

# A Victorious Church in a Dark World

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*Before we Look at the Real Church Let's Examine the False One*

*Is Today's Church (as a whole) Ready for the Return of the Lord?*

*Study of Global Christianity (by Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary)*

*There are over **45,000 christian denominations** around the world. Most do not agree with each other. This is a rather shocking statement considering what the Scriptures tell us:*

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that **ye all speak the same thing**, and that **there be no divisions among you**; but that ye be **perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment**. (1 Cor. 1:10)

Endeavouring to **keep the unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace. There is **one body**, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in **one hope** of your calling; **One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God** and **Father of all**, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (Eph. 4:3-6)

That **they all may be one**; as thou, Father, **art in me**, and **I in thee**, that **they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me**. And the glory which thou gavest me **I have given them**; that **they may be one**, even **as we are one: I in them**, and **thou in me**, that **they may be made perfect in one**; and **that the world may know that thou hast sent me**, and **hast loved them**, as **thou hast loved me**.

(John 17:21-23)

I therefore, **a prisoner for the Lord**, urge you to **walk in a manner worthy of the calling** to which you have been called, with **all humility** and **gentleness**, with **patience**, **bearing with one another in love**, **eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**. There is **one body** and **one Spirit** just as you were called to the **one hope** that belongs to your call; **one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God** and **Father of all**, who is **over all** and **through all** and **in all**. (Eph. 4:1-6) ESVS

*When Jesus Died on the Cross His Blood gave the Church the Victory over Death, Hell, the Grave, the Flesh, the World, and the Devil. The only weapon Satan can use against the Church is Deception and Fear:*

### ***The Victorious Church***

*This is God's proclamation to every believer. I don't know why bad things happen to some good people, but I can only tell you God cannot lie. I also know God responds to "Faith, Hope, and Love." A person might say one thing and in his heart and believe another.*

*Only God can see the real heart, we are to trust Him completely no matter what. Lastly, God puts trials before us to show us what we are really like. One good example is Job; (Job 1:7-22). Job loved God and apparently knew Him very well. Look at Job's response to a horrible trial; "He said, "**Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.**" **Despite all this, Job did not sin, nor did he blame God** (Job 1:21,22). God let satan try him to the very end; but Job trusted God in an extremely difficult situation (Job 2:2-11) saying; "Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold firm your integrity? Curse God and die!" **But he said to her, "You are speaking as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we actually accept good from God but not accept adversity?"** **Despite all this, Job did not sin with his lips;** (v. 9,10).*

*God reserves the right to Bless, Protect, and let persecution come upon his children in order to bring Him Glory and ultimate Good to a negative situation. Job was a perfect example. Job concluded his trial with these words; "**Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him;** but I will maintain mine own ways before him. **He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him.** (Job 13:15,16). Read Hebrews chapter 11 and you will find many more of God's heroes of the faith!*

### ***The Victorious Church (Psalm 91)***

**He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.** I will say of the LORD, **He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.** (Psa. 91:1,2)

*To **abide** means to live there permanently, it means you will never move away from God's secret place, His shadow, His fortress of protection. This means you will trust Him for your protection no matter what happens. Job trusted God even in death, and was greatly blessed at the end. That's what God wants of us!*

Surely **he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,** and **from the noisome pestilence.** **He shall cover thee with his feathers,** and **under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.** Thou **shalt not be afraid for the terror by night;** **nor for the arrow that flieth by day;** **Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness;** **nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.**

**A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.** (Psa. 91: 3-7)

*Satan cannot enter into God's holy and secret place. Sin cannot touch you there, evil cannot enter that most Holy place. We are safe and secure in that fortress, nothing can harm us there. So, if we are dwelling in that secret place here on earth (spiritually) there should be no fear in our hearts as to what is happening all around us. God's perfect peace should fill our hearts. People claiming to be Christian who live in fear are not in that secret place and under the shadow of the Almighty. **Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*** (Is. 26:3)

Only **with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.** Because **thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.** For **he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.** (Psa. 91: 8-13)

*Everyone who is IN CHRIST overcomes period! There are two words repeated throughout all 7 Churches in Revelation; (Rev. 2 and 3). Overcometh and Hear What the Spirit is saying: Also, "And they **overcame him by the blood of the Lamb**, and **by the word of their testimony**; and they loved not their lives unto the death (Rev. 12:11).*

*The reward of the wicked means, all those who hated Christ and refused to submit to His Authority. They will be in Hell for all eternity. But those who love Him will soar like Eagles above the storms of this world. "But **they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.**" (Is. 40:31)*

Because **he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.** (Psa. 91: 14-16)

When we come to Christ in the New Covenant, we become One with God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). We have entered into Covenant with God. We no longer live but Christ liveth in me. **“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”** (Gal. 2:20)

### ***What is a Covenant Based on the Bible?***

The Bible index translates these words as the Old and New Testaments. But the original word for Testament was COVENANT. We will explain why this word is the more accurate and was what Jesus was trying to convey to us. The English word testament derives from a Greek term meaning “Covenant.” In Hebrew, it means “Agreement,” “Covenant,” or “Contract.” Covenant is the dominant theme in the Scriptures and serves as the foundation to the story of God's people. In a literal sense, a Covenant means a binding agreement, a legal contract. It is a seal between two or more parties that cannot be broken. There were many Covenants made by God and man, but we will use the most important one in our explanation; that being the Cross of Jesus Christ and the Blood He shed for our redemption. There are Nine parts to a Biblical Covenant.

### ***First, The Lord's Covenant; (The Lord's Supper)***

For **I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you**, that the Lord Jesus, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, **“This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”** In the same way He also took the cup after supper, saying, **“This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”** For **as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes**. Therefore **whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy way, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord**. But **a person must examine himself**, and **in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup**. For the one who eats and drinks, **eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not properly recognize the body**. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number are asleep. But **if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged**. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be **condemned along with the world**. (1 Cor. 11:23-32) NASB

### ***Nine Parts to a Biblical Covenant (by Rick Renner)***

### **1. Promises Made;**

*When you made a Covenant promise it was forever. Example David and Jonathan's relation, (Jonathan's son Mephibosheth). Promises made were binding unto death. Four primary reasons for entering a Covenant; (relationship, protection, trust, and love). With the covenant was an exchange of promises or vows.*

### **2. Blood Sacrifice;**

*In every covenant, there was always some kind of blood sacrifice. The word for covenant in Hebrew literally means "to cut until the blood flows." There could be no covenant without the shedding of blood. Either an animals blood was shed, or participating parties cut themselves and mixed (mingled) their blood. (Abraham - Gen. 15).*

### **3. Bloody Path;**

*Once the animals were sacrificed the people making the covenant joined hands and walked through the pieces upon the bloody path. This symbolized both partners dying to self and becoming one. Witnesses from both sides attended to watch the covenant making event. (Gen. 15:17).*

### **4. Blessings and Curses;**

*The partners cutting covenant together would pledge a never-ending commitment to each other, which included a continual flow of blessings. They would also acknowledge the curses of punishment for breaking the covenant. Most often, this was understood to be the curse of death that would come upon those who were unfaithful to the covenant. (1 Cor. 11:27-30).*

### **5. Mingling of Blood;**

*In every covenant there was always the mingling of blood. Blood in the Bible, and many other cultures symbolizes life. (Lev. 17:11). A covenant symbolizes taking in the blood of another and thereby acquiring that person's life. Likewise, in a covenant, when someone took in the blood of another, it represented the taking in of their life. By taking another person's blood, you literally became a partner of that person's life and nature. In this way, two unrelated people could become one "flesh and blood." In the ancient world, this practice was often called "brothering", because it put two into a blood relationship of one. This was a real and legal transaction that could not be broken.*

## **6. Ex-Change of Names;**

*Along with the blood sacrifice, blessings and curses, and the mingling of blood, there was also a mingling or “exchange of names” to signify a covenant. Both partners might add the others’ name to his or hers, or one might take on the other’s name, a practice that is still common today in the covenant of marriage. Abram was changed to Abraham, Sarai’s name was changed to Sarah, Saul was changed to Paul; etc...*

## **7. Exchange of Gifts;**

*We see this custom demonstrated in the covenant relationship between David and Jonathan. (1 Sam. 18:3,4) “Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and his bow, and to his girdle.” What is interesting is that each of the items mentioned had significance. A person’s robe represented the identity and authority of that person. A sword represented strength and protection. Finally, the girdle represented a person’s possessions and their wealth.*

## **8. A Covenant Meal;**

*Covenant partners typically shared a “covenant meal.” This consisted of **bread** and **wine**. The bread represented a person. It was symbolic of a person’s wealth and all that he or she possessed. Covenant partners would take a loaf of bread and divided in half, symbolizing the sharing of one another’s resources. When people cut covenant and broke bread together, it was the equivalent of saying, “Everything I have is at your disposal.” Wine represented “blood.” Covenant partners could drink wine as a symbol of blood, giving their life to the other. Wine was produced by the crushing or squeezing of grapes, which depicts that life has been given; someone has sacrificed their life, shedding their blood to keep the covenant.*

## **9. A Witness to a Memorial Event;**

*A reminder was created so that everyone who saw it would remember that a covenant had been made. This was a reminder to all parties, and a visible witness that a covenant had been made. Some examples; (the rainbow - Gen. 9:8-17), (erecting a stone pillar - Gen. 31), and the most important of all, (the LORD’S Supper, communion - (1 Cor. 11:23-32).*

## **My Personal Opinion**

*In my opinion there are **two mayor covenants** we make here on Earth. One is our union to GOD (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), and the other is to a spouse (one man to one woman in holy matrimony).*

*If we get the first one wrong we will suffer in Hell for an eternity. If we get the second one wrong we will suffer the rest of our life here on earth possibly even losing our salvation. Divorce, broken homes, little children with broken hearts, divided families, etc... could cause even some people to walk away from God in anger and lose their salvation. Making the Right decision in both of these covenants are of critical importance, with the first one being the most important (eternal salvation).*

### ***Chose GOD as your Eternal Covenant***

*You will either make an eternal covenant with GOD, or the Devil. You cannot make a covenant with both! Judas picked the Wrong covenant. He made a covenant with Satan and was lost to an eternal hell forever (to be tortured day and night). Even Jesus said, it would have been better if Judas had never been born (Mark 14:21). You see, as Judas sat and received the bread and the wine offered by Christ in the upper room, he pretended to make a covenant with Jesus, because he had already made a covenant with the chief priests and the devil.*

Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching. And the chief priests and the scribes were trying to find a way to put Him to death, since they were afraid of the people. And Satan entered Judas, the one called Iscariot, who belonged to the number of the twelve. And he left and discussed with the chief priests and officers how he was to betray Him to them. And they were delighted, and agreed to give him money. (Luke 22:1-5) NASB

And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes." And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body, which is being given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup, which is poured out for you, is the new covenant in My blood. "But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table. "For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" (Luke 22:17-22) NASB