

FROM HEAVEN HE CAME AND SOUGHT HER



## Acts 14:19-23

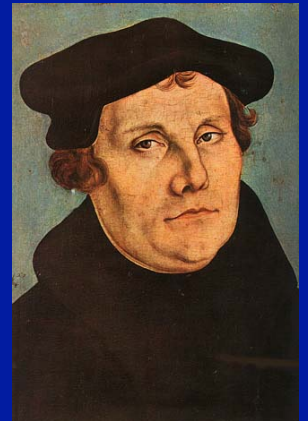
But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,

strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.



This heavenly Jerusalem is the Church, that is to say the number of all believers throughout the world, having one and the same Gospel, one and the same faith in Christ, one and the same Holy Ghost, and the same sacraments.

- Martin Luther



## 1 John 2:19

Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come.

Therefore we know that it is the last hour.

They went out from us, but **they were not of us**; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

This verse also gives biblical warrant for some distinction between the visible and invisible church. Granted, that God intends his church to be visibly manifest in local worshipping, witnessing fellowships, this does not mean that all professing, baptized members of the church are necessarily members of Christ. Some are with us but do not really belong to us. They share our earthly company but not our heavenly birth.

- John Stott



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Lord in whom they had believed.**

Acts 2:41

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were **added** that day about three thousand souls.

Acts 2:47

And the Lord **added to their number** day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 5:14

And more than ever believers were **added to the Lord**, multitudes of both men and women

Acts 16:5

So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they **increased in numbers daily**.



## 1 Corinthians 1:2

To the church of God that is in Corinth,  
to those sanctified in Christ Jesus,  
called to be saints together with all  
those who in every place call upon the  
name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both  
their Lord and ours

## 2 Corinthians 11:23-28

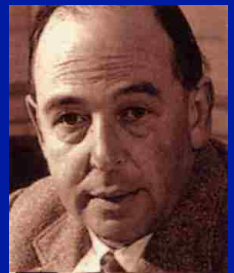
with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things,

**there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.**

One of our great allies at present is the Church itself. Do not misunderstand me. I do not mean the Church as we see her spread out through all time and space and rooted in eternity, terrible as an army with banners. That I confess, is a spectacle which makes our boldest tempters uneasy. But fortunately it is quite invisible to these humans. All your patient sees is the half-finished, sham Gothic erection on the new building estate. When he goes inside, he sees the local grocer with rather an oily expression on his face bustling up to offer him one shiny little book containing a liturgy which neither of them understands.

When he gets to his pew and looks round him he sees just that selection of his neighbors whom he has hitherto avoided. You want to lean pretty heavily on those neighbors. Make his mind flit to and fro between an expression like “the body of Christ” and the actual faces in the next pew. Provided that any of those neighbors sing out of tune, or have boots that squeak, or double chins, or odd clothes, the patient will quite easily believe that their religion must therefore be somehow ridiculous.

- C.S. Lewis



## Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared,  
bringing salvation for all people,  
training us to renounce ungodliness  
and worldly passions, and to live self-  
controlled, upright, and godly lives in  
the present age, waiting for our  
blessed hope,

the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.



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blessed hope,

Saving grace makes a man as willing to leave his lusts as a slave is willing to leave his galley, or a prisoner his dungeon, or a beggar his rags.

- Thomas Brooks



the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

## Deuteronomy 14:2

For you are a people holy to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

## Ephesians 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

## John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. **By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.**

We usually think of Rome as the imperial city of the Caesars, glorious in its palaces, marble monuments, and treasures. It was that. But it was also a terrible city, full of horrible sins and gross licentiousness. Vice was everywhere. Yet in this city of gross sin there was a fellowship of people who rejected Rome's sin and instead lived an entirely different kind of life.



It was a life marked by holiness, a mutual sharing of burdens, love, and compassion for those who were abused or downtrodden. It was nothing less than a new humanity planted by God atop the deteriorating carcass of the old.

– James Boice



Some people construct a Christianity which consists entirely of a personal relationship to Jesus Christ and has virtually nothing to do with the church. Others make a grudging concession to the need for church membership, but add that they have given up the institution as hopeless. Now it is understandable, even inevitable, that we are critical of many of the church's inherited structures and traditions.

Every church in every place at every time is in need of reform and renewal. But we need to beware lest we despise the church of God, and are blind to his work in history. We may safely say that

God has not abandoned his church, however displeased with it he may be. He is still building and refining it. And if God has not abandoned it, how can we?

- John Stott

