



WHAT IS THE CHURCH

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The English word "church" is used at least eighty times in the New Testament. As often as this word is used in the Scriptures, you would think that we would have a proper concept of what the church is, but such is not the case. In fact, we could probably say that most people do not have a Biblical understanding of the church. In order to help us understand what the church is, I would like to first mention some things that the church is NOT.

First, the church is NOT a building. In Acts 20:28 we read that Jesus purchased the church with His own blood. Jesus did not die for brick and stone, therefore, we know that the church is not a building.

Second, the church is NOT worship. We have probably all said it from time to time, "It's time to go to church?" The church has the privilege of worshipping God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24), but the church is not worship! When the church assembles together, we worship God. It's not time to go to church, "It's time to go to worship."

Third, the church is NOT a denomination. Usually when somebody asks what church you go to, what they are really asking is: "What denomination are you a member of?" When we examine all that the Scriptures say about the church, it is clear that the Lord intends for His church to be unified (John 17:20-21, Psalm 133:1, John 10:16).

So what is the church? The word "church" in our English New Testament comes from a

Greek word which means "the called out." The church is made up of people who have been called out of darkness (1 Peter 2:9) by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14) into the one body of Christ (Colossians 3:15 & 1 Corinthians 12:27). Saved people are added to the church (Acts 2:37-47). Therefore, "the church" is the collection of those who have been baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27), whom He has added to His body, the church (Colossians 1:18).

While the church is not a building, it is a kingdom (Colossians 1:13), it is a vineyard (Matthew 20:1-6), it is a household (Ephesians 2:19), it is a body (1 Corinthians 12:12-26) and is the "one body" of Ephesians 4:3-4 of which Christ is the Savior (Ephesians 5:23). Allow that to sink in, Christ is the Savior of the body! If we are to be saved, we must be in the body of Christ the Scriptures talk so much about.

While many proclaim "join the church of your choice," the Spirit cries out "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

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