

Christ's Bride

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2 Corinthians 11:2 - "I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." God's church is symbolized by a woman or bride in the Bible.

God has always had His church, or bride, on this earth. The second coming of Christ will be the consummation of their marriage (see Revelation 19:7). He has always had a faithful representative to show His will to those who do not know Him.

Genesis 1-3 - Adam and Eve were God's church on this earth. There were no other representatives with more truth than they had. They worshipped God and followed His commands until meeting the serpent in the garden...

Genesis 6-9:1 - Noah and His family were God's church on this earth during their time. **Note:** In Noah's family there was a minority, with one message, going to the entire world population, and one way that lead to salvation/preservation. **Matthew 24:37** says, "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Genesis 12:1-3, 26:5 - Abraham with his family was God's church on earth. God took Abraham out of Babylon (Ur of the Chaldees) with a promise to a blessing to the entire world. Abraham was also obedient to the commandments of God. **Note:** A minority, with a world-wide focus, with God's message, was keeping the commandments of God.

Deuteronomy 7:6-15 - Abraham had Isaac, Isaac had Jacob, and Jacob became Israel. Israel was God's chosen people, a minority, on this earth with a message of salvation for the entire world, and they kept the commandments of God.

Luke 23:52-24:1, Acts 5:29 - The Apostles were God's church on earth after the Children of Israel. Jesus had rejected Israel because they rejected Him and His prophets (**Matthew 23:37-38**). The Apostles and the disciples of Jesus were in the minority, their commission was to reach the world, they had the only message of truth and they kept the commandments of God.

Matthew 16:13-24 - Was the foundation of Christ's church Peter? Or Jesus? **Note:** The name "Peter" is "Petros" in the Greek, meaning a piece of a rock. Jesus said, "Upon this rock ("Petra" in the Greek, meaning a mass of rock) I will build My church." Having just called Peter the son of Jona (someone on this earth), Jesus was referring Himself (Someone from Heaven) as being the Rock, or Petra. Jesus then said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it," but shortly after saying that He said to Peter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." The gates of hell prevailed against Peter within minutes of Christ saying the gates of hell would not prevail against the Rock, being Christ. Don't be confused on this point. There is no other foundation than Jesus Christ.

Matthew 28:18-20 - “Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and **teach** all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **Teaching** them to observe **all** things whatsoever I have **commanded** you: and, lo, **I am with you always**, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Acts 2:41, 47 - “They that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were **added unto them** about three thousand souls.” “The Lord added to the **church** daily such as should be saved.” God uses His church as a means to gather His believers so they can grow in grace together and be organized to methodically reach the world with the gospel. We are justified individually, but sanctified together. Yet, we as church members are just as needy of the gospel as anyone else. As one elderly pastor said, “To dwell up above with the saints that we love, that will be glory! But to dwell down below with the saints that we know, now that’s another story!”

Acts 14:23 - “When they had ordained them elders in every **church**, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.” The Apostles worked closely with the church that God had raised up through His Son Jesus.

The question many ask is, “If God has a church on earth, how do I find it?” **Note:** You don’t find the truth by a church, but rather find the truth by the Bible. Know the Scripture and compare everything you believe with it as a standard of all beliefs and practices.

One of the easiest ways to decipher between 4,200 faiths (according to Adherents.com in 2014) is to measure the churches by one simple standard. Do they keep the commandments of God—all of them? If the answer is no, then you’ve found the wrong church, though it’s easier to look for the right church.

Revelation 12:7-17 - Here is described a war between the forces of good and evil. The enemy was cast down to the earth at the cross (“**Now** is come salvation... the power of His **Christ**”). The enemy (the dragon using Rome) chased God’s church (the woman) and she fled into the wilderness for hiding. God’s people have always been on earth to represent His truth, but during the Dark Ages, they were hidden away due to the wrath of the enemy. The enemy continues to chase God’s people till the end of time where he is exceptionally angry with those who keep the **commandments of God** and have the **testimony of Jesus**. So, regarding the churches not keeping the commandments of God at the end of time, is the enemy angry with them?

Revelation 17:3-5, 18:16 - Here is described a woman (a church) riding a beast (a nation) that looks much like the dragon found in 12:3. This woman, representing the false church at the end of time, is dressed in various colors: fine linen, purple, scarlet, gold, precious stones, and pearls. She’s dressed similar in colors to the priests of the Old Testament (see **Exodus 28:4-6**). One color she is missing is BLUE! Why? Because blue represents obedience to the commandments of God: **Numbers 15:38-40**. This false church is not faithful to God’s commandments.

There are identifying points given by studying prophecy to help identify God’s last day church on earth.

- It would not be organized during the Dark Ages (**Revelation 12:14**)
- It would be organized in North America (**Revelation 12:16**)
- It would arise and do its work after 1798 (**Revelation 12:17**)
- It would keep all the Commandments (**Revelation 12:17**)
- It would have the gift of prophecy (**Revelation 12:17, 19:10, 22:8-9**)
- It would have a worldwide focus (**Revelation 14:6**)
- It would teach the 3 Angels` messages (**Revelation 14:7-12**)

The gift of prophecy? What's that? Notice the progression that helps explain what the Bible calls the "testimony of Jesus."

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

Revelation 19:10 - "I fell at his feet to **worship** him. And he said unto me, See thou **do it not**: I am thy **fellow servant**, and of thy **brethren** that have the **testimony of Jesus**."

Revelation 20:8-9 - "I fell down to **worship** before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou **do it not**: for I am thy **fellow servant**, and of thy **brethren** the **prophets**."

Daniel 8:14 - "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Remember that prophecy? It takes us to Christ's final ministry phase in 1844 when the antitypical Day of Atonement began.

In 1844 a world-wide, large and scattered group, generally called the Adventists in North America, who believed the Second Advent of Christ was to occur that year, were deeply disappointed when He didn't return. As a result, most of Christendom rejected the idea of an imminent coming of Christ in the clouds of glory. Many in North America: Catholics, Methodists and Baptists, did not reject the idea but continued to study the Bible to find where they went wrong. During this extended time of intense Bible study, God gifted this diverse group with the gift of prophecy through a young lady named Ellen Gould Harmon. God did not often lead to conclusions through Ms. Harmon, but did give direction and suggestions through visions and dreams which lead the Bible students into deeper and more intense Bible study. As a result of studying the Bible with prayerful hearts and deep desire to find truth, the Adventists organized 19 years later into the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

Similar to the Apostles experience was the Seventh-day Adventist's beginning. The Apostles expected Christ to set up a kingdom on earth, when in His death they were deeply disappointed. After a time of intense study and prayer, God gave them direction in starting a new organization we today refer to as the New Testament church.

Ellen Harmon, later Ellen G. White, has been proven over and over again to fulfill the Biblical characteristics of a prophet, or messenger of God. I, a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, have personally and critically read many thousands, yeah tens of thousands of her pages, and have been drawn closer to Christ at every step. I can recommend her writings with belief that God raised her up for our time in earths history.