

The Biblical Description Of The Christian Church

The Christian Church is accepted as a convention, this is not doubted or questioned.

But how many present-day Christians have ever searched the scriptures of the Christian Bible seriously to know what the Church is?

Matthew 16:13-18 [NIV] *“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’ They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ ‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.’”*

What was this rock that Jesus Christ was going to build His Church?

Peter’s inspired understanding of Who Jesus Christ was, Christ the Son of the Living God.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 [NIV] *“For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.”*

The “rock” that fed the “church in the wilderness” was Jesus Christ [**Acts 57:38; Exodus 17:6**].

1 Corinthians 3:11 [NIV] *“For no-one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*

Jesus Christ is the foundation of every Christian’s life, so is the foundation of the Christian Church.

The rock on which Jesus Christ was to build His Church was the Greek word “*pētra*” meaning a massive crag of solid rock, the Greek word for Peter is “*pētrōs*” meaning a small piece of rock or stone, certainly **not** suitable for a foundation.

When we understand from scripture recorded in the Christian Bible what the universal church is, then we can understand what a local Christian church fellowship should be.

The average local church is to a large extent a social organisation where well-intentioned people get together and know each other.

The people are drawn together by social events, which are harmless.

But when we understand what the universal church of Jesus Christ really is, these social events will become marginal, for they are **not** the purpose of the church.

If it is only these social events that hold the people together we do **not** have a church of Jesus Christ, we have something else.

The Christian Bible gives us clear illustrations of what the true Church that Jesus Christ founded really is.

First, the Church is the future bride of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ was a complete man with the nature of a man, but He **never** married. He could have, but did not.

Jesus Christ never married a daughter of a woman so that He could marry His whole Church, His bride.

Revelation 19:6-9 [NIV] *“Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: ‘Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.’ (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!”’ And he added, ‘These are the true words of God.’”*

Notice *“the bride has made herself ready”* and *“the righteous acts of the saints.”*

The church consists of all true and faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

The whole universal church is the bride of Jesus Christ and so each local church should be the bride of Jesus Christ in miniature, preparing themselves to be that bride.

Ephesians 5:22-29 [NIV] *“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no-one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church,”*

This illustration drawn from husbands and wives in a marriage relationship is applied directly without apology to Jesus Christ and His Church.

Just as a young man would **not** marry a dirty bride, so Jesus Christ will not marry a church that has *“stains or wrinkles or blemishes.”*

How does Jesus Christ accomplish this cleansing?

By the washing of the Word, that is the Word of God, the Christian Bible.

This process is part of the work of the Holy Spirit which Jesus Christ asked the Father to send, [**John 14:15-18**].

John 16:7-8 [NIV] *“But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:”*

These three things are essential for the true future bride of Jesus Christ to understand and accept as part her nature.

Convicted of sin and brought to a continual state of repentance.

Realise that only imputed righteousness is acceptable to God the Father, [**Isaiah 64:6; Romans 4:13, 16, 18-24**].

Understand we will all face the judgement of our future Husband as to our being acceptable as His bride, [**2 Corinthians 5:10-12**].

Galatians 5:22-26 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.”*

This personal and intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, [**Romans 8:9**], will produce in us these attributes that will make us acceptable to our future Husband, Jesus Christ.

Those people who look to God for approval **not** other people will show they are submissive to the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit, [**verse 26**].

There was a created man named Adam, and he was the first bachelor, and God asked Adam to name all the animals He had created.

Genesis 2:19-23 [NIV] *“Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called “woman”, for she was taken out of man.’”*

But Adam did **not** find the same nature in any of these animals because they had not been created in the “image” of God as Adam had been created, [**Genesis 1:26**].

So the Creator God, Jesus Christ, [**John 1:1-3, 14**], created a new human out of one of Adam’s ribs, and called her Eve, meaning one who would give life to all the human race.

When Adam came out of his sleep and saw Eve, he knew he now had a suitable helper.

1 Corinthians 15:45-47 [NIV] *“So it is written: ‘The first man Adam became a living being’; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven.”*

The Christian Bible speaks about a second Adam, Jesus Christ, He has a nature that is divine, God in the flesh.

Just as Jesus Christ had done with Adam, Jesus Christ submitted to the will of the Father and on the cross was put into a deep sleep of death and His side was opened up by the thrust of a Roman spear, [**John 19:34**] and out flowed blood and water.

From that water and blood God is washing, cleansing and preparing a bride worthy [suitable] for Jesus Christ.

From out of the side of the crucified Jesus Christ, God is creating a new race of human beings, the Immanuel race, that is a race that has the indwelling of God, through the Holy Spirit, the true Christian Church.

God is giving the very nature of Jesus Christ to His future bride by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit so that she will be worthy of Him.

Note that God took a bone from Adam’s side, next to his heart, and under the protection of his arm, that he might love her.

If you are a true disciple of Jesus Christ, then you are part of the future bride of Jesus Christ.

The true Christian is described in scripture, the Christian Bible, as the body of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-7 [NIV] *“Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.” ... “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”*

Different spiritual gifts have been given to various people in the Christian Church for its common good.

1 Corinthians 12:12-20 [NIV] *“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free, and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.”*

Many different parts but one body and the Head of this spiritual body is Jesus Christ, [**Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 1:18**].

Jesus Christ is head of the universal Christian Church and as our physical head directs all the rest of the body so Jesus Christ directs the true Christian Church, **not** any physical human being.

As the local Christian Church is a miniature of the universal Church so Jesus Christ is the Head of that body of His disciples, **not** the pastor, elder or bishop.

Before anyone can be part of a local church, the miniature of the universal Christian Church, they must first be in the universal Church.

We must enter this true universal Christian Church through a new birth.

John 3:3 [NIV] *“In reply Jesus declared, ‘I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.’”*

The Kingdom of God is the created family of God, just as we are born into the human family so we are born into the created spiritual family of God.

John 3:5-7 [NIV] *“Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’”*

This new birth is by the coming into our lives of the Holy Spirit to direct our lives.

To be born again we first have to die, how is this accomplished?

Romans 6:1-4 [NIV] *“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”*

Our old life dies in the waters of total immersion baptism as a symbol of what has happened in our minds and human spirit, [**Job 32:8**].

Romans 6:5-8 [NIV] *“If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the*

body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.”

Our old lifestyle is crucified so that we can then live with Jesus Christ as His wife.

The new heaven and earth that will come into being at the return of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of the firstfruits of God’s created family, [**1 Corinthians 15:12-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17**].

The wife of Jesus Christ, true disciples and born-again Christians, will be ruling the new world with Jesus Christ, [**Revelation 1:4-6; Revelation 5:10; 1 Peter 2:9-10**].

Revelation 22:17 [NIV] *“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.”*

Both the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, and the bride, the church, extend an invitation to all humanity to experience salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, this will be accomplished through a resurrection of all who have never even heard of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 20:11-13 [NIV] *“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.”*

A time when the true Christian Church, the bride of Jesus Christ, will open up the Christian Bible to all those resurrected back to human life.

The true universal Church will be preparing itself for this task by following the instructions that Jesus Christ gave them just before His ascension back to the throne of God the Father, [**Matthew 28:16-20**].