

# THE CHURCH JESUS LOVES

by Owen D. Olbricht

Does Jesus love the church? Is the church important to Him? Is there a church that Jesus loves? If there is, what church does He love? In order to answer these questions other questions should be answered.

**1. What is the church?** Many people use the word church to refer to a building by saying: "The church burned." "The wedding will be in the church." "The funeral was held in the church." The word ekklesia (literally, called out), which is translated "church," never means a physical building but rather refers to a congregation of people. Saul persecuted the church by putting men and women in prison (Acts 8:3). These were the disciples of the Lord (Acts 9:1) who were called Christians (Acts 11:26).

**2. Who built the church?** Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). In later books of the New Testament we read about the church, which must mean that Jesus had built His church before these books were written (Acts 5:11; 8:3; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:13; etc.).

**3. On what did Jesus build His church?** Jesus said, "On this rock, I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). Peter had confessed Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus replied that on this He would build His church. Paul taught that Jesus is the only foundation. "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11).

**4. To whom does the church belong?** Jesus called it, "My church" (Matt. 10:18). The church is His because He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). The fact that He purchased it with His blood means:

- (1) It belongs to Him.
- (2) If it belongs to Him, we should call it His church
- (3) The value of the church is Jesus' blood. The price paid is the value of what is purchased.

(4) In order to benefit from Jesus' blood, one must be in His church because it is what Jesus purchased with His blood. (5) Jesus will come for His church, the one He purchased. If He came for others, He would be taking what He has not purchased, that which does not belong to Him.

**5. How can we identify Jesus' church?** His church is made up of those

who submit to Him. "Therefore as the church is subject to Christ" (Eph. 5:24). Jesus' church responds to Him because He is the head of the church (Eph. 5:23), it's only lawgiver (James 4:12).

These are the people He loves, His church (Eph. 5:25), because they have His commandments and keep them. "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21).

Those who are following the traditions, doctrines, creeds, and teachings of men are not loved by Jesus. He loves those people who obey Him, which people are His church. His wrath is on, continues to remain on, those who do not obey Him (John 3:36 ASV).

**6. Who will Jesus take to heaven?** He will present His church to Himself, a spotless and holy church (Eph. 5:27). These are the people who have been made perfect (Heb. 12:23) by the death of Jesus (Eph. 5:25-27) and whose names are written in heaven (Heb. 12:23), in the book of life (Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5).

Those whose names are not in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15) but those whose names are in the book of life will get to enter the holy city, the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:27).

The church does not save, but Jesus is the Savior of the church (Eph. 5:23), His body (Eph. 1:22, 23). The church is the flock (Acts 20:28) to which Jesus will give eternal life (John 10:27). It is His kingdom (Matt. 16:18; Col. 1:13) which cannot be shaken (Heb. 12:28) that will get to shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father (Matt. 13:41-43). Also the church is His house, His family (1 Tim. 3:15), the children of which will get to inherit heaven (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 4:7; 1 Pet. 1:3,4).

**7. How does one enter the body, the church?** There is one body in Christ (Rom. 12:5). We enter Christ by being baptized (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27), so by baptism we enter the one body (1 Cor. 12:13), the church.

## **CONCLUSION**

The church Jesus loves is the one He built, the one over which He is head, and is the one that obeys Him. Those not in His church are not written in heaven. If we are written in the book of life, we will get to enter the holy city, but if not, we will be cast into the lake of fire. All of us who have been baptized with the one baptism (Eph. 4:5) are in His one church.

Are you in the church Jesus so loves that He will present it to Himself? If not, you should obey Him (Heb. 5:9) to be saved by being baptized (Mark 16:16) and in so doing become a member of His church which has the hope of eternal life in heaven.