

A WORD ON WORSHIP

REVIEW OF MESSAGE FROM OCTOBER 18, 2015

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Revelation 1:19-20

“Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”



Perhaps you've seen the television commercial in which a doctor instructs his patient how to perform surgery on himself - all over the phone. The "patient" asks the doctor, "Shouldn't you be doing this?" One would expect something as serious as surgery to be performed by a surgeon - not by the patient. The same is true for the church. If the church is important, and its mission critical, then one would think that God would have significant involvement. He would not leave it for us to do ourselves, as best we can figure it out. Yet, many Christians seem to think that God has pretty much left the church on its own to figure out for itself just how it should function best.

It is generally accepted that the Gospel of Matthew has a Jewish focus. Noteworthy here is that Matthew is the only Gospel where the term "church" is found. In Matthew 16, we find Peter's "great confession" and our Lord's first reference to the church: "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it." The coming of Israel's Messiah was so that He could build His church. I am not saying this was His only reason for coming. What I am saying is that Matthew, a Jew writing to a Jewish audience, is saying this immediately after our Lord's identity as Messiah is proclaimed by Peter. And this new confederation, His church, is so endowed with power that the gates of Hades cannot successfully resist or oppose it. The church is the means by which our Lord will overcome Satan's domain.

I'm not quite sure how to say it any better than this. The church is very special to God. The imagery of our Lord's relationship to the church depicts the love and intimacy between Christ and His church. He is the Shepherd; we are His flock. He is the groom; we are the bride. Christ loved the church and gave His life for it. That is exactly what Paul told the Ephesian elders: "Watch out for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son (Acts 20:28)."

Christ nourishes and cherishes the church (Ephesians 5:29), and He keeps a watchful eye on the church, both in its victories and in its defeats. Our study in the first three books of Revelation demonstrates that our Lord knows exactly what is going on in each of the seven churches of Asia. He identifies their strengths and their failures far better than they knew- or we know about our body. Even today, the Lord Jesus gives us words of exhortation and words of warning. Our Lord cares about His church, and it shows.

Sunrise Community Church
Come acknowledge the Lord in our midst
EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AT 8:45 A.M.

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