

The Counterfeit “Christianity” of Christ’s Time (and Today!)

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True Christianity of Christ’s time

What was the purpose of the Sanctuary/Temple Service?

The Israelites had spent 400 years in Egypt as slaves to a pagan nation. Very few, if any Israelites could read, and even if they could, there were no books as we have now. There may have been very expensive scrolls, but certainly not scrolls of the Bible because it had not yet been written.

So how was God going to reveal Himself, and His Plan of Salvation, to the Israelites? Through the Temple Service!

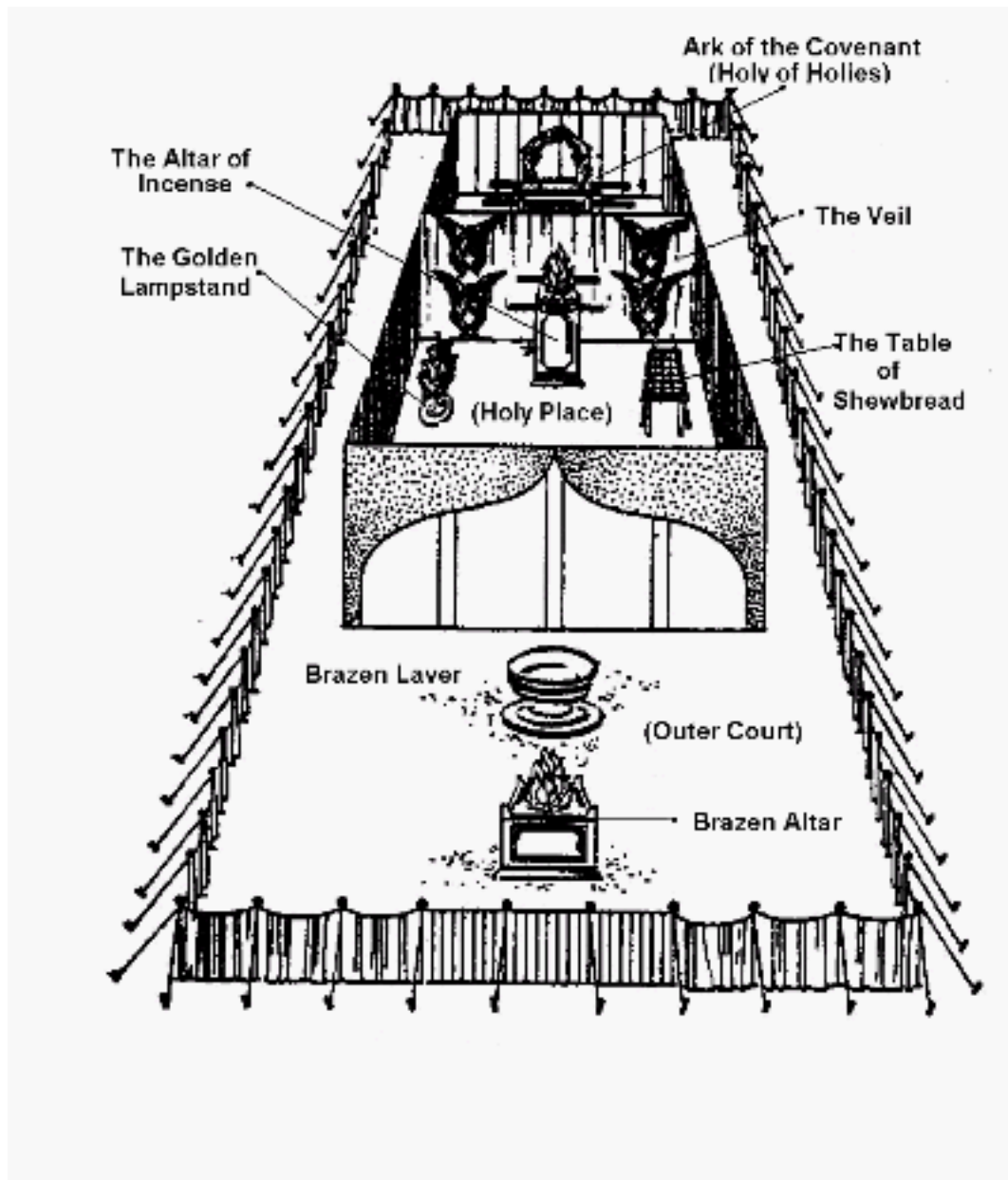
The Lord told Moses:

“Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” Exodus 25:8

The portable sanctuary in the wilderness was called the Tabernacle, for which God gave Moses exact plans for everything, down to the most minute detail, even to the items on the hem of the priest’s garments. God told them the exact dimensions, the type of wood that was to be used, the type of metal (silver, gold, or brass), that was to be used, the type of yard goods (linen, etc.) that was to be used, and literally, everything else about the building of the tabernacle. Regarding the plans to build the tabernacle, God left NO DECISION to Moses or any other human being. God gave ALL the orders.

Lesson to be learned? God did not give us a mind “to make our own decisions” as the churches frequently teach. God gave us a mind so we can follow **HIS orders - to do the things that HE (not “the church”) tells us to do!**

Every component, from the largest curtain to the tiniest piece of furniture, had a symbolic meaning that helped the children of Israel see, experience, and comprehend the Plan of Salvation.



The Sanctuary consisted of three principal areas: the courtyard, the holy place, and the most holy place. These three locations represent the three primary steps in the process of salvation.

The Most Holy Place, represents the presence of God. In fact, God's presence resided over the Ark of the Covenant that contained the Ten Commandments – a transcript of God's character.

All of the sanctuary services represent a sinner's journey back to God. In the first three chapters of the Bible, sin enters the world and man is evicted from the Garden of Eden, so they no longer were able to "commune with God in the cool

of the day.” In the last three chapters of the Bible, sin is eradicated and man is restored to the garden and communion with God.

How many people in the human race were thrown into sin by Adam’s sin?

Answer: The ENTIRE human race became sinners (except for Jesus Christ, who was God in human form).

“ALL have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23

How many people in the human race will be saved from sin by Jesus’ death on the Cross?

Answer: **The SAME number that fell into sin through Adam’s sin: ALL!**

“Behold the Lamb of God who TAKES AWAY the sin of the (whole) WORLD.” John 1:29

The Door

The first thing to notice when approaching the sanctuary is that there is only ONE door. Jesus said,

“I am the door: by Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” John 10:9

Salvation is through Jesus alone.

“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

What is the world's largest church?

Present-day pop-culture stars like Oprah Winfrey are dead WRONG when they say, “There are many ways to God.”

“The world's largest church is one that teaches a New Age theology that denies all the fundamental truths of the Bible. The church has over 20 million enthusiastic members in the United States who adore their pastor — Oprah Winfrey.

Oprah's life story is a rags-to-riches sensation that could happen only in America. She was born in 1954 to an unwed teenager in Mississippi. She was given the name of Orpah at birth, after the biblical character in the book of Ruth, but her family and friends always mispronounced it, calling her "Oprah" instead.

On September 8, 1986, the Oprah Winfrey Show began broadcasting nationally, and in short order it replaced Donahue as the number one day-time talk show in America. Since that time, the Oprah Show has set all sorts of records. It is the highest-rated and longest-running television talk show in American history. The show has 22 million viewers in the States and 49 million worldwide in the more than 120 countries in which it is broadcast. Her O Magazine readership is over 3 million. Her website is visited 1.3 million times each day.

All of this has propelled Oprah to immense wealth and popularity. Her net worth is estimated to be more than one billion dollars. A Gallup poll ranked her as the 4th most important woman in the entire history of the world! CNN and Time magazine have both referred to her as "arguably the world's most powerful woman." She has received similar laudatory rankings from Life, USA Today, and Ladies Home Journal. Forbes named her the world's most powerful celebrity in 2005, 2007, 2008, and 2010. And in 2010, Life magazine named her one of the 100 most important people who have changed the world — right up there with Jesus Christ and Elvis Presley!

An Incredible Danger

There is no doubt that Oprah Winfrey is the world's most popular and powerful woman. And there is also no doubt that she is the most dangerous.

I make that assertion without hesitation because she has emerged as a New Age High Priestess who is deceiving millions into rejecting God's Word and embracing, instead, a convoluted theology that is straight from the pit of Hell.

Her Role As A Spiritual Leader

She is widely recognized as a spiritual leader. In 2002 Christianity Today declared she "has become one of the most influential spiritual leaders in America." In 2006 USA Today pointed out that she has been referred to as "a really hip and materialistic Mother Teresa," "a symbolic figurehead of spirituality," "America's pastor," and "today's Billy Graham."

The spiritual pornography that Oprah is peddling is called The New Age Movement. The irony is that Oprah claims to be a Christian and denies being a New Ager! On one of her programs when a Christian in the audience challenged Oprah about being a "New Ager," Oprah responded:

I am not New Age anything, and I resent being called that. I am trying to open a door so that people can see themselves more clearly and perhaps be the light to get to God, whatever they may call that. I don't see spirits in the trees, and I don't sit in a room with crystals.

Unfortunately for Oprah, this very denial revealed her New Age mentality. Notice that she refers to God as "whatever" a person "may call that." And she asserts that human beings can be "the light" to get to God. This denial is either a lie about her New Age beliefs, or else she is totally deceived by them.

The essence of the New Age Movement is pantheism — the pagan belief that God is in everything and therefore everything is God. This belief stands in direct opposition to the biblical teaching that God exists separate and apart from His creation. A corollary of pantheism is the belief that Man is god and therefore the key to spiritual enlightenment and salvation is to recognize one's divinity and release it to achieve Christ-consciousness.

Oprah can deny all day long that she is a New Ager, but the truth is to be found in her writings and public statements and in the guests that she features on her programs.

Oprah's Words

For example, during a program when she was interviewing New Age guru Shirley MacLaine, Oprah said that being born again is the same as "being connected to the higher Self," and she added that when the Bible says, "ask and it shall be given," we are being prompted to seek answers from our "intuitive Self."

On a program featuring a panel of New Age authors, Oprah said she does not think God is "hung up" on what we believe about Him. "Whatever that force is, it doesn't care what you call it. He doesn't have an ego problem." She went on to say, "I believe in the FORCE. I call it God." On the contrary, the Bible reveals God as our Heavenly Father, as a person, and not as some impersonal force or "it."

On another program featuring a panel of New Age gurus, Oprah said, "...one of the biggest mistakes humans make is to believe that there is only one way. Actually there are many diverse paths leading to what you call God." When one of her audience members disagreed, testifying that she believed Jesus is the only way to God, Oprah lost her temper and shouted, "There couldn't possibly be only one way!" She added that she felt like God cares more about our hearts than He does about what we believe about Jesus.

In her 2005 book, *Live Your Best Life*, Oprah described her theology as a belief that everything is one and Man is divine and Man can thus create his own reality. She encouraged people to meditate and pray (to any god!) and say, "My heart is open to find the flow, the flow, the flow, the flow that is my life...I am willing to surrender to the flow that is my life." Does that sound like a Christian prayer to

you? The Bible teaches that we are to surrender our lives to Jesus.

Oprah claims that one of the most important books she has ever read is one by Eric Butterworth called Discover the Power Within You. In that book the author wrote, "Jesus did not come to teach us how divine he was but to teach that divinity was within us." Commenting on this totally unbiblical and blasphemous statement, Oprah said that for Jesus to claim exclusive divinity "would make Jesus the biggest egotist that ever lived."

One of Oprah's severest critics, David Cloud, says that "in a nutshell, Oprah's gospel is ME." As he further points out, she has said repeatedly, "God wants you to love yourself. It starts with you." Newsweek magazine quoted her in 1997 as saying that spiritual gurus are here "not to teach us about their divinity, but to teach us about our own." By David R. Reagan

The Courtyard

The Sanctuary was surrounded by a courtyard. It was comprised of linen curtains with the one opening facing east. That arrangement ensured that the worshipers and priests who stood at the door had their backs to the rising sun, instead of facing it like the pagan sun-worshipping religions of the day. God's people worship the Creator, instead of the creation!

"Christians" today are still worshiping the Sun god, rather than the God of heaven

Unfortunately, even today, 99% of "Christians" are still pagan sun-worshippers because they worship on SUNDAY – the day of the worship of the sun – rather than on the day that God made holy, the Seventh-day, Saturday, Sabbath.

After Creation, God stopped His work, declared His creation "Good" and made the Seventh Day – Saturday – HOLY!

God made the Seventh-day Sabbath Holy immediately after Creation (which occurred in Genesis, Chapter 1). God gave the Seventh-day Sabbath to Adam and Eve, and to their offspring, the whole human race.

Adam and Eve were NOT Jewish! The Seventh-day Sabbath is NOT Jewish. God gave it to ALL mankind.

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

"And on the seventh day (Saturday), God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the Seventh Day from all His work which He had made.

“And God BLESSED the Seventh day (Saturday), and made it HOLY (sanctified it): because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.” Genesis 2:1-3

The Seventh-day Sabbath

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

“Six days (from Sunday through Friday), shalt thou labor and do all thy work.

“But the Seventh day (Saturday) is the SABBATH of the Lord thy God: In it thou shalt not do ANY work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger (visitor or employee) that is within thy gates

“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 made it HOLY (hallowed it).” Ex 20:8-11

How do we know that Saturday is the Seventh day?

Some present-day calendars begin the week with Monday, making Sunday the “seventh day.” But we know that Saturday is the Seventh day, because it is the day that Jesus kept holy when He was on earth. And good records of the weekly cycle have been kept for the last 2,000 years.

But wasn’t Jesus keeping Saturday as the Sabbath because He was a Jew?

Jesus was NOT a “Jew.” He was GOD, in human form, and God is NOT “Jewish.” Furthermore, the word “Jew” is not in the Bible. The word is Judean or Iudean, and it does not refer to an ethnicity. It refers to a form of worship: the Judeans and the heathen (or nations).

“. . . the nations (mistranslated “Gentiles”) who know not God.”

The term “Judeans” applied to the true believers who worshiped the God of heaven, whose presence was in the temple in Jerusalem in Judea.

The “nations” (mistranslated “Gentiles”) were the heathen, or pagans, who worshiped many different gods, all of which were made from wood or metal.

So the terms “Jew” and Gentile were “written into” the Bible by the translators, who tried to make them definitions of ethnicity, when in fact, the actual words are “Judean” or **ludean**, and **nations** – terms that referred to how one worshipped: whether they worshiped the true God of heaven, or whether they worshiped many pagan false gods.

(The letter “J” was not invented until the 16th century.)

The Altar of Ascent (Burnt) Offering

Immediately upon entering the door of the courtyard sat the brazen altar of ascent offerings. They were, colloquially, called “burnt” offerings because the animals were slain and burned on the altar. That’s why Abraham made the huge mistake of thinking God wanted him to murder his son, Isaac. God said He wanted Abraham to offer Isaac as an “ascent” offering (even though the translators mis-translate the word “ascent” as “burnt”), God wanted Abraham to offer Isaac as a “LIVING” sacrifice – to dedicate Isaac’s life to God.

But because the animal “ascent” offerings were slaughtered and burned, Abraham, not yet knowing the true character of God, mistakenly thought God wanted Abraham to kill and burn Isaac.

But God stopped him from doing that, and provided a ram in the thicket for an ascent (burnt) offering.

God does NOT require human burning sacrifices as Satan does.

The Israelites, over and over again, fell into paganism, to the point that they were even offering their children as human burning sacrifices to the gods Molech and Baal – Satanic pagan gods. But God said,

And they built the high places of Baal, which *are* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through *the fire* unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin. Jer 32:35

They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire *for* burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake *it*, neither came *it* into my mind: Jer 19:5

No Hellfire

God says that the thought of burning human beings alive has “NEVER entered His mind.” He calls it an abomination. Therefore, God, obviously, is NOT going to burn people in hellfire at any time. Burning human beings alive is of Satan – NOT of God.

The Laver

Between the altar of ascent offerings and the entrance to the Holy Place stood the Laver. It contained water for the outward symbolic cleansing of the priests.

It represents baptism – and outward “washing” of the person – when they accept Jesus Christ.

The Holy Place

Remember, NO ONE, except the priests were allowed into the Sanctuary itself. The Israelites brought their animal sacrifices to the Courtyard, but no farther. So, this was NOT a “church” as Christians understand church buildings today. Only the priests were allowed inside. For anyone else – the penalty was Death. God made VERY CLEAR that He didn’t want His followers to go inside a building to sit down and have “man” tell them how to worship God.

God wants to teach us directly through His Word – the Bible – with no one else in between..

“You need no man to teach you. One is your Teacher – Christ.” 1 John 2:27; Matt 23:10

NO ONE “went to church” for the first 4,000 years of earth’s history.

In the Holy Place – The Golden Lamp Stand

The Lamp Stand represented Jesus.

“I am the light of the world.” Matt 5:14

In the Holy Place – The Table of Showbread

Opposite the lamp was the table of showbread. On it were kept 12 loaves of unleavened bread. (In the Bible, leaven – yeast - represents sin.) These loaves were symbolic of Jesus, the Bread of Life. John 6:35

In the Holy Place – the Altar of Incense

The altar of incense was located directly across from the door standing against the ornate veil that separated the holy place from the most holy place. It was here that the priest burned a very special blend of incense that represented the prayers of intercession and confession of the believers. Exodus 30:8

The bread, incense and lamp represent the devotional life: feeding on the word of God (the table of showbread), prayer (the incense rising to heaven) and the light (living the life of Christ and letting our light shine to others).

The Most Holy Place

This room contained only one piece of furniture – the Ark, which contained the Ten Commandments, a transcript of the character of God. God’s presence was immediately above the ark – called the Shekinah, which means “the dwelling.” This symbolized the throne of God, with two cherubs or angels, one on either end of the ark.

The veil between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place represented Jesus Christ, the only way one can get to God.

How Does This Work

The sanctuary shows how a person receives salvation from sin. The wages of sin are death (Romans 6:23) which Jesus paid for by His death on the cross – for EVERY person.

When a sinner became convicted of sin by God’s working in his life, he came to the door of the courtyard with a spotless animal (usually a lamb) to sacrifice. This represented the “Lamb of God” – Jesus Christ, who would die “for the sin of the whole world.”

After confessing his sin and slaying the lamb, the sinner went away forgiven, his sin covered by the shed blood of the victim, representing the blood of Christ.

After some of the blood was caught by the priest, the rest was poured out on the ground at the base of the altar and the animal was burnt on the altar, after it was dead. The altar symbolized the cross where Jesus was sacrificed for the sins of the world. His blood was spilt on the ground at the foot of the cross when the centurion pierced His side. John 19:34

The blood of the lamb, symbolically bearing the guilt of the sinner, was then taken by the priest and transferred to the holy place of the sanctuary. However, the priest never went into the sanctuary without first cleansing himself at the laver. This washing is symbolic of baptism and is listed as one of the symbols for

salvation (Acts 2:38). The Israelites had to cross the Red Sea before they were free from the bondage of Egypt.

“And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” 1 Cor 10:2

However, baptism, although desirable, is not mandatory for salvation. The thief on the cross, who was being crucified at the same time with Jesus, confessed his sin, and was saved, even though he never had an opportunity to be baptized. (See Luke 23:39-43)

The washing in the laver represented baptism (the washing of the outside) and the fire represented the purification of sin (purifying of the inside).

NOTICE: When the Israelite brought the lamb to the courtyard as a sacrifice for sin, the Israelite placed his hands on the head of the lamb, symbolically transferring his sin to the lamb.

What was burned up? The LAMB – representing the SIN. The Israelite, the sinner, was NOT burned up.

Fire represents God “burning” the sin out of our life – NOT burning us up. Indeed, the sin CAN be separated from the sinner, by God putting His life – His character and disposition – into us.

“Fire” represents purification from sin – NOT literal burning up of the sinner.

Peter wrote of the “fiery trials” (1 Peter 4:12) which would try us. God refers to His law as the “fiery law” (Deut 33:2) that purges the sin from the life of the sinner. The “lake of fire” is not to burn up sinners. The “lake of fire” is to purge the sin from the sinner, through “fiery trials.”

“Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (our fleshly nature), that his spirit (now purged from sin) may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” 1 Cor 5:5⁶

“And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.” Mal 3:3

Jesus said,

“I came NOT to destroy men’s lives, but to SAVE them.” Luke 9:56

The Theme of the Entire Bible

The Plan of Salvation is the theme of the entire Bible. God is revealing that He will put His character and disposition into His followers, so they will do right – because it is right, not just because there is a law – the Ten Commandments.

It is impossible to keep the Ten Commandments unless God has put His law in our heart. God promises to put His law in our heart: that promise is given in both the Old and the New Testament.

“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel (the true Christians): After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts: and will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Jer 31:35

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel (true Christians) after those days, saith the Lord: I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people.

“And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: **for ALL shall know Me**, from the least to the greatest.” Hebrews 8:10,11

The Sanctuary was to Reveal the Plan of Salvation

Here are the elements of the Sanctuary doctrine:

1. God’s presence was in the Sanctuary
2. The Sanctuary was NOT a place to “go to church.” NO ONE, except the priests, was allowed to go into the Sanctuary – under penalty of DEATH!
3. Neither the temporary Sanctuary in the wilderness, nor the permanent Temple in Jerusalem, were “churches” where people went in to sit down and hear “man” tell him what to believe about God.
4. God never set up an organized church. The Temple and the Sanctuary were only meant to teach “man” the Plan of Salvation, by the rituals the priests observed. They were not places to “go to church.”

What was happening across town?

What was happening across town from the Temple in Jerusalem?

God's presence was in the Temple. Jesus said, when casting out the money-changers from the Temple"

"Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise." John 2:16

The Pharisees and the Synagogues

Across town, the Pharisees – the enemies of Christ – were setting up a COUNTERFEIT religion, in the Synagogues.

We have established that God's presence was in the Temple, so it could NOT be in the synagogues that were being set up by the Pharisees – the ENEMIES of Christ, the ones who called for the execution of Jesus Christ.

The Synagogues were buildings where people came in and sat down, to hear "man" tell them what to believe about God. The synagogues were established by those who wanted Christ dead.

Jesus had rebuked the Pharisees strongly, saying:

"By your traditions, you make the Word of God of no effect." Mark 7:13

Jesus called the Pharisees "white-washed tombs full of dead men's bones." He referred to them as vipers, hypocrites, the synagogue of SATAN, and "of your father the devil" (John 8:44).

What is the model for today's Organized Churches?

It is the Synagogues! The Counterfeit religion set up by the Pharisees – the enemies of Jesus Christ – the Pharisees who called for the DEATH of Jesus Christ on the cross!

Jesus NEVER wanted an organized church. He said,

"I just want to be your God and you be My people.

"You need no man to teach you. One is your Teacher, Christ."

But doesn't the Bible say, "Don't Forsake the Assembly of Believers"

Doesn't the Bible tell us **NOT** to “forsake the assembling of believers”? Doesn't that mean that we should have worship services in Organized Churches? Didn't God ordain the “Organized Church”?

“Let us hold fast the confession of the expectation without wavering: for He is faithful that promised.

“And let us consider one another to incite to love and ideal acts:

“**Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves**, as the manner of some is; but entreating one another: and so much the more, as you are observing the day drawing near.” Hebrews 10:23-25

To whom was the book of Hebrews written?

“The letter was addressed primarily to Israelite converts to Christianity who no longer followed the Pharisees who were the leaders in the synagogues – the “Organized Church” of the day. These Israelites were familiar with the Old Testament and were being tempted to revert to Phariseeism and/or to pervert the true gospel by the infiltration of Phariseeism. (Galatians 2:14)

“Some have suggested that these professing Israelite Christians were thinking of merging with a sect, such as the Essenes at Qumran near the dead Sea, who lived an ascetic life. The accounts by Josephus and Philo show that the Essenes (Philo: *Essaioi*) led a strictly celibate and communal life — often compared by scholars to later Christian monastic living.

The Theme of the book of Hebrews

“The theme of Hebrews is the absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus Christ as revealer and as mediator of God's grace. The prologue (1:1-4) presents Christ as God's full and final revelation, far surpassing the limited preliminary revelation given in the Old Testament. The prophecies and promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New Testament (New Covenant), of which Christ is the mediator. From the Old Testament itself, Christ is shown to be superior to the ancient prophets, to angels, to Moses and to Aaron and the priestly succession descended from him. Hebrews could be called “the book of better things” since the two Greek words for “better” and “superior” occur 15 times in the letter.

“Practical applications of this theme are given throughout the book. The readers are told that there can be no turning back to, or continuation in, the old system of Phariseeism, which has been superseded by the unique priesthood of Christ. God's people now must look only to Him, whose atoning death, resurrection and ascension have opened the way into the true, heavenly

sanctuary of God's presence. Resisting temptations to give up the struggle, believers must persevere in the spiritual contest to which they have committed themselves. Otherwise they may meet with judgment as did the rebellious generation of Israelites in the desert." Introduction to the book of Hebrews, New International Version of the Bible, pg 1857,1858.

Apparently some of the Israelite (Hebrew) Christians were in danger of joining a sect that believed in a celibate, monastic life of repeated fasting – a plan of salvation by works - something the Bible condemns.

"Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits, and doctrines of devils:

"Speaking lies in hypocrisy: having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from eating foods (NOT "meats") that God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them that believe and know the truth." 1 Timothy 4:1-3

The author of the book of Hebrews warns against this ascetic, monastic life by saying:

"Let us hold fast the confession of the expectation without wavering: for He is faithful that promised.

"And let us consider one another to incite to love and ideal acts:

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves, as the manner of some is; but entreating one another: and so much the more, as you are observing the day drawing near." Hebrews 10:23-25

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves, as the manner of some is (such as the Essenes and their ascetic, monastic, life of "salvation by works") but entreating one another. . ."

In this passage, the author of the book of Hebrews is NOT endorsing a system of "Organized churches" as the "assembling of believers" as that would be like the Pharisees were doing in the synagogues, a system that Jesus strongly rebuked which undoubtedly culminated in His being put to death by these same leaders of the "Organized church" – the Pharisees. Instead, the author of Hebrews is denouncing the idea of living a celibate, monastic, life far away from the masses of humanity who need to learn of the perfect Life of Jesus and God's marvelous grace and salvation. They were – and we are – to be "lights" in a dark world.

The Israelite Christians and those who had converted from paganism (the nations) were meeting in homes and in groups along the riverbanks, worshipping on the Seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday) – the Lord’s Day. The pagans, on the other hand, worshiped their gods in gorgeous temples of stone with magnificent adornments, even though the Bible says:

“Howbeit the most High dwells NOT in temples made with hands. . .” Acts 7:48

“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwells NOT in temples made with hands.” Acts 17:24

God does NOT dwell in temples (churches) made with hands. Our body is the temple of God’s spirit. He dwells in us.

“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (God’s breath of holiness) which is IN YOU, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s. 1 Corinthians 6:19,20

When Jesus was on earth, He made no attempt to set up an Organized church. Even when He was soon to be crucified, he strongly rejected His disciples’ desire to be part of a hierarchy (“Who will sit on your left and your right?” they asked Jesus). Jesus said,

“The Unbelievers (mistranslated as *Gentiles*) lord it over each other, but it shall NOT be that way among you (the Believers).” (Mark 10:42,43)

Again, the pagans (the heathen – the unbelievers) had a strong hierarchy, but Jesus instructed His followers to reject that system because when “man” lords it over man, his “power” always corrupts him.

Shutting oneself off in a monastery makes one useless to God in addition to the secret sin of self-righteousness, in which one concentrates only on his own life and his own salvation, rather than being concerned for, and working for, the salvation of others.

When the author of Hebrews warned against “forsaking the assembling of ourselves together” he was not endorsing an “Organized Church” but instead he was warning the Israelite Christians NOT to sequester themselves away from life and civilization by pursuing a monastic, ascetic, self-centered existence.

Instead, we are to be “lights in a dark world” – exhibiting the character and disposition of Jesus Christ.

What are the elements of worship in the Synagogues (today’s “churches”)?

1. God’s presence was not in the synagogues, nor is it in today’s churches.
2. God presence “does NOT dwell in temples made with hands” such as today’s organized churches.
3. God is our Teacher, not the pastor in a church
4. We now have the Bible – the Word of God – which we can study individually, to learn the Plan of Salvation
5. Today’s organized churches are all 501c3 organizations, whose head is the State, and NOT Jesus Christ.
6. The followers of Christ, in His time, and shortly thereafter, worshiped in homes and along the riverbank, NOT in buildings with an organizational hierarchy.

God NEVER wanted an organized church!