

## Part Six In A Series Of Seven

### God's Chosen People and the Dawning of a New Day!

#### WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- We Are Very Sinful But By God's Grace We Can Live Nobly and Bravely.
- The Old Covenant Which Was Made Only With Israel Was Replaced by the New Covenant Which is Offered to All Mankind.
- The Church That Doesn't Exist to Serve Others is Not the Church 'of Christ'.
- We Can't Say Yes To Christ and No To the Church.

#### EVALUATION SHEET

Please go ahead and fill in the evaluation sheet attached.

#### CONTACT DETAILS

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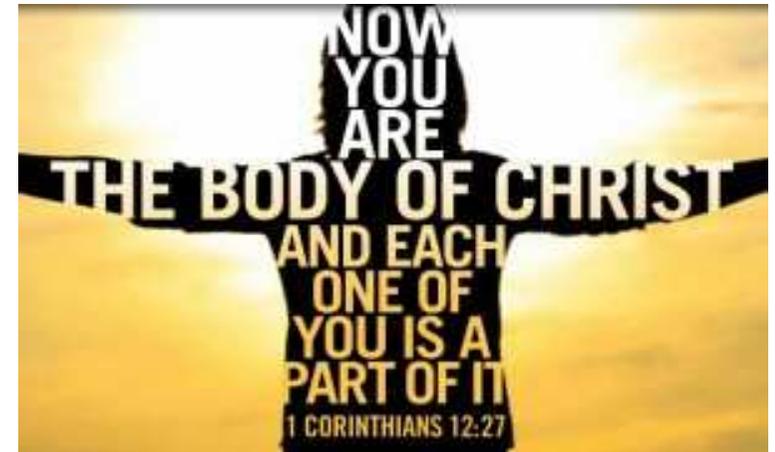
GREAT BARR  
CHURCH OF CHRIST



## GOD, LIFE AND PEOPLE

Part six in a Series of Seven

## 6. THE CHURCH



**God's Chosen  
People and the  
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New Day!**

'caring for PEOPLE for PEOPLE matter to God' Romans 5:8

# NOAH WALKED WITH GOD

## I. MAN WORKING WITH GOD TO BLESS THE WORLD

1. One of God's favourite virtues in man is gallantry! It's true that God has concluded all under sin (**Romans 3:10** —no exceptions) but it's also true that by God's grace people often pursue noble dreams and bravely make God's longing to bless the entire world their longing too.

**Will you be one of these?**

2. Noah worked with God! Whatever his faults, by God's grace (**Genesis 6:8**), Noah stood where the rest fell, Noah, says the Bible, 'walked with God' and God saw the bravery of this righteous man in an incredibly evil generation (**Genesis 7:1**). I will use this man, God seems to say, to bless the whole world (**Genesis 9:1**).

3. And Abraham worked with God. An old man with a wife who couldn't bear children, yet when God called him to follow a dream, he trusted God and went (**Hebrews 11:7-12**).

Years passed without the promises being fulfilled but still he trusted and God called him his friend (**Isaiah 41:8**), And God blessed Abraham that the old man might be a blessing to the world (**Genesis 12:1-3; 18:18**).

# CHURCH MEMBERSHIP ISN'T OPTIONAL

14. For the Church to be the Church 'of Christ', it must be like him! If the Church doesn't exist for others, it isn't 'of Christ' because he came to bless others (**Matthew 20:28**).

To be his Church, the Church must love truth and pursue it as it is found in him (**John 14:6**). And when she sees it she must do as he did, bear witness to it even at awful cost. See **Luke 9:23 & Matthew 10:25**.

It isn't enough for the Church to recognise the truth, be able to recite the truth or correctly formulate the truth, the truth is also for doing (**John 3:21**).

Man was redeemed by the Word 'become flesh' (**John 1:14**). Rehearsing truth and doing truth may be related but they're not the same thing!

## THE CHURCH'S LIFE IS GOD'S WITNESS THAT CHRIST IS ALIVE

**11.** The Church by its very existence shows that life with God is possible for sinners. The Church doesn't save itself — it is the saved Community! It doesn't proclaim its own goodness — it proclaims his saving grace! The Church's life is part of God's witness that Christ is alive and not dead. His life keeps her alive, his life is her life.

**12.** The Church has greater strength than any individual. 'The Church' is the sum total of all who have submitted their lives to Christ as Lord. The believers as a Body are able to help individuals stay alive. If you love your country and go to a noble-spirited and patriotic meeting, you come away loving and believing in your country more. If you love Christ and worship with noble Christ-loving people, you come away loving him more! See **2 Timothy 2:22** and **Hebrews 10:24-25**.

**13.** The effect of the Church on the world is greater than that of an individual. The power of any community lies in its unity. Organised crime knows there is more power when crime is organised, when it bands together. This is one of the reasons God does not save individuals in isolation. As people are saved, they are added to the believing Community (**Acts 2:47**).

Christians have been made into one Body because this way they can better serve God and the world he loves so much. Church membership isn't optional! We can't have Christ as Saviour and refuse him as Head (**Ephesians 1:22-23**).

## GOD REMOVED THE OLD COVENANT

**4.** Of Abraham's descendants God created the Israelite nation after he had rescued them from Egyptian oppression and made a covenant with them (**Exodus 19:5-6 & 24:1-8**), Israel became a sign for the whole world that God was seeking fellowship with all men. They were the visible proof of God's intentions toward mankind and God gave them the task of telling the world about it (**Isaiah 49:3-6 & John 4:22**).

### II. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

**5.** When the Old Covenant had served its purpose God removed it and brought in a New Covenant through Jesus his Son (**Hebrews 8:6-13**). He took away the first, says **Hebrews 10:9-10**, that he might establish the second through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

**6.** The Old Covenant, which had been made only with physical Jews was replaced by a New Covenant which is offered to the whole human race. On the basis of that New Covenant a new Community of Faith was set up.

In **Matthew 16:18** Jesus called it his Church in contrast to the Old Covenant Church in the wilderness (**Acts 7:38**). At first, as the prophets had foretold, it was made up of believing Jews who then took the gospel to all the nations (**Romans 1:16 / Luke 24:47 / Matthew 28:19**).

# THE OLD TESTAMENT CHURCH

## III. THE IDENTITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

7. In the New Testament, Paul is able to tell us in **Ephesians 4:4-6** that the disciples of Christ held these major truths in common. They saw themselves, whatever their differences in culture and heritage, as one Body into which they were brought by one Spirit.

They joyfully shared one hope for the future and served only one as their Lord (**Jesus Christ**). They firmly held to one body of truth they called the Faith and everyone knew they submitted to one baptism. They recognised no God but one, and he was the Father of Jesus Christ.

8. The Old Testament Church had Moses as its mediator but this New Testament Church had Christ as its Mediator (**Hebrews 8:6**).

The New Testament Church held on to all the abiding truths of the Old Covenant and gently laid the rest aside as belonging to a former age. God's new people were bound by God's new covenant (**Hebrews 8:6-7**).

# HOLY COMMUNION IS A VISIBLE PROCLAMATION

## IV. THE NATURE AND PLACE OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD TODAY

9. The Church is the Body through which Christ moves in the world today. The New Testament speaks of '**the Church which is his body**' (**Colossians 1:18**). Until he returns, Christ lives in the world through the Church. His mission in the Church is the same as when he was here in his personal body — to seek and save the hurt, the weak and the lost.

10. The Church keeps profound truths before the eyes of the world. In the New Testament, when a person wanted to become a Christian he submitted to being immersed in water as a confession of his faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (**see Lesson 5**).

Baptism is a visible proclamation of the gospel. When Christians met each Sunday to share Holy Communion, they were confessing their faith in the living Christ who communed with them there until he returns (**1 Corinthians 10:16-17 & 1 Corinthians 11:26**).

Holy Communion is a visible proclamation of Christ's dying and living again. These truths, said Paul in **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**, are '**of first importance**'.