

## Semester 4 – Week 10 - Class 20

### THE MOST SOUGHT AFTER SECRET IN THE BIBLE

The Dictionary of Christianity in America says the U.S. is currently the home of more than 1,500 different churches, denominations, and religious societies. There are "more than 900 different Christian groups." Certainly you can see why many an average person might be confused about where to worship.

According to Christianity Today - General Statistics and Facts of Christianity there are approximately 38,000 Christian denominations in the world. This statistic takes into consideration cultural distinctions of denominations in different countries.

In fact people will say, "With all the different array of churches and with so many different church doors open, with each church preacher saying, 'This is the way, come follow us,' how can a person possibly be sure which church is the right church?"

A Times magazine article stated, "...new religious groups are exploding." Look at some of the names of these groups, "The Church of the Four Leaf Clover;" "The Church of the Fuller Concept;" "The Infinite Way;" "The Faithists;" "Pragmatic Mysticism;" and "Soulcraft, Inc." to name a few, with each claiming to have truth.

It's almost like picking a cereal based on its name. Billy Grahams or Presbyterian Muffin Flakes. The yellow pages also have what seems to be an endless number of churches. How should one pick a church?

Here's a question to ponder: "Does God have a people on earth today called, "His Church?" What is the most sought after secret in the Bible? Simply this — of all the thousands of churches, what church is the right church for these last days? What church would Jesus join if He came here to South Hill? What message would He start preaching?

If the sum total of all the wisdom of the ages is to find out which way God's leading so that we can follow the same path, certainly God would not leave us blind as to what the right path is!

Before we go any further, we should point out that God has His people in every nation, and in every denomination. But why do people attend so many different churches if the Bible only has one truth?

Why does a person go to the church they attend? If you ask a person, "Why do you attend the church that you do?" Many will answer, "Well my parents went there and we've always attended this particular church. In fact it's kind of a tradition in our family and we wouldn't possibly think about changing now."

That was the attitude of the Jews at the time of Jesus. "My father was a Jew, his father was a Jew, his grandfather and great-grandfather were Jews, and we have 1800 years of Hebrew tradition—that's part of our heritage. And if it was good enough for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, then it's good enough for me." And amazingly enough they rejected Jesus, and the advancing light that God gave, because their minds were locked into the traditions of what their fathers had done.

Simply because we've done something all of our lives isn't sufficient enough reason to do it now—simply because it's been the practice, the pattern, the family tradition.

Others may say that "I attend the church that I do because it's close to my house, and it's easy to walk there." Some say, "I'm a member of this particular church because I like the people who go there."

The reason to attend a church should not be that you have attended it all your life, or that it's close to your house, or because you like the people there.. There a better reason?

"There is but one inquiry to be made, namely, which is the true church? ... By solving this one question you will at once solve every question of religious controversy that has ever been or that ever can be agitated."

There is a hunger to know and discover truth. There is a hunger for genuine Christianity.

1 Timothy 3:15, **"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the (what?) truth."**

The only reason to attend any church is because you're profoundly convicted that that church is teaching all the truth of Scripture. The motto of the Christian should be "If God tells me in His Word, I'll follow it!"

John 8:32, **"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."** And ye shall what? **Know the truth!** Jesus says that you can know the truth. **"... and the truth shall make you"** what? **"Free!"** Free from what? Free from the sins and the snares of the devil.

The formula for finding truth is found in John 7:17, **"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself."** Jesus says, **"If any man will do his will..."** This is the crucial point; because it shows they have a teachable mind. Just say, "God I'm willing to make the necessary changes in my life."

There will be two classes of people at the coming of Christ—sheep and goats. Sheep will follow their Master while goats are always butting obstinately. They are in the "God says, but..." syndrome. People's attitudes will reflect either a sheep or a goat mentality.

Here's an important point: 'You do not go to the church to find the truth. You find truth by the Word of God. When you find the truth from the Bible, you look for God's church that teaches that truth.

Jesus said in John 10:27 **"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."** Jesus has got a lot of sheep out there, but only one fold. What fold? The fold that teaches and preaches God's message!!

Some say, "I thought all roads led to heaven, therefore all faiths were of God."

Ephesians 4:4,5 **"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord,** (900 faiths),No!, **ONE faith, one baptism,"** The Lord gives us one, clear, singular, message of truth, and it's OUR responsibility to study His Word and find out what it is!

But even though the Lord has His true believers scattered throughout the world, the Bible teaches that all through history God has had a true visible movement on earth, as a witness to all people.

Genesis 26:5, **"Because that Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."** God called Abraham, and he obediently kept the commandments of God. The Bible characterizes God's true movement, not by their size, but by their faithfulness.

Deuteronomy 7:6, 7 **"For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the (what?) fewest of all people:"**

Deuteronomy 7:9 **"Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and (what?) keep his commandments ..."** God therefore, chose Israel not because they were biggest but because they were faithful.

But Israel drifted away from God and began to worship idols. They disregarded God's Sabbath and intermarried with the heathen. In the book of Haggai near the end of the Old Testament there was a group, in Israel, a smaller group, that was still faithful.

Here at the end of the Old Testament, Haggai is one of the minor prophets, not minor because his message isn't important, but minor because his book isn't very long. Isaiah and Jeremiah had very long books, but Haggai had a much smaller book.

Haggai 1:12 Now here God coins a term. A term that describes those that have stood loyal, those that are obedient, and those that are faithful. **"Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the (what?) remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD."** What's that word? **"remnant" of the people,** What did they do? **obeyed the voice of the Lord.** The remnant obeyed then, and God is looking for the same now! God's people are characterized by their faithfulness, by their loyalty and by their obedience.

The question is this. In the New Testament, although a large number of Israelites rejected Jesus, did God have a remnant that remained loyal to Him and accepted the Messiah?

Romans 11:4, 5 **"But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time**

**also there is a (what?) remnant according to the election of grace."** A remnant! A group that is faithful and have not bowed down to the idols of the world. When the majority have apostatized against God, the remnant became the Christian Church.

The word remnant is from our English word remain. It means "the remaining ones." When the larger group rebels and drifts away from God, God calls out a smaller group that remains loyal and obedient.

Doesn't it make sense that in these last days of earth's history God would have a remnant that were loyal, faithful and obedient? In the last book of the Bible, written for the last generation of men and women who live on planet earth, the remnant is described. Let's look and see what Revelation tells us about them.

The Bible pictures God's church as a pure chaste woman; and the fallen church as a harlot. While the little horn power beast power, the papacy, would reign supreme for 1260 years, the Bible talks about the woman or the church fleeing into the wilderness during that time of persecution.

**Revelation 12:6 "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."**

We have previously studied that in Bible prophecy, a prophetic day equals one literal year! (Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34). The Bible predicted that during the period of the dark ages, persecution took place, and God's true church would be in the wilderness or in hiding. The papal power began to reign supreme in 538 AD. It reigned for 1260 years or until 1798.

In Revelation 12:14, 15 the Bible tells us, **"And to the woman, (the church), were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness (this is the 1260 year period from 538 to 1798) into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood."**

**Revelation 12:17 "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."**

God's church has been the object of Satan's attack. Since Jesus ascended to heaven, he could no longer attack Jesus directly, so he attacks Christ by attacking His church.

Does God have a remnant church on earth today? The Bible provides the answer. The book of Revelation gives the characteristics of the Remnant.

**1) They would have risen after 1798, after the 1260 years. From 538 to 1798 the church was in the wilderness. After the death of Christ and the disciples, compromise came into the church. The Biblical concept of remnant is a group of people who have survived calamity and have been faithful to God and His truth, especially amid a time of apostasy.**

The Bible clearly tells us what God's true church will preach in the last days. Revelation 14:6 **"And I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven. When God reveals an angel flying in mid-heaven, it is heaven's last day message going to the ends of the earth and it's a message that God considers to be very important.) "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people,"**

**2) So God's remnant church will preach the everlasting gospel (three angel's messages of Revelation 14:6-12).**

Notice Revelation 14:12 **"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."** Some say it's not necessary to keep the commandments of God but the Bible says that God would have a remnant that would keep the commandments of God. Obedience stemming from love in the heart is not legalism, it's loyalty.

**3) God's remnant people would love Jesus Christ with all their hearts, and be characterized by keeping the commandments of God.**

Revelation 14:7 **"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."** It is a call to worship the Creator. The true, last day church of God calls people to worship their Creator by remembering and keeping the same Bible Sabbath that Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jesus Christ, Paul and the

disciples kept. Christianity is following the life of Jesus. Genesis 2:3 **"And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."** Exodus 20:8-10 **"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day [is] the sabbath of the LORD thy God:"**

4) So God's Remnant Church will be keeping God's seventh day Sabbath.

Revelation 14:7 **"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come . . . "** 2300 years from 457 BC to 1844 AD.

5) The remnant church of God preaches that we are living in the judgment hour of earth's history. It would point men and women to 1844 and the significance of the start of the judgment. Here is the call to get ready for the coming of Jesus.

Also in verse 7 **"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him;"** God's last day message is a call to give glory to God. How do we give glory to God? The Bible says **"Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God."** 1 Corinthians 10:31. How we treat this physical body is important to God! The Bible says **"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."** 1 Corinthians 6:19,20.

God's church is leading men and women to glorify God in their bodies by calling them from alcohol and tobacco and unclean foods. The remnant church is calling men and women to consider their body as a temple which God desires to dwell in and to be done with those body destroying vices. The last day church of God would have high standards. In an age of accommodating religion where many churches don't ask you to give up anything sinful at all to follow Christ, the last day church of God would call people from any defiling substance, calling people to get ready to meet Jesus Christ.

6) The remnant church of God is preaching a distinctive health message.

Revelation 14:9-11. **"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive [his] mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, ..."** God's true church would preach the warning message differentiating between the true worship of God and keeping His commandments, and the rejecting of God by following the traditions of men. It is a call to worship the Creator and not to worship the beast. God's remnant church calls people from the beast power who has attempted to change the Sabbath and it warns them that the beast power will use the change of the Sabbath as the vehicle to unite all religions. God's church calls people from false worship and from the mark and traditions of man to the commandments of God.

7) Warns the world of the Mark of the Beast.

Revelation 12:17 **"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."** God would have a remnant, a group of people who would be characterized by two things: They, according to the Bible, keep the commandments of God, and they have something. What do they have? The testimony of who? **"The testimony of Jesus Christ."** The word "testimony" comes from the word meaning "witness." A witness gives a testimony. God's last day movement will be given a witness from Jesus. Now I wonder, what is this testimony or witness from Jesus Christ? John, on the Isle of Patmos, had an angel come down before him. And John fell at his feet to worship the angel. But the angel told him not to worship him. Why not? Revelation 19:10 **"I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."** God's last day church will keep the commandments and have the gift of prophecy.

8) Guided by the gift of prophecy. Like two great Bible co-ordinates that intersect on a graph to pinpoint an exact location, so these two Bible identifying marks go together to pinpoint God's true remnant movement.

Revelation 14:13 **"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."** Revelation's true message is that death is but a rest. This is our safeguard against being swept up in a world-wide movement of spiritualism. Ecclesiastes 9:5 **"The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, ..."**

Psalms 115:17 **"The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence."**

**9)** The remnant church will teach that death is as a sleep that continues until the resurrection at the coming of Jesus. It will not teach that men and women go to heaven immediately when they die because the Bible doesn't teach that. The Bible says the dead praise not the Lord. 53 times the Bible says that death is a sleep.

Have all these points come right out of the Bible? One of the most important questions that could be asked of any man or woman on planet earth: Are you a member of a church that is preaching the three angel's message and calling men and women only to Jesus as Lord, and our Savior who delivers us from sin; that was raised up after 1798; preaching the everlasting gospel message; that calls people back to faithfulness in keeping God's commandments; that is calling people back to the true worship of the Creator on the true Seventh-Day Bible Sabbath; that teaches that right now we are living in the judgment hour; that calls people from alcohol and tobacco and teaches holiness regarding our body temples; in other words, teaches a health message; that is guided by the gift of prophecy; that is clearly warning against the Mark of the Beast and enforced Sunday worship in the future; that teaches the truth about death, that death is but a rest until the resurrection? God's last day remnant church will meet all nine points. You find the truth by the Word of God. Jesus hands us these specifications and says "Go and find my people."

The true church will be an advent church. That is to say; it will be getting people ready for the second advent of Jesus.

Revelation 14:14 **"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle."**

This true church teaches men and women that Jesus is coming soon and that: 1. Christ's coming is literal; 2. Christ's coming will be personal; 3. Christ's coming will be visible; 4. Christ's coming will be audible; 5. Christ's coming brings a resurrection; 6. Christ's coming will be glorious; 7. Christ's coming will be climatic; 8. Christ's coming will be decisive.

**10)** The remnant church will preach the soon second coming of Jesus and the manner of His coming.

Revelation 14:8 **"And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."**

God's remnant church will not exist solely for the purpose of simply presenting information but it is to appeal to men and women of every religious persuasion who don't know the truth about God's Word to make a decision.

Revelation 18:2, 4 **"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen ... Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."**

Come out of her. Come out of whom? Babylon! Come out of those bodies of false confusing religion. That's what spiritual Babylon is—religious confusion. We are not left in doubt as to what God would have us do. The Lord says "Come out of Babylon. It's fallen.

**11)** The remnant church will call people out of Babylon.

To whom will God's church preach these messages? Revelation 14:6 **"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."**

Matthew 24:14 **"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."** It is a worldwide mission.

**12)** The remnant church will be a world-wide church with a world-wide message.

Now let's review the 12 points of identification of God's Remnant Church:

1. Rises after 1798.
2. It spreads the everlasting gospel.
3. It preaches loyalty to all of God's commandments.
4. It keeps God's 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath.
5. Teaches that the hour of God's Judgment has come.
6. Gives glory to God through a health message
7. Warns the world of the Mark of the Beast
8. Has the Testimony of Jesus/Spirit of Prophecy
9. Teaches the truth about death being a sleep until the resurrection.
10. Teaches the truth about Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.

11. Calls people to come out of Babylon.
12. A world-wide church with a world-wide message.

We talked about what God's remnant church is. Now let's look at what it is not: God's Church is NOT in the majority. God's Church is NOT the most popular. God's Church is NOT the most spectacular. God's Church does NOT need the approval of popular religious leaders. TRUTH is TRUTH whether religious leaders accept it as truth or not!

Which Church? Which one meets all 12 points for God's Remnant church? In the final days of Earth's history, there is to be 1 remnant, with 1 message, resulting in 1 group of faithful Christians ready for Christ's return.

This Revelation message is being preached around the globe. If you go over to the Philippines, or Korea or any of over 200 countries and you step into an Adventist church and they're holding meetings like this, you'll hear the same message. This message is being preached around the world today. Since there are many faithful Christians in other churches and since God has only one true remnant What will happen to these sincere Christians?

Christ puts it this way in John 10:16 **"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."**

One Lord, one faith, one baptism. The Bible and the Bible only.

In the days of Noah the people cherished a false sense of security. And the destruction of the world in the days of Noah is a solemn prototype of the fate of Earth's last generation. Noah preached an uncompromising, unpopular, undiluted, solemn message of warning to a generation of people who had lost sight of morality, fidelity and righteousness. What made Noah different than the other people of his day?

Hebrews 11:7 **"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, (what did he do?) HE MOVED!! He did something about it!! He "moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; ..."**

Would you have gotten into Noah's ark? If we see truth today, and don't respond by action, we wouldn't have responded then either. And that would be a sad realization wouldn't it?

This is what God is again looking for in the time of the end. When God sounds the storm warning, He wants people to do something about it. To move! There's preparation to be made. Truth to follow.

Jesus is calling in John 10:27 **"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."**

Proverbs 4:18 **"The path of the just is as the shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day."**

Noah and his family went into that ark a minority but guess what? . . . God made sure that he came out of it a majority!! We are living in the last days of earth's history. God is shining the full searchlight of scripture upon this age. You and I have greater opportunities to learn from the scriptures than our parents ever had. We must not only know the gospel, but God calls us to join the believers who take this gospel message to all the world. Literally thousands upon thousands, indeed millions, are awakening to this message God has for His people. Men and women of all faiths, men and women of all creeds, are responding to God's call. Men and women whom Jesus is leading in a special way are taking a step in their lives.

Acts 2:47 **"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."**

Acts 5:29 **"Then Peter and the [other] apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."**

John 14:15 **"If ye love me, keep my commandments."**

End Semester 4 – Week 10 - Class 20

**The Next Class** Semester 4 – Week 11 - Class 21 **"Prophets and Prophecy, Visions and Dreams"**

# **The Following Class**

Semester 4 – Week 11 - Class 22

“The Unpardonable Sin”