

Surprising Facts Series 2

23. God's Remnant People.

The Bible says there is only one body, or church, into which Jesus is calling His end-time people. To some, this seems unnerving. There are well over 1,000 different churches and religious organizations in today's world. Virtually every one claims to be God's church, yet they differ widely in belief and practice. It is utterly impossible to examine the beliefs of so many churches. What a wrenching dilemma for a sincere truth-seeker! We can be thankful that Jesus has solved this dilemma by describing His end-time church in such detail that one can very easily identify it. That vivid description is found in Revelation chapters 12 and 14. Prepare to discover some exciting new truths! Please read Revelation 12:1-17 before you begin.

1. By what prophetic symbol does Jesus represent His true church?

"I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman." Jeremiah 6:2. "And say unto Zion, Thou art my people." Isaiah 51:16.

Answer: We learned that Jesus symbolizes His true, pure church (Zion) as a pure woman and an apostate church as a harlot. A few other texts which also utilize this symbolism are: **"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." 2 Corinthians 11:2; "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." Ephesians 5:22, 23; "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Revelation 19:7, 8.**

2. In Revelation 12:1, Jesus symbolizes His church as a woman "clothed with the sun," with "the moon under her feet," and wearing "a crown of twelve stars." What do these symbols mean?

Answer A: The sun represents Jesus, His gospel, and His righteousness. **"The Lord God is a sun." Psalm 84:11. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." Malachi 4:2. Without Jesus there is no salvation. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.** More than anything else, Jesus wants His church to overflow with His presence and glory.

Answer B: "The moon under her feet" represents the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. As the moon reflects the light of the sun, so the sacrificial system was helpful spiritually only as it reflected light from the Messiah to come. **"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." Hebrews 10:1.**

Answer C: The "Crown of twelve stars" represents the work of the 12 disciples, which crowned the early years of the New Testament church.

3. Next, the prophecy states that the woman is in labor, about to deliver a baby Who would one day rule all nations with a rod of iron. She then delivered the "man child," and later He was taken up to God's throne in heaven. (Revelation 12:1, 2, 5). Who was this baby?

Answer: The baby was Jesus. He will one day rule all nations with a rod of iron (Revelation 19:13-16; Psalm 2:7-9). Jesus, who was crucified for our sins, was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9-11). His resurrection power in our lives is one of Jesus' essential gifts to His people (Philippians 3:10). The baby mentioned in Revelation chapter 12 is Jesus.

4. "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."

Revelation 12:3, 4 introduces "a great red dragon" who hated the "man child" and tried to kill him at birth. Who was the dragon?

Answer: The dragon represents Satan, who was cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9) and who was working at the time of Jesus' birth through the pagan Roman empire. The ruler who tried to kill Jesus at birth was Herod, a king under pagan Rome. He killed all the male babies of Bethlehem, hoping that one of them would be Jesus (Matthew 2:16). The great red dragon is Satan, who at Jesus' birth was working through pagan Rome.

5. What is the meaning of the "seven heads" and "ten horns" of the dragon, and of "the third part of the stars of heaven" being cast to the earth?

Answer A: The "seven heads" represent the seven kingdoms that Satan worked through at different times, who through the ages ruled the world. We have now encountered a beast with seven heads and 10 horns three times: (Revelation 12:3; 13:1; 17:3).

Answer B: The "ten horns" represent the governments, or nations, that support the major powers in their oppression of God's people and church. During pagan Rome's tenure (Revelation 12:3, 4), they represented the 10 barbarian tribes that supported the papacy in eventually bringing down the Roman empire (Daniel 7:23, 24). These tribes later became modern Europe. In the last days, they represent all the nations of the world united in the end-time coalition (Revelation 16:14; 17:12, 13, 16) which will support "Babylon the great" in her warfare against God's people.

Answer C: "The third part of the stars of heaven" are the angels who supported Lucifer in his insurrection in heaven and who were cast out with him (Revelation 12:9; Luke 10:18; Isaiah 14:12). The "third part of of the stars" represent the rebellious angels who were cast out of heaven with Lucifer.

A REVIEW AND SUMMARY

Thus far, the prophecy has covered the following Bible facts:

1. God's true church appears, symbolized as a pure woman.
2. Jesus is born into the church.
3. Satan, working through King Herod of pagan Rome, tries to kill baby Jesus. 4. Satan's plan is unsuccessful.
5. Jesus' ascension is pictured.

6. What did Satan do after he failed in his plan to destroy baby Jesus?

"He persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." Revelation 12:13.

Answer: Since he was no longer able to attack Jesus personally, he aimed his fury and persecution at God's true church and His people. Many millions were burned at the stake because of Satan's persecution.

SIX IDENTIFYING POINTS: In Revelation chapters 12 and 14, Jesus gives us six descriptive points to use in identifying His end-time church. Watch for them.

7. What did the woman (church) do to protect herself, and what is the "wilderness" spoken of in Revelation 12:6, 14? **"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."**

Answer A: "The woman fled into the wilderness," where she was protected for "a time, and times, and half a time" (or 1,260 literal years) from the wrath of Satan—who was then working through papal Rome. The "two wings" represent the protection and support God gave the church during her time in the "wilderness" (Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32:11). The time spent in the wilderness is the same 1,260-year period of papal prominence and persecution (A.D. 538 to 1798) that Jesus repeatedly mentioned in prophecy. One prophetic day equals one literal year (Ezekiel 4:6).

Answer B: The term "wilderness" refers to the solitary places of earth (mountains, caves, forests, etc.) where God's people could hide in seclusion and thus escape total annihilation (Hebrews 11:37, 38). And hide they did, the Waldenses, Albigenses, Huguenots, and many others. God's people (His church) would have been obliterated if they had not fled and hid in the wilderness during this devastating persecution by the papacy. God's people fled to the solitary places of the earth to escape persecution. (In one 40-year period, "from the beginning of the order of the Jesuits, in the years 1540, to 1580, nine hundred thousand were destroyed. One hundred fifty thousand perished in the Inquisition in 30 years." Albert Barnes, Notes on Daniel, comment on Daniel 7:25, p. 328.) At least 50 million people died for their faith during this 1,260-year time period. God's church did not exist as an official organization during this 1,260-year time period. From A.D. 538 to 1798 it was alive but not identifiable as an organization. When it came out of hiding after the 1,260 years, it still had the same doctrine and characteristics as the apostolic church, which entered the "wilderness" in A.D. 538. Many fled to America to escape the terrible persecutions of God's people.

The 1,260 days of Revelation 12:6 refer to the 1,260 literal Years of papal rule that is so often mentioned in Bible prophecy. 1,260 years AD 538 to AD 1798

Note: We have now discovered our first two identification points for Jesus' end-time church:

1. It would not exist officially as an organization between A.D. 538 and 1798.
2. It would arise and do its end-time work after 1798.

There are many loving, genuine Christians in churches that were officially in existence before 1798. But none of these churches can be God's end-time church into which Jesus is calling all

His people, because Jesus' end-time church had to arise after 1798. This means that most of the popular Protestant churches cannot be God's end-time church because they existed officially before 1798.

8. In Revelation 12:17, God calls His end-time church the remnant. What does the word "remnant" mean?

Answer: It means the last remaining portion. In reference to Jesus' church, it means His church of the very last days, which is identical in doctrine to the apostolic church. A remnant of cloth is the last remaining portion of a bolt. It is exactly like the first piece from the same bolt.

9. In Revelation 12:17, what additional two-point description did Jesus give of His end-time remnant church?

Answer: It would keep all the Ten Commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment (John 14:15; Revelation 22:14). It also would have the "testimony of Jesus," which the Bible tells us is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10). The next lesson gives a full explanation of the gift of prophecy.)

So here are Jesus' next two points of identification for His end-time remnant church:

3. It will keep God's commandments, including His seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

4. It will have the gift of prophecy. Remember that while hosts of sincere Christian people are found in churches that do not keep the Sabbath or have the gift of prophecy, none of these churches can be God's remnant end-time church into which Jesus is calling all last-day Christians, because God's end-time church will both keep God's commandments and have the gift of prophecy. God's remnant church will keep His commandments and will also have the gift of prophecy.

10. What final two points of identification for God's remnant does the book of Revelation provide?

Answer: The final two points of the six are:

(5) It will be a worldwide missionary church (Revelation 14:6), and

(6) It will be preaching the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-14, which are briefly summarized below.

A. God's judgment is in session. Worship Him! God's end-time church must be preaching that the judgment began in 1844. It also calls upon people to "worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Revelation 14:7. How do we worship God as Creator? God wrote the answer in the fourth commandment. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:8, 11. So the first angel's message commands all to worship God as Creator by keeping holy His seventhday Sabbath, which He gave to us as a memorial of Creation.

B. Come out of the fallen churches of Babylon.

C. Don't worship the beast or receive his mark, which is Sunday as a holy day. Beware of all counterfeits.

Unless a church is preaching the three angels' messages worldwide, it cannot be God's remnant church for the end time. Now let's review the six points that Jesus gives us for identifying His end-time remnant church:

1. It would not exist as an official organization between A.D. 538 and 1798.
2. It would arise and do its work after 1798.
3. It would keep the Ten Commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment.
4. It would have the gift of prophecy.
5. It would be a worldwide missionary church.
6. It would be teaching and preaching Jesus' three-point message of Revelation 14:6-14.

11. Now that we have established Jesus' six identification points for His end-time remnant church, what does Jesus tell us to do, and with what results?

Answer: "Seek, and ye shall find." Matthew 7:7. Jesus hands you these six specifications and says, "Go find my church." He promises that those who seek for heavenly things will find them. Jesus promise, that all who sincerely apply His six specifications will find His remnant church.

12. How many churches fit these six specifications?

Answer: Jesus gave such distinctive and specific specifications that they fit only one church. Jesus did not give vague generalities such as "There will be many good people in my church" and "There will also be some hypocrites." How many churches would those two points fit? All of them. Those two points also fit the corner grocery store and downtown civic clubs. They would fit everything, and thus mean nothing. Instead, Jesus gave such pointed, specific, highly descriptive points that they fit one church and only one church-the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Let's double-check the specifications. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only one that fits all six specifications.

1. Did not exist as an official organization between A.D. 538 and 1798.
2. Arose after 1798. It began to form in the early 1840s.
3. Keeps the Ten Commandments, including the fourth-God's holy seventh-day Sabbath.
4. Has the gift of prophecy.
5. Is a worldwide missionary church, working in 208 of the 236 countries of the world.
6. Teaches and preaches Jesus' great three-point message of Revelation 14:6-14.

Jesus asks you to take these six specifications and check for yourself. It is easy. You cannot miss.

Note: Please remember that there are many loving Christians in churches which these points do not fit, but no such church can be God's end-time remnant into which He is calling all His people for today.

13. After one of Jesus' children heeds His loving warning call and comes out of Babylon (Revelation 18:2, 4), what does Jesus ask him to do next?

"Ye are called in one body." Colossians 3:15. "He [Jesus] is the head of the body, the church." Colossians 1:18.

Answer: The Bible says that God's people are called into one body, or church. Jesus asks those who leave Babylon to join the remnant church, of which He is the head. Jesus said, **"Other**

sheep I have, which are not of this fold." John 10:16. He also calls them "my people" in both the Old Testament (Isaiah 58:1) and the New Testament (Revelation 18:4). Of His sheep outside His fold (church), He says, **"Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."** **"My sheep hear my voice, ... and they follow me." John 10:16, 27.**

14. How does one enter that body, or church?

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles." 1 Corinthians 12:13.

Answer: We enter Jesus' end-time remnant church by baptism. When God calls people out of Babylon, He asks them to join His remnant church. People join His remnant church by baptism.

15. Does the Bible provide other evidence that Jesus has only one remnant church into which He is calling all of His people?

Answer: Yes, it does. Let's review it:

A. The Bible says there is only one true body, or church (Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18).

B. The Bible says our day is like Noah's day (Luke 17:26, 27). How many ways of escape were there in Noah's day? Only one--the ark. Once again, today, God has provided only one boat, or church, that will take His people safely through to His heavenly kingdom. Be sure to get on the right boat! The Bible says, **"The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2:47.** It was true in apostolic times; it is still true today.

16. What is the good news regarding God's remnant church?

Answer: A. Its central theme is "the everlasting gospel" of righteousness by faith in Jesus only (Revelation 14:6).

B. It is built on Jesus, the Rock (1 Corinthians 3:11; 10:4), and "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matthew 16:18.

C. Jesus died for His church (Ephesians 5:25).

D. Jesus describes His remnant church so plainly that it's easy to identify. He also describes the fallen churches and calls His people out of them. Satan will trap only those who keep their eyes and hearts shut.

E. Its doctrines are all true (1 Timothy 3:15).

17. What is the good news regarding God's remnant people?

Answer: They will:

A. Be saved in His heavenly kingdom (Revelation 15:2).

B. Overcome the devil by the "power" and "blood" of Jesus (Revelation 12:10, 11).

C. Be patient (Revelation 14:12).

D. Have Jesus' faith (Revelation 14:12).

E. Find glorious freedom (John 8:31, 32).

18. Earth's hour is very late. Jesus' second coming immediately follows the giving of the three angels' messages (Revelation 14:12-14). What is Jesus' urgent plea now to His people?

"Come thou and all thy house into the ark." Genesis 7:1.

Answer: In Noah's day, only eight people (including Noah himself) heeded God's invitation. Jesus is waiting at the door of His end-time ark, or remnant church, for you.

19. Are you willing to heed Jesus' call to come into the safety of His end-time remnant church?

Your Answer: _____

Your Thought Questions Answered

1. China, with one-fourth of the world's population, has barely been touched with the gospel. Wouldn't it take a long time to reach everyone there?

ANSWER: **"With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible." Mark 10:27.** The Bible says the Lord **"will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." Romans 9:28.** That same Lord who empowered Jonah to lead an entire city to repentance in less than 40 days (Jonah chapter 3) will finish His work very quickly in these last days. He says His work will move with such breathtaking speed that it will be almost impossible for God's church to adequately handle the overwhelming influx of souls (Amos 9:13). God promised it. It will happen. Soon and suddenly it will all be over. Long-term thinking and planning in God's work misses the point today. This is a time of great emergency, and an emergency demands immediate action. Long-term thinkers may be trapped and wake up too late.

2. Is there really a serious danger that many professed Christian people will be caught off guard and lost when Jesus returns?

ANSWER: Yes, Jesus made that point crystal clear. He warned of several things that will trap and destroy Christians: (1) surfeiting, (2) drunkenness, (3) the cares of this life, and (4) sleeping (Luke 21:34; Mark 13:34-36).

A. Surfeiting is overdoing in anything, eating, working, reading, recreation, etc. It upsets balance and destroys clear thinking. It also precludes spending time with Jesus.

B. Drunkenness refers to things that bring on a stupor and give us a distaste for heavenly things. Examples include pornography, illicit sex, evil companions, neglect of Bible study, neglect of prayer, and avoiding church services. Such things cause people to live in an unreal dream world and thus miss out.

C. Cares of this life destroy Christians who become so busy doing perfectly good things that time for Jesus, prayer, study of the Word, witnessing, and attendance of church services are crowded out. In so doing, we take our eyes off the real goal and drown in peripheral matters.

D. Sleeping refers to being spiritually asleep. It may be the biggest problem today. When a person is asleep, he does not know he is asleep. Taking our relationship with Jesus for granted, having a form of godliness with no power, applying all great sermons to others, and refusing to become actively involved in Jesus' work--all these things and many others make sleepwalkers of those who, unless miraculously wakened, will sleep past the moment of truth.

3. I joined God's remnant church and have never been so happy in all my life. But I have never been harassed so much by the devil, either. Why is this?

ANSWER: Because the devil is angry with God's remnant people and spends his time trying to hurt and discourage them (Revelation 12:17). Jesus did not promise that His people would not suffer trials, woes, onslaughts from the devil, tough times, and even serious injury from Satan. In fact, He promised that such things would, indeed, come to His people (2 Timothy 3:12). He did, however, gloriously promise:

(1) to give His people the victory (1 Corinthians 15:57),
(2) to be with His people always, in everything they face (Matthew 28:20),
(3) to give them peace (John 16:33; Psalm 119:165), and
(4) to never forsake them (Hebrews 13:5). Finally, Jesus and His Father promised to hold onto Their children so tightly that no one could take them out of Their hands (John 10:28, 29). Amen!

4. What does the word "church" mean?

ANSWER: The word "church" is translated from the Greek word "ecclesia," which means "called-out ones." "Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both): assembly, church." How fitting indeed! Jesus' people are called out of the world and Babylon into His community of members. People become part of Jesus' remnant end-time church by being baptized when Jesus calls them. Jesus says, "**My sheep hear my voice, ... and they follow me.**" **John 10:27**

Summary Sheet. Place a check beside the correct answers.

1. How does Jesus symbolize His true church in prophecy?

- By a tall steeple.
- As a beast.
- By a bright angel.
- As a pure woman.
- By a mysterious cloud.

2. What was the "wilderness" into which the church fled?

- Solitary places such as caves, forests, etc.
- The Sahara desert.
- Iraq.
- The Gobi desert.

3. The following items are part of the three angels' messages:

- Babylon is fallen. Come out of her!
- Hell burns forever and ever.
- God's judgment is in session.

Revere, praise, and worship Him as the Creator by keeping His holy Sabbath, His sign, or mark.

The plagues have ended.

Everybody is going to be saved.

Do not worship the beast or receive his mark.

4. How long was the church to be in the wilderness?

Five years.

1,000 years.

680 years.

1,260 years.

33 years.

5. Jesus provides six identification points to guide us to His remnant church. This church will:

Have many fine Christians.

Keep the Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath.

Have some hypocrites.

Enjoy singing great Christian songs.

Pray much.

Not exist as an official organization between A.D. 538 and 1798.

Have the gift of prophecy.

Speak in tongues.

Be a worldwide missionary church.

Have many fine church buildings.

Arise and do its work after 1798.

Preach and teach the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-14.

6. Does Jesus call all of His people out of Babylon and into His remnant church?

Yes. No.

7. How does one enter the remnant church?

By shaking the preacher's hand.

By signing a membership card.

By baptism by immersion.

By giving a large donation.

8. There are many fine Christians in all churches, and even some who are not members of any church. ___ Yes. ___ No.

9. Which of the following things cause Christians to be caught off guard and lost?

- Surfeiting.
- Cares of this life.
- Getting too excited about your religion.
- Spiritual drunkenness.
- Being spiritually asleep.
- Faithful witnessing.
- Reading the newspaper.

10. God will cut short His work on earth by taking the gospel quickly to every creature.

___ Yes. ___ No.

11. Which of the following does God promise His children?

- Peace.
- They will have no troubles.
- Victory.
- They will never get sick.
- No one can take them out of His and Jesus' hands.
- He'll never forsake them.
- They will be rich.

12. What does the word "church" literally mean?

- A properly designated place of worship.
- A congregation of the faithful.
- "Called-out ones."
- A cathedral.

13. I want to become part of God's end-time remnant church.

___ Yes. ___ No.