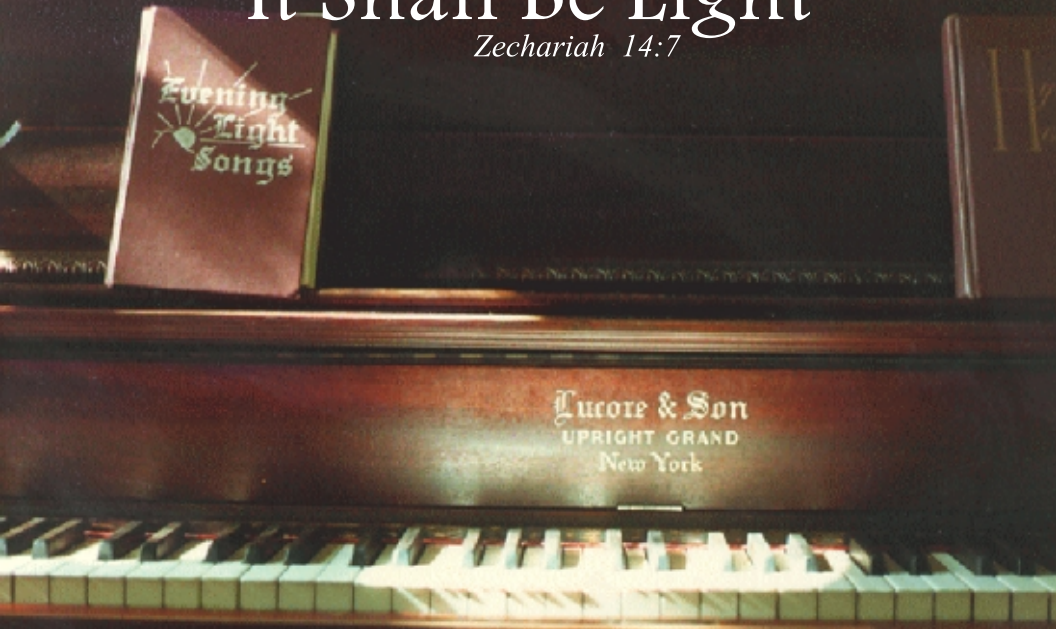


A Brief History of the Church

# At Evening Time

## It Shall Be Light

*Zechariah 14:7*



*Photo: Kathi Nettleton*



**Church of God**  
at Brandon

# God has always had a people.

From the beginning of time, God has had a faithful band of followers whom He has chosen to honor and reverence Him as the only true God and Creator of all things visible and invisible. In the old testament days, it was the Jews, the peculiar people who worshipped God and followed Him until the Messiah, Jesus Christ, came to fulfil the long awaited promise of a deliverer and King.

The Jews, in general, rejected Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of mankind so God turned to the Gentiles. He bestowed the privilege of becoming his "chosen" to whosoever would believe on Jesus, His Son and Sacrifice for sin. Many have believed, and from those early days when Jesus established His Church, the devil has fought to stamp it out, force it into obscurity and extinguish its message and influence from the face of the earth.

But this will never happen. The gates of hell are no match for God and His people. True, they may appear to be a very small minority but his church still exists and will until Jesus comes again to deliver it up to the Father. The history of the Church has been a history of great victories and great persecution. It has been highly visible with signs and wonders following its course, and it has appeared obscure and nearly extinct as it sought refuge from persecution in the secret underground worship places. Still, the Church has come through every battle, every phase of history until this present day. It has never gone out of existence and it never will.

✠ Matthew 16:18 ✠

## Where is this Church, you ask?

Where are the people of God and how will I find them? Do they have a name? There are hundreds of churches with hundreds of names and everyone has a different doctrine! Who is right? It is all a mass of confusion!

The early Church, which Jesus built on the apostles and their ministry, faced the opposition of paganism and Roman rule. In spite of this, the infant Church was victorious and full of faith. Great miracles and mighty works were done in the face of the great persecution. We can read about this in the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of the ministry of that day. They went by ONE name, the Church of God. It was the name God Himself had chosen and it was used continuously through the new testament. The apostle Paul warned of a great falling away and a time when grievous wolves would enter into the ranks of the Church and would cause an apostasy and eventual decline that gave rise to Catholicism, a mixture of paganism and religious beliefs. Great darkness came over all the known world. History refers to this time as, "the dark ages."

## During this time, Catholicism ruled...

And all mankind dwelt in spiritual darkness. The Roman religious system with its mixture of pagenic observances and ritualistic rites, took on the name, "Church of God" and referred to the Roman Church as "Catholic" or the Universal Church. The Roman Church put to death all true believers who would not come under the authority of the Pope and the Roman Church. Hundreds of thousands were tortured and died cruel deaths for their stand for the Truth and their faith in the true Church of God. Satan thought he would stamp out God's people once and for all. But there were some who were preserved along with the divine Word of God. There were some who would yet rise up to carry the blood stained banner on to victory.

## Finally, in 1517...,

a young German monk, sick of the gross deception and abuses of Catholicism, dared to nail on the door of the church in Whittenberg, a statement expressing ninety-five grievances against the Catholic Church. Light was coming back with Martin Luther's message of, "The just shall live by faith." Thus began a great reformation which brought light and hope into the lives of the spiritually oppressed. This period of time is referred to in history as the Protestant Reformation. Almost immediately, the devil hatched up a scheme to counteract the renewed light of restoration with a plan to divide God's people into sects and groups founded on man-made doctrines and creeds of their own divining. Those who protested the Catholic church were soon dubbed, "Protestants." These well intended reformers protested in so many different ways that it soon became a time of great confusion. God's people were scattered in various protestant groups and followed first one reformer and then another.

Despite this confusion, light continued to come with the message God gave the Wesleys around 1730. These two preachers, John and Charles Wesley, began to preach the message of, "entire sanctification" or the infilling of the Holy Spirit. With this new restoration of gospel light, once again men began to be led by the Spirit of God and to follow His Word. Great revivals broke out and missionaries began evangelizing the world with the gospel message.

### ⌘ Mark 16:15 ⌘

Again, God sent light in another restoration message around 1880 which revealed the truths long obscured in the book of the Revelations, the last book of the Bible. The restoration of the Church of God in all its beauty and holiness and the truth of His One Church, who are the redeemed of all the earth, was again proclaimed. The message of the Unity of God's people, would once again be heard in the evening of time just as it had in the morning of the gospel day.

# The Church that Jesus built

had come full circle as history was coming to a close. God wanted His people united in a final victory over the deception of the devil. God's men began to preach a message of oneness; of harmony and fellowship with all God's People who had been scattered throughout various sects and false religions.

They began to declare that the Godhead; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, were in divine authority over the Church and He was pre-eminent in His Church. God's name was given back to His Church as God's people began to come out from among their sects and divisions of man-made religion. Babylon's (false religion, man's religion) walls were crumbling and the message of "Come out of her, my people," (Rev, 18:4), was being preached in this last restoration movement of the Holy Spirit.

## The Church of God,

Divinely built and Divinely ruled, was once again honored and blessed by God. His people took back their rightful name; His name, and rejoiced in their new found freedom from man's religion. They are still rejoicing today. Rejoicing in a victorious life through the power of the Holy Spirit. The bonds of sin, false religion and the rule and oppression of men are now broken for all time.

Friend, have you seen God's Church? Have you walked about Zion and caught a glimpse of her majesty and splendor as she reigns victorious over all the religious systems of men? Have you seen her mighty bulwarks and counted her towers? Have you walked about her and beheld her palaces? She is the only one of her Mother, a virgin without spot and blameless. She alone is victorious over sin and the devil. Ask God to reveal His Church to you; to show you where God's people are at, for He dwells in the midst of them. Search with all of your heart, mind and soul, for this is the greatest treasure you will ever find in this life.

"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion,... the city of the Great King.... For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide, even unto death." *Psalms 48.*

*RAE*

## While the Evening Light is Shining

1

Evening shadows now have fallen  
Sunset streams across the sky  
Zion's camp has been surrounded  
Saints, look up, redemption's nigh!  
See the light! Is it not brighter?  
Can it be 'tis sevenfold?  
And the evening sun shines brighter  
Pure and true as beaten gold!

2

Clear the sound and sweet the music  
Of the trumpet sounding now  
Saints in unity are dwelling  
And to Christ their Captain bow  
Dark the night that soon surrounds us  
Work and labor for the lost  
While the evening light is shining  
Preach the word at any cost!

Chorus

Stand, Oh Christian, face the battle!  
Fear no foe, nor powers of men  
Faith is still our blessed motto  
Rise with courage to defend!

3

Men of principle and Honor  
Women who are tried and true  
Stand together with one purpose  
With the evening light in view  
We will not forsake our honor  
To the Lord we will stand true  
And with joy we shall press onward  
Keeping heaven's goal in view.

### **Church of God at Brandon**

1203 Lithia Pinecrest Rd., Brandon, FL 33511

Services: Sunday School: 9:30 am

Sunday Services: 10:45 am & 6:30 pm

Wednesday Prayer & Bible Study: 7:00 pm

[www.brandonchurchofgod.org](http://www.brandonchurchofgod.org)