

**GOD'S**  
**MESSAGE**  
**TO**  
**MAN**

by Ray Vaughn

- 1. The Standard of Authority for Morals & Religion today.**
- 2. Bible (God's) Definition of SIN !**
- 3. What MUST I do to be Forgiven of MY Sins ?**
- 4. The New Testament Church belongs to Jesus,  
(Matthew 16:18) and Membership in it.**
- 5. How to Identify the Lord's Church Today**

## THE STANDARD OF AUTHORITY

INTRODUCTION: In order for us to be in agreement, a standard of authority is essential. For instance:

1. How shall we determine the correct length of an object?
2. How shall we know how much something weighs?
3. How may we tell the proper time of day. (60 minutes = 60 Nautical miles).
4. In the spiritual realm, we also need a standard, a rule book for right/wrong.

### I. WHAT SHALL WE USE AS OUR STANDARD OF AUTHORITY IN RELIGION?

1. Shall we follow the religion of our fore-fathers as our only guide?
  - a. Each person traced back seven generation has 128 parents. Which one?
  - b. Paul & every other Jew, had to give up the religion of his fore-fathers in order to become a Christian & please God, Gal.1:13-14; Rom.10:1-3.
2. Shall our conscience be our sole guide?
  - a. Some heathen women have been known to throw babies to crocodiles!
  - b. Most religious people are conscientious, but disagreed among themselves.
  - c. Paul was conscientious while persecuting Christians, but wrong!  
Acts 23:1; Acts 26:9-11
3. Shall we follow the decisions of the majority? Exodus 23:2; Matt. 7:13-14.
4. Shall we accept church councils and doctrines of men?
  - a. They disagree and contradict, Matt. 15:9, 13; Jer. 10:23.
5. Shall we follow the Old Testament?
  - a. It is not sufficient, Gal. 2:21; 3:21.
  - b. Jesus took it away with His death, Gal. 5:4; Col. 2:14; Heb.8:7-8; 10:8.
  - c. If I use parts of the O.T. , I am debtor to do it ALL, Gal.3:10; Js.2:10.
  - d. Proper use of the O.T. today, Rom. 15:4; 1Cor. 10:11.

### II. GOD'S WORD IN THE N.T. IS OUR STANDARD OF AUTHORITY IN RELIGION TODAY!

1. God claims His word is that standard, 2Tim. 3:16-17; 2Pet. 1:3; 2Jn. 9-11.
  - a. Not to add to, take away, or change, Rev. 22:18-19; Prov. 30:6.
  - b. Not to reject Christ or His word, Jno. 12:48.
  - c. Not to preach, believe, or accept any other, Gal. 1:6-9; Phil. 4:9.
2. God's word is WRITTEN in the Bible.
  - a. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to reveal ALL of the truth, Jn. 16:13; 14:26.
  - b. Inspired men guided by the Spirit wrote it in the New Testament, Jno. 20:30-31; 1Cor. 14:37; 2Tim. 3:16-17 (scripture = written word).
3. This word was given ONCE for all time, never to be repeated or changed, Jude 3, "once"= (1Pet. 3:18); 1Pet. 1:24-25
4. Therefore, the N.T. is complete and sufficient as revealed.

CONCLUSION: Today God speaks to us through the written word given by Spirit inspired apostles and prophets. Hence it is final and complete (Heb. 1:1-2) and EVERY religious question should be answered and settled by a "thus saith the Lord". (1Pet. 4:11). Whenever and wherever people have failed to follow this RULE BOOK on religion, they have rebelled against God and have wandered from Him. 2Jn. 9

2 John 9 = "have not God".-

QUESTION: What about those things which God did not reveal? Deut. 29:29.

STUDY that which is revealed! 2Tim. 2:15; Acts 17:11.

UNDERSTAND IT ! Eph. 3:3-5; 5:17; Rom. 10:17.

## SIN

**INTRODUCTION:** Most people have their own opinions in defining sin, which differ greatly from one person to the next. What one considers wrong, to another it may be considered right. The result has been mass confusion and division in the religious world. 1Cor. 1:10; 3:3; (John 17:20-21).

Each person tends to do that which is "right in his own eyes." But, God has revealed that it is to Him that we must look for guidance in things religious and moral. His word determines what is right and wrong, NOT MAN! Isa. 55:6-9; Jer. 10:23; Prov. 14:12;

### I. WHAT IS SIN? = "missing the mark" or "to rebel"

1. Sin is transgression of God's law, 1Jno. 3:4; (Rom. 4:15; 5:13)
2. The omission of that which is good, James 4:17.
3. ANY unauthorized religious practice, Mt. 7:21-23; 15:9, 13; 2Jn. 9; Col. 3:17.
  - a. "ye that work iniquity" = to work without law, without authority!
  - b. Silence of the Bible is to be respected, Acts 15:24; Heb. 7:14.
4. ALL unrighteousness, 1Jn. 5:17; (Rom. 1:16-17).
5. Unbelief, Jno. 3:18; Heb. 11:6; (Heb. 4:1-6).
6. Ignorance is no excuse before God! Acts 17:30-31; Gal. 6:7-8.

### II. WHO IS GUILTY OF SIN?

1. Those coming under any of the above things.....
2. ALL responsible men and women, Rom. 3:23; 1Jno. 1:8.
  - a. Infants are not responsible; NOT guilty; Deut. 1:39; Ezek. 18:20; Matt. 18:3 (1-5); Matt. 19:13-14.
3. Those not forgiven of sins committed in the past, Eph. 2:1.
4. Those forgiven in the past, but have fallen away, Ezek. 18:24, 26; Heb. 3:12-14; 2Pet. 2:20-22; Heb. 10:38!

### III. WHAT DOES GOD THINK OF SIN?

1. Turns his face away from those who sin, Isa. 59:1-2;
2. Will bring every sinful work into judgment, 2Cor. 5:10-11; Rom. 2:6-11; Heb. 2:1-3.
3. No sin or sinner can enter heaven, Rev. 21:7-8; 22:11-15.
4. God wants ALL to repent and be forgiven, (saved); 2Pet. 3:9.

### IV. WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF SIN?

1. Separation from God, Isa. 59:1-2; (Gen. 3:3, 6, 24)
2. Rom. 6:23, spiritual death!
3. To be without God = no hope, 2Jn. 9; Eph. 2:1-2, 12!
4. To be lost forever, 1Pet. 4:17-18; Matt. 25:45-46.

### V. HOW CAN MY SINS BE FORGIVEN?

1. There are two things necessary with reference to sin;
  - a. Freedom from the guilt of sin, Acts 3:19; 1Jno. 3:20-21.
  - b. To be released from the power of sin, Acts 26:18; Heb. 2:14-15; Rom. 6:12, 16.
2. Sins are recorded in the mind of God, Mal. 3:16-17. Therefore I need my sins erased from God's remembrance, NOT merely hide them from men or try to forget them without forgiveness! Heb. 4:13; Prov. 28:13.
3. Jesus is the only saviour, Heb. 9:22; Matt. 26:28; 1Tim. 1:15; Acts 4:12.

**CONCLUSION:** Our sins are washed away in the blood of Christ when we submit our will to his in obedience to his commandments!

Gal. 5:6; Heb. 5:8-9; Rev. 22:14; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16.

## SALVATION

**INTRODUCTION:** Before a person can be saved, he MUST first desire to be. This desire is produced by realizing one is lost in sin, without God, and needs to be saved! Rom. 3:23; 6:23. Jesus is man's ONLY hope, Matt. 1:21; Acts 4:12. He died for ALL men (Heb. 2:9) but all men are NOT saved. WHY? Because all men have not accepted Jesus on His terms.

Let us open the N.T. and review some case histories of individuals who heard the gospel preached and their reactions to what they heard. James said it was only through "receiving the word with meekness" that is able to save our souls, James 1:21. Jesus said it was through knowledge of truth that could set us free, John 8:32. Hence, let us set aside false and preconceived ideas and receive with meekness the word of God in an honest and good heart = salvation will be ours.

1. God's law of reproduction is "each seed bears after its own kind", Gen. 1:11-12.
2. The gospel is like a seed that is planted in the hearts of men, Luke 8:11; Matt. 13:19.
  - a. The fruit produced depends upon the condition of the soil (heart).
3. God's seed (word) planted in good soil (honest heart) produces proper fruit!

### I. WHEN THE WORD WAS PREACHED (PLANTED IN THE HEART) WHAT HAPPENED?

1. Some refused to listen and attacked the preacher, Acts 7:48-60. (mail man?)
2. Some were curiosity seekers, Acts 17:16-21.
3. One man troubled upon hearing, put off any decision, Acts 24:25.
4. Another man thought the preacher was crazy, Acts 26:23-25.
5. A king was "almost persuaded" but ..... Acts 26:26-29
6. Some, not knowing the truth, were very anxious to hear, Acts 10:33-35
7. Others were convicted of sin and wanted salvation, Acts 2:36-37.
8. **CAUTION:** Some hear, but allow the devil to take it away, Lk. 8:12; Rom. 10:17.

Which one of these represents my attitude toward the truth?

### II. WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE WHO HEARD, WERE CONVICTED, AND DESIRED SALVATION?

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. The Jews, <u>Acts 2:36-41</u> .        | 5. Paul, <u>Acts 22:16</u> .      |
| 2. The Eunuch, <u>Acts 8:35-39</u> .      | 6. Lydia, <u>Acts 16:13-15</u> .  |
| 3. The Corinthians, <u>Acts 18:8</u> .    | 7. Jailer, <u>Acts 16:25-34</u> . |
| 4. The Samaritians, <u>Acts 8:12-13</u> . |                                   |

### III. WHAT DOES BAPTISM HAVE TO DO WITH SALVATION?

1. Is for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38; 22:16.
2. In order to be saved, Mark 16:15-16.
3. An answer of a good conscience, 1Pet. 3:21 (free from sin = not guilty).
4. Shows our faith in God's operation, Col. 2:12.
5. Is obedience from the heart, Rom. 6:17-18, 3-5; (1Cor. 15:1-4)
6. Puts one IN Christ, Gal. 3:27 - where we are children by faith, v. 26.
7. Born again into the Kingdom, Jn. 3:3-5; 2Cor. 5:17.

### IV. WHAT IS BAPTISM? (ordained of God)

1. A burial, of a penitent believer, in water, for the remission of sins, Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:3-5; Acts 2:36-38; Acts 8:36-39.
2. This forever eliminates infants, unbelievers, impenitents as proper subjects for Bible baptism; and sprinkling or pouring as proper action!
3. The Corinthians upon believing the word were baptized, Acts 18:8; thus, they were washed, sanctified, and justified from sin, 1Cor. 6:9-11 (Acts 22:16).

**CONCLUSION:** In the first century, ALL children of God were the product of hearing the pure seed (word), allowing it to take root in honest hearts who were led to be baptized for forgiveness of sins. If we will receive the same word (seed) in honest hearts, believe it and turn to the Lord in baptism, as they did, we will become nothing more or less than they were: Christians (1Pet. 4:16); in God's church, Ac. 2:47.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

**INTRODUCTION:** This is a study of the Lord's church revealed in the New Testament and **NOT** about one of many modern day denominations in existence today.

It is regrettable that so many people have no true concept of this church because of religious instruction which neglects, ignores or gives out false teaching.

Let us now open our hearts and minds and allow God, in His word, to answer two very important questions vital to our salvation:

1. Is the New Testament church important ?
2. Is membership in THIS church of any consequence to us ?

### I. WHAT THE LORD'S CHURCH IS.

1. The term "church" comes from a greek word "ekklesia", meaning "the called out".
  - a. The general term can be applied to any group or body of people "called out and assembled" for any purpose. It was so used by the Greeks, and sometimes translated "assembly". Acts 19:32, 39
  - b. The Lord applied this term to His followers in the N.T. because it accurately describes them.
2. The followers of Christ have been "called out" from sin into a fellowship with God & Christ for spiritual service, hence the "church" - "called out".
  - a. This calling comes only through the hearing of the gospel, 2Thess. 2:14.
3. Another way of understanding the same thing is:
  - a. Men hear and learn the truth, John 6:44-45; Mark 16:15.
  - b. Jesus calls & invites those burdened with sin to share in a spiritual relationship with him, Matt. 11:28-30.
  - c. Those desiring to dedicate their lives in service to God, obey the message, Mark 16:16.
  - d. Through their obedience to the gospel they are saved from past sins and God adds them to the number of the saved = the church, Acts 2:41, 47.
4. The N.T. church then, is composed of obedient believers "called out" and known in the scriptures as the body of Christ, Col. 1:18; the family or house of God; 1Tim. 3:15; the kingdom of Christ, Col. 1:2, 13.

### II. HOW MANY CHURCHES DOES GOD HAVE?

1. The N.T. only reveals ONE, with Jesus as head, Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 4:3-6; 1Cor. 12:20.
2. This one church, because of geographical locations, is divided up into many local congregations ALL teaching and practicing the same doctrines, Rev. 1:4

### III. IS MEMBERSHIP IN THIS CHURCH IMPORTANT TO ME ?

1. This church is the house of God, God's family, 1Tim. 3:15
  - a. Being a member of the church is the same as being a child in God's family! Is it important to be a child of God? Eph. 2:19; Rom. 8:17.
2. This church is His spiritual body, Col. 1:18
  - a. Reconciliation takes place in the one body, Eph. 2:16; Col. 3:15.
  - b. ALL those reconciled unto God are in the body of Christ.
3. This church is the fulness of Christ, Eph. 1:22-23.
  - a. Since the church is the fulness of Christ, to be in Christ is to be IN the church. Is it important to be in Christ? 2Tim. 2:10
  - b. The way INTO one, is the way into both, Gal. 3:27; 1Cor. 12:13.
  - c. This is why Jesus is said to be the saviour of the body, Eph. 5:23
  - d. To be OUT of the church, is to be OUT of Christ!
4. This church is His kingdom, Col. 1:2, 13; Rev. 1:9.
  - a. Is it important to submit to Jesus as King? Luke 6:46. Then you MUST be a part of his kingdom as a citizen, Eph. 2:19; else a foreigner!

**CONCLUSION:** Jesus thought so much of the church that he DIED for her, Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25. This makes the church just as important as his blood, Heb. 9:22; Matt. 26:28. We can start glorifying God WHEN we become members of his body, Eph. 3:21; Acts 2:41, 47. WHY NOT NOW ? ?

## HOW TO IDENTIFY THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

**INTRODUCTION:** There are many divided churches in the world today ALL claiming to be "of the Lord", while the N.T. reveals only ONE. Col. 1:24; Eph. 4:4; 1Cor. 12:20. God hates religious division: 1Cor. 3:3-7; Js. 3:16-17; 1Cor. 1:10; Phil. 3:16-17. To which church then, should I become a member? This poses a BIG PROBLEM to the conscientious.

The solution = become a member of the Lord's church. But, which one is it, and how can I identify it?

The ONE church can be found in the same way the police would locate a missing automobile. There are several marks of identity. ALL of them must match! So it is with the Lord's church. **NOTE:** some of the marks which identify the ONE church!

### I. A NAME IDENTIFIES:

1. A bride takes the name of her husband, Gen. 5:2.
  - a. Any bride calling herself by another's name dishonors her husband!
2. The church is the bride of Christ, 2Cor. 11:2; Rom. 7:4; (Eph. 5:23-33).
  - a. The church being the bride of Christ wears a name that brings honor and glory to Christ. Isa. 63:19; Rom. 16:16; (Acts 11:26).

### II. THE ORIGIN: (When and where did the church start?)

1. Jesus is the builder & foundation of His church. Mt. 16:18; Heb. 3:3-6; 1Cor. 3:
2. The Kingdom & church are same institution. Col. 1:2, 13; Matt. 16:18-19.
  - a. Kingdom to come w/power; Mk. 9:1; Power to come w/ the Spirit, Acts 1:4-
  - b. The Spirit came in Jerusalem, the day of Pentecost, in A.D. 33. Acts 2:1-4, 47. THIS was the beginning, Acts 11:15; Isa. 2:2-3.

### III. THE PATTERN OF WORSHIP FOR THE CHURCH: (Heb. 8:5)

1. Pray to God through Jesus, Col. 3:17; 1Tim. 2:5.
2. Eating the Lord's supper, 1Cor. 11:23-26; on the first day of wk., Acts 20:7
3. Contribution on the first day of the week, 1Cor. 16:2; 2Cor. 9:7.
4. Singing, Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; vocal = sing / melody = heart; No mech. ins

### IV. THE WORK GOD HAS AUTHORIZED FOR THE CHURCH:

1. Preaching the gospel to ALL, 1Tim. 3:15; Rev. 22:17; Mk. 16:15.
2. Teaching members their duties to the Lord & the church, Mt. 28:18-20; He. 10:2
3. Relieving needy members in emergencies, Acts 11:29-30; 1Cor. 16:1.  
**NOTE:** Church action VS individual action, Js. 1:27; Gal. 6:10; 1Tim. 5:16.

### V. THE ORGANIZATION TO DO THIS WORK, AND CONDUCT WORSHIP:

1. Christ is the head, Eph. 1:22-23; He is in heaven, Eph. 1:18-21.
2. The church is organized into LOCAL congregations with overseers in each ONE!
  - a. Their authority is limited to the LOCAL church, Acts 14:23; 1Pet. 5:2.
  - b. Deacons were to be appointed as special helpers to overseers, Phil. 1:1.
  - c. Evangelists were to see that such men were appointed, Tit. 1:5; (1Tim. 3:1-2)
3. This is the ONLY organization thru which the church is to function under Christ

### VI. THE ONLY RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE IS THE NEW TESTAMENT:

2Tim. 3:16-17; 2Pet. 1:3; Gal. 1:6-9; 2Jn. 9-11; 1Pet. 4:11; Rom. 10:17; 2Cor. 5:7.

### VII. DOCTRINE OF SALVATION: (How to be saved and become a member).

1. MUST be taught the truth, Jn. 8:32; 17:17; Jn. 6:44-45; Heb. 8:10-12.
2. Faith by hearing the word, Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6; Jn. 8:24, 21; 20:30-31.
3. Repentance ( a change of mind) Acts 17:30-31; 2Pet. 3:9; Lk. 13:3.
4. Confession of your faith in Christ, Phil. 2:11; Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:36-37.
5. Baptized in water for remission of sins, INTO the church, Acts 2:38, 41;  
Mark 16:16; 1Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-27; Acts 2:47.

**CONCLUSION:** Look for the church that has these characteristics = BECOME A MEMBER!