

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

“...Tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?”-1King 22:16

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What Have You Learned Since You Picked Up Your Bible? Test “your Bible Knowledge.”

1. “God would provide” refers to the fact the He provided Abraham with a:

- a. Son
- b. Food
- c. Descendants
- d. Ram

{Genesis 22:8, 13}

2 “No one can sever two masters” said Jesus, because:

- a. If one master loves him the other will hate him
- b. No two masters can cooperate
- c. None of the master will get along
- d. He will love one master and hate or despise the other.

{Matthew 6:24}

3. Paul’s prescription for younger widows was to:

- a. Never remarry
- b. Remarry but have no children
- c. Remarry and have children
- d. Make up their own mind

{1Timothy 5:11-15}

4. Next time, Peter said, the world will be destroy not by:

- a. Water but fire
- b. Water but by ice
- c. Fire but by ice
- d. Ice but by fire

{2 Peter 3:5-7}

-Fred Singleton

**“KNOW NOW THE CERTAINTY OF THE WORDS
OF TRUTH”
Prov 22:2**

Question: Is “church of Christ” scriptural?

Answer: It is good that we are concerned about what is scriptural. Indeed, we are taught to have authority for all we believe and practice (I Pet. 4: 11, I Thes. 5: 21). Many will be lost in the Day of Judgment because they

Religious names of churches. We are told that there are now thousands of different denominations in America. Each religion has a name. However, no more thought is usually given to the scripturalness of a designation than to the religion itself. Church names often glorify their founder, philosophy, or when they claimed to have begun. Lutheran, Baptist, and Pentecostal are examples.

Scriptural designations. We read of “the church,” “church of the Lord,” and “church of God” (Col. 1: 18; Acts 20: 28, ASV; I Cor. 1: 2). You will notice that these descriptive phrases glorify God, not man, particular teaching, or time of origin. You never read of Lutheran, Baptist, or Pentecostal because these religions were started many centuries after Jesus built his church (Matt. 16: 18, 19, Acts 2: 47, KJV).

Regarding “church of Christ,” we read the following: “Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you” (Rom. 16: 16). Christ is the founder of his church, he provides the teaching, he has assigned the work, he is her husband and head, and he died for the church (Matt. 16: 19; 2 Jn. 9-11; I Tim. 3: 15; Eph. 5: 22, 23; Acts 20: 28). Moreover, Christ is the savior of the church (Eph. 5: 23). Therefore, it should be no surprise that we read of “churches of Christ.” It is true that it takes more than the right “name” to be the Lord’s church. However, the right designation is required. Men can be united around Jesus’ name and glorification, however, seeking human matters divide (I Cor. 1: 10 ff.).

Question: Why is the local church so important?

Answer: The term church (ekklēsia) is used in a variety of ways. However, the two most common are the church universal and the local church. The term church means the called out (ek - out of; klesis - a calling). The church universal is made up of the saved or called out of (Matt. 16: 18). The local church is comprised of those in a geographic location who profess to be Christians (cf. I Cor. 1: 2). The Lord adds the obedient to His church (universal), and the saved join a faithful local church (cf. Acts 9: 26).

Christians are commanded to be a part of a local church. The writer of Hebrews exhorted: “Not forsaking the

assembling of ourselves together..." (Heb. 10: 25). To forsake is to fall away from Christ (vs. 26-31). The early Christians were bound together in local churches (Acts 2: 42, 5: 11; I Cor. 12, 14, etc.).

A number of specific commands are performed in the church (assembly). The scriptures teach that Christians are to provoke one another to love and good works (the assembly is involved, Heb. 10: 24, 25), build up one another in song (Eph. 5: 19), give of their means into the local treasury (I Cor. 16: 1, 2), and experience sound preaching (2 Tim. 4: 1-5; Acts 20: 7). It is in the local church environment that the Lord's Supper is observed (Acts 20: 7; I Cor. 11). Moreover, the local church is the pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim. 3: 15).

The world belittles the church and much of denominationalism presents it as nonessential. Beloved, when we speak of the church, we are not referring to a denomination. All the local churches in the First Century were the same (cf. I Cor. 4: 17; Rom. 16: 16). They preached (ideally) the one faith and for that they contended (Eph. 4: 4, 5; Jude 3). Indeed, the church is important. Put another way, the church is an essential element or component to pristine Christianity.

-Don Martin

Enduring Trials

There are times in life when we face challenges that threaten to shake us to our very core. Many early Christians faced the question of publicly declaring Caesar as Lord God. In some cases, their answer affected their possibility of continued employment to support their families. In other cases, their answer determined the difference between life and death.

While we in the United States are fortunate to have the freedom to worship as we please, there are still other circumstances that can rock us. Recall the attitude of the American people in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the hurricanes that destroyed so much along the Gulf Coast. It seemed that a large number of people thought more about the Lord then – if only for a little while.

Even for those who were not affected by similar large disasters, there are still personal challenges that cause us to re-examine our core values. Think about the challenges involved as one faces a severe illness, the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, a home destroyed by a tornado. How have you seen similar challenges affect those around you? How have they affected you?

Some who have never before known God will seek Him during times of trouble. They recognize that there must be a deeper meaning to their existence – that there must be a divine purpose or plan. A number of these will look only for a short while before turning back to their previous way of life.

Some seekers will be distracted and turn aside after false religions or false gods. A few will find the narrow way that leads to life eternal. Christians are not at all immune to challenges which test our faith. There are those who turn away from God at such a time. They express that God failed them, that a loving God would not allow such a thing to happen, that what the Lord requires is too difficult or is just not worth their effort. They may begin feeling so sorry for themselves that they lose sight of the purpose for which God created us.

Others may not turn completely away from God, but their faith is obviously weakened. They continue to attend the worship services of the saints on a regular basis but seem to be merely going through the motions. They limit their interaction with other Christians both inside and outside the building. Their Bibles gather dust on the shelf. They no longer allow themselves to be counted on when there is work to be done. Sadly some will spend the rest of their lives in this forlorn state.

Yet there are those who see such trying times as actually being profitable for them. They understand that our God is the God who sees (Gen 16:13). Jehovah knows when we are hurting. He is the Lord who provides (Gen 22:8, 14).

Not only does He love us and care for us, He has all wisdom to know just what we need – and He has all power to fulfill our every need. He is the Lord who heals (Ex 15:26). He provides both physical and spiritual healing.

As our Lord, He is our Ruler and our Master. He has given us all we require to be successful in His service. As our Father, He wants what is best for His children.

We realize that even when troubles come upon us, God desires it to be for our good (Gen 50:19-20). We see the example of Jesus Christ in which the Son of God learned obedience through His sufferings (Heb 5:8-9).

Although our struggles on earth may be hard, they are temporary (II Cor 4:17-18) and are not comparable to the glory awaiting in heaven (Rom 8:17-18). Let us not be shortsighted, living for the present. Instead let our focus be on our eternal goal. Our earthly troubles can help to strengthen and build us up in the faith (I Pet 1:6-9).

We grow stronger in perseverance, in character, and in hope. We become more steadfast in our reliance upon the Lord. We understand that God created us for His good pleasure, to serve Him as He wills, to submit ourselves to Him so that Christ lives within us. It is not about us – it is about God. Praise be to His holy name! - Terry Bennett **Answer 1.d 2.d 3.c 4.a**