, he stated in 2nd Corinthians: 11:2-4, " ² *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* ³ *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his*

subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. ⁴ For if he that cometh (1) preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or (2) if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or (3) another gospel, which ye have not accepted, (I fear) ye might well bear with him. "

Jesus Christ said to the Jewish nation, ⁴³ Therefore say I unto you, **The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.** ⁴⁴ And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. ⁴⁵ And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. ⁴⁶ But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet. ¹ And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, ² The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, ³ And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. ⁴ Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. ⁵ But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: ⁶ And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. ⁷ But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. ⁸ Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. ⁹ Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. ¹⁰ So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. ¹¹ And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: ¹² And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. ¹³ Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen. " Matthew 21:43 through Matthew 22: 14 (The King James Version)

Please note that in the parable above, Jesus Christ mentioned (1) a father who would host the wedding, (2) a groom (his son), (3) it was understood that there would be a bride in order for there to be a wedding, (4) three groups of servants who were sent out with the invitation to be

present at the wedding and (5) wedding guests. Also, please note that those who were invited would not be there to marry the groom but rather to witness the marriage. They were not the bride. This verifies what Paul wrote in his conclusion in Hebrews 12:15-24. Paul counseled those who were about to "sell out" their inheritance rights as a member of the Bride of Christ by "jumping ship". He tells them that when they get on the New Earth (*Revelation 21:1-4*) they will see eight outstanding things.

(1) they will see Mount Zion

(2) they will see the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem

(3) they will see thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly

(4) they will see the church (or called out assembly) of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven

(5) they will see God, the Judge of all

(6) they will see the spirits of the righteous made perfect

(7) they will see Jesus the mediator of a new covenant

(8) they will see the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel

"¹⁵ See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. ¹⁶ See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. ¹⁷ Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done. ¹⁸ You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; ¹⁹ to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, ²⁰ because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." ²¹ The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." ²² But you have come (1) to Mount Zion, (2) to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come (3) to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³ (4) to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have

come (5) to God, the Judge of all, (6) to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,²⁴ (7) to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and (8) to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. Hebrews 12:15-24 (The New International Version)

Please note that in the passage above, Paul shares, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that there will be two groups of saved people living on the New Earth.

(4) to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.

(6) to the spirits of the righteous made perfect

How are the names of the church of the firstborn written in heaven? " ¹⁵If your brother sins (against you), go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. ¹⁶ If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses.' ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, **tell the church**. If he refuses to listen even to **the church**, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector. ¹⁸ Amen, I say to you, **whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven**, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again, (amen,) I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 18:15-20 (New American Bible - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

How are the names of the church of the firstborn written in heaven? " ¹⁹ Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the **disciples** were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send **you**." ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive Holy Spirit Power. ²³ If **you** forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if **you** retain the sins of any, they are retained." John 20:19-23 New King James Version

Here in John 20:19-23 we find the law of scriptural church discipline. Jesus Christ **did not** give the members of His local, scriptural churches the authority to forgive others their sin

debt so they could become members of **the Family of God**. Jesus Christ gave the members of His local, scriptural churches the authority to discipline a wayward church member in hopes that they would repent and desist from the sins that they are habitually committing. When did a scriptural church receive the authority to discipline a member who is habitually walking in sin and will not repent?

¹⁵ *"Moreover if **your brother** sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained **your brother**." ¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' ¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to **the church**. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Assuredly, I say to you, whatever **you bind** on earth **will be bound in heaven**, and whatever **you loose** on earth **will be loosed in heaven**." Matthew 18:15-18 (The New King James Version)*

Paul counseled the local, scriptural church in Corinth to practice church discipline. ¹ *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife. ² And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have **put out of your fellowship** the man who has been doing this? ³ For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already **passed judgment** in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this. ⁴ So **when you are assembled** and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, ⁵ hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the **flesh**, so that **his spirit** may be saved on the day of the Lord. ⁶ Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? ⁷ Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸ Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. ⁹ I wrote to you in my letter not to **associate** with sexually immoral people— ¹⁰ not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. ¹¹ But now I am writing to you that **you must not associate** with anyone who claims to be **a brother or sister** but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat **(the Lord's Supper)** with such people. ¹² What business is it of*

mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? ¹³ God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked person from among you." 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 (The New International Version)

Again, let us remember that Paul's long letter was divided into the two books we call Galatians and Hebrews. In that long letter,, Paul urged the readers to serve Christ as part of the Bride of Christ instead of being future guests at the wedding feast which will occur in the Third Heaven during the Great Tribulation. Another view of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is found in Luke 14:16-24. ¹⁶ *Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:* ¹⁷ *And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.* ¹⁸ *And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.* ¹⁹ *And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.* ²⁰ *And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.* ²¹ *So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.* ²² *And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.* ²³ *And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.* ²⁴ *For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." Luke 14:16-24 (The King James Version)*

Also, we find Christ Jesus explaining in Matthew 25:1-13, " ¹ *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.* ² *And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.* ³ *They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:* ⁴ *But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.* ⁵ *While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.* ⁶ *And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.* ⁷ *Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.* ⁸ *And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.* ⁹ *But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.* ¹⁰ *And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was*

shut. ¹¹ **Afterward came also** the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. ¹² But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. ¹³ Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. "

Was John the Baptist Saved?

I realize that most erroneously teach that everyone who is saved is a member of the Bride of Christ. However, please note that in John 3:29, John the Baptist recognized the fact that even though he was saved, he was not a member of the Bride of Christ. Rather, he claimed to be a friend of the Bridegroom. That would make him a wedding guest. " ²⁸ *Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.* ²⁹ *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled."* John 3:28-29 (King James Version)

John the Baptist was not a member of the Bride of Christ because he lacked the one thing that all members of the Bride of Christ have received - scriptural baptism. Yes, John received the authority to prepare many for the kingdom of heaven that Jesus Christ was going to establish, His local New Testament churches. That is, many of those he baptized were willing to respond when Christ called to them and they were willing to become Christ's disciples when He called to them to become fishers of men. " ⁷ *As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?" ⁸ *But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.* ⁹ *But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.* ¹⁰ *For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.'* ¹¹ *"Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."* Matthew 11:7-11 (The New King James Version)*

John the Baptist preached the gospel of the soon coming Messiah and baptized those who responded. No one else on earth had the authority to baptize except Jesus Christ and those to whom He gave the authority. But John the Baptist was killed before he could receive scriptural baptism by the authority of the first church Jesus Christ established. " 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 Judaea, and departed again into Galilee." John 4:1-3 (The King James Version)

Again, throughout the letter that was divided into the two books we now call Galatians and Hebrews, the author emphasizes his chief concern for the Jewish and non-Jewish members of the New Testament churches. His desire was that they finish their race with Jesus Christ gloriously and triumphantly. He urged them to serve Christ as part of the Bride of Christ instead of being future guests at the wedding feast which will occur in the Third Heaven during the Great Tribulation.

"Pay more careful attention," the author warns, "so that we do not drift away" (Hebrews 2:1).

"Let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it [God's promised rest or abode]" (Hebrews 4:1).

"Let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity," the writer appeals (Hebrews 6:1).

"We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure" (Hebrews 6:11).

After convincingly showing how Jesus Christ was a superior high priest who meets all of our needs, the writer cries out, *"Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith . . . Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:22-23).*

"Do not throw away your confidence . . . You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised" (Hebrews 10:35-36).

Why would Paul only write such a letter to the Jewish members of the New Testament churches? Simply this. He **did not** write such a letter to only the Jewish members of the New Testament churches. Paul wrote a very long letter to the members of the churches of Galatia because he was aware that many of them had been deceived into thinking that the Living God wanted them to serve Him by returning back to service in the Jewish Theocracy. They had been deceived into thinking that the Living God wanted them to serve Him by following all the moral laws as well as the ceremonial laws as they were led by a human priest. Paul pointed out that

after Christ's death and resurrection, we now have a superior high priest. We have a Great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

¹⁴ *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us **hold firmly** to the faith we profess.* ¹⁵ *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.* ¹⁶ *Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.* ¹ *Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.* ² *He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness.* ³ *This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people.* ⁴ *And no one takes this honor on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was.* ⁵ *In the same way, Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father."* ⁶ *And he says in another place, "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." Hebrews 4:14 through 5:6 (The New International Version)*

Paul pointed out that because of this, we are now to serve the Living God as faithful members of a local New Testament church. ¹⁹ *Therefore, brothers, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus,* ²⁰ *by a new and living way He has opened for us through the curtain (that is, His flesh),* ²¹ *and since we have a great high priest over the house of God,* ²² *let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, our hearts sprinkled [clean] from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water.* ²³ *Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.* ²⁴ *And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works,* ²⁵ ***not staying away from our [worship/ meetings, as some habitually do,*** but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day drawing near." Hebrews 10:19-25 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

¹ *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?* ² *This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* ³ *Are ye*

so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Galatians 3:1-3 (The King James Version)

In both the book of Galatians and the book of Hebrews, Paul was trying to get them to see their mistake if they "jumped ship", renounced their membership in a local New Testament church and attempted to serve the Living God as a member of the Jewish Theocracy rather than serve Him as a member of the Bride of Christ. Paul was not trying to get them to see that they would lose their birth into the Family of God. Paul was trying to get them to see that they would lose their birthright as members of the Bride of Christ and would only be a wedding guest at the future wedding that will take place between Jesus Christ and His Bride.

In the latter part of the long letter (the part that was divided into the book of Hebrews) Paul showed the superiority of the fulfilled law as it was fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Please note that Paul informed them in Hebrews 13:10 that if they **did not** jump ship, they had an altar, "*whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.*" We call that altar the Lord's Supper.

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, Paul reminded the readers of many of the faithful and influential people in the past. In his conclusion in chapter 12 he says, "¹ *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,* ² *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* ³ *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*" Hebrews 12:1-3 (The King James Version)

Please allow us to repeat what we shared earlier in this paper. IT IS THAT IMPORTANT! Sometime in the past, someone divided the long letter Paul wrote into the two books we now call Galatians and Hebrews. In that long letter, Paul emphasizes his concern that the Galatians finish their service to Jesus Christ as they had started it. Those he wrote to included the Jewish members of the scriptural churches. Paul counseled those who were about to sell their inheritance rights as a member of the Bride of Christ by "jumping ship". He tells them that when they get on the New Earth (*Revelation 21:1-4*) they will see eight outstanding things.

(1) they will see Mount Zion

- (2) they will see the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem
- (3) they will see thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly
- (4) they will see the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven
- (5) they will see God, the Judge of all
- (6) they will see the spirits of the righteous made perfect
- (7) they will see Jesus the mediator of a new covenant
- (8) they will see the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel

"¹⁵ See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. ¹⁶ See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. ¹⁷ Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done. ¹⁸ You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; ¹⁹ to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, ²⁰ because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." ²¹ The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." ²² But you have come (1) to Mount Zion, (2) to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come (3) to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³ (4) to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come (5) to God, the Judge of all, (6) to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ (7) to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and (8) to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. Hebrews 12:15-24 (The New International Version)

As we noted earlier in this paper, Paul shares, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that there will be two groups of saved people living on the New Earth.

(4) to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.

(6) to the spirits of the righteous made perfect

Becoming a member of the Family of God is very important. However, we would counsel you, if you desire to receive the greatest rewards through eternity, make sure that you also are a member of the Bride of Christ, not just a member of the Family of God. Make sure you are not just a member of the spirits of the righteous made perfect but also a member of the called out assembly of the First Born, whose names are written in heaven.

May we also remind you that when Jesus Christ returns for the catching up (please see 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18 printed below), He told us that most churches that began as **His** churches will have degenerated into Laodicean churches and will have forced Him out.

There were, indeed seven local churches in the cities that are mentioned in Revelation chapters two and three. And the conditions of those seven local churches were accurately described by Christ in the seven letters. But please remember that the successive descriptions were also a prophetic portrayal of **seven divisions of the Church Age**, beginning with the local church in Jerusalem and ending with the last local, scriptural churches who will be existence just before the catching up. The last church mentioned, the Laodicean church, represented the conditions most of Christ's churches will be in when His Father sends Him to retrieve those who have been saved up until that time. The catching up is described in the following verses. If you would like to know more details about the seven divisions of the Church Age and about the seven local churches to whom Jesus Christ sent letters, please read about them in the paper "A Chronological Study Of Revelation" that is posted on our website at <http://www.bayourouge.net> .

*"¹³ Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. ¹⁴ For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵ According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left **will be caught up** together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words." 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (The New International Version)*

⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed--⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 (The New King James Version)

"¹³ And having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, I have believed, therefore have I spoken; we also believe, therefore also we speak;¹⁴ **knowing that he who has raised the Lord Jesus shall raise us also with Jesus, and shall present [us] with you.**¹⁵ For all things [are] for your sakes, that the grace abounding through the many may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.¹⁶ Wherefore we faint not; but if indeed our outward man is consumed, yet the inward is renewed day by day.¹⁷ For our momentary [and] light affliction works for us in surpassing measure an eternal weight of glory;¹⁸ while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen [are] for a time, but those that are not seen eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:13-18 (Darby)

¹ For we know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven.² For in this tent we groan, longing to be further clothed with our heavenly habitation³ if indeed, when we have taken it off, we shall not be found naked.⁴ For while we are in this tent we groan and are weighed down, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.⁵ Now the one who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a first installment.⁶ So we are always courageous, although we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord,⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight.⁸ Yet we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord.⁹ Therefore, we aspire to please him, whether we are at home or away.¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat (βῆμα - bay'-ma or reward seat) of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil." 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 (New American Bible - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

Again, please allow us to repeat that there were, indeed, seven local churches in the cities that are mentioned in Revelation chapters two and three. And the conditions of those seven local churches were accurately described by Christ in the seven letters. But please remember that the successive descriptions were also a prophetic portrayal of the **seven divisions of the Church Age**, beginning with the local church in Jerusalem and ending with the last local churches who will be existence just before the catching up. The last church mentioned, the Laodicean church, represented the conditions most of Christ's churches will be in when His Father sends Him to retrieve those who have been saved up until that time.

Revelation 3:14-22 tells us that by the time Christ returns, He will find most of His churches have departed from the solid footing upon which they began. The situation will have become so appalling that Christ will have already departed from most of them. How do we know? Because according to Revelation 3:20, Jesus had been sending them the invitation to open the door and He would come in and sup with them. *"20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."* If He is promising to come in, it means He is on the outside of that particular church. In addition, Christ said He would come in and sup with them. When do the members enjoy a supper with Christ? The members of His scriptural churches enjoy a supper with Him when we observe what we refer to as "the Lord's Supper". That means He is not present when most of His churches in the last part of the Laodicean Church Age observe what they call "The Lord's Supper". That is, indeed, a sobering thought. Please note again, what the Lord said to Ezekiel in Ezekiel 8:6. *"6 And he said to me", Son of man, do you see what they are doing—the utterly detestable things the house of Israel is doing here, things that will drive me far from my sanctuary?"* Israel drove the Lord from His sanctuary in the Old Testament just as many congregations will drive Jesus Christ out of their churches in the Laodicean Church Age.

Of course, it is important to bear in mind that there will be some overlapping during each church age. For instance, in the last days, most of the churches who began as a scriptural, theocracy will, indeed, degenerate into an oligarchy who believe that they are wealthy, and have need of nothing. They will be, in reality, wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. But when Jesus Christ returns for the catching up, there will also be a few local Philadelphian churches.

" 7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and

shutteth, and no man openeth; ⁸ I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for **thou hast a little strength**, and **hast kept my word**, and **hast not denied my name**. 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. ¹⁰ Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. ¹¹ Behold, I come quickly: **hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown**. ¹² Him that overcometh will I make **a pillar in the temple** of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of **the city** of my God, **which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven** from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. ¹³ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Revelation 3:7-13 (King James Version)

The individual members in the few local Philadelphian churches will continue to seek revival and renewed commitment to Jesus Christ. The individual members will also continue to seek revival after revival within their local membership. They will be diligently studying all of the Lord's divine word at home as well as in their assembly, They will be sharing His teachings with others. They will have remained faithful to their commission to make disciples, baptize them and teach the new disciples the things that they have been taught from the Lord's perfect Word. Unfortunately, those Philadelphian churches will be few and far between.

In the last days, many times people will seek to be a member of a mega church, not to serve the Living God but so that they can hide among the large membership. They will do so in order to avoid any responsibility or to avoid church discipline because of the inconsistent, lukewarm life they are leading. They may attend once a week, once a month or even once a year, believing that they have fulfilled their obligation to the Living God. In other words, they will think they are fooling the Living God by "playing church".

¹⁴ "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵ **I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.** ¹⁶ So then, because you are **lukewarm**, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'--and do not know that you are wretched,

miserable, poor, blind, and naked-- ¹⁸ *I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.* ¹⁹ *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.* ²⁰ **Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.** *Revelation 3:14-20 (The New King James Version)*

As we shared in the paper "Decline Of The United States" (posted on this website), there have been many times in the past when a church loses their leaders who make judgments in their church based upon the laws of the Lord. When that happens, that church is no longer a theocracy. In a true theocracy, a wise and benevolent God rules a church or a nation. "4 You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. 5Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD." *Leviticus 18:4-5 (The New International Version)*

The church in Jerusalem began with this type of government. When the members became disciples of Jesus Christ, they put themselves under His authority. Christ's disciples agreed His laws would govern their lives and actions and they would be sustained by His power. The Holy Spirit of God inspired the recording of these laws in a library of books under one cover, the Bible. Once a church ceases to be a theocracy, they soon become a democracy where the will of the majority of the voting membership rules. The members no longer fervently seek the Lord's will in all the matters concerning that church before they vote. Then, over a period of time, they become an oligarchy. An oligarchy is a form of government in which the ruling power belongs to a few, elite people. Perhaps it is the pastor, perhaps it is the deacons or perhaps it is a few influential families in the local church. That particular church usually becomes an oligarchy because of the coldness and inattention of the majority of the membership. Satan, the prince of this world, loves an oligarchy when the elite group who controls a church or a nation is composed of his children, the lost, and the saved who are following Satan's leadership. " ²⁴ *Another illustration He set before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man who sows good seed in his field. But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and went to sowing bastard wheat over and in the midst of the wheat, and went off. And when the wheat stalk put forth leaves and produced fruit, then also the bastard wheat came to light and became evident.*

And the slaves of the master of the house having come, they said to him, Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? From where therefore does it have bastard wheat? And he said to them, A man, an enemy, did this. And the slaves say to him, Do you desire therefore, having gone off, that we should gather them up? But he said, No, lest when you are gathering up the bastard wheat, you uproot at the same time with it the wheat. Permit both to grow together until the harvest, and in the strategic season of the harvest I will say to the harvesters, Gather first the bastard wheat and bind it into bundles for the purpose of burning it, but the wheat gather together into my granary." Matthew 13:24 (Wuest New Testament: An Expanded Translation)

In closing, what can a saved person do if they can't find a Philadelphian type of church to serve Jesus Christ in? There may not have ever been a Philadelphian type of church in your area or even in your nation. On the other hand, there may have been a Philadelphian type of church but they have degenerated into a Laodicean church. If you have searched and can't find a Philadelphian type of church it does not relieve you of the responsibility to (1) share Christ's glorious plan of salvation with others. " ¹⁷ *And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" **And let him who hears say, "Come!"** And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17 (The New King James Version)*

You still have the responsibility to (2) be diligently studying **all** of the Lord's divine word on your own (Genesis through Revelation). Jesus Christ expects you to (3) share what you are learning with others even if you have to share the knowledge in your home or in their home. He expects us to (4) daily seek Him in prayer and (5) submit our will to the Lord's will at all times. " ² *And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. **Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.**" Luke 11:2 (The King James Version)*

We should (6) be striving to allow the desires of our spiritual body to override the desires of our sinful material bodies and we should (7) be growing daily in the service of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ so that one day He will say, "Well done, thy good and faithful servant".