# What is the Church Model?

​And why it can't be an organisation

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​​This paper examines the structural model Christ left the Church to follow. Most Christians believe that the natural progression is to find a religious organisation that espouses what they think is true and then join it. But is that what God wants, and is this the precedent Christ established? Here are a few of the questions we tackle:

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* What are the offices of the Church?
* Did Christ intend the Church to operate as an organisation or an association?
* Should it elect a leader?
* Should the Church have a centralised point of power or authority?
* Should the Church claim tax deductions on tithes or offerings?
* Recognising Korah's modern-day rebellion
* What is the spiritual meaning behind building the Tower of Babel?

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We find the answers throughout the Bible, line upon line, here a little, there a little (Isa. 28:9-11).

We must not only have the courage and fortitude to seek God's word regarding these matters, but also have the conviction to accept scripture as our only source of truth and obey it.

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## (1) Called Out of This World

​Figuratively, the Church is often described as the body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16-17,12:12-13, 27; Eph. 1:22, 4:4; 5:23; Col. 1:18, 2:19, 3:15).

Col. 1:24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.

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Eph. 4:11-13 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

​Individuals, not members of a specific religious organisation, compose the Church (Isa. 55:3; Mat. 11:28; Lk. 6:47-48; Jn. Chapter 9; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3; 1Cor. 12:27).

The word "church" is derived from the Greek word 'ekklesia' (Strong's Greek Dictionary (SGD1577)). It refers to an 'assembly' of people, a (religious) congregation, that has been called out of this world (of darkness) into the body of Christ. It does not refer to a building, temple, or organisation incorporated by the State

The term 'Christian' was first used to describe the disciples of Christ in Antioch (Acts 11:26; cf. Acts 26:28).

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## (2) Hearing God's Calls

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Through His grace, God calls us to be saved through faith. We cannot earn or deserve it by our works (Rom. 3:22-24; 1Cor. 1:27-31).

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Eph 2:8-10 BSB  For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God,  (9)  not by works, so that no one can boast.  (10)  For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance as our way of life.

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God, the Father, begins by opening our minds to His Will, Word and truth. He grants us an understanding of what sin is, how it separates us from having a right relationship with Him, and that the wages of sin is death (Prov. 28:9; Micah 3:4; Isa. 1:15, 59:2).

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Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In loving kindness, God causes us to experience godly sorrow, which leads to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). God then leads us to His Son, Jesus (Jn. 6:65; cf. 6:39).

Jn. 6:44 BLB No one is able to come to Me unless the Father, the one having sent Me, draws him, and I will raise him up in the last day.

We come to find Jesus is our appointed saviour, redeemer, brother, Apostle, high priest and king (Heb. 2:7 & 2:11-14; 3:1, 5:5, 6:20; 9:11; Mat. 25:40, 28:10; Jn. 8:54, Jn. 1:49, 20:17; Jer. 23:5-8; Micha 5:2; Eph. 1:7; Job 19:25; 1Cor. 7:23, 1:30).

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Heb 2:17 ESV  Therefore he had to be made **like his brothers** in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful **high priest** in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. (Emphasis added).

Heb 9:11 BSB  But when **Christ** came as **high priest** of the good things that have come, He went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made by hands and is not a part of this creation. (Emphasis added).

God chose Jesus from amongst his companions (Ps. 45:7; Heb. 1:9) to be the Passover lamb on our behalf for our sins (Jn. 1:29; 1Cor. 5:70; Heb. 9:28).

Christ paid the ultimate debt, laying down his life for us (Heb. 10:12; 1 Cor. 10:16, 15:3; 1Jn. 2:2).

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Heb. 9:14-15 TCENT  how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?  (15)  That is why he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

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Christ's unblemished sacrifice paid the bill for our indebtedness, which we amassed when we lived contrary to God's will (1 Jn. 2:2).

Col. 2:13-14 NET  And even though you were dead in your transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he nevertheless made you alive with him, having forgiven all your transgressions. (14)  He has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross.

Thus, anyone who desires a covenant relationship with the One True Everlasting God can only do so through Jesus, God's appointed Messiah. For Christ alone is the way, the truth, and the life.

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Jn. 14:6 BSB Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. **No one** **comes to the Father except through Me**. (Emphasis added)

## (3) Called to Repentance and Baptism

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We have all been called to undertake baptism into the body of Jesus as an outward sign that we have acknowledged that our sinful behaviour warranted a (death) penalty, one that we could not pay (Acts 10:38, 19:3-6; Rom. 6:22-23) and seek forgiveness for our sins.  It also signifies that we acknowledge and accept Jesus as our appointed Lord and Christ. (The word Christ comes from Christos, a Greek word that means “the anointed one” or “the chosen one").

Acts 2:36-38 BSB Therefore let all Israel know with certainty **that God has made** this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ!”  (37)  When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and asked Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”  (38)  Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Emphasis added).

Acts 3:19-20 BSB  Repent, then, and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped away,  (20)  that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus, the Christ, who has been appointed for you.

Gal. 3:27-28 TCENT  For all of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.  (28)  There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

The undertaking of baptism also carries with it the symbolism that we desire to bury our former way of life that was contrary to the Will of God.

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Rom. 6:3-13 BSB Or aren’t you aware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?  (4)  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 walk in newness of life.  (5)  For if we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection.  (6)  We know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.  (7)  For anyone who has died has been freed from sin.  (8)  Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him.  (9)  For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again; death no longer has dominion over Him.  (10)  The death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God.  (11)  So you too must count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.  (12) Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its desires.  (13)  Do not present the parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and present the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness.

We now have a strong longing to live a new life in Christ that aligns with God's perfect will (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:1-14, 8:5-8; Rev. 12:17, 14:12).

Rom 6:20-23 BSB  For when you were slaves to sin, you were free of obligation to righteousness. (21)  What fruit did you reap at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? The outcome of those things is death.  (22)  But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the fruit you reap leads to holiness, and the outcome is eternal life.  (23)  For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thus, we see infant baptism as invalid. The concepts of sin, repentance, acknowledging, accepting, and following Christ, as well as the expected fruits of the spirit, are beyond the comprehension of an infant.

We should also take into account that baptised members of the body of Christ are required to consume fermented wine and unleavened bread during our annual Passover observance, as they symbolise Christ's body. Additionally, participation in the foot-washing ceremony is mandatory when two or more baptised members are gathered before the Passover symbols, i.e., the bread and wine, are consumed. For more details, see the paper, '*The Passover of the New Covenant.*

Having been fully immersed underwater, the person then has hands laid on them by a baptised member of the faith for the receipt of God's holy spirit (Mar. 1:9-11; Acts 8:26-40; Heb. 6:2).​

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Acts 19:3-6 TCENT So Paul said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John's baptism.”  (4)  Then Paul said, “John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Christ Jesus.”  (5)  On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.  (6)  And when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. Emphasis added).

Acts 8:14-17 TCENT  When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John.  (15)  These two went down and prayed for the Samaritan believers to receive the Holy Spirit,  (16)  for the Spirit had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of Christ Jesus.  (17)  Then Peter and John laid their hands on the Samaritan believers, and they received the Holy Spirit. (Emphasis added).

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## (4) Identifying the Early Church

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The early Church (believers) were identified by their location (Acts 5:42, 16:13; Rom. 16:1, 1Cor. 1:2; 2Thes. 1:1).

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Col. 4:15 (ESV) Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

They fellowshipped at believers' houses and even beside the seaside (Acts 5:42; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:15,19; Col. 4:15; Phil. 1:2).

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Biblically, the early Church model (i.e., assembly of people) operated autonomously, free from a centralised hierarchy and/or the control of one man. Each Church has the right to self-governance within the bounds laid down by Christ and the early disciples. None of this has changed. We will see that this is the model we are to observe until Christ's return.

The early church continued to maintain a monotheistic identity of God that Israel was given (Deut. 6:4; Mk. 12:29-30; John 17:3; Rom 3:30; 1 Cor 8:4; Gal 3:20; Eph 4:6; 1 Tim 2:5, 6:16; Jas 2:19). They did not believe or perpetuate that God was a trinity or three gods in one. That ideology infiltrated the Church over the next three centuries, culminating at the Council of Constantinople in 381 CE. At this council, God's holy spirit (the means or power in which He does all things) was redefined as a separate personage or entity.

Since Christ had been elevated (contrary to scripture) to co-eternality and co-equality with God the Father at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, the redefining of God’s power into a separate personage in 381 CE enabled a triune godhead to be created.

The early Church held that Christ was (a) Lord, but like King David, understood that their Lord (Christ), was inferior to '**The** Lord' (God, the Father) (Ps. 110:1).

Mat 22:41-45 BSB  While the Pharisees were assembled, Jesus questioned them:  (42)  “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is He?” “David’s,” they answered.  (43)  Jesus said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord’? For he says:  (44)  ‘**The Lord** said to **my** Lord, “Sit at **My** right hand **until I** put Your enemies under Your feet.”’  (45)  So if David calls Him ‘Lord,’ how can He be David’s son?” (Emphasis added).

Jn. 17:3 BSB  Now this is eternal life, that they may know **You**, the **only true God**, **and** Jesus Christ, whom **You** have sent. (Emphasis added).

Christ himself stated that the Father is greater than he (Jn. 14:28) and that he submits his will to that of his Father (Ps. 40:8; Jn. 4:34, 5:30; Mk. 14:36). Christ also prayed to God, his Father, and instructed everyone to direct their prayers to the Father only (Mt. 6:9; Lk. 11:2). A being who is the God does not pray to oneself or another being, for He is the object of worship. Christ recognised the Father as his God in the same way his disciples did.

Jn. 20:17 BSB  “Do not cling to Me,” Jesus said, “for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go and tell **My brothers**, ‘I am ascending to **My Father** and **your Father**, **to My God and your God**.’” (Emphasis added).

For more on God's true identity and the relationship between Him and His Son, Jesus, see the paper, *'Who is God?'*

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## (5) Continuing In the Law

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The disciples and early church continued to walk in the ways of our Lord in observing the Law of God (Mat. 5:17-19, Jn. 8:29, 8:55, 15:10; cf. Rom. 3:31; 1Jn. 2:3-6; 1Cor. 11:1, 17:9; Col. 2:16; cf. Jn. 14:15, 21).

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1Jn. 5:2-3 ASV  Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments.  (3)  For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

2Jn. 1:6 BSB  And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the very commandment you have heard from the beginning, that you must walk in love.

The disciples kept the food laws and observed God’s Sabbaths, New Moons and Holy Days as found in the word of God (Lev.  Chap.11 & 23; Exod. 20; Deut. 16; Amos 8:5; Isa. 66:22-23; Num. 10:10; 28:11; 1Sam. 20:5; 2 Ki. 4:23; 1 Chron. 23:31; 2 Chron. 2:4, 8:13, 33:3: Ezra 3:5; Ezek. 45:17, 46:1-6; Isa. 1:13, 66:23; Hos. 2:11; Neh. 10:33; Col. 2:16; Acts 11:1-18, cf. Isa. 66:15-17; Rev. 18:2; 1Jn. 3:4).

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The disciples and early Church kept the weekly (Saturday) sabbath (Acts 13:13-14, 42, 16:11-13, 17:2, 18:1-3).

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The disciples and the early Church kept God’s Holy days, feasts and New Moons (Lk. 23:56; Acts 2:1, 20:16, 27:9; 1Cor. 11:20-34, 1 Cor. 5:7, 1 Cor. 16:8; cf. Col. 2:16). See the paper, '*God's Biblical Calendar for* more information.

## (6) What Are the Offices of the Church?

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To be regarded as an Apostle of Christ, it was accepted that one had to have been given the call of God personally by Christ, taught by him directly, and seen him alive after his resurrection (Acts 1:17, 22, 25).

The other offices made available to the Church were elder and deacon (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 3:8-13; Phil. 1:1).

It was commonly understood that there were to be multiple elders in each respective Church (given the eligibility (Titus 1:5-9)). For this reason, when elders are referred to, it is usually in the plural (Acts. 11:30, 14:23, 15:4, 15:6, 15:22-23, 20:17, 20:28; 1Pet. 5:1).

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Titus 1:5 (ERV) I left you in Crete so that you could finish doing what still needed to be done. And I also left you there so that you could choose men to be elders in every town.

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Elders of a Church are there to assist the brethren. They help keep the peace (Acts 15:1-2), pray for others (James 5:14), teach others (1Pet. 5:1-4) and lead by example (Phil. 3:17; 1Cor. 4:16, 11:1). They should be able to feed the flock of God with a ready mind, and not for power, authority, control or monetary gain (1Pet. 5:3). It is not to be viewed as a glorified position, but as a serious undertaking before the Lord. Rather than seeking to be clothed in vanity, pride and the authority to exercise lordship over others, we should instead clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 13:14).

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​Elders are not granted the power or authority to oversee State, national, or international geographical areas. Nor was an elder given authority over another elder (cf. 3 Jn. 1: 9-11). Thus, this also invalidates the concept of a 'governing body' or board of Directors as having authority and oversight over the Church as a whole.

Elders were sometimes referred to as bishops, pastors, or overseers of the flock. Thus, the same rules apply to the role of pastor or bishop as they do to the role of elder.

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​Everyone was part of the process when important decisions had to be made.

Acts 15:22 (EMTV)  Then it seemed best to the apostles and the elders, together with the whole church, to send men being chosen from them to Antioch, together with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers. (Emphasis added)

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Not one letter the apostles wrote to the early Churches singled out one person and addressed them as the sole leader of any church, anywhere, at any time. They addressed letters to the entire Church (Rom. 1:7; 3Jn. 1:9; 1Cor. 1:2).

​Rom. 1:7 (ESV) To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

​Our Lord instructs us not to assign ourselves spiritual titles such as 'Rabbi' or 'Father.' These titles denote spiritual superiority and sovereignty over others.

God placed His Son, Jesus, as the head of the church, and we are all to look to him as our leader and listen to him (Jn. 18:37; Mt. 17:5; 28:18; Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:18).

So, there are many parts, but only one body (1 Cor. 12:20), and Christ is the head of the body (1 Cor. 11:3).

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Let's not forget, the disciples, **BEFORE** they were converted, when they were **amongst themselves**, argued as to which of them was greater (Mk. 9:33-35). When left to ourselves, our carnal mindset seeks to establish a pecking order, i.e., a hierarchical order of power and dominance. Jesus, as we see, continually shut down this thought process and instructed his followers that it would not be so among us (Lk. 22:24-27).

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Mat. 20:25-28 (LITV) But having called them, Jesus said, You know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship over them, and the great ones exercise authority over them.  (26)  But it will not be so among you. But whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.  (27) And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your servant;  (28) Even as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Christ came as a servant- one who serves, not one who is served (Isa. 42:1; Phil. 2:7; Mar. 10:43-45; Jn. 13:1-5). We are to instruct and build each other up as brothers and sisters in the faith. Scripture tells us to serve and submit to one another (Gal. 5:13; Phil. 2:3; Rom. 12:10; Eph. 5:21; 1Thes. 5:11; Gal. 5:14).

Rom. 12:10 TCENT  Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Take the lead in honoring one another.

Arguing, playing politics, stacking boards, bullying or dominating people, removing people from positions who could not be manipulated, seeking leadership or being unwilling to relinquish leadership, power, control, etc., all come from a carnal mindset. It is the spirit of this world.

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## (7) Make him King

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There was a time in Christ's ministry when he perceived that the people were about to come and take him by force to make him King. His disciples likely got swept up in the crowd's desire to make Christ king also. But Christ withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

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Jn. 6:14-15 (ESV) When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!"  (15) Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself. (emphasis added)

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Christ was not willing to accept the role of a King or leader of Israel as a man by the people in this present age. Christ withdrew to the mountain by himself to prevent it from taking place.

By his example, Christ showed his followers that we are to forsake the honours and powers of position this world offers regarding the Kingdom of God to come.  Our focus should not be on electing a (temporal) leader or being elected to that position in this age. We are to avoid falling victim to this trap and deception.

It is important to note that after Christ's ascension, not one of Christ's disciples brought up the issue as to which one of them, or anyone else for that matter, should be appointed leader of the Church. Christ's message and example finally got through to all of them. **They all saw Christ as the only leader of the Church upon his ascension**. No one dared elevate themselves above his brethren or comrades (cf. Ps. 45:7). It was completely and unanimously understood and never questioned again by the disciples.

In the face of scripture to the contrary, if Christ truly did want someone to lead to Church after his ascension, he could have easily placed the leadership of the church in someone else's care, similar to when he placed his earthly mother in the care of John just before his death (Jn. 19:27).

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## (8) Christ - The Only Leader

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​In light of the scriptures, if Christ truly intended for someone to lead the Church after his ascension, he could have easily entrusted the leadership of the church to someone else, just as he entrusted his earthly mother to John just before his death (John 19:27).

​Christ deliberately made no provisions for someone else to head the Church in any capacity once he ascended to Heaven. This was not an oversight by Jesus; he did this on purpose. It was to prevent men from arguing and contesting over a position they were not entitled to. It also ensured that Christ held the position of leader of the Church in Heaven and on earth.

No one other than Christ can lay claim to the head of the Church on earth or in heaven (cf. Isa. 9:7; Phil. 2:9; 1Cor. 3:1-9; Eph. 1:22-23).

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Mat. 28:18-20 NET  Then Jesus came up and said to them, “**All authority** in heaven **and on earth** has been **given to me**.  (19)  Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,  (20)  **teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you**. And remember, **I am with you always**, to the end of the age.” (Emphasis added)

Jesus said he would personally build or edify the church, saying, “I will build my church” (Mt 16:18).

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1Cor. 3:11 ESV  For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Yet, despite these proofs, there are still men in the churches today who have appointed themselves the position, supposedly, the role of leader of God’s Church!

Christ is the only one ordained by Almighty God to be appointed to and lay claim to the position of leader of the Church. To compound their delusional sin of grandeur even further, they have assigned themselves titles befitting that position and responsibility. Some titles include Pastor General, Co-ordinator General, Chief General, Pope and President.

​​After the great commission of making disciples of all nations through baptism, our Lord also said, "*teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you*". By issuing that statement, Christ emphasised that he is not only the head of the Church but remains the only leader of the Church here on Earth as well.

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We must not be deaf to Christ's words to simply follow him (Mat. 4:19, 8:22, 10:38,16:24, 19:21; Jn. 10:27, 12:26).

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Christ said, “*And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age*.” Christ is with each one of us. His abiding presence constitutes the continual role of our leader.  '*Always*' does not mean only once he returns. Christ’s ascension into heaven did not annul his position as leader of the Church on Earth; it magnified it.

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## (9) Wanting to Be a Leader in the Early Church

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In one of his letters, we read that the Apostle John draws attention to one person who saw himself as a leader. It revealed how easily power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

3Jn. 1:9-11 (GW)  I wrote a letter to the congregation. But Diotrephes, who loves to be in charge, won't accept us.  (10)  For this reason, when I come I will bring up what he's doing. He's not satisfied with saying malicious things about us. He also refuses to accept the believers we send as guests. He even tries to stop others who want to accept them and attempts to throw those people out of the congregation.  (11)  Dear friend, never imitate evil, but imitate good. The person who does good is from God. The person who does evil has never seen God. (Emphasis added)

Many of us have also witnessed church “leaders” who have refused entry to some people and barred others from fellowshipping with the group for questioning false teachings or doctrinal discrepancies. Some leaders have even kicked out individuals without disclosing the reason why. The congregation is then warned not to talk to anyone who has been unceremoniously removed. Many leaders also hinder the opportunity for redress or an open hearing.

Once the original decentralised Church model has been distorted and replaced by a centralised, hierarchical framework, we see how easily issues and accusations are handled with bias. In many cases, proceedings are nothing more than a kangaroo court.

Spiritually, this rejection of John still takes place today by those who make themselves the leader of a Church or are appointed to that position. These 'leaders' still refuse to accept John (or any of the other apostles, even Christ himself) by refusing to listen to their instructions on how the Church is to function.

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2Ti. 3:16-17 MKJV  All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,  (17)  that the man of God may be perfected, thoroughly furnished to every good work.

The Apostle Paul states we are all God's fellow workers (1Cor. 3:9). We should recognise that by following a man or an organisation, we are still of the flesh and "*even now you are not yet ready*".

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1 Cor. 3:2-5 ESV  I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. **And even now you are not yet ready**,  (3)  **for you are still of the flesh**. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?  (4)  **For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human?**  (5)  What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. (Emphasis added)

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## (10) Kingdom Not of This World

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When Christ was on trial, he said plainly, "***My kingdom*** *is* ***not*** *of* ***this world***" and "...***my kingdom*** *is* ***not from******the world***".

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Jn. 18:36 (ESV) Jesus answered, “**My kingdom is not of this world**. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. **But my kingdom is not from the world**.” (Emphasis added)

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It is essential to understand that once we incorporate a Church, it now becomes part of this world and '***from*'** the world. It is now party to a contract, be it a (working) legal relationship with the state, and ultimately under the authority of Satan, who is the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4).

Every Church registered as an organisation does so under the permission, issuing and legislating **of this world**. Thus, there is no getting around the fact the Church that Christ established cannot operate as an incorporated body. Anyone can belong to an organisation, but only those who listen to Christ's voice belong to the truth.

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Jn. 18:37 BSB  “Then You are a king!” Pilate said. “You say that I am a king,” Jesus answered. “For this reason I was born and have come into the world, to testify to the truth. **Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to My voice**.” (Emphasis added)

The chief priests, out of envy, delivered Christ up to the State. Figuratively, the "chief priests" represent the leaders of organisations today who have also delivered the body of Christ, the Church, to the State to seek incorporation by the State. By seeking incorporated status by the State, organisations can seize the power and authority given only to Christ (cf. Mat. 27:18; Acts 13:45; Rom. 1:28-32).

Mar 15:9-11 BSB  “Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” Pilate asked.  (10)  For he knew it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over.  (11)  But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas to them instead.

*​*​As we progress, we see the parallels between the organized religious groups of Christ's day and religious organisations today. This is discussed in further detail under section 25 of this study, 'He Who Has An Ear Let Him Hear'.

## (11) Thy Kingdom Come

When we examine Christ's model prayer, we see another example of how the Church is not to establish a centralised power base with a hierarchical power structure (Mat. 6:10; Lk. 11:2).

It says, "... ***Thy******Kingdom come****, Your will be done*...".

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"*Thy Kingdom Come*". Firstly, this implies a choice.

We see from Cain that man would seek to establish his own version of the Kingdom of God that would compete for the hearts and minds of men concerning eternal salvation. And how would one distinguish between the Kingdom of God that our Heavenly Father is about to introduce and the one that man has already done? The answer: Truth, by necessity, incorporates submission to His timing (2Sam. 7:28; Ps. 119:160; Jn. 17:17; cf. Jn. 15:3; Eph. 6:12).

The model prayer reminds us to centre our thoughts on God and His future Kingdom. It highlights that the only truly divine hierarchical kingdom we can look forward to is the one that God Himself will establish, especially upon the return of His Son. It's crucial to acknowledge that this kingdom has not yet been established in this era and will not be.

Christ is instilling in us that a working model or organisational representation of the Kingdom of God cannot be established before his return.

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Mat. 12:50 ESV  For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

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If we try to supersede God's timing in this matter, we no longer abide and submit to the Father and His "*Will be done*". We are now following our own will, being self-willed (cf. Acts 13:22; 1Jn. 2:17; Esp. 6:6).

Scripture tells us, '*Do not be conformed to this world*'. In regards to the Church, this relates to the use of a (centralised) hierarchical form of governance here on earth. Instead, we should be transformed by the renewing of our minds, aligning our thinking to that of God and His Son. Then, we will be able to test and approve what is good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Rom, 12:2 BSB  Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

## (12) Overcome the World

Overcoming the world is a prominent theme of the Bible (Jn. 16:33; 1Jn. 5:4; Col. 3:2).

This world wants us to believe that we should take things into our own hands (cf. Gen. 3:1-24) and desire a (centralised) hierarchical working model of the kingdom of God in this present age.

Spiritually, it parallels the taking of the fruit of good and evil and the rejection of the tree of life, namely, Jesus Christ. Satan tempts the Church in the same way he tempted Eve, the wife of the first Adam (Gen. chap. 3). He plays on the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1Jn. 2:16).

Satan leads us to believe organisations are good for food because they are a great way to produce and amass spiritual sustenance via a matrix of media platforms. We allow ourselves to be fooled into thinking that organisations are also pleasant to the eyes in that we look virtuous and that we appear to be the instrument or vehicle God is using here on earth. Thirdly, organisations are made to appear desirable in making one wise in that we think we can set up a centralised incorporated structure that mimics God's kingdom here on earth now and that we have the means and understanding of attaining salvation as long we pledge our loyalty to it.  We think it is also wise to elect another man other than Christ to lead the Church in the interim period despite the fact Christ said he is head of the Church in heaven and on earth (Mat. 28:18).

So, how can we say we love the children of God if we enslave one another in a matrix of hierarchical captivity and systems and structures that the Lord condemns (Gen. 11:1-9)? Our love for one another is expressed by our love for God and the keeping of His Commandments.

1Jn 5:2-5 BSB  By this we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments.  (3)  For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome,  (4)  because everyone born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world: our faith.  (5)  Who then overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Everyone born of God overcomes the world. And it is by our faith we overcome the world and have victory. This involves-

1. Staying strong in the face of the devil's attempt to tempt us to eat the forbidden fruit of power, wisdom, and influence that (incorporated) organisations offer.
2. Remaining loyal and faithful to Christ as the only leader of the Church, following only him.
3. Waiting on Christ and the Kingdom of God to come, setting our minds on the things above, not earthly things below (Col. 3:2).
4. Keeping ourselves from being polluted by the world, i.e., seeking incorporation by the State (James 1:27).

## (13) Thou Shalt Not Covet

Exod. 20:17 NET  “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Covetousness, the strong desire or eagerness to obtain and possess something without regard to law or justice, also applies to the Kingdom of God.

When we look at the 10th Commandment from a spiritual standpoint, in this context, thy neighbours' house, which we are commanded not to covet, is the House of God. Only upon our resurrection to spirit beings will we be given far-reaching responsibilities and oversight. The belief that we can claim and exercise some of those responsibilities now, within an incorporated body licenced by the State, not only breaches the 10th Commandment but all the Ten Commandments one way or another on a spiritual level.

The '*male servant,*' so to speak, whom God appointed to rule over His House is Christ (Mat. 12:15-21; Zech. 3:8; Isa. 49:3). The spirit of covetousness, in this instance, is in wanting Christ's position, power and authority, and the establishment of what is essentially a competing kingdom.  The neighbour's wife, spiritually, is the Church, Christ's bride.

Many religious organisations boast because of their sheer number of members and/or the size of their operations. Having carved such a prominent place in this world has left many feeling on top of the world. But what good is it for someone to gain the whole world yet forfeit their soul? (Mark 8:36).

Thus, any involvement in establishing, supporting (be it financially or doctrinally), participating in, or running a centralised hierarchical incorporated Church model is a breach of the 10th Commandment.

## (14) Wanting to Be Like the Most High

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Satan sought to raise his throne above all the angelic beings, including Christ, and make himself like the One True God, the Most High.

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Isa. 14:12-14 BSB  How you have fallen from heaven, O day star, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the ground, O destroyer of nations.  (13)  You said in your heart: “I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God. I will sit on the mount of assembly, in the far reaches of the north.  (14)  I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”

In creating their own kingdom **now**, along with establishing their own ruler on earth, with doctrines and calendars to match, those running organisations have also made themselves like the Most High in executing and defining truth, power, authority, and the plan of salvation. It is truly one of the greatest deceptions Satan has pulled over the Church.

Many organisations claim that people must join them, seeing themselves as having power, authority, and legitimacy from on high. In doing so, they have literally made thrones for themselves above the stars of God, including Christ’s, and made themselves *'like the Most High*'.

## (15) Korah's Modern-Day Rebellion

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We should also note the correlation between wanting to establish a working hierarchical organisational model of the Kingdom of God now to that of following Cain's example, what Balaam did, and Korah's rebellion (Numbers Chapter 16).

Jud. 1:10-11 CEV  But these people insult powers they don't know anything about. They are like senseless animals that end up getting destroyed, because they live only by their feelings.  (11)  Now they are in for real trouble. They have followed Cain's example and have made the same mistake that Balaam did by caring only for money. They have also rebelled against God, just as Korah did. Because of all this, they will be destroyed.

Korah accused Moses and Aaron of exalting themselves above the congregation of the Lord. He did not recognise or respect the authority God had given them.

Korah led a band of 250 prominent leaders throughout the congregation in defying Moses and Aaron, both of whom were confirmed of God by outward signs and miracles. Compare;

Act 2:22-23 LEB  "Israelite men, listen to these words! Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—  (23)  this man, delivered up by the determined plan and foreknowledge of God, you executed by nailing to a cross through the hand of lawless men.

Samuel Barth, in his article, '*The True Sin of Korah'*, makes an interesting observation.

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*It seems to me that the greatest failure and transgression of Korah was not that he raised concerns—or even challenges—to the leadership of Moses, nor that he raised questions about the leadership structures emerging among the Israelites. The sin of Korah was in thinking of himself as “outside the community”; he betook himself and his followers from being part of the People of Israel, and they became a faction, catalysts for further factionalization.*

*Later, this theme seems to recur as we read, “But as the community gathered against them, Moses and Aaron turned towards the tent . . . ” (Num. 17: 7).*

*​*

*The Hebrew verb for “gather” is hikahel, from the same Hebrew root as the word kahal/kehillah, which means “congregation.” So the phrase might be translated as “the community congregated against them.” Korah has now served as a catalyst to encourage his followers to become their own “splinter congregation” against Moses and the People. This is not just a group within the community that possesses different views or a different style, but one that is formed for the main purpose of active opposition, even active destruction. The initial action of Korah, who betook himself from being a member of the People of Israel, has grown into an insurrection, a poison in the midst of the community that is so negative it leads to the destruction, by God, of all involved.*

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Korah and those who followed him were drowning in envy, jealousy and pride. Their lust for power and prominence gave rise to them establishing their own '*splinter congregation*' against Moses and the people. They clearly disregarded God's plan and rejected His appointed leader. This is no different to those today in the congregation of spiritual Israel who have established their own '*splinter congregation*' or be it '*faction*' under the guise of an (incorporated) hierarchical organisation.  They, too, have chosen to disregard God's plan and reject Christ as their sole leader here on earth. They, like Korah and those of the initial rebellion, feel adamant that they, too, are more than capable of leading the congregation with one of their own at the helm.

It is worth reading the entire letter written by Jude as he addresses this great falling away from the faith and our need to keep the faith and defend it.

Do not be deceived; the day of the Lord **has not come**, that is to say, operationally, when we are gathered together under one centralised working model of the kingdom of God, under one leader. However, it is crucial to recognise that Jesus alone is that leader, and we should not be looking to another man to centralise our efforts while waiting patiently for the Lord's return.

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2Thes. 2:1-3 BSB  Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being **gathered together** to Him, we ask you, brothers,  (2)  not to be easily disconcerted or alarmed by any spirit or message or letter seeming to be from us, alleging that the Day of the Lord has already come.  (3)  Let no one deceive you in any way, for it will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness—the son of destruction—is revealed. (Emphasis added)

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Every religious organisation believes they are the operational side of the Kingdom of God here on earth now, with Christ taking over the helm upon his return. In waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to come, they feel they have been given the responsibility and authority to see its (worldwide) implementation and oversight and persuade people to gather together under it.

## ​(16) In Spirit and In Truth

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God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

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​Jn. 4:19-24 ESV  The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.  (20)  Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.”  (21)  Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.  (22)  You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.  (23)  But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.  (24)  God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Christ says those who would worship God would neither worship on 'this mountain nor in Jerusalem'. This is very interesting because biblically, mountains are symbolic of kingdoms, governance, power, strength, and immovability (Isa. 2:3; Rev. 17:9).

Added to this is, Christ did not address her by name. Jesus addressed her only as '*woman*'. Thus, we may conclude that Christ is also getting us, the Church, to consider what is being spoken of from a spiritual standpoint.

Biblically, a woman is a symbol of the Church (Gen. 37:6-10; Pro. 31; Jer. 6:2; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23; Rev. 12, 19:7). Thus, the spiritual message we can construe is that those whom we follow(ed) and look(ed) up to as spiritual guides, 'our fathers' so to speak, all worship(ed) on their own religious mountain, i.e., religious organisation.

Christ is showing us that we are not to get caught up in that type of thinking, where we debate which mountain (which, in this case, represents an organisation) we belong to and worship with. Thus, the true Church of God is not identified with any organisation or denomination. It is made up of individuals who have been called out from among them to worship God under the direct leadership of Christ in spirit and truth.

## (17) Christ Separates his Flock

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Christ tells us that a reason he came was to create division, namely, with the sword of truth (Mat. 12:34; cf. Rev. 6:4).

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Lk. 12:51-53 ESV  Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.  (52)  For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three.  (53)  They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

One of Christ’s roles is to cause a separation between us and our (spiritual) fathers, i.e., leaders of organisations and the organisation itself, and that would include its ministry. This then expands to include an incorporated Church as a whole, again symbolised by a woman or a daughter. Jesus separates us from our spiritual mother, namely, the harlot religious organisation or one of her many daughters that we were either born into or joined.

God is spirit, and those who worship Him MUST worship in spirit and “in truth”. Christ is making it plain that the true worshippers will be outside the bounds of religious organisations because they, i.e., organisations, “are of this world” and “from this world”. They are purely the construct of man, established on a Babylonian-Egyptian hierarchical system, electing one of their own, in place of Christ, to be head of his Church on Earth. God does not ordain these structures, nor do they play any part in His plan of salvation, as we will discover in part 22, '*The Significance of the Tower of Babel'.*

​

​Most organisations today, in relation to how they determine God’s calendar, specifically the first day of the month, have chosen to worship still, as it were, on the mountain of Jerusalem, literally. Many organisations use what is referred to as the Hillel Calendar. Another calendar, which has gained some traction, is known as the ‘temple calendar’. Both calendars determine the first of each month according to the astronomical sign of the new moon, according to the ‘physical mountain’ of Jerusalem only.

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​Thus, this decision, in some instances, requires some to forego or postpone their local astronomical new moon so as to have the same calendar day for the first day of the month as Jerusalem. This, by necessity, creates two calendars. There are now those who observe the local astronomical new moons for the determination of the first day of the month and those who don’t. This is simply another ‘golden calf’ or ‘god’ the congregation demanded of its ministry to '*make*'.

God established only one calendar for all humanity, and there are no choices or options in this matter. There aren't multiple versions of the truth, faith, or body of Christ. God’s calendar is to be observed the same way by everyone, everywhere.

Eph. 4:4-6 (ESV)  There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—  (5)  one Lord, one faith, one baptism,  (6)  one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Emphasis added)

The body of Christ is no longer tied to the physical temple in Jerusalem. As members of the body of Christ, we are the Temple of God (1Cor. 3:16-17, 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21). Therefore, each person not only has the right but the duty to **determine the start and end of** **each day, weekly Sabbath**, and the **start of each month** by their **local** astronomical signs.

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​1 Cor. 3:16-17 KJV Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?  (17)  If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

If any person defiles the temple of God, which we are, by observing a false calendar, such as the ‘Temple Calendar’ or ‘Hillel Calendar’, God shall remove that person. See the paper, '*God’s Biblical Calendar–Understanding how to determine God's day, months and the first day of the year'.*

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## ​(18) Tax Deductions for the House of God?

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Let's be clear: God does not want His Church to seek a tax-exemption status from the state or be able to claim deductions on tithes and/or offerings. The House of God is a house of prayer, not a house of business.

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Mat. 21:13 (MKJV)  And He said to them, It is written, "My house shall be called the house of prayer"; but you have made it a den of thieves.

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We, as the Church, spiritually, make up the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5; 1Cor. 10:17, 12:27; Eph. 4:12; Heb. 13:3). From Christ's example, the Church should uphold and demonstrate the utmost reverence for God in His House. We are not to profane God's Temple with money dealings, such as claiming tax exemptions or tax deductions on tithes from the state. Christ did not lay down his life so we could profit from him.

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Satan is ready to offer financial incentives in the form of tax deductions or exemptions to anyone willing to betray Christ to him via the State. This deception is so calculating and subtle that those claiming the deduction see it as a benefit of following him and are blind to the severity of their betrayal.

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This mindset is spiritually more inclined to Judas Iscariot, as it has nothing to do with our Lord and Master.

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Mar. 14:10-11 KJV-BRG  And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.  (11) And when they heard it, they were glad, **and promised to give him money.** And he sought how he might conveniently betray him. (Emphasis added)

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It should be disturbing to see how unmoved the church is about selling Messiah, and everything he lives and died for, to the state, all for the lordly price of a few pieces of silver in deductions (Matthew 26:14, 15; compare Zachariah 11 verse 13). Do not be deceived; God is not mocked (Gal. 6:7).

Our Heavenly Father does not look favourably on us having this type of friendship with the world (2 Cor. 6:14; 1Pet. 5:8; Mat. 6:24, 7:13-14).

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Jas. 4:4 (ERV) You people are not faithful to God! You should know that loving what the world has is the same as hating God. So anyone who wants to be friends with this evil world becomes God's enemy. (Emphasis added)

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Christ, who is at our head, established the Church. Thus, no man has the right to go beyond what Christ established and take control and register his spiritual body with the state (1 Cor. 11:3).

Every one of the 'plants' that our heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted (Mat. 15:13; Ps. 127:1).

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## (19) God's Kingdom Does Not Come With Observation

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The Pharisees questioned Christ as to when the Kingdom of God would appear.

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Lk. 17:20-21 KJV And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: (21) Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. (Emphasis added)

Christ stated, 'The kingdom of God does not come with observation". It is not, and cannot be, an incorporated body that one can point to and say, "Behold, so and so organisation is "THE" Church and it’s headed up by Mr so and so'.

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What we should take away from this statement, at the very least, is that no Church organisation may claim it is an operational representation of the Kingdom of God now and that somehow, it is merely holding the reins until Christ returns.

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Scripture tells us that God does not dwell in temples made with hands.

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Acts 7:48-51 MKJV  But, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says,  (49)  "Heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool. What house will you build Me, says the Lord, or what is the place of My rest?  (50)  Has not My hand made all these things?"  (51)  O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit. **As your fathers did, so you do.** (Emphasis added)

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## (20) Christ Refused Power and Authority In This Age

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The devil showed Christ all the kingdoms 'of this world' and their glory and offered them all to him on the condition that he fall down before him and worshipped him.

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Mat. 4:8-10 (ESV) Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.  (9) And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”  (10) Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’” (Emphasis added)

Satan offered Christ a shortcut to power, position, and glory without the need to undergo any more trials, perfecting, or even death (Heb. 5:9).

Christ rejected every opportunity for sinful gain, power, or advancement in this age. We, like Christ, must also wait on our God to commence His Kingdom. Upon our resurrection and conversion, will be when our place and position will likely be revealed to us. Even Christ said to the mother and her two sons born to Zebedee that to sit at his right and his left hand is not his to give, but to those for whom it was prepared by his Father (Mat. 20:20-23).

What many people don't realise is that the temptation to offer Christ the Kingdoms of the World did not end there. The devil still offers the same temptation to the Church, the body of Christ today. We no longer refer to them as kingdoms; they are more commonly referred to as religious organisations.

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For many, the temptation to be part of a kingdom (i.e., religious organisation) and, in some cases, exercise power and authority in them now is just too hard to resist.

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Rev. 14:12 ESV Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. (Emphasis added)

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The Church, as the body of Christ, will be tested similarly to that of our Lord. We, like Christ, have been called to resist accepting power and authority from Satan in this age. We have been called to patiently endure, keep the commandments of God, and keep our faith in Jesus. Any office we should look forward to is in the kingdom to come when Christ returns.

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Satan has deceived the Church into thinking it can and/or should establish an image of the Kingdom of God now, on earth, without having to wait on the Lord God to send Christ. Like Jesus, we are all being tested as to whether or not we, too, are willing to wait patiently on God's promises and timing.

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Psa. 110:1 (ESV) A Psalm of David. The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.” (Emphasis added)

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## (21) The Wealthy Young Man

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Similarly to Ancient Egypt, many organisations today have riches or treasures that attract many people. They build walls to insulate themselves and have an abundance of spiritual food on offer in the form of booklets, magazines, sermons, videos, teaching lessons, etc., that no one ever has to go hungry or search for again. All the hard work is done for them and delivered to their door, literally. We also note that some organisations pay their ministry handsomely.

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Some religious organisations' treasures also extend to owning grand halls, media networks, and other social programs, such as schools.

Some view the sheer number of people that belong to the organisation as a reflection of its wealth. For this reason, they attract people who long for a sense of inclusion and community. In some cases, people seek to join them in their Feasts and festivities, despite the fact they do not agree with their doctrines.

In many ways, being asked to leave any or all these riches parallels the young, rich man with whom Christ asked to sell his property and come, and follow him (Mar. 10:17-22). Interestingly, Luke notes him to be a 'ruler' (Lk.18:18-23).

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Mat. 19:16-24 LITV  And, behold, coming near, one said to Him, Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?  (17)  And He said to him, Why do you call Me good? No one is good except One, God! But if you desire to enter into life, keep the commandments.  (18)  He said to Him, Which? And Jesus said, "You shall not commit murder, nor commit adultery, nor steal, nor bear false witness,  (19)  honor your father and your mother," and, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (20)  The young man said to Him, All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?  (21)  Jesus said to him, If you desire to be perfect, go sell your property and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow Me.  (22)  But having heard the Word, being grieved, the young man went away, for he had many possessions.  (23)  And Jesus said to His disciples, Truly I say to you that a rich man will with great difficulty enter into the kingdom of Heaven.  (24)  And again I say to you, It is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. (Emphasis added)

Symbolically, the wealth or property spoken of today could be the stake people have in their organisation. It could be in the security, community, and confidence it provides. Many have invested years, even decades, in building relationships, friendships, reputations, positions of power and authority, and a wealth of knowledge related to what their organisation preaches.

Sadly, not many would be willing to part with all these "riches" to follow Christ. For many, the thought of having to start all over again, of having to question everything they know, to learn and unlearn things, often in isolation, is too high a price to pay.

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No doubt, there will be those who read this study and, having learned what organisations symbolise and represent, will be grieved yet continue to remain with their organisation of choice.

Christ tells us our focus should not be on storing treasures for ourselves on Earth. Instead, he tells us to store treasures for ourselves in heaven, where they can’t be destroyed or stolen. Our hearts will be where our treasure is.

We cannot serve God and wealth (Mat. 6:19-24). Interestingly, the word wealth (SGD 3126) is most often translated as mammon. It means confidence (figurative wealth, personified); the same type of confidence some people have in their organisation.

## (22) The Significance of the Tower of Babel

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Hopefully, we have started to grasp how establishing a working representation of the Kingdom of God in the form of a centralised, hierarchal incorporated structure is playing right into the hands of Satan.

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When we delve into the origins of religious organisations, we actually find it was Cain. In his unwillingness to be a fugitive and wanderer, living a life of humility and servitude similar to that of Abraham and Christ himself, Cain chose instead to leave the presence of the Lord and build his own city.

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Gen 4:16-17 BSB  So Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.  (17)  And Cain had relations with his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain built a city and named it after his son Enoch.

Eventually, that rebellious attitude spread wholesale, with everyone wanting a piece. The spiritual blueprint of this mindset is given to us in the eleventh chapter of the Book of Genesis. We see that the building of these spiritual towers has not stopped. In fact, one could say business is booming.

​

Gen. 11:1-4 ESV  Now the whole earth had one language and the same words.  (2)  And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. (3) And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.  (4)  Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”

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We see just as the people then were of one language; today, it is reflected in the way (mainstream) Christianity uses the Bible as their source of religious language. Every organisation uses the same scriptures, words, phrases, themes, etc., such as faith, Sabbath, obedience, Law, and baptism, though each one applies its own interpretation and application.

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The people, who sought out a flat plain in the land of Shinar, are akin to splinter groups today that seek a fresh start, a clean slate, so to speak. There are many reasons for this, such as being disgruntled as to how their former organisation was being led, or the person leading it, or how its funds were being (mis)managed, and/or the lack of transparency, or how badly people were being treated. The list goes on and on.

And to this very day, these same people are still trying to make a "*name for themselves*". The most common way today of doing this is by registering their organisation with the State. This usually involves choosing a name that implies they are the 'Church of God' or the 'body of Christ', magnifying their legitimacy in the eyes of others.

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We also note that just like the people of Ancient Babylon, people today still do not want to be dispersed over the face of the earth. Like their forefathers, people today go about and elect their "mightiest hunter" to be their leader. They then follow suit and establish a centralised power base. Soon enough, everyone falls in line and concedes to submit to the leader's authority. If anyone disagrees with the leader or questions his decisions, it is not long before they find themselves removed unceremoniously.

We read in Genesis that the Lord had to come down from heaven to see the city and the tower "that the people had started building".

Gen. 11:5-9 NET  But the LORD **came down** to see the city and the tower that the people had started building.  (6)  And the LORD said, “If as one people all sharing a common language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be beyond them.  (7)  Come, let’s go down and confuse their language so they won’t be able to understand each other.”  (8)  So the LORD scattered them from there across the face of the entire earth, and they stopped building the city.  (9)  That is why its name was called Babel – because there the LORD confused the language of the entire world, and from there the LORD scattered them across the face of the entire earth. (Emphasis added)

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We note that the Lord had to come down from heaven to see the city and the tower the people had started building. This highlights that this city and all that it has spawned today have not been sanctioned, authorised or approved by God. It is accepted that it was Christ who came down to see what the people had started building (which continues to this day). It is clear Christ was not leading or part of this spiritual movement. Christ did not know them.

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Mat 7:21-23 BSB  Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father in heaven.  (22)  Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’  (23)  Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness!’

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Psa. 26:4-6 BSB  I do not sit with deceitful men, nor keep company with hypocrites.  (5)  I hate the mob of evildoers, and refuse to sit with the wicked.  (6)  I wash my hands in innocence that I may go about Your altar, O LORD,

Luk 13:22-28 BSB  Then Jesus traveled throughout the towns and villages, teaching as He made His way toward Jerusalem.  (23)  “Lord,” someone asked Him, “will only a few people be saved?” Jesus answered,  (24)  “Make every effort to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able.  (25)  After the master of the house gets up and shuts the door, you will stand outside knocking and saying, ‘Lord, open the door for us.’ But he will reply, ‘I do not know where you are from.’  (26)  Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.’  (27)  And he will answer, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you are from. Depart from me, all you evildoers.’  (28)  There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves are thrown out.

What we can take from this is that no organisation up till now has ever reached the pinnacle of heaven, so to speak, regarding attaining recognition, legitimacy, power, or authority from the throne room of Almighty God.  Even though they will say to Messiah '*We ate and drank with you*' (symbolic of the Passover symbols of the bread and wine which must be taken) and use Christ's teaching in their (city) streets, Christ will answer, '*I tell you, I do not know where you are from. Depart from me, all you evildoers.’*

For those who take part in spiritual Babylon, we can perceive that God still confuses their language, specifically regarding truth and salvation. That is a reason why so many organisations are not able to understand one another. They all have their own "language", so to speak, i.e., doctrines, calendars, observances, traditions, etc., that they themselves understand clearly. But as soon as they talk to someone from another organisation, they have trouble understanding them! That is why, for some, listening to someone from another organisation all sounds like gibberish.

It is this spiritual environment God called Abraham to leave behind. It is no accident that the calling of Abraham begins in the next chapter of the Book of Exodus.

## (23) Abraham Looked Forward To Spiritual Jerusalem

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Upon hearing the call, Abraham obeyed and went to a place where he did not know where he was going. By faith, he resided as a foreigner in a land of promise, living in tents.

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Heb. 11:8-10 LITV  Having been called out by faith, Abraham obeyed to go forth to a place which he was going to receive for an inheritance; and he went out not understanding where he went.  (9)  By faith he resided as a foreigner in a land of promise, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the joint-heirs of the same promise;  (10)  for he looked forward to a city having the foundations of which the builder and maker is God.

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Even after Abraham arrived in the promised land, he remained a tent dweller. He didn’t establish his own city or take one over. He did not require people's tithes and offerings to be given to him, and then he spent them as he saw fit. That's what was taking place in Babylon and Egypt. These are just some reasons why God called Abraham out of Babylon and calls us out of spiritual Babylon/Egypt today.

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We should make a note that once Abraham reached the promised land, he never entered another city built by a man again. That has profound spiritual significance and implications for us today.

Abraham, along with his son and grandson, all lived in tents. Even our Lord did not have a permanent place he called home once he commenced his ministry (Mat. 8:20). It is to demonstrate that we are to be content merely being spiritual sojourners in this world and that we are to resist establishing any sort of religious governmental headquarters, i.e., organisations, associations, etc. Where two or three are gathered together in his name, Christ is in their midst (Mat. 18:20). As we can see, it is not dependent on being a member of any organisation.

## (24) Do Not Make For Yourself Idols

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The Third Commandment tells us not to build for ourselves images that are in heaven above or the earth below (Exod. 20:4). Establishing a version of the Kingdom of God, now, on earth, no matter how good one believes their intentions are, is just that, an image of the Kingdom God will implement on the return of Christ. Thus, it becomes an idol. In doing so, he takes the Lord's name in vain (Exod. 20:7), usurping the power, timing, and position of both God and His Son.

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When we compare the state of the church today to the people of Abraham's time or Ancient Israel, we see that we have not progressed as far as we might like to think.

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God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:24; Deut. 1:17, 10:17; 2Chron. 19:7). Because so many churches today have followed the model Cain has set up, God has done what He forewarned and has taken them back to (spiritual) Shinar, where it all began. Because they disbelieve the truth and delight in wickedness, God has sent them a strong delusion so they believe the lie (2Thes. 2:9-12).

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Zech. 5:1-11 (CEV) When I looked the next time, I saw a flying scroll,  (2)  and the angel asked, "What do you see?" "A flying scroll," I answered. "About thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide."  (3)  Then he told me: This scroll puts a curse on everyone in the land who steals or tells lies. The writing on one side tells about the destruction of those who steal, while the writing on the other side tells about the destruction of those who lie.  (4)  The LORD All-Powerful has said, "I am sending this scroll into the house of everyone who is a robber or tells lies in my name, and it will remain there until every piece of wood and stone in that house crumbles."  (5)  Now the angel who was there to explain the visions came over and said, "Look up and tell me what you see coming."  (6)  "I don't know what it is," was my reply. "It's a big basket," he said. "And it shows what everyone in the land has in mind."  (7)  The lead cover of the basket was opened, and in the basket was a woman.  (8)  "This woman represents evil," the angel explained. Then he threw her back into the basket and slammed the heavy cover down tight.  (9)  Right after this I saw two women coming through the sky like storks with wings outstretched in the wind. Suddenly they lifted the basket into the air,  (10)  and I asked the angel, "Where are they taking the basket?"  (11)  "To Babylonia," he answered, "where they will build a house for the basket and set it down inside."

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This scroll is spiritually in the midst of every religious organisation today. And there is no one to blame for this except ourselves. We, individually and collectively, have brought this upon ourselves because we have followed in the ways of Cain. This punishment is just and it will be indeed painful. The pain will be so bad it will pierce our hearts. (Mat. 8:10-12, 24:50-51, Jer. 13:25, cf. Mat. 22:1-14).

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We have all spent time in spiritual Egypt and Babylon. During our spiritual captivity, God used it to refine us. But we are by no means to remain in Babylon, under the yoke of man, enslaved, paying tribute in the form of tithes and offerings to grow and expand a man's Kingdom, which is in rebellion against God.

Rev. 18:4-5 LITV  And I heard another voice out of Heaven saying, My people, come out of her, that you may not share in her sins, and that you may not receive of her plagues;  (5)  because her sins joined together, even up to Heaven, and God remembered her unjust deeds.

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God wants us to come out of these Babylonian-stylised religious organisations with a shout of joy, and declare that He has redeemed His servant Jacob (Isa. 48:12-22).

## (25) He Who Has An Ear, Let him Hear

Today, we watch incorporated religious organisations battle it out amongst themselves as to which one of them thinks they have the ultimate power and authority (cf. Mat. 24:6-7). Some organisations even dare claim they possess 'the candlestick' of authority. There are not one, but seven candlesticks, each one representing a spiritual Church (Rev. 1:20). And the only one in possession of any sort of candlestick of power is Jesus, the Messiah. He alone holds all seven churches in his hand.

Rev. 2:1 “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of Him who holds the seven stars in His right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands.

A sign that one has progressed and developed into the Church of Philadelphia, in spirit, is that we finally reject man's many versions of the Kingdom of God, namely, incorporated organisational structures, here on earth. We now sojourn under no identifiable name. We fellowship with like-minded individuals who are not beholden to the traditions of man and/or any of the calendars that emanate from a man and/or an organisation. Now, we only yoke ourselves to Christ, and only follow him; we no longer allow another man to be at our head other than Christ, nor have power or precedence beside or above God the Father (Exod. 20:1-16).

Rev. 3:7-13 (ESV)  “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.  (8)  “‘I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.  (9)  Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.  (10)  Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.  (11)  I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.  (12)  The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.  (13)  He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

If we have ears to hear, the entire message to the Philadelphia Church is a stern rebuke to anyone who takes any part in religious organisations. Christ is the holy one, the true King, High-priest and Messiah. It is he who has the key of David, akin to the so-called 'candlestick of power' and not a man, or his organisation.

Christ is the one who opens and closes at his discretion. Though many of us have been shown the door by our previous organisations so to speak, Christ has set before us an open door that no one is able to shut.

Christ says to his faithful, "*I know your works*." This is in direct contrast to having to come down from heaven to see the works of men in relation to the cities and towers they are building (cf. Gen.11:5). It is this small group of faithful believers that Christ has set an open door, which no one is able to shut access to him or his God.

Christ also acknowledges we '*have but little power*'. We are merely sojourners, salt of the earth. We don't have the power or reach of organisations. Yet, by remaining outside of them, we keep his word and do not deny his name, as our Lord, leader and King.

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Christ then declares that belonging to an organisation is akin to the synagogue of Satan. Organisations tell their members they are spiritual Jews, specifically the body of Christ. Our Lord tells us they are not. They will come to know Christ loved those who despised the riches of spiritual Egypt and what this world offers.

Christ states, "*To the one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.*" Christ brings us full circle. We need to ensure we don't get conquered or captured by one of these cities (i.e., organisations of Cain) or the ideology or theology of its mightiest hunter, i.e., leader.

Rather than playing a part in a man's organisation, with the fear that the leader can remove them at any time, Christ is making the distinction we will be made a pillar in the temple of his God. No man will have to power to threaten, intimidate, castigate, move or remove us from the body of Christ.  This should be of great encouragement to all those who have been removed, kicked out, or ostracised from their former organisation/association for wanting to only worship God, keep His Commandments, follow His Son, Jesus, and keep his words and faith in him.

To drive the point home, Christ says he will write the name of his God, and the name of the city of his God, the new Jerusalem, on us. All this, as well as his new name. This is to distinguish between those of us who have remained brandless, so to speak, in this world, who refuse to be identified by a man's city or organisation, and thus, by default, take on the name of its leader at their head.

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Christ ends by encouraging us to continue looking forward, that the city that is prepared for us comes down from his God, from heaven, up above, and not below, from the earth where men build theirs.

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## (26) Let the Dead Bury the Dead

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Our allegiance should not be to the spiritually deceased. We must not be afraid to follow Christ. We should have the courage to leave it all behind and not look back.

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Mat. 8:21-22 (Darby) But another of his disciples said to him, Lord, suffer me first to go away and bury my father.  (22) But Jesus said to him, Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.

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For those still in, connected to, or remotely tracking organizations via their calendar, doctrines, etc., it is time we repent and turn to God.

Now that we have come to see some of the spiritual idols the Church has made and worships, we have the duty to guard ourselves from them.

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1Jn. 5:21 (LSV)  Little children, guard yourselves from idols! Amen.

End.