

## Defending the Lord's Church

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by Wayne Goff

In one sense, the Lord's church needs no defending because it is a kingdom which will stand forever (Daniel 2:44). But as Christians, and members of the body of Christ, the Lord's church has been assaulted since the beginning of the church some 2,000 years ago. Satan is behind these assaults, and we need to understand what they are and how to respond. Here are a few of the attacks against the Lord's church:

- **The church is not the kingdom; it is a substitution for the kingdom which Jesus failed to establish when He came to earth.** Of course, this is not true, but it is what premillennialists say who believe the kingdom of Christ is earthly, and materialistic. Jesus said that His kingdom was "*at hand*" (Matt. 4:17) 2,000 years ago, that it was not of this world (Jn. 18:36), and that it is "*within you*" (Lk. 17:21). The kingdom was in existence in the first century (Col. 1:13, 23).
- **Church membership is important but not essential to salvation.** Once again, nothing could be further from the truth! Jesus Christ purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28)! And the local church is essential in order for Christians to come together to do together what God has commanded them to do together — worship, work, and obey our Head, Jesus Christ! Ephesians 5:23, 25-27. Jesus is the Savior of the body, the church; Jesus loves the church and gave Himself for her! What an insult to say that His church is non-essential to salvation!
- **One church is as good as another.** Jesus Christ promised to build His church (Matt. 16:18), and He did. His church is better than all the others because they are founded by men.
- **You can have a "personal relationship" with Jesus, be "spiritual," and not even be a member of any church, especially since they are all corrupt!** Again, none of this is true. But Satan is on the attack, and he wants to destroy the eternal lives of those who would be true disciples of Jesus Christ! First, there is no mention of a "personal relationship" in the New Testament, so that is a figment of man's imagination. You can be saved by baptism into Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and have "*fellowship*" with Him (Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Jn. 1:1-3). The apostle Paul said that if anyone thinks himself to be "*spiritual*," then he should acknowledge that Paul's writings constitute commandments from the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37)! And Paul taught the essentiality of the Lord's church in all of his epistles! Finally, there are corrupt churches out there, even among "*churches of Christ*" (see Rom. 16:16; Rev. 2-3). But that does not relieve the Christian of his responsibility to find and be a part of a congregation that is striving to be the kind of church that Jesus Christ ordained in His Word. Do not let Satan take advantage of you through his devices (2 Cor. 2:11).
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