† Blessed is our God always, as it is now, was in the beginning, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. ... in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Through the prayers of our holy Fathers and Mothers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen. Glory to You, our God, glory to You.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, You are everywhere and fill all things, Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life: come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

† Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us (three times).

† Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it is now, was in the beginning, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Introduction

This introduction has already begun with the previous article, “Forgiveness”. Our goal is to seek forgiveness, not further condemnation. We must be extremely careful here, not to multiply the damage that has already been done in previous millennia.

Well over a decade ago, I was reciting in unison with the rest of the congregation these well-known words:

“Πιστεύομεν καὶ εἰς μίαν, ἁγίαν, καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν.”

“We also believe in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.”[[1]](#endnote-1)

The words stuck in my craw; I had to take action: the obvious obfuscation of the heavenly reality would not let go of me. I could never look back again.

In time, I had discovered the biblical definition of the Church:

“You have come to mount Sion, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.

“See that you do not refuse Him who speaks: for if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more we shall not escape, if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now He has promised, saying, ‘Yet, once more, I shake not only the earth, but also heaven’.

“This word, ‘Yet, once more’, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, [since] we [are] receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God well-pleasingly, with reverence and respect: for, our God is a consuming fire.”[[2]](#endnote-2)

Hebrews 12 has much more to say about the Church. Verses 1-11, discuss how Christ is head of the Church and what it means to be Son and sons or daughters.[[3]](#endnote-3) Verses 12-17, deal with the Christian obedience of the Church: especially, concerning bitterness. Verses 18-21, draw a striking contrast to one of the major failures of the Old Testament Church, and the serious consequences of taking Pentecost, and the gift of the Spirit, lightly. So, our idea of Church is informed by the obedience of Christ and the disobedience of man. The danger for us is that we might allow the perverted thinking, that the Via Dolorosa is too difficult for us to walk; we might, perchance, let down our guard; we might cease to “look diligently”.

In any case, we see in verses 18-29 that the Church is one indivisible unity in heaven and earth; it cannot be divided: division of the Church is an absolute impossibility. This is not some mere abstract, hypothetical possibility or potential. This is the indicative statement of fact. The Holy Spirit is the final arbiter of all such matters. Yet, what God has joined together; it would seem that men have made every attempt to put asunder.

The Church throughout the ages is characterized by discord, disruption, and division. We will adduce the evidence as we follow the rough outline of historical progression.

From its outset, the Church was persecuted by Judaism, Romanism, Greek philosophies, and others. It was soon made an illegal religion; then, it was made legal; finally, it became the official religion of the Empire. In becoming legal, the Church learned how to persecute: soon, there were retaliations against Jews, pagans, and other Christians… then persecution by and of new religions developed: retaliation became popular. Just war was defined. Persecution and retaliation escalated into international war.

If the first millennium, we once dreamed and hoped would be idyllic, turns into massive bloodshed; while, the second millennium proves to be even worse…. How is it that the instrument of humility and peace, happened to be made into an instrument of murder and pride. Subduing error, came to mean by any means of violence available. Perhaps this is what John is warning us about with his seven seals, trumpets, and bowls.

The father rushes to intercept his returning prodigal son. Job received his children alive from the dead, in a type. Is Adam hoping to receive Able from the dead. Can Ishmael, Esau, and the children of Keturah ever be gathered again. Novatianism seems to have originated the idea of creating the perfect Church: have we, as neo-Novationists driven away our prodigal brothers and sisters from Christ?

How? Why? Will we be able to expose the lies, so easily glossed over by the standard milquetoast secular histories? Or will we just be poking a hornet’s nest, causing even more sorrow and trouble for the wounded body of Christ. We hope not to do any harm. We sincerely hope that this is a healing process. That is what these studies are about.

https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/468

[[4]](#endnote-4)

1. Of course, that denomination had altered the word catholic or universal; but, I knew it was there, and I knew very well what Hebrews 12 had to say about the subject: I could not escape. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Hebrews 12:22-29 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Whether you believe that this indicates punishment or result makes little difference to me: it says what it says. No one becomes either son or daughter without chastening. If walking with Christ has any physical truth to it whatsoever; it means walking in the shadow of His Crucifixion. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. If you have been blessed or helped by any of these meditations, please repost, share, or use any of them as you wish. No rights are reserved. They are designed and intended for your free participation. They were freely received, and are freely given. No other permission is required for their use. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)