

## **SUBJECT: The Invisible Church Theory and Attending Evils**

**DEFINE SUBJECT:** By the invisible church theory, we mean the theory so popular today that all that claim to be Christian some way constitute the true church.

By attending evils I mean all those other false doctrines it supports while this doctrine has been with us since the reformation, it has grown more in the last 25 years than any other false doctrine. There are three beliefs concerning the Lord's church, namely Universal Visible Theory (Catholic), Universal Invisible Theory (all denominations) and Local Visible Truth (held by true Baptists today).

### **SCRIPTURE USED:**

1). 1 Cor. 12-13 "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body." Who: Jew and Gentile, free or slave. The 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> chapters are written primarily on the subject of spiritual gifts to the church. What did Paul mean when he wrote this verse (13). Look at verse 27 and he tells us now ye are "a" body of Christ (Jew and Gentile, slaves or free) and members in particular.

- A. *Ecclesia* comes from the Greek word *Ekkleetos* and that from the Greek word *Ekkaleo*, meaning to call out or forth. But it does not mean the called out. Usage, not etymology, determines the meaning of words.
- B. *Ecclesia* had its original application to a gathering of citizens called out of their homes into an "assembly" to attend to public affairs (Acts 19: 32, 39, 41) (Thayer)
- C. The primary meaning is "an organized assembly whose members have been called out of private homes or businesses, assembled to attend to public affairs. *Ecclesia* always implied that those called out ones would assemble. (B.H.Carroll)
- D. The word *ecclesia* was not translated into church in the earliest English translation (Tyndale's Coverdales and The Cramner, The Great Bible) but the word is used in the KJV and that by the orders of King James.
- E. In the King James Version, the word *ecclesia* is used 115 times in the Greek text. In 112 times it is translated church or churches.

### **2). SOME PERVERTED SCRIPTURE:**

- A. Matthew 16:18 "I will build my church." This verse is used today to bolster the universal theory. It does not refer to something invisible, but to something local and visible. Ask Jesus what He meant when he used (Matt. 16:19) this word church, and in the next mention of church (Matt. 18:17) "Tell it to the church." Now that would be an impossible task if He meant universal or invisible. Other scripture proves the meaning of *ecclesia* is not invisible, but local and visible.
- B. Acts 8:1 The church which was at Jerusalem -- local and visible
- C. Acts 9:31
- D. Acts 20:17 Called the elders of the church
- E. Romans 16:4 All the churches of the Gentiles
- F. Gal. 1:22 Paul said, "I persecuted the church of God." There was but one church at Jerusalem.
- G. When the word church is used, and a specific church or churches is not meant, it is used in a generic or institutional sense.

## **THE ATTENDING EVILS:**

In the South they have hurricanes. These hurricanes spin off tornadoes. A tornado has as much destructive power as a hurricane, so does false doctrine that is supported by the invisible church theory.

### **A. CHURCH UNIONISM:**

Union revivals are one evil. Suppose we were in such a meeting and a sinner asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved Act. 16:30 is the answer from the scripture.

A Church of Christ preacher says, "But you must be immersed in order to be saved."

A Methodist pastor says, "Pardon me, sprinkling or pouring is just as well."

Another jumps up and says, "You'll be saved only until you sin again."

How can a poor sinner ever know the truth? Now some poor deceived soul ends it all by saying, "Well, we don't believe just alike, but our differences relate only to our little local churches."

### **ECUMENICALISM**

This movement is a direct product on universalism. For several years now, there is a concerned effort to unite all beliefs into one controlling body, i.e. world council of churches in America.

The universal theory supports TV and radio ministry. Most of the ministries claim to be a part of the true church. I hear now that according to WJCR radio, that anyone who wishes can prepare the Lord's Supper and observe it with the people on their program.

The universal theory gives the so-called undenominational or nondenominational their only hope of a link to the New Testament Church.

This Universal Theory does this:

1. Falsifies when the Church was set up (Day of Pentecost)
2. Leaves the Church with no commission
3. Leaves the Church with no ordinances
4. Makes Jesus a liar. He said, "I will build my church."

Nowhere in script does it even hint that the church was to be formed by baptism of the Holy Ghost.