

# **THE MEANING OF THE MARKS THAT MATTER**

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When Isaiah wrote, “And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein” (Isa. 35:8), he was calling attention to the fact that “the way of holiness” (a prophetic reference to the church of Christ) would be as clearly marked as any important highway in the land. What are some of these markings, and what do they mean?

## **The Bride of Christ**

One of the most endearing ways the church is referenced is as “the bride of Christ.” In Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul wrote that Christ is the head of the church, the savior of the body, the church is subject to Christ, Christ loved the church, Christ gave himself for the church, Christ cleanses and sets apart as holy the church, Christ presents the glorious church to himself, Christ nourishes and cherishes the church, he demands the church to forsake all others, the church is his flesh and bones, and the church is to reverence Christ. Toward the close of the Bible Christ promised to return for his bride (Rev. 19:7-9). This manifestation of “the way of holiness” shows that Christ loves the church.

## **The Body of Christ**

Already the church as the bride of Christ has yielded the view that the church is the “flesh and bones” of Christ. And, the fact is intensified that the church is the body of Christ in Ephesians 1:22-23, “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” This expression of “the way of holiness” indicates the dependence of the church on Christ.

## **The Family of Christ**

In that powerful treatise on the church known as the book of Ephesians, Paul revealed by the Holy Spirit the family relationship of Christ to his people. He wrote, “Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Eph. 3:15). When baptized into the name of the sacred three of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, an obedient believer is born again, this time into the family of Christ. The emphasis

within this expression of “the way of holiness” is placed upon the relationship to Deity enjoyed within the church of Christ.

### **The House of God**

Again, closely related to the foregoing remarks on the bride of Christ and the family of Christ is the teaching that “the way of holiness” represents the house of God. Prophecies on the point come from Isaiah 2:2-3 and Micah 4:1-2. I Timothy 3:15 revealed, “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” Since every established house is ordered and regulated, the meaning of this mark that matters is to call attention to the organization associated with the church of Christ where Christ serves as head over the house and the members of the local church are ordered and regulated by the word of Christ (Col. 3:16).

### **The Kingdom of Christ**

The student of the church of Christ is well acquainted with the prophetic promise of the Lord to build his church (Matt. 16:18-19). In the verse in Matthew, Jesus called his church his kingdom. His statement emerges out of his regal calling as King. Just prior to his ascension to the Father, Jesus affirmed, “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). “The way of holiness” is attended by the authority of “Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2).

### **Summary**

Clearly, there exists within the pages of inspiration marks of the church of Christ that are filled with meaning. The church as the bride of Christ shows his love. The church as the body of Christ shows man’s dependence upon Christ. The church as the family of Christ shows the relationship of obedient believers to Christ. The church as the house of God shows the church is organized. And, the church as the kingdom of Christ shows the attendant authority of Christ. The church of Christ is “the way of holiness.”