

# THE LONE RANGER

Last Sunday, November 5, I watched some TV before heading out for church. I was already dressed and my tie was on straight, so I thought I would catch more on the Iraqi verdict of Saddam Hussein. Satisfied, I began to channel surf.

One after another, the stations went by, until I saw this masked man riding a horse on a beach. Being a horse man, myself, I stopped to see what the message was. The announcer said, "Like the Lone Ranger, too many self motivated people, with a lot of ability, think they can serve God without going to church.

In the next shot, the camera cut to a young man. "Pastor," he said, "I'm pretty satisfied with Jesus as the Son of God, but I don't think I am ready to commit to baptism."

It was time to go. I clicked the off button, grabbed my Bible and left for the assembly. I had to go, I'm the Pastor. But, much more than that, I'm no Lone Ranger when it comes to serving God. I learned, many years ago, that I need the church to learn about worship and service. The church is the Lord's house; an assembly of spiritual members, making up the Body of Christ.

No, I'm no Lone Ranger. And, my sidekick isn't an Indian - she's my wife, who knows what "Kemosabe" means. When it comes to defining the church, we must set aside our personal thinking, unsaddle the horse and sit down in the pew.

THE FOLLOWING POINTS WILL AIDE US IN DEFINING WHAT THE LORD'S CHURCH MEANS,  
RELATIVE TO GATHERING, SERVICE AND ORDINANCES

## THE CALL, BY JIM BURKS

1. **THE CALL IS TO FOLLOW CHRIST:** "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men," Matthew 4:18.
2. **THE CALL IS TO BE SAVED, TO BE BAPTIZED AND, TO "GO":** "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, BAPTIZING them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit," Matthew 28:19. "Who saved us, and called us with a holy calling...", 2 Timothy 1:9.
3. **THE CALL IS AN AUTHORITATIVE CALL:** The word used for CHURCH comes from the Greek Word, EKKLESIA. J. T. Thayer, D. D., in his Greek-English Lexicon, says, "a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly; for the purpose of deliberating; an assembly of Christians gathered for worship."
4. **THE CALL TO RECEIVE CHRIST MEANS TO SERVE CHIRST:** "but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses of Me... to the remotest part of the earth," Acts 1:8.
5. **SAVED, BAPTIZED CHURCH MEMBERS WERE GIVEN AUTHORITATIVE KEYS:** "I will give you the KEYS of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," Matthew 16:19.
6. **THE CALL IS FULFILLED IN THE CHURCH:** "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ," 1st Corinthians 12:12.
7. **THE CALL IS TO DISCIPLINE:** "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private (next, take two others)...And, if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer," Matthew 18:15-17. "For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church?"

But those outside, God judges, 'Remove the wicked man from among yourselves,'" 1st Corinthians 5:12, 13.

8. THE CALL IS FOR MEN TO INHERIT THE COMING KINGDOM: John, the Baptist, Jesus and the Disciples, all came, "Preaching the Kingdom of God is at hand," Mt 3:2; Mt. 4:17; Lk 9:2.

9. THE CALL IS TO FULFILL GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM: While, Israel rejected the Messiah, God turned to Gentiles. "The gospel of this kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come," Mt 24:14.

"For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ...And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise," Galatians 3:27, 29.

"I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel," Galatians 1:6.

"...as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things (flesh deeds) shall not inherit the KINGDOM of GOD," Galatians 5:21.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the KINGDOM of HEAVEN; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven," Mt 7:21.

"Shall be called least in the KINGDOM of HEAVEN; he shall be called great in the KINGDOM of HEAVEN," Matthew 5:19.

"Pray this way: 'Out Father who art in heaven, Hallowed by Thy name. THY KINGDOM COME. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,'" Matthew 6:9, 10.

Abraham's promise of a city on earth is secured. First, the spiritual control of Satan had to be removed; which Christ did at Calvary and in the resurrection. Today, the promise is secured by the giving of the Holy Spirit. He leads and guides God's people into all truth.

There is a great correlation of SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY seen in the New and Old Testaments. The church has been given authority, as the Levitical Priesthood had.

Notice these statements: "And the Priest shall look...offer... and order," (see Leviticus, Chapters 13-16). "Whatsoever ye bind on earth," Mt 16:17.

In the transition of authority, we see Jesus honor the priesthood, "...but, go show yourself to the priest," Mt 8:4. Then, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit upon His assembled people, the church. "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with POWER from on high," Luke 24:49.

In both peoples, Israel and the church, power is seen in their assemblies. For Israel, it was physically revealed; for the church, it is a spiritual reality, which overcomes the spiritual god of this world; not in physical manifestations, but in the Holy Spirit's fruit of love, joy and peace, (See Gal 5).

Jesus taught that the greatest of His people is the servant of all; such as a pastor, deacon and faithful members of the body. The church has no Lone Rangers, riding off into the sunset.

While, the Lone Ranger shouts, "Hi ooooo, Silver, AWAY!" the servant of Jesus sings, "Hallelujah, Draw Me Nearer to God."