

A NEW CHRISTIAN

- God expects something from us
- A new life
 - Rom.6:17-18, Titus 2:11-12
- To walk in the light
 - IJn.1:6-7
- Sustained growth
 - Heb.5:12-14

Yet, God has given us assistance

- The scriptures
 - IITim.3:16-17
- The brethren, i.e., the church
 - Heb.10:24-27, Col.3:16, (Eph.4:11-12)

WHAT IS THE CHURCH ?

- The church is a collection of Christians, not an institution.
 - In Classic Greek “ekklesia” is the word translated “church”
 - “ekklesia” meant “to call out”
 - In fact, Christians are “called out of darkness”, 1Pet.2:9
 - In Koine (common) Greek of the New Testament, “ekklesia” was commonly used to refer to an assembly or group, even a very loose assembly (mob), Acts 19:32

WHAT IS THE CHURCH ?

- The church has the same relationship to the Christian, as a herd does to an individual elk.

Christ's church, His collection of Christians



- Peter used the term “flock”, referring to the local congregation, 1Pet.5:2-3
- In contrast to the “body” referring to all Christians, whether in heaven or on earth.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH ?

- The Same Group of People:

**IN
CHRIST**

Eph.1:3

BODY

Eph.1:22-23

CHURCH

Acts 20:28

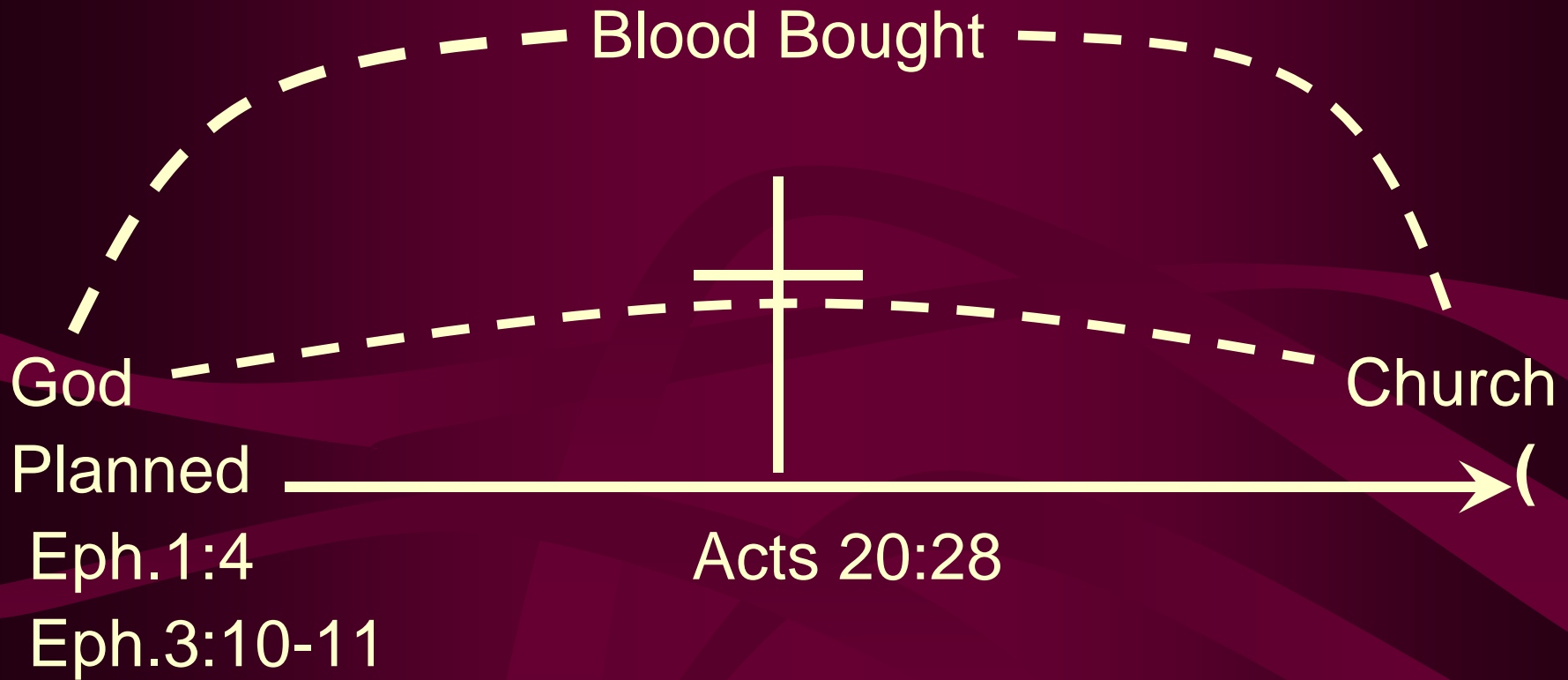
KINGDOM

& Rev. 5:9-10

**HOUSE
OR
FAMILY**

1Tim.3:15

IMPORTANCE OF THE CHURCH



- Spiritual blessings: only in the church:

Eph. 1:3

- The church (kingdom) will be delivered up to God:

1Cor. 15:24

The baptized have already been added to the church

Acts 2:47

- Baptized into Christ
 - Gal.3:26-27
- Baptized into the body of Christ
 - ICor.12:13

ONE BODY

Eph.4:4, ICor.12:12-27



- God has disapproved of dividing the church into denominations or sects: ICor.1:10-15

Disciples of Jesus

Wear No Denominational Names Or Support Denominational Doctrines

- No such names or denominations existed when Jesus built His church.
- Jesus's disciples belong to His church, Mt.16:18, Acts 2:47
 - Added by Him to His church
- Jesus's disciples only went by the name “Christian”, and in that name glorified God
 - Acts 11:26, 4:10-12, IPet.4:14-16

Christ's Disciples Are To Grow In Him

- Christians have died to sin, Rom.6:1-7
- Christians have been born again (IPet.1:22-23) and begin as babes, IPet.2:1-2
- Christians are to grow into being like Christ, Eph.4:14-15
 - Removing the attributes of the world, and adding the attributes of Christ, Col.3:1-17
 - Putting away the works of the flesh, and producing the fruits of the Spirit, Gal.5:19-24
 - Grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, IIPet.3:18
- Adding and practicing the qualities of the divine nature, IIPet.1:2-11
- A Christian is to remain faithful, Rev.2:10

Growing By Taking In The Word of God

- “..long for the pure milk of the word, that you may grow in respect to salvation,” , IPet.2:2
- Maturing in the “oracles of God”, Heb.5:12-14
- Growing in faith by hearing God’s word, Rom.10:17
- Letting the word of Christ dwell within us, Col.3:16, IJn.2:14 (Eph.3:17 with Rom.10:17)
- Receiving and practicing the word, Jam.1:21-22

Making Prayer a Part of Life

- Adopting a prayerful disposition, 1Thess. 5:17
- Asking for wisdom, with confidence that God will provide it, Jam.1:5-6
- Rather than being anxious, take your requests to God in prayer, Phil. 4:6
- Pray that you may not enter into temptation, Luke 22:40
- Ask while doing the things that are pleasing to Him, 1John 3:22

God Gave the Parts To Equip & Build Up the Body (Christians)

- Eph.4:11-13 - Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers
- Our obligation to assemble with the brethren
 - Heb.10:24-25
- Example of Saul:
 - Added to the church when he was baptized
 - Acts 9:18 & Gal.3:26-27
 - Later joined himself to the brethren in Jerusalem
 - Acts 9:26-27
- Who are we going to assemble with?

Today, the situation has been complicated

- Rather than one church per community there are dozens.
- Yet, God has told us that this is wrong
 - ICor.1:10
- In fact, we can't even condone such evil
 - IThess.5:22, IIIJn.11
- The church is the pillar and support of the truth, not error, ITim.3:15
- God told us 2000 years ago of this situation

THE FALLING AWAY



33AD

120AD

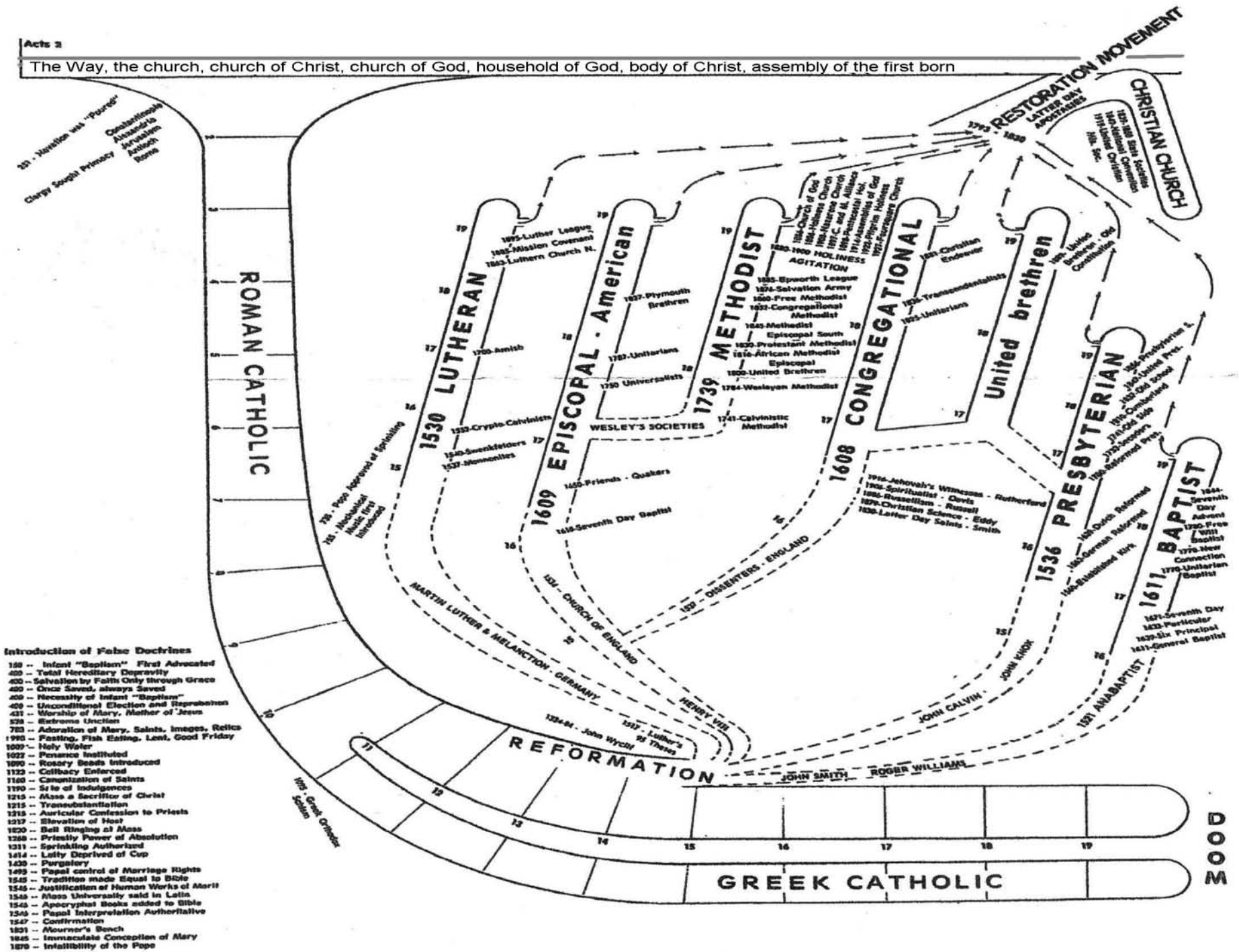
Apostasy – walking away

-- II Thess. 2:3-4

-- I Tim. 4:1-4

-- II Tim. 4:1-4

The Way, the church, church of Christ, church of God, household of God, body of Christ, assembly of the first born



- Introduction of False Doctrines
- 158 - Infant "Baptism" First Advocated
 - 400 - Total Hereditary Depravity
 - 400 - Salvation by Faiths Only through Grace
 - 400 - Once Saved, always Saved
 - 400 - Necessity of Infant "Baptism"
 - 400 - Unconditional Election and Reprobation
 - 431 - Worship of Mary, Mother of Jesus
 - 828 - Extreme Unction
 - 783 - Adoration of Mary, Saints, Images, Relics
 - 1190 - Fasting, Fish Eating, Lent, Good Friday
 - 1009 - Holy Water
 - 1022 - Penance Instituted
 - 1090 - Rosary Beads Introduced
 - 1152 - Celibacy Enforced
 - 1160 - Canonization of Saints
 - 1190 - Site of Indulgences
 - 1215 - Mass a Sacrifice of Christ
 - 1215 - Transubstantiation
 - 1215 - Auricular Confession to Priests
 - 1217 - Elevation of Host
 - 1820 - Bell Ringing at Mass
 - 1250 - Priestly Power of Absolution
 - 1311 - Sprinkling Authorized
 - 1414 - Laity Deprived of Cup
 - 1430 - Purgatory
 - 1493 - Papal control of Marriage Rights
 - 1545 - Tradition made Equal to Bible
 - 1545 - Justification of Human Works of Merit
 - 1545 - Mass Universally said in Latin
 - 1545 - Apocryphal Books added to Bible
 - 1545 - Papal Interpretation Authoritative
 - 1547 - Confirmation
 - 1821 - Mourner's Bench
 - 1845 - Immaculate Conception of Mary
 - 1870 - Infallibility of the Pope

MOOD

We Need the Original Blueprints

- To be able to either Identify or Imitate the True church of God
 - God has provided the blueprints for us
 - IThess.2:14, IITim.3:16-17

THE PATTERN FOR GOD'S CHURCH

- **Objective**

- Ephesians 5:10 – “trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.”

- **Goals**

- Obey God’s commands, Mt.7:21-23, Jn.14:15
 - Including commands via the apostles and prophets, Jn.13:20
- Following the example of the apostles and the pattern they set for us.
 - Phil.3:17, 1Thess.1:6
- Being careful to respect God’s silence
 - Heb.7:14

CHARACTERISTICS

- Description or designation
 - The group
 - The individual
- Work
- Collective Worship
- Roles, Parts, Components
- Structure
- Basis for Fellowship

Description, Designation of the Group

“of” → “Christ”, “God”

The total group:

- The church of the living God -- 1Tim.3:15
- The church of the first-born – Heb.12:23,
(Col.1:18)
- The body of Christ -- Eph.4:11-12
- The household of God – 1Tim.3:15
- **Notice the use of the word “church”**

Description, Designation of the Group

“of” / “in” → "Christ", "God"

The local group:

- The church -- Acts 8:3
- The church of God – ICor.1:2, Acts 20:28
- The church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ -- 1Thess. 1:1
- Notice the use of the word “church”

Description, Designation of the Group

“of” / “in” → "Christ", "God"

A number of local groups:

- The churches of Christ -- Rom.16:16
- The churches of God – ICor.11:16
- The churches of Galatia – ICor.16:1, Gal.1:2
- The churches of Judea which are in Christ – Gal.1:22

Disciples in a region:

- The church – Acts 9:31

Name of the Individual

- “Christian” – Acts 11:26, IPet.4:16
- Christ's name alone --ICor.1:10-15
– “of Christ”

Work

- Preach the Word -- IThess.1:8, Mt.28:19-20, (Acts 20:7)
- Edify the brethren -- Eph.4:11-12, Heb.10:24-27
- Benevolence for needy brethren -- Acts 2:44-45, Acts 4:32-34 (Acts 6:1-3, ICor.16:1-2, IICor.8:3-4)

Worship In The Assembly

=> Not limited to the assembly, or implying that our service, worship to God is sufficient in these activities, Rom.12:1

- Prayer -- I Tim.2:8, I Thess.5:17
- Singing -- Eph.5:19, Col.3:16
- Lord's Supper -- Acts 20:7, I Cor.11:17-32
- Preaching -- Acts 20:7
- Public reading of scripture -- I Tim.4:13, Col.4:16
- Giving – For needy brethren - I Cor.16:1-2, II Cor.9:6-7
– For preaching of the gospel - Phil.4:15-16

Roles, Parts, Components

(Eph.4:11-12, ICor.12:28)

- Elders -- Acts 14:23, Acts 20:28 (Titus 1:5-9),
 - presbuteros - elder
 - IPet.5:1-3 – “shepherd the flock of God among you”
 - Overseer - a job of an elder
 - Phil.1:1 with Acts 20:28 - episkopos - a superintendent, an overseer
- Deacons -- ITim.3:8-9
 - diakonos - a servant, minister
- Saints -- ICor.1:2, Phil.1:1
 - hagios - sacred, holy, set apart for a special purpose
- Teachers -- Heb.5:12, Jam.3:1
- Evangelists -- Eph.4:11
 - euaggeliste - a bringer of good tidings

Structure

- Individual, autonomous local groups, “flock”
 - Acts 14:23, IPet.5:1-3
 - Simple
 - No hierarchy

Recognized Fellowship Based On

- Belief -- Jn.8:24, Heb.11:6
- Repentance -- Lk.13:3, Acts 2:38
- Confession -- Rom.10:9-10, Acts 8:36-38
- Baptism
 - In water – Acts. 8:36-38
 - A burial – Rom.6:3-8
 - Forgives sins – Mk.16:16, Acts 2:38, 22:16
 - Saves us – I Pet.3:21
 - *Have you been baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins?*