

ATTEND THE CHURCH OF YOUR CHOICE?

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TEXT:

“Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:13-19).

Purpose: To help us view things through the eyes of God - not through our own eyes.

INTRODUCTION:

1) Jesus once prayed, "not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

(1) Think about that statement!

(2) In what setting was it first made—"Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and sore troubled. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here, and watch with me. And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:36-39).

(3) Jesus' prayer was for the Father's will to be done, not His own.

2) We live in a society where we have many, many choices (good).

3) But must realize, don't have the right to be wrong (murder, theft, etc.).

4) We have often heard or read, "Attend the Church of Your Choice."

5) Is this a Biblical concept? Can we Biblically choose the church we want, worship, religious activity, etc.?

I. DID ABEL OFFER THE SACRIFICE OF HIS CHOICE?

1) “And the man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with the help of Jehovah. And again she bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and

his countenance fell" (Genesis 4:1-5).

2) Why was Cain's sacrifice rejected? It wasn't pleasing to God - was not of faith!

(1) "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4).

(2) "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

3) Cain had the philosophy of offering his own choice as opposed to what God wanted! His choice was REJECTED.

4) Such an attitude is wrong, "not as Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 John 3:12).

II. DID NOAH USE THE WOOD OF HIS CHOICE?

1) "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch" (Genesis 6:13-14).

2) God didn't leave the details up to Noah -gave specific instructions-**gopher wood**.

3) "By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11:7).

III. COULD MOSES BUILD THE TABERNACLE OF HIS CHOICE?

1) Again, God gave detailed instructions, "And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the furniture thereof, even so shall ye make it" (Exodus 25:8-9).

2) "who serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned of God when he is about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount" (Hebrews 8:5).

IV. ARE WE SAVED BY "THE BLOOD OF OUR CHOICE"?

1) God has required blood as an atonement for sin, "And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). (just any blood? No!)

2) "for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto

remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

3) "knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot, even the blood of Christ:" (1Peter 1:18-19).

4) Song: "What Can Wash Away My Sins?.....**nothing but the blood of Jesus.**"

V. GOSPEL OF YOUR CHOICE?

1) "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live;" (John 11:25).

2) "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema. For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:6-10).

VI. ARE WE SAVED IN THE CHURCH OF OUR CHOICE?

1) "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:17-18).

2) "Salute one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ salute you" (Romans 16:16).

3) "far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:21-23).

4) "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:18).

5) "praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved" (Acts 2:47).

6) "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body" (Ephesians 5:23).

CONCLUSION:

1) We are to have , "the mind of Christ." "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an

equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8).

2) What was his mind? Obedience! "And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

3) God rewards those who obey.

(1) "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

(2) "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves" (James 1:22).

(3) "though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation;" (Hebrews 5:8-9).

4) It is not my (your) will, but God's.