

PURPOSE OF STUDY: To discover the identity of God's last-day remnant church and to invite all people to become an active part of its mission and fellowship.

TEXTS:

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| 1. REV 12:1-5; 17:3-5 (JE 6:2; 2CO 11:2) | 8. REV 12:6, 13-14 |
| 2. JN 10:16 (EPH 4:5) | 9. REV 12:15-17 |
| 3. AC 7:38 | 10. REV 19:10 |
| 4. GE 26:4-5 | 11. REV 22:8-9 |
| 5. DT 7:6, 9 | 12. REV 14:6-11 |
| 6. MT 16:16-18 | 13. REV 14:14 |
| 7. 1TI 3:15; JN 18:37 | 14. REV 14:12 |

THE STUDY:

1. **Who are the two women in the book of Revelation? REV 12:1-5; REV 17:3-5 (JE 6:2; 2CO 11:2)**
A pure woman and a harlot woman. We have already studied that a woman represents a church (Je. 6:2; 2 Co. 11:2), and that the harlot woman represents a corrupt church. The pure woman, then, would be representative of God's true church. This woman is shown standing on the moon (representing the Old Testament types and shadows), clothed with the sun (the gospel of Christ that gives light to the Old Testament), and she is crowned with twelve stars (the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles). She is about to give birth to Him who would rule the nations with a rod of iron (Rev. 19:15) – Jesus Christ. This is a picture of the “birth” of the Christian era, where Jesus takes from among the twelve tribes and established twelve apostles over the Christian church.
2. **How many churches does God have? JN 10:16 (EPH 4:5)**
God has always had only one church, although he has many “sheep.” The purpose of the preaching of the gospel is to gather all the followers – the “sheep” – into “one fold” – His church.
3. **Did Jesus have a church in Old Testament times? AC 7:38**
Yes – the congregation in the wilderness.
4. **How does God identify His genuine followers in Old Testament times? GE 26:4-5**
They were those who obeyed Him and kept His commandments.
5. **How does God describe His relationship with His people? DT 7:6, 9**
He calls them His special people who love Him and keep His commandments.
6. **Did Jesus have a church in New Testament times? What promise did He make concerning it? MT 16:16-18**
The gates of Hell would not prevail against it.
7. **For what purpose did Jesus establish His church on the earth? 1TI 3:15; JN 18:37**
Jesus established His church on the earth to be the foundation of truth, and to uphold the truth. According to Jesus, this is why He came into the world – to bear witness to the truth. If a church is not proclaiming the truth, it has lost its purpose for existence.
8. **What would happen to the woman who gave birth to the Christ-child? REV 12:6, 13-14**
She would be persecuted, and would have to go into hiding in order to keep from being utterly destroyed. For the 1260 years of Papal supremacy, from 538 A.D. to 1798 A.D., God's church was scattered and in hiding, risking their very lives in every act of devotion to God.

9. When she would come out of wilderness hiding at the end of time, how was God's church to be identified? REV 12:15-17

It would be keeping the commandments of God (including the fourth – the Sabbath commandment), and would have the Testimony of Jesus. We believe that both of these characteristics are found in only one church – the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This will become clearer as we continue.

10. What is the “testimony of Jesus”? REV 19:10

The “testimony of Jesus” refers to the spiritual gift of prophecy. Just as the Old Testament church had prophets (Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, etc.) and the New Testament church had prophets (Ac. 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; 21:9-10), so God's end-time church has the gift of prophecy. The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes this gift was manifested in the ministry of one of its founders, Ellen G. White.

11. Who were John's “brethren” who had the testimony of Jesus? REV 22:8-9 (compare w/19:10)

They were the prophets.

12. What is the three-fold message of God's church at the end of time? REV 14:6-11

The three angels' messages in the context of the everlasting gospel. It is a world-wide message that includes calling God's people back to worship on the memorial of creation – the Sabbath, and warning them against the teachings of Babylon and the Mark of the Beast. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only church that preaches these messages, and it has grown to nearly 17 million members sharing God's end-time truth in 202 out of 228 countries and nations recognized by the U.N. According to the World Council of Churches, it is “Probably the most widespread Protestant denomination.”

13. What happens just after this message is given? REV 14:14

Jesus returns! Here is the fulfillment of the words of Jesus when He said “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come (Mt. 24:14). The three angels' messages were designed to prepare the world for the coming of Christ.

14. How does God identify those who receive this message in preparation for His coming? REV 14:12

They keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus Christ.

APPEAL:

God's true church has always been characterized by those who love Him and obey His commandments. Today, God has a church on the earth that the devil has not prevailed against. Just now, He is inviting people of every nation to be a part of His church and take their stand with His commandment-keeping people. Today He is inviting you, too. Don't you want to say “Yes” to Him today?

DIFFICULT TEXTS/OBJECTIONS:

Does God's “True Church” mean that Adventists don't believe anyone else will be saved, or that they are infallible? Jesus told the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well that “salvation is of the Jews” (Jn. 4:19-24). The Jewish nation, as God's church, was to uphold the truth. They had the truth in their fundamental teachings – the law, the covenants, the Bible (see Ro. 3:1-2; 9:3-5). However, they rejected the truth of the Messiah, and God rejected them from being His people (see Ho. 4:6-7). A “true church,” therefore, is true, not because they have no problems, nor because they are the only ones who will be saved. They are God's “true church” because they hold to and teach God's truth. When they cease to uphold the truth, they cease to be God's “true church.”

“Did Jesus build the Christian church on Peter, its first leader?” This question comes from Matthew 16:16-19, where Jesus tells Simon that his name is Peter, and “on this rock I will build My church...” There are those who claim that Peter is the rock that the church was built upon, because the name “Peter” means “rock.” The truth of the matter is that the name Peter actually comes from the Greek word *petros* which means “a small stone”, while the word Jesus used for “rock” is the word *petra*, which refers to a large rock. Peter himself never assumed to be the rock that the church was built on, but said that the Rock was Jesus (Ac. 4:8-12; 1 Pe. 2:4-8). Jesus Himself, using the same Scriptures, made this claim (Mt. 21:42; Lk. 20:17-18). Jesus likened the person who heard His sayings and practiced them to a wise man who “built his house upon the rock” (Mt. 7:24). Finally, James, and not Peter, was the head of the Christian Church (Ac. 15:13; Ga. 2:11-12). Incidentally, only a few verses later (Mt. 16:21-23), the devil does prevail against Peter!