

Is Church Membership necessary?

George Burnside

www.CreationismOnline.com

WHICH CHURCH IS THE TRANSLATION CHURCH?

This has become a test question with some. So let us see what is "noted in the Scripture of Truth" (Daniel 11:21) on this vital question, for Christ's Church is a subject of great importance. The first time "the church" is mentioned in Scripture is in:

ACTS 7:38 "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spoke to him on the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us."

"The church" was at Sinai. To the church was given the living oracles "to give unto us." They were to pass on "the law and the testimony" to those in the church in the coming days.

EPHESIANS 3:20,21 "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Note "the church" is singular. Christ has only one church and it exists "throughout all ages. It covers all time and spans all history.

EPHESIANS 1:22,23 "And has put all things under his feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all."

Christ is the "Head" of the church and the church is Christ's "body." EPHESIANS 4:4 "There is one body." There is only one church of our lord.

CHRIST LOVED "THE CHURCH."

MATTHEW 16:17 "Upon this Rock I Will build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

ACTS 15:15,16 "And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set up."

When the kingdom was taken from the Jewish people Christ "built," or as prophecy stated, He would "build again, His church. The church in the Old Testament was built on the "Rock Christ Jesus." For:

1 CORINTHIANS 10:4 "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

The New Testament church was built on the same Rock.

ACTS 20:28 "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

ACTS 2:47 "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Christ built His church as a great aid in salvation.

LEVITICUS 23:26-30 If a person should not be right with God at the close of the Day of Atonement, he shall be cut off from among His people."

"The same soul will I destroy from among his people."

Membership in God's church was vital.

REVELATION 1:10,11 The "Revelation" is for the Seven Churches.

REVELATION 1:1 "Signified," in signs or symbols. Seven churches are the symbol of the same church in seven periods.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES

The names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian Era. The number 7 indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, while the symbols he used reveal the condition of the church at different periods in the history of the world. Christ is spoken of as walking in the midst of the golden-candlesticks. Thus is symbolized His relation to the churches. Acts of the Apostles, page 586.

A REVELATION OF HIS REMNANT CHURCH

REVELATION 22:16 "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." This book came to us from Jesus.

REVELATION 1:10-13 "I was in the Spirit on the lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou sees, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the chest with a golden girdle."

All of Revelation is given to His sevenfold Church. Recently I had a visit from one who had been a member of the S.D.A. church. He said "We, my wife and I don't know what to do, or where to go." He had been with the Seventh-day Baptists for a short time. He said "He cannot join the Seventh day Baptists, they are so confused on doctrine, and we cannot go back to the Adventists." I asked "Why not?" He answered "That 1844 business! I can't accept that." I answered "If you cannot accept the disappointment of 1844 what will you do with Revelation 10." Note:

A FEW FACTS IN REVELATION 10

1. It is set in between the Sixth and Seventh Trumpet. In Revelation 9:15 we are brought down to 1840 in wonderful and "atheist-converting" prophecy. This is confirmed by history and by the "Great Controversy."

In the year 1840 another remarkable fulfillment of prophecy excited widespread interest. Two years before, Josiah Litch, one of the leading ministers preaching the second advent, published an exposition of Revelation 9 predicting the fall of the Ottoman Empire. According to his calculations, this power was to be overthrown in AD 1840, sometime in the month of August and only a few days previous to its accomplishment he wrote: "Allowing the first-period 150 years, to have been exactly fulfilled before Deacozes ascended the throne by permission of the Turks, and that the 391 years, fifteen days commences at the close of the first period, it will end on the 11th of August 1840

2. In this 1840 period the revelator is shown: REVELATION 10:1 "A mighty angel or messenger. (See Judges 2:1 "Angel" margin "messenger.") It is a heaven-sent message for he "came down from heaven."

3. This message is based on: REVELATION 10:2 "A little book open." The only little book that was closed in "Daniel." (Daniel 12:4)

4. It was a terrifying message. REVELATION 10:3 "As when a lion roars." A lion roars to terrify and petrify its victim.

5. The message was based on: REVELATION 10:6 "There shall be time no longer." The world is about to end! This message was to be:

6. REVELATION 10:5,6 "In thy mouth sweet as honey." This would be followed with a very bitter experience.

7. REVELATION 10:9,10 "It shall make thy belly bitter." The great disappointment of 1844 - what else meets the specifications of prophecy. Out of this would arise a World embracing message.

This is clear for we read:

REVELATION 10:11 "And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before man peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." Thus we have about 1840, a heaven-sent message, based on the prophecies of Daniel, that announces to a terrified world the fact that time is about to end. This brought joy unspeakable to the hearts of Christ's waiting saints, to be followed by a "great disappointment" when they discovered their Lord had not come. Out of this soul crushing disappointment there would arise God's last world-circling message as recorded in:

REVELATION 14:6 "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred, and tongue and people."

I asked the ex Adventist, "How would you explain Revelation 10 except in the light of the "great disappointment of 1844, and the rise of the SDA Message and movement in 1844?" He had no answer. There is no other that fits the specifications of this Christ-given infallible prediction. Truly God has given us a sure foundation for our faith. Men have said to me in a sneering tone. "Christianity is only based on blind faith." Nothing is father from the truth. Our God's "everlasting gospel is based on the immovable rock of the sure word of divine prophecy. Upon the only sure thing in this uncertain world, anger and decay in all around I see." Except in God's Word and His Truth.

1 PETER 1:24 "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away."

But the Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word on which the everlasting gospel message of this last time is based. The second "Revelation" foundation of God's Advent Message is found in:

REVELATION 12:17 "And the dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

WHO ARE CHRIST'S REMNANT?

Are they all the "Born again"? Probably 99% of these who claim to "born again" reject "the Commandments of God." The prophecy of our Lord must therefore exclude the 99%. Christ's "Remnant" "have also the Testimony of Jesus." Christ Himself said so. He also said "The Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy." Some groups which claim to keep His Sabbath emphatically deny the Spirit of Prophecy. Therefore they cannot possibly be part of Christ's Remnant. The only ones that make up the "Remnant" are those who "keep the commandments of God and have the Testimony of Jesus."

THE DEVIL HATES THE CHURCH

Especially the Last, the Remnant.

Only Two Parties Upon Earth. There are only two parties upon this earth, those who stand under the blood stained banner of Jesus Christ, and those who stand under the black banner of rebellion. In the twelfth chapter of Revelation is represented the great conflict between the obedient and the disobedient. SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 7, page 974.

TWO COMPANIES

MALACHI 3:18 "Then shall you return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serves God and him that serves him not."

Righteous - Wicked.
Keep Commandments - Sinning.
Wheat - Tares.
Sheep - Goats.
Heaven - Hell.

JESUS IS WITH HIS CHURCH

REVELATION 1:12,13 "And I turned to see the voice that spoke to me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the chest with a golden girdle."

John had seen Jesus in Gethsemane.
John had seen Jesus sweating blood.
John had seen Jesus on the cross.
John had seen Jesus - the Risen Lord.
Now John sees Jesus in the midst of the seven churches.

MATTHEW 28:20 "Lo I am with you". Even unto the end of the world. That covers the Laodicean period, the worst period. "The power of Satan now to tempt and deceive is tenfold greater than it was in the days of the apostles. His power has increased, and it will increase, until it is taken away. His wrath and hate grow stronger as his time to work draws near its close. 2 Spiritual Gifts, page 277. Many will stand in our pulpits with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan. If doubts and unbelief are cherished, the faithful ministers will be removed from the people who think they know so much. Testimonies to Ministers, page 409.

WORST PERIOD

2 THESSALONIANS 2:9-11 "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

DANIEL 2 Nations begin with Gold and end in mud. It's not evolution - its anti evolution.

YET THIS PERIOD HAS THE GREATEST VICTORY

REVELATION 18:1-4 "Another angel comes down from heaven." "Having great power." "The earth was lightened with his glory." "He cried mightily." "With a strong voice."

MATTHEW 28:18 "All power is give unto Me in heaven and in earth." "Go you therefore and teach all nations."

ROMANS 1:16 "The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation."

REVELATION 14:6 "The Everlasting Gospel."

Therefore the Truth of God for today is all powerful.

Yet in the face of these never failing prophecies the enemy who hates- Christ's church has deceived some to believe that Christ is victorious except in the "last" period.

REVELATION 12:9 "in heaven."

REVELATION 1:18 "I am he that lived, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

REVELATION 12:13,14 Victorious "In the church in the wilderness." Christ's people of this climax period are headed for the greatest Victory of all.

FACTS ABOUT LAODICEA

The Church in the Laodicean period is still in Christ's hand.

The Laodicean message is one of rebuke, not of hopeless defeat.

REVELATION 3:17 "Wretched." Note, this word is found again in Romans 7:24. We must need to move into the experience of Romans 8. (See "From Gloom to Glory" by George Burnside.)

REVELATION 3:17 "I counsel you." Jesus counsels Laodicea. The devil condemns, he never counsels.

"The Laodicean message to the people of God who profess to believe present truth."

It is not a message of rejection, to those spewed out, to the lost.
REVELATION 3:20 Jesus calls "My people" out of Babylon.
He calls them out of Sunday keeping; Immortal soul; and eternal torment. The Philadelphian period taught these doctrines of Babylon, before 1844. Jesus calls them out of it.

Christ's Message to Laodicea is a message of "in." Let the Savior in.
The devil never counsels, only condemns. He whispers "Join another group, another organization." (He means disorganization - confusion.) To the church in this Laodicean period the "Testimony of Jesus" is: "We have no discouraging message for the church. Although reproofs, cautions, and corrections have been given, the church has stood as God's chosen instrumentality to diffuse light." Review and Herald, October 10, 1893.

Remember: Jesus never asked us to come out of Laodicea. Sister White never left the Adventist Church. We are never asked in the Spirit of Prophecy to leave.

THE CHURCH IN OTHER PERIODS

It has faced discouraging problems.

REVELATION 2:6 "Ephesus" - "desirable" yet they had the "Nicolaitanes" and their God-hated deeds. REVELATION 2:9 "Smyrna" had the blasphemers who, despite their claims, were of "the synagogue of Satan."

REVELATION 2:13 "Pergamos." They dwelt "where Satan's seat is." They were plagued with the hateful doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitanes.

Our Lord adds "which I hate."

REVELATION 2:20 "Thyatira." They even allowed "Jezebel" to teach her seducing corrupting teachings. Remember, that since our Lord returned to Glory the devil has turned the full fury of his hatred against the church.

REVELATION 12:13 "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child."

As the devil sees his time growing short he works harder, with the fury of desperation.

REVELATION 12:12 "Therefore rejoice, you heavens, and you that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he hath but a short time."

This fury, reaches its pinnacle in the last period of Christ's church, the Laodicean period. The period from 1844 to the End.

Beside me as I write is a letter from an ex S.D.A. He wants me to leave the church. "Leave Laodicea and join Philadelphia." He warns me that Jesus says of Laodicea "I will spew thee out of My mouth." There are no conditions stated, but a clear "I will". I answer - True! But brother, you err, not knowing the Scriptures. Remember! The devil came to Jesus in the wilderness of temptation. Our Lord met him with "It is written." So the devil quoted part of a Scripture and added "for it is written." Note the significant reply of Jesus.

MATTHEW 4: 7 "It is written again"

A scripture quoted out of context can deceive. We must not only take the immediate context, but the context of "all Scripture." "It is written again." This eternal principle of our God is clearly stated in:

JEREMIAH 18:8-10 "If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from the evil I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, Then I will repent of the good, where-with I said I would benefit them."

It is interesting to note that:

JEREMIAH 18:1-4 "The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it."

God does not reveal all in every message but like Jesus we must begin with Moses (the first writer) and take "all the prophets" and "all the Scriptures." Luke 24:27.

The Bible illustrates this Jesus principle of "It is written again."

Take an illustration:

JONAH 3:2 "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and Preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." JONAH 3:4 "And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

The message to Ninevah, "According to the lord" mentioned no conditions, no call to repent, but only a straight message of doom. But "It is written again" that every message of God has conditions as clearly stated in Jeremiah 18.

MATTHEW 12:41 "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here." There is no mention in Jonah of conditions or repentance, but the principle of mercy is there.

That eternal principle of long suffering mercy certainly applies to God's trusting, struggling saints in this black period of Laodicea. "It is written again". It is written in the message to the church in Laodicea. What a tragedy that some stop at the warning and don't read on. Note what it says:

WHO WILL BE SPUED OUT?

"If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to the straight word of God, it should convince them they have a work to do to overcome, or be s d Out of the mouth of the Lord." 2 Spiritual Gifts, page 255 Overcoming is essential!

WHO WILL NOT BE SPUED OUT?

"He sacrificed all for fallen humanity. The names of the obedient, self-sacrificing and faithful will be engraved upon the palms of His hands; they will not be spewed out of His mouth." 3 Testimonies, page 251.

Our God has great things in store for His "Overcomers" especially in this last, blackest and worst period. REVELATION 3:21 "To him that overcomes will I grant to sits me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in his throne."

"To him that overcomes." Some people, even some professed Adventists, say it is impossible to overcome. It is not only possible, but it is possible in Laodicea in this blackest and worst period in human history.

Note the promise of Christ to the Laodicean Overcomers. "I will grant to sit with Me on My throne." Could you find a greater promise?

Could you be more privileged? Not only that but our Lord reveals the secret of overcoming.

EVEN AS I OVERCAME

The weapon Christ used to overcome the devil was the Scriptures.

"It is Written. " When the devil quotes a Scripture, Jesus answer "It is Written again" and gave him more Scripture.

Note further what the Scriptures can do for you. 1 PETER 1:23 Being born again by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever."

The Living Word of God can change you into a living saint. (Not a dead saint.)

2 PETER 1:4 "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature."

Note these gems:

"The only thing in our world upon which we can rely is the Word of God." Desire of Ages, page 121.

"The Written Word is our only safety." 1 Selected Messages, page 158. "It is written, is to be our anchor." 6 Testimonies, page 161.

In view of these precious promises why do the majority of Adventists neglect the Bible. Why so little Bible in our church services? Why even in our Sabbath School classes the Bible is often never opened? Is this a leading cause for our Laodicean condition? "At every assault, Christ presented the shield of eternal truth, saying 'It is written.'" Great Controversy, page 51. In the Bible's "exceeding great and precious promises," some of the greatest are given especially to the people of the Laodicean period. In addition to this think of the tens of thousands of pages that our Lord has given through the Spirit of Prophecy to Laodicea. How can any claim that God has forsaken Laodicea? "The gold that Jesus would have us buy of Him is gold tried in the fire; it is the gold of faith and obedience." 7 Bible Commentary, page 965.

True faith always obeys. It is "faith which works by love." Galatians 5:6. "They can have immortality only through faith and obedience." Acts of the Apostles, page 77.

REVELATION 3:18 "I counsel thee." Not your house is left unto you desolate." REVELATION 3:19 "As many as I love." Not hate.

"Be zealous and repent."

Not:- Get out.

Not:- "You are doomed."

Not:- "The kingdom is taken from you." BUT:

REVELATION 3:20 "Behold I stand at the door and knock."

Not:- Your door of opportunity is shut forever.

Some deceivers say "You are in the company of the lost."

All some can see is "I will spew thee out." Why not read on. Remember "It is written again." Jesus says "I will come in."

"The warning for the last church also must be proclaimed to all who claim to be Christians. The Laodicean message, like a sharp two-edged sword must go to all the churches." Acts of the Apostles, page 77.

The Laodicean period is the last. No other church follows. Out of this "last" church Jesus will translate His people home to Glory. Out of the worst will come the best. Jesus never said we were to leave the church and join Philadelphia. Jesus warns of those:

"They would tear down that which God would restore by the Laodicean message. He wounds that He may heal." Testimonies to Ministers, page 23.

Jesus still loves His church. He died for it.

ACTS 20:28 "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Our lord "rebukes" His church because He loves it.

REVELATION 3:19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

He will "purge out" the rebels. (See "The Great Shaking." by George Burnside.)

He will shake His church mightily, so he can use it. For the blackest period he will have a people will do the greatest work and in the greatest blaze of Glory.

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 sup with him and he with me. Revelation 3:20

www.CreationismOnline.com