

Discipleship Guide
Lesson 10
The People of God (Part II)

"I believe in . . .the holy catholic church, the communion of saints. . . ."

As a result of studying this lesson, the student will:

- (1) see the importance of becoming a faithful member of a worshipping local congregation;
- (2) understand the importance of accountability and support.

Jesus and the Church

Comment and Reading

In the Creed, the word *catholic* refers to the universal or global church of Christ, that is, everyone who is born again. It is not referencing any subgroup that calls itself *The Church*. The Creed does *not* refer to the *Roman Catholic Church*, which is a specific group. Also, in that it uses the words "holy" and "church", we are to live out our life of holiness and be united in affection for one another by the Holy Spirit. May it be so!

The student should read Matthew 16:13-20. Jesus often referred to Himself as the Son of Man. This was a term first used in Ezekiel. There it seems to be little more than a stylized equivalent of "man." But by the time of the writing of Daniel, the term had taken on divine proportions (see Daniel 7:13-14). By Jesus' day, the "Son of Man" title had likely accumulated a good deal of mystery and had become a messianic title. Jesus often used it in settings that bespeak both messianic humiliation and exaltation. After reading the text, answer the following questions:

1. What does Jesus say he will build?
2. What will not prevail against this global congregation?

Reading

The student should read Matthew 18. This passage refers to the church but in contrast to the other passage, here in a more local sense, a particular gathering of believers. After reading the text, you should answer the following questions:

3. If your "brother" sins against you, what should you do?
4. Jesus said he would be where?

Opinion Question:

If Jesus, in human form, could be present in only one place at a time, what might he mean in verse 20?

Comment

Y'shua said that he would be in the midst of two or three gathered believers. In Judaism certain prayers cannot be prayed publicly unless there is a *minyan*, a quorum in attendance. The rabbinical rule was based on Abraham's intercession for Sodom (see Genesis 19) where the required minimum was ten men. Here Y'shua changes the rabbinical minimum to two or three. He is helping us to understand that community is a corporate expression of any number. See lesson #14 on Prayer for more on this.

Reading

The student should read 1 Corinthians 12. Note that the church of Christ is sometimes called the body of Christ. After reading the text, answer the following questions:

5. What is the purpose of diversity (different manifestations) in the church?
6. Who distributes various gifts to the church?
7. According to verses 25-26, how should the members of the church relate to one another?

Comment

In Greek the word translated "church" is *ekklesia*. It refers to people who are "called out." We are called out of the world order, which is hostile to God, and called upon to take our place with other believers in service to God. Scripture compares the body of the messiah to our physical flesh-and-blood bodies. This demonstrates the place, purpose and function of every church member. God calls upon us to serve him and to build up one another (see Ephesians 4:12).

Reading

The student should read Exodus 19:1-10 and answer the following questions:

8. What percentage of the Jewish people were at (not on) Mount Sinai to receive God's Law?
9. Who said they would obey God?

Images of the Church

Comment

In 1 Corinthians 12 and in Ephesians 4 (to be studied below), Paul wrote about the church, using the image of a body. In the entire letter to the Ephesians, Paul actually uses seven metaphors or images to refer to the church: (1) the church (1:22); (2) the body (1:23); (3) God's poem (2:10--this is usually translated *workmanship*, but in Greek it is the word *poema*); (4) the temple (2:21); (5) a household (2:22); (6) the bride of Christ (5:22-33); (7) an army (6:10-18). Each metaphor presents a unique aspect of the Christian communal life. Sometimes we are in a spiritual war where we need to perceive of ourselves militarily. Sometimes we need a love

relationship and need to remember our “brideness.” Use these images to strengthen your love for and walk with the Lord.

Reading

The student should read Ephesians 4 and answer the following questions:

10. Verse 11 describes various gifts in the church, given for what purpose?
11. Who is the head of the church body?
12. As believers, what should we “put off”?
13. As believers, what should we “put on”?

A New Commandment

Reading

The student should read John 13. This teaching was given at the closing of the Passover seder, just before Jesus’ trial and death. After reading the text, answer the following questions:

14. What is the new commandment Y’shua gave to his disciples?
15. How did Y’shua’s actions earlier in the evening help the disciples understand His instruction in verses 31-35?

Comment

The “new commandment” is not new in terms of its content (see Leviticus 19:18), but it is new in that the power of the Holy Spirit will make it possible for us to keep the commandment. Y’shua called us to love beyond ourselves in the same way that he loved us—that is, to the point of death. By the way, “Maundy” Thursday that occurs in the calendar right before Easter or Resurrection Sunday, means “Commandment” Thursday, that is, the day Y’shua issued the great “new” commandment.

Comment

We saw in both Lesson 9 and here, as believers, we are called to be humble and receive correction from one another. A teachable spirit allows God to use others to strengthen our weaknesses.

Attend messianic congregational meetings or your church services often; worship with God’s people; listen to God’s Word. When you fellowship with other believers, you will find that you have the support and accountability you need. Many of us Jewish believers often have a resistance to authority. Although we like the support we receive from other believers, we also need to be accountable to the fellowship of believers, as grounded in the Word of God.

Opinion Question:

Consider the verses you have just read in Hebrews chapter 10 and all you’ve learned in this lesson and lesson 9. Now, how can we “strengthen the hands which hang down” of a brother?

How can we strengthen “the feeble knees” of a sister? How can we “make straight the paths of” each other’s feet? (See also Job 4:3-4.)

Memory Verse: Hebrews 10:25

“ . . . not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but encouraging one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (NASB).