
JESUS, DISDAINED AND SO MISUNDERSTOOD

First, it was the Jewish nation that misunderstood the coming of their Messiah; even though Jesus asked the Jews to "search the Scriptures ... they are they which testify of me" (Jn 5:39).

Yet, all evidence that Jesus produced, by Scripture and miracles, came back with a negative verdict. It was not received by the Jews. They might have searched, but with hateful bias; even, incorrectly stating: "Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet," as recorded in John 7:53.

Jewish leaders could not get over where Jesus was raised. Galilee put Him out of Jerusalem power of the elite. However, **Jonah** (of Gath-hepher) and **Elijah** the Tishbite (of Thisbe) were both of Galilee. But, people will grab at any straw and modify Scripture to suit their objective when a person is as disdained as Jesus was.

If Jesus came riding in on a white horse and over threw the Roman government, Israel would have received Him as their Messiah. Their thought was, and still is, that She will be free of all outside influence, becoming the number one nation in the kingdom the moment the Messiah sets foot on the earth. Israel's heart was not a spiritual one. As a whole, their heart was nationalistic.

No, at His first Advent, **Jesus came to save sinners**; not to establish His kingdom on earth. But, because learned men have agendas in all ages, the Jewish-like problem has been carried over, growing by leaps and bounds in today's religious climate.

And, confusion grows! Theologians have interjected a universal thinking into the meaning of the church. They avow, '*All the saved are members of the church. All the saved make up the church.*'

This results in biased theologians explaining that a church is the kingdom on earth, having authority. Now, place all the saved in the church, and scholars have **the church and the kingdom as one in the same**. To see where this leads, just take a long look at the Catholic Church.

Please note that we are taught by Jesus to pray for "**the Kingdom to come**." Jesus said he would **GIVE** us the kingdom; not, make us one. The church is not the kingdom, it is clear! She has power to preach kingdom truth and keys to unlock mysteries but, there can be no Kingdom on the earth without a King reigning on the earth.

Putting every saved person in the church and, therefore, in the kingdom, has a wonderful sound to fleshly ears, but Jesus did not say it this way.

His stress was upon servants, putting an awful lot of required faithfulness upon every disciple. Look at the **five foolish virgins, householder** and some of the **churches in Revelations**. These, and everywhere in Scripture, were admonished to pay attention to the work at hand.

So, if the church is the kingdom and all the saved make up the church, what do we do with all the verses on discipline, work and watching?

Without a clear understanding of the church and its ordinances; as well as, discipline and perpetuity that apply to this present day and life, the meaning of Christ's first coming will, indeed, be misunderstood. Believers will be saved but, will try - as they do - to serve Christ apart from a local New Testament Church.

The thought process of A. D. 30 remains with us today - just wait until the Messiah arrives. Thus, between the first coming and the Second coming of Christ, all that a saved person needs to do is simply wait around until the time occurs. Then, all things will be worked out for their good. Even Romans 8:28 is made to sound good to the saved. But, what about the portion that says, "**to those who are called according to His purpose?**"

After one is saved, there is more to do than just a few things like, 'feed the hungry,' 'attend church occasionally' and stop doing a few other things. One may think this is okay, but will Jesus be smiling when He comes up at the Last Trump? Like the Jew, saved folks will think of Scripture in a twisted way, if they merely wait until the Messiah arrives.

The Jew thought the words of Jesus were inapplicable to them. Their outward keeping and ceremony of the Law was all they needed. Jesus tried to take them to the spiritualness of the Law, over and over again, but they would not.

Jesus taught that **adultery begins inwardly**; a strong desire that lies in natural man which the spirit is unable to withstand.

Jesus also taught that a **murderer** is one that **hates** his neighbor; which, also comes from within the heart. Yea, **all of sin** causes natural man to **miss the mark of the Law**. But, Jewish ears could not be attentive to the man of Galilee.

What about the church of today when it comes to listening to Jesus? All say they listen, but what about those deeds of spirituality? Paul lists the fruit of the Holy Spirit and he lists deeds of the flesh (See Gal 5). Does it really matter? If one wants to inherit the kingdom that's coming, it matters eternally. **Notice:** The kingdom is coming. It is not here, presently.

We all need to look into our hearts and try to answer a few questions. "**Why was the Bible written?** And, what does the Bible says about service and obedience to the LORD, Jesus Christ?"

Certainly, we cannot think that Christian service is just **not** doing bad things (habits). Bad habits are to be shunned. But, a believer is **set free from sin** for a special reason; that is, in order to do **Spiritual service as described in Scripture**; things that are found in the local New Covenant Church. (Or, missing; such as taught in the Parables, church letters and found to be missing in one or two of the churches of Revelation.)

Living a clean life is good; yet, there are many who have clean lives; many who are not Christian, even. A Christian that follows the New Covenant is one that obeys the requirements taught by Jesus; not, merely doing good things and abstaining bad things.

The meaning of service is doing "**whatsoever I have commanded you,**" Matthew 28:19. His words are clear. Jesus meant that **His church** - the one that He commissioned and sent into all the world - **must preach** how to be saved, **teach** how to be baptize and **teach** all things to those saved and baptized members of the local church.

To observe **all these things**, one has to be in attendance; which gives the meaning of a church - an **ASSEMBLY**. Thus, a New Covenant believer within the church has to "**not forsake the assembling together,**" Hebrews 10:25.

And further still, since Jesus is the **Founder** and **Head** of the **church**, His body has always been on the earth, doing His spiritual work as directed by the Holy Spirit. When one checks out Baptist history, it will be seen that they have preached, baptized and taught the Bible (**without change**) from Jerusalem until now.

All saved folks need to listen to what Jesus said and not reject His words just because they do not fit their perception of what a church is. You can always find a Scripture that justifies your position, just like the Jews did.

The instruction given to the first church at Jerusalem has never changed. It's the constant truth for all churches that have Scriptural authority - those built upon the Rock of Jesus and have those "**Keys to the kingdom**" that Jesus issued to His church in Matthew 16:18, 19.

There is an equal thinking between Jews and Christians. But, Christians have the entire Bible to find the truth. Yet, a lack of spiritual understanding of the Church and the duty required, have led too many to equate the Kingdom of the LORD and the His church as being the same.

Now, put all the saved into the church/kingdom doctrine, and you've got a teaching that the majority readily accepts.

To be fair, universalists do make a difference between the kingdom here now, and the one that is coming. The difference is the idea that the kingdom lies within the spiritual realm for today; while, the literal kingdom will arrive at the Second Coming of Christ, when He returns to earth.

However, I doubt that very many understand this difference; or, care about it in the first place. Yet, it makes believers feel great. All they really have to do - all they really want to do, is trust in Jesus, initially; then, wait for the Second Coming.

A saved person then, doesn't have to be concerned with doctrine about the church, Theology, end-times or, even Christology (study of His Person, unless he wants to, of course). Yet, "**Study to show thyself approved**, was Paul's admonition of 2Tim 2:15.

If a person is taught what he naturally feels - that he is fine, without serving in a local church, then it makes sense to be content and happy, in the now, just waiting for the Second Coming.

The Jews believed (still do) that the moment their Messiah sets foot on the earth, the Kingdom will be set up, making Israel the number one nation in the kingdom. They miss the suffering portion of the life of the Messiah, wanting; that is, desiring only, to go directly to the Kingdom promised where David sits.

It's not hard to find where the Bible clearly states that most of the Jews misunderstood Scripture. With their approach fixed on the physical, alone, it stands to reason that Christ's First Coming would be misunderstood and missed altogether, as truly happened.

Christians must be careful and not misapply Scripture. Like the Jew who thinks everything is done when their Messiah comes, many Christians think that the moment Jesus is accepted as Savior, everything is done. With this strong belief that all things are fixed forever, they go on their merry way, clapping and raising their hands.

Well, saved folks may stay busy, doing some aspect of the LORD'S work. They may help the poor and read the Book, while ending the practice of bad habits. But, are they listening to the whole Bible, in general or, in particular, to Jude, who wrote: "**to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints?**"