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Discovery

Scripture & Science for Kids



The Bride of Christ

CALEB COLLEY

The church is known by many names in the New Testament, including “the kingdom,” “the house of God,” “the body of Christ,” “the whole family,” “the flock of God,” “the fold,” and “the general assembly and church of the first-born.” Each of these titles is important, because it helps us to understand the special relationship between Christ and His followers.

One of the most interesting titles for the church is “the bride of Christ.” Jesus never married while He was on Earth, but He does have a wife. Notice Christ’s

“bride” in Revelation 21:2: “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” In Ephesians 5:22-25, Paul told husbands to love their wives, just as Christ loves the church. Jesus loved the church so much that He died for her.

Why did Christ refer to His church as His bride? Most boys grow up to be husbands, and most girls become wives. If you are a husband, your wife (bride) has specific characteristics that make her different from all other women. Similarly, the Bible lists qualities that people must have in order to be a part of Christ’s bride, the church. These characteristics make Christ’s bride unique—different from all other churches and religious groups.

A husband does not confuse his bride with any other women, because he married only one woman. While there are many other women, he knows for certain which one is his wife. Only one woman belongs to him, and he belongs to only one wife. Christ definitely knows how to identify His bride, and on the Judgment Day, it will be easy for Him to recognize His bride from among many false religious groups. On that day, only those who compose the body that is identified as the bride of Christ will be saved, because only those

who have become members of His church will have had their names written in the book of life (Revelation 20:12-15; 21:27). Everyone should want to be part of the bride of Christ, and can, by becoming a Christian.



THE LORD'S ARMY

KYLE BUTT

Maybe you have seen pictures and read stories in history books about nations that went to war with each other. Pictures of cannons, horses, and armed soldiers fill American history books that deal with wars like the American Civil War, the Spanish American War, and the Revolutionary War. In more recent years, pictures of missiles, tanks, grenades, and planes remind us of the Gulf War or the war in Iraq.

But did you know that there has been a war going on almost as long as the Earth has existed? That war is between the forces of ultimate good, which are God and His followers, and the forces of evil, which are the devil and his followers. In fact, the war between good and evil is still going on today, and the Bible tells us that everyone who is a faithful member of Christ’s church is fighting on the Lord’s side.

Paul wrote an important message about this war to the Christians who lived in Ephesus. He told them to arm themselves with God’s armor. The reason he told them to arm themselves for a fight is because they were fighting against “principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). Paul told the members of the Lord’s church that they were an army fighting against strong powers of wickedness.

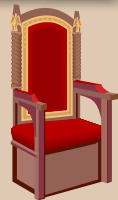
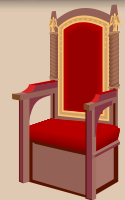
If Christians are part of the Lord’s army, what weapons can they use to defeat evil? Do they need rockets, explosives, guns, armor, knives, or swords?

No. The Lord’s army fights with different weapons. Paul said that Christians should arm themselves with the shield of faith, put on the helmet of salvation, and carry the sword of the Spirit, “which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17).

Christians do not defeat evil by blowing things up or using real swords or guns. They defeat evil by doing good deeds, teaching the Word of God, resisting temptation, and helping others learn the truth. Since God is much stronger than all the forces of wickedness, He has promised the faithful fighters in His army that He will “crush Satan” under their feet. Let’s all make sure to obey God and do right so we can be members of Christ’s church and fight in His army.



THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST



ERIC LYONS

Imagine an earthly kingdom with a king more powerful than any other ruler on Earth. He has more wealth, more land, more servants, and more military might than anyone in the world. He is wiser, stronger, and more influential than any king ever to live. What also sets this king apart from all others is his willingness to serve his subjects. In fact, he eventually dies while saving one of his poorest servants from a terrible accident. What would you think about such a king?

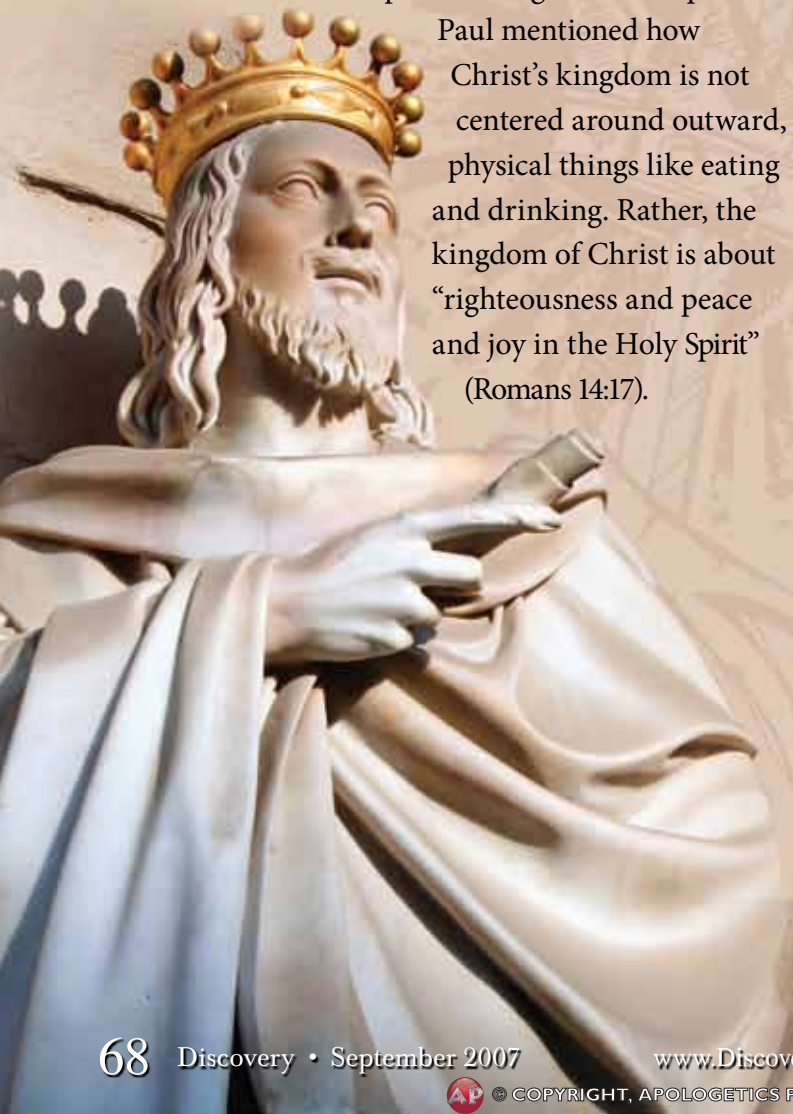
Did you know that the church of Christ is a kingdom? It is not an earthly kingdom that competes for wealth, prestige, and natural resources. The church is a spiritual kingdom. The apostle

Paul mentioned how Christ's kingdom is not centered around outward, physical things like eating and drinking. Rather, the kingdom of Christ is about "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

The King of this spiritual kingdom is Christ. The Bible calls Him "the King of kings, and Lord of lords...to Whom be honor and everlasting power" (1 Timothy 6:15-16). As King, Jesus is "far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come" (Ephesians 1:21). No one is greater than Christ.

Instead of using His greatness to lord over His servants (like so many worldly kings), Jesus served His servants, even to the point of death. He taught His followers: "Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26-27).

In truth, Christians who do not serve God and their fellow men are not faithful servants of Christ; they are servants in name only. Christians need to spend time worshiping God and working in His kingdom, visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, and teaching the lost. And thank God that He has "delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13).



THE "CALLED OUT" ONES

KYLE BUTT

Suppose your school is going to send four students to compete in a math competition with other schools. All the kids in your grade take a math test. When the tests are graded, four names are called to be on the team, and yours is one of them. Being "called out" to be on such a team would be a special honor, because you would get to represent your school at the competition.

Did you know that the Bible talks about a special "team" that has been "called out?" In the New Testament, you often read the word "church." That word comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*

(ek-lay-SEE-uh), and it means "the ones who are called out." During Bible times, the word *ekklesia* could be used for lots of different things. It could be used to describe a group of people in a town who were "called out" to be a part of a town meeting. It could be used to describe a council of people who were called together to vote on something. But the Bible writers used it in a special way to describe all the members of Christ's church who were called out of the world of sin.

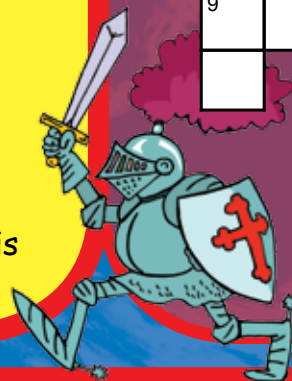
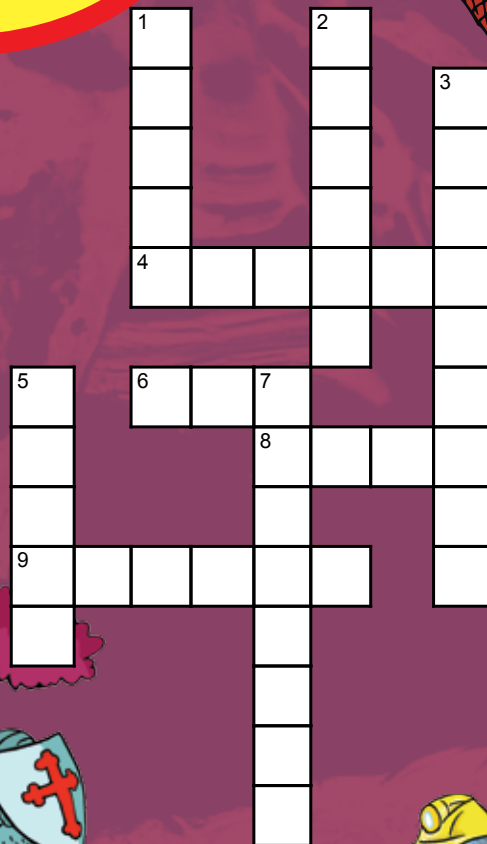
You might wonder why Christians are called out of the world. Is it because Christians are smarter, stronger, or richer than other people? No. When Paul wrote to the Christians in Thessalonica, he told them that God had called them by the Gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14). The truth is, God wants every person in the world to be one of His specially called-out people, but many people choose not to respond when God calls them through the Gospel.

What special job does God give to those He calls? The apostle Peter said that Christians are supposed to "proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness and into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). God has called Christians by the Gospel so that we can show others how wonderful it is to be a part of God's "called-out" group.



ACTIVITY PAGES

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE



ACROSS

- Represents faith in the Christian's armor
- The number of Christ's brides
- Christ is the _____ of kings
- From the Latin word *templum*

DOWN

- The church was built by this person
- God calls people out of a world of sin by means of this
- Sword of the Spirit
- About this many men wrote the Bible by inspiration of God
- The English word "church" comes from this Greek word

(New King James Version)

- "Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your _____. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to _____, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26-27).
- The kingdom of Christ is about "_____ and peace and _____ in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).
- "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does _____ dwell in temples made with _____" (Acts 17:24).
- "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is _____, which _____ you are" (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).
- "Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a _____ adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:2).

COMPLETE THE BIBLE VERSES

TRUE OR FALSE

- The church is the cousin of Christ.
- The Greek word for church means "the called out ones."
- Christians have been called "out of darkness and into His [God's] marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).
- Jesus is not the king of a kingdom.
- The church is known by many names in the New Testament.
- The church of Christ has certain unique characteristics by which it can be recognized.
- Everyone chooses to obey God when He calls them through the Gospel.
- The church is the temple of the devil.
- The church is supposed to be an earthly kingdom that competes for wealth and prestige.
- The church is the bride of Christ.



Dear Digger Doug,

Who made the different versions of the Bible?
—Emily, Laconia, IN

Dear Emily,

Thank you for submitting this excellent question. The Holy Spirit gave about 40 men the words of the Bible, and these men wrote the words in their own languages. Because the Holy Spirit inspired Moses, Paul, Luke, and others, their original documents were absolutely perfect in every way. But their languages, such as Hebrew and Greek, are difficult for most of us to read, because we usually read things only in English.

Scholars, who know a lot about the ancient languages in which the Bible originally was written, have produced English translations of the Bible. These include the King James Version, the New American Standard Version, the English Standard Version, and others. They allow us to have the Word of God in our own language. Some translations are better than others, but we always can check any translation by comparing it to ancient manuscripts, written in the original languages. Even though we live about 2,000 years after the Bible was completed, we still have the words of God, and can read them easily!





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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

The Temple of God

DAVE MILLER

A temple (from the Latin word *templum*) is a building used for religious or spiritual activities, such as prayer and sacrifice. Pagan temples have usually been viewed as the sacred dwelling places of the gods that some people worship. Many people in history, such as the Greeks and the Romans, believed in many gods and dedicated temples to honor those imaginary gods. Today, Hindus around the world have built temples that contain many images of their gods. But concerning the one true God of the Bible, Paul told the Athenians that “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, **does not dwell in temples made with hands**” (Acts 17:24).

The God of the Bible created the entire Universe. He is not confined by physical limits. But the Bible does tell us about the temple of God. It is not a physical

building made by human hands. It is a spiritual building made of those who have become Christians: “Do you not know that you are **the temple of God** and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, **which temple you are**” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). So the church of Christ is the temple of God made up of those who have obeyed the Gospel in order to become Christians.

God does not want His people to be a part of worldly religion. That’s why Paul asked, “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are **the temple of the living God**. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people’” (2 Corinthians 6:15-16). Christians are members of the household of God, “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a **holy temple in the Lord**” (Ephesians 2:20-21).

How exciting! If we are Christians, then we are part of—not stone temples built by mere men—but the temple of God built by God Himself. Are you part of that temple?



ANSWERS

3-T; 4-F; 5-T; 6-T; 7-F; 8-F; 9-F; 10-T.
 COMPLETE THE BIBLE VERSES: 1. servant, serve; 2. righteousness, joy; 3. not, hands; 4. holy, temple; 5. bride, TRUE OR FALSE: 1-F; 2-T.
 CROSSWORD CHALLENGE: Across: 4. shield; 6. one; 8. King; 9. temple; Down: 1. Jesus; 2. Gospel; 3. Word of God; 5. forty; 7. Ekkelesia.
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