

How Scripture Can Guide Christians to Unity in the Twenty-first Century

**ARE WE
MISSING
SOMETHING?**

*Discovering God's House, God's Church, and
True Worship*

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Are We Missing Something?

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Preface

Some Vital Questions

Is it possible for a Christian to be in the Body of Christ but not be in the house of God today? Is it possible for a church of Christians not to be a church of God? Is it possible for Christian worship to miss the mark?

The purpose of this book is to examine and explore three implicit beliefs that are very prevalent in the evangelical Christian world today. These are:

1 That the “**house of God**” refers to all those living believers who, by virtue of having the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, are in the Body of Christ. Therefore all believers have the privilege of spiritual worship to God as a priesthood, wherever and however it may be offered.

2 That every local gathering of born-again believers in Christ is a “**church of God**” (as the Bible uses that term). They gather on the basis of all being members of the church “the Body of Christ” (sometimes referred to as “the true church”). Which particular church group they should gather with is largely a matter of personal preference.

3 That the **worship** of believers involves the presence of God coming down to men and women on Earth wherever they gather for that purpose.

The three main sections of this book deal separately with these three issues. They also attempt to show how these issues are related to each other in one integrated pattern of scriptural teaching. The first section deals with the topic of the house of God—what it is, what it does, and who are in it. It traces the concept of God living among a people on the Earth, from the first reference in Genesis, through Israel’s experience of it throughout most of the Old Testament, and then to its replacement by the spiritual house of today as set out in the New Testament narrative of the Acts of the Apostles and in the epistles. What becomes apparent is how pervasive a subject it is, and how central it should be in the life and service of disciples of the Lord Jesus today. It is not by any means an incidental topic. God will also have a house in the future, but this book does not deal with either the Millennial temple or the eternal state on the new Earth, which are both subsequent aspects of this comprehen-

sive purpose of God.

Section two deals with the topic of the churches of God, as the scriptural gathering of disciples in this age. It addresses questions such as:

- Why are there so many Christian churches today?
- Can we be true Christians without belonging to a church?
- Does it matter which church we attend?
- Are we fulfilling the “great commission”?
- Is the apostles’ teaching relevant in the twenty-first century?
- Is the New Testament just first century history, or is it also a blueprint for us?

The third section addresses the subject of worship. It asks whether all worship is acceptable to God and what true worship involves. It explores the particular character of collective worship and addresses the question “Where does true worship take place?” It also considers what impediments there are to worship that can detract from the pleasure that God wants to get from it.

Before proceeding with these key issues, however, there are two topics that should be looked at first, because they underpin what follows. Examining them beforehand will give a proper perspective on the issues themselves. These topics are:

- the special relationship that we as believers in Christ have been eternally brought into as members of “the church which is Christ’s Body” (chapter 1); and
- a brief historical perspective of the development of the Christian faith throughout the centuries, which has led to our fragmented twenty-first century Christian world (chapter 2).

This book is offered to all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who are serious about their lives and service for Him, and who welcome opportunities to explore ways in which they may be able to please Him more.

In the pages that follow, as we delve into the highly relevant and inter-connected issues of God’s house, God’s church, and true worship, which are at the heart of the life and service expected of every disciple of the Lord Jesus, we shall have to keep in mind the cardinal principle that the Reformers used - “sola scriptura” - “by the Scriptures alone”. The Scriptures, the written Word of God, will have to be the test of everything that we seek to discover. And then, as one Bible teacher put it, “If you show me what is in that book, you put me under an obligation to do it.”