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## The Bride of Christ

It was instilled in me early on, that the bride of Christ was the church. The definition of the church, however, was defined as the organization of man. This idea is still held by many today, probably based on the idea that the whole of Israel was the church.

Definition of a church: **1Corinthians 12:27-28**: *27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church,* <sup>(g1577)</sup>.... The church of the living God is *the pillar and ground of the truth* (1Tim 3:15).

Ekklesia <sup>(g1577)</sup> is properly *a calling out* (examples: Rv 18:4; Zech 2:6-7; Gen 12:1; Ex 3:7-8; Hos 11:1; Mt 2:15). The body of Christ are those answering the call to come out of confusion into God's way of thinking. There is bondage in confusion, whereas there is liberty in Jesus Christ. Remember, *my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD* (Isa 55:8). Servants of God must adapt to His way of thinking.

Was all of Israel the church? Stephen mentions the church: **Acts 7:38**: *This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:* The NIV and MKJV use "assembly" and "congregation" respectively, which is closer to the meaning of the Hebrew words. The Septuagint uses ekklesia <sup>(g1577)</sup> for the Hebrew word *qahal* <sup>(h6951)</sup> in several places for the "whole congregation" (Num 16:3). But was the entire congregation serving God in their hearts? Absolutely not. In Numbers 16, and in several other places, thousands were destroyed out of the congregation because they had rebellion in their hearts.

So the church in the wilderness was not the entire congregation. Another example in Jeremiah was a warning and instruction to the people of Judah concerning Babylon. **Jeremiah 7:27-28, 34**: *27 Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee. 28 But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeys not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receives correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth. .... 34 .... I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem .... the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.* Notice, because of Judah's sins and refusal to hear the Lord via his prophets, He would cause to cease from the cities of Judah, the voice of the Bridegroom and Bride. Only a remnant of the people of Judah were following God (Jer 15:11). Only a remnant were considered to be the Bride.

It is important to understand how a person becomes part of the bride. Then it is easier to discern the bride. The church is an assembly of those who respond to the call to come out of confusion (Rv 18:4). As the bride of Christ they will carry his thoughts. Men's organizations in general, are not the bride of Christ. The sincere people who are open to truth and walk in the light of it, no matter where they are, are the bride of Christ. Many of the sincere, which may be scattered among the various congregations, may not have time to reach this state. Never the less, they are pictured as wedding guests, friends of the Bridegroom, the category in which John the Baptist saw himself (Jn 3:29). Therefore, all are God's people, as Christ died in behalf of all; God's righteousness is to all, but only upon those who believe (Rom 3:22: 10:12).

**Mt 16:15-18:** *15 He said to them, But who do you say I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 Jesus answered and said to him, You are blessed, Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but My Father in Heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (MKJV)*

What was Jesus telling Peter? “You are a rock (Peter), moreover, I will build my church on this rock, i.e. the concept that I am the anointed One, the Son of the living God.” While men’s organizations have various names, they are essentially grouped by the particular doctrine of Christ that they hold. Here are some examples:

1. Trinity doctrine: 3 in 1 God. One God with three personalities.
2. Oneness or Jesus only doctrine: Jesus is the one and only God of the Old & New Testaments.
3. The Son of God did not exist prior to his birth in Bethlehem.
4. The Son of God was created in eternity.
5. The Messiah has not as yet come. He will be a prophet like Moses.
6. The Father & Son are two separate individuals. Jesus is the actual Son and not equal to his Father.

Taking the outward appearance, since there is only one truth, if the final judgment happened today, the majority of Christians would be lost. However, God does not look on the outward appearance, but on the heart (2Sam 16:7). He is merciful. If this indeed is the last generation, all the living will have the opportunity to consider the truth and make their decision. **1John 1:7:** *But if we walk in the light, as He (the Father) is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. (MKJV)*

John wrote: *No one has seen God at any time...* and yet Jesus, in answer to Phillip’s request to show them the Father, said: *He who has seen Me has seen the Father.* Who ever understands the character of the Son, understands the character of the Father, because *the Only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.* (Jn 1:18; 14:9 MKJV). So, when Paul wrote of the “invisible God” was he saying that man cannot see the physical form or the spiritual attributes, or both?

**Romans 1:20:** *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, <sup>(g4161)</sup> even his eternal power <sup>(g1411)</sup> and Divinity [KJ =Godhead]; so that they are without excuse: What does this verse say that is invisible about God? It is his “eternal power” and “Divinity.” Actually, Daniel and John saw the Father’s form in vision. The proper meaning of *dunamis* <sup>(g1411)</sup> is *ability*. Now, the underlined phrase is one Greek word used only one other time: *For we are His workmanship, <sup>(g4161)</sup> created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them* (Eph 2:10).*

Here is Romans 1:20 as I understand it: *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the workmanship, his eternal ability (to love and forgive) and His divine nature; so that they are without excuse.* Who are His workmanship? Those that are hearing and doing, being created in Christ Jesus, they are the church, the bride of Christ, which at this time is invisible to the world. Those *without excuse* are those restraining the truth in unrighteousness by not receiving and sharing it (Rom 1:18).

**Isaiah 54:4-5:** *4 Do not fear; for you shall not be ashamed, nor shall you blush; for you shall not be put to shame; for you shall forget the shame of your youth, and shall not remember the reproach of your widowhood any more. 5 For your Maker is your husband; the LORD of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called. Amen.*