

The Church: God's Victorious People, Authorized to Trample the Gates of Hell

Discover Your Spiritual Identity: The Revelation of the Names and Titles God Has Given His People

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or imagine, according to the power that works in us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen" (Eph. 3:20-21).

Acts 2:47 explains that in the beginning, "the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." So from the start, "the church" was a work of God, not a work of man. The word "church" is translated from the Greek word *ecclesia* (pronounced ek-klay-see'-ah), meaning called out ones. So, all who are in the church have been "called ... out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

Presently, over two billion people claim the Christian faith in this world. However, there is a "professing church" (those who merely profess an intellectual belief in a historical Christ) and a smaller-in-number "possessing church" at its core (those who possess a genuine, personal relationship with Jesus). This latter group is made up of sincere lovers of God out of every denomination who are truly born again (see John 3:1-7). Such a spiritual rebirth happens when the Lord Jesus dwells in a person's heart "by faith" (Eph. 3:17). Such persons make up the "true church": not an organization, but a living organism—the body of Christ worldwide.

The Church Is the Most Valuable Institution in the World

Acts 20:28 declares we are "the church of God which He

purchased with His own blood.” Whenever we purchase something, we must first be convinced that the item is more valuable to us than the price—or we will never make the transaction. In like manner, God must have decided that even though we were sin-stained, defiled and under a curse, we were more valuable to Him than His own blood. How amazing is that!

The Church Is the Most Important Institution in the World

The church is called “the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). This world is saturated with deception. But the church is like a memorial “pillar” raised up high above all nations, radiating the brilliant light of truth to those who are stumbling through the darkness. Furthermore, the church is a strong foundation on which God is building His eternal plans and purposes in a world that is often opposed to Him. Without this influence, all the seed of Adam would utterly perish. However, through the church, the truth will prevail, for the wicked one, “who deceives the whole world” will ultimately be vanquished by those who have been begotten by “the word of truth” and born of “the Spirit of truth” (Rev. 12:9-11, James 1:18, John 16:13).

The Church Is the Most Victorious Institution in the World

During His earthly sojourn, Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” The chief apostle responded, “Some say that You are John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” Jesus then replied, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ [the Messiah], the Son of the living God.” (Matt. 16:13-16). Jesus then declared Peter was “blessed” because he received that insight, not from “flesh and blood,” but from the Father in heaven—then the Savior prophesied with intensity:

“Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18, KJV).

In other words, the greatest adversaries of the human race—sin, the curse, Satan, his demonic hordes, the grave, eternal destruction—none of these can triumph over the church of the living God, because it has been formed, not by doctrinal persuasion, but by supernatural, divine revelation (that’s the “rock” Jesus was talking about). Therefore, absolutely nothing can prevent the members of God’s true church from obtaining ultimate, absolute victory, because the Most High intends to be both “the Author and the Finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2). He has already predetermined that at the resurrection His “called out ones” will emerge: “... a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27).

Yes, we will then be “called out” of mortality into immortality, “called out” of time into eternity and “called out” of separation from God into a rapturous oneness with Him—forevermore!

Explore this wonderful subject more deeply by listening to a former episode of Mike Shreve’s weekly podcast called *Discover Your Spiritual Identity* here or on our YouTube channel here. {eoa}

*A product of the Jesus Movement Era, **Mike Shreve** has traveled evangelistically in the United States and overseas since 1970 with an emphasis on healing and the prophetic. His primary biblical teaching for over 30 years has been the spiritual identity of believers. This powerful insight is featured on his weekly podcast on and his TV program—both titled Discover Your Spiritual Identity. It is also the theme of his Charisma House book titled WHO AM I? Dynamic Declarations of Who You Are in Christ. The first three categories on his YouTube website expand on this amazing revelation.*

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