

About the CHURCH

Lesson 10

The ninth major theme is ABOUT the CHURCH!

The Church is a major part of the GREATEST LOVE STORY ever told!

Think of it as the time of *Engagement*

before the marriage.

When you accepted
the Lord as your
Savior, joy broke out
in heaven!

*I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in
heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine
righteous persons who need no repentance.*
Luke 15:7

*In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of
the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*
Luke 15:10

Why is there joy in heaven?

*The Heavenly Host
Wishes to Announce Your
Engagement and Future Marriage
To the Lord Jesus!*

Write down the day that you accepted the Lord as your Savior.

THE OFFICIAL DAY OF YOUR ENGAGEMENT

On that day, and at that moment,
news rang out in heaven that YOU had said yes to the Lord's invitation!

**And there was tremendous
joy because of YOUR decision!**

What does that
mean?

Possible Answer:
Church

It means that YOU have
officially become part of
the body of the bride of
Christ, called the

_____.



What?

It was part of the LORD's eternal plan to take a bride that would consist of all the people who entered into a personal relationship with Him after His death, burial, resurrection and ascension into heaven. He called those people the church and they make up the body of His bride.

You are now part of the church!

Paul used the love of the LORD for His bride to explain how a husband should love his wife.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, because we are members of His body. ... This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

Ephesians 5:25-32

What a love story!

The Lord, Christ Jesus came to earth to select a bride for Himself. He called it the Church. He gave Himself for the Church in the greatest act of love that anyone could imagine. After selecting the Church, He promised that He would return to take her to heaven to be with Him when all the preparations for the wedding are finished. He said,

"In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

John 14:2-3

You are headed for a heavenly wedding ceremony!

What are you supposed to do now that you are part of the bride/church?

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

2 Corinthians 11:2 ...so that to Christ I might present you *as* a pure virgin.

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

As part of the Bride/Church, the Lord expects you to

1. be His disciple.
2. learn all that He has taught that is recorded in God's WORD.
3. share His story with others so they can become part of His Church.
4. share His story in every nation so all people have the opportunity to become part of His Bride/Church.
5. keep yourself pure and holy, according to what He has commanded.
6. never doubt your future marriage to the Lord.
7. finds ways to help others grow in their relationships with the Lord.
8. always be faithful in meeting with other disciples to worship together.
9. encourage others by your faithful attendance in the worship of the Lord.

What is the church?

Is it a BUILDING or is it just the PEOPLE?

Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

The Bride/Church is NOT A BUILDING.

The Bride/Church is ONLY THE PEOPLE who accepted the Lord as their Savior.

**If the Bride/Church is the people,
why are there church buildings?**

As Jesus was selecting His Bride while He was here on earth, He met with His disciples in many different places. He taught them

1. in the Temple as a 12 year old and then again when He was visiting Jerusalem during His three years of ministry.
2. in the home of Peter in Capernaum where He stayed during His ministry years.
3. in the synagogues in every village that He visited during His ministry years.
4. in the home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha when He was in Bethany.
5. in the home of the Pharisees when He visited them.
6. in the home of the Phoenician women when He left His home country to visit the city of Sidon.
7. in the home of the girl whom He raised from the dead.
8. in the upper room at Passover time.

You can think of it this way. Jesus used buildings as a place of teaching except when the multitudes were so large that they had to meet outside.

Before 100 AD, groups of disciples were meeting in almost every city from Britain and Spain to India and Russia to Africa, all in the homes of believers.

Acts 2:9-11 "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs..."

After Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples continued to meet in buildings to worship Him. They met and taught

1. in the upper room where they stayed until the day of Pentecost.
2. in the homes of all the people from all over the known world who accepted the Lord on the day of Pentecost and then returned to their cities to share the Gospel and make disciples.
3. in homes in Jerusalem where the widows were fed meals.
4. in homes in the cities of Joppa, Caesarea, Antioch, Corinth, Thessalonica, Berea, Rome, Ephesus, Pergamum, Derby, Lystra, Lydia and many more before the last book of the New Testament was completed.

Acts 2:9-11 records the home cities of all the people who accepted the Lord on the day of Pentecost.

Those 12 countries make up most of them are within the black oval on the map.



After the day of Pentecost, it took as long as 90 days for the new disciples to return home and begin sharing the Gospel and making disciples.

Over the next 70 years, the Gospel groups of disciples lived in most of the civilized populated areas included in the map.

The Bride/Church of the Lord exploded across the world and they met in the houses of the disciples!

Even before John, the last Apostle of the Lord, died, disciples were building stone structures as permanent meeting places.

All that is left of the church building mentioned in the last book of God's WORD in the city of Philadelphia are the two enormous front columns.



The Bride/Church has gathered in structures of all sizes to worship the Lord over the years, yet those structures are not the church; they are just the places built with tithes and offerings to provide a facility for all the disciples to meet on a regular basis in a permanent location.



What are you to do when you meet with other disciples to worship the Lord?

Acts 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Scribe = secretary

Acts 2:42 give a short outline of how the Bride/Church worshiped the Lord after the day of Pentecost.

It has been a good outline for the Bride/Church to follow all these years since the day of Pentecost.

It is a good outline for the Bride/Church to follow even today and until the Lord comes to take His Bride/Church to the wedding ceremony in heaven.

Study the Apostles' Teaching

The Lord used the accounts of Matthew, Peter, John and Paul to reveal His message.

When you study the New Testament, you are studying the Apostles' teachings.

- Matthew wrote the Gospel of Matthew.
- John wrote the Gospel of John, 1st, 2nd, & 3rd John and the Revelation.
- Peter wrote 1st & 2nd Peter.
- Peter's Gospel was recorded by Mark.
- Paul's Gospel and history of the church was recorded by Luke in his Gospel and Acts.
- Assisted by a scribe, Paul's teachings were recorded in all the rest of the New Testament except for two letters.

James and Jude were half-brothers of Jesus and became disciple at the end of His ministry or after His resurrection.

- James became the pastor of the church in Jerusalem and met with the Apostles many times to help steer the Bride/Church. One of his letters is recorded in Acts 15. A second letter is included in the New Testament under his name.
- Jude also recorded a short but important letter to direct the Bride/Church in times of struggle with evil oppression.

All of the teachings in the New Testament include important information found in the Old Testament; therefore, we must also study the Old Testament.

1 John 1:3 ... what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Luke 22:19 And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁰ And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood."

Ephesians 6:18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, ¹⁹ and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Fellowship Together

To fellowship means to bind together for a common purpose and devotion.

Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

Acts 2:43-45

The Bride/Church needs to meet together in with a common goal and purpose and that is to do the work of the Lord and lead others to worship Him.

Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:5-6

Break Bread Together

Until the introduction of the automobile, when the Bride/Church gathered together on Sunday, the worship service was usually followed by box lunch on the church grounds. They were called fellowship meals.

However, in this case, breaking of bread means the observance of the **LORD'S SUPPER** which occurs during the actual service as an act of worship.

Pray Together

When the Bride/Church meets together, needs become known and the disciples are instructed to pray together for those needs as part of worship.

In this world, there are true Churches and false churches.

True Bride/Churches believe everything you are learning in these lessons and hold all of God's WORD as faithful, accurate and true.

False churches will **PICK AND CHOOSE** what they want to believe and will usually add another book to their teaching that is a greater authority in their mind than God's WORD.

The Bride/Church

When will the *Engagement* be over

and the *Marriage Ceremony* take place?



¹ Thessalonians 4:7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. ...
¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

What a love story!

One day in the future, when the marriage preparations are complete and the Bride/Church is fully assembled, the Lord will come to take her from this world to heaven for the ceremony.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.

Revelation 19:7

But for now, your job is to help others become

Engaged to the Lord!

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

Revelation 22:17