

# What Is The Church?

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In the New Testament, the English word "church" was translated from the Greek word "**ekklēsia**"(ek-klay-see'-ah), which is defined by *Strong's Concordance* as "*a calling out, i.e. (concretely) a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both)*". This word was used 113 times in the new testament, mostly translated as the English word "**church**", but also translated as "**assembly**".

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## The Rock Upon Whom Jesus Built His Church

Jesus was the first to speak of **His church(ekklēsia)**:

[Matthew 16:15-18](#) [Jesus] saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? **16** And Simon Peter answered and said, **Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.** **17** And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. **18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon **this rock I will build my church**; and **the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**

Some think that the "**rock**" that Jesus here referred to was Peter. However, there is great evidence otherwise, from the Bible( & [DA 412-413](#)):

1. Actually, "**the gates of hell**" did "**prevail against**" Peter when he denied his Lord with cursing and swearing. The church was built upon One against whom the gates of hell could not prevail.
2. Centuries before the Saviour's advent Moses had pointed to the **Rock** of Israel's salvation. ([Deuteronomy 32:4](#))
3. The psalmist had sung of "the **Rock** of my strength."[\(Psalm 62:7\)](#)
4. Isaiah had written, "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a **foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation.**"([Isaiah 28:16](#))
5. Peter himself, writing by inspiration, applies this prophecy to **Jesus**. He says, "If ye have tasted that **the Lord** is gracious: unto whom coming, a **living stone**, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious..."([1 Peter 2:3-5](#))
6. The apostle Paul said, "Other **foundation** can no man lay than that is laid, **which is Jesus Christ.**"([1 Corinthians 3:11](#))

"Upon **this rock**," said Jesus, "I will build **My church.**" In the presence of God, and all the heavenly intelligences, in the presence of the unseen army of hell, **Christ founded His church upon the living Rock. That Rock is Himself, — His own body**, for us broken and bruised. **Against the church built upon this foundation, the gates of hell shall not prevail.**

When Peter confessed that Jesus is "**the Christ, the literal Son of the living God -- Father Jehovah**", he was expressing **the truth which is the foundation of the church's faith...**

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## The Church is the **body of Christ - His Flesh and Bones**

[Ephesians 1:22](#) And hath put all things under his[**Christ's**] feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to **the church**, **23 Which is his body**, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

- **The church is Christ's body.**

[1 Corinthians 12:13](#) For **we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body**—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and **we were all given the one Spirit** to drink

[2 Corinthians 3:17](#) Now **the Lord is that Spirit**: and where **the Spirit of the Lord** is, there is liberty.

- Those who believe are part of **the body of Christ** and have received **the Spirit of Christ** as evidence. All those who have received salvation through faith in Jesus Christ comprise **the church**.

[Ephesians 5:23-32](#) For the husband is the head of the wife, even as **Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.** 24 Therefore as **the church is subject unto Christ**, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

- What is subject to Christ? Is the church a building, or is it a "body", a group of believers?

25 ¶ Husbands, love your wives, even as **Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;**

- Did Christ give Himself for a beloved building, or did He give Himself for His followers -- the church, the "the body"?

26 That he might **sanctify and cleanse** it(the church) with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

- Did Christ "**sanctify and cleanse**" a building, or did He do this for "the body" -- the church?

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, **even as the Lord the church:** 30 For **we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.** 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be **one flesh.** 32 This is a great mystery: but **I speak concerning Christ and the church.**

- "**we are members of his body(the church), of his flesh, and of his bones**"

[Colossians 1:12-20](#) Giving thanks unto **the Father, which hath made us** meet to be partakers of **the inheritance of the saints** in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into **the kingdom of his dear Son:** 14 **In whom we have redemption** through his blood, even **the forgiveness of sins:** 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, **the firstborn of every creature:** 16 For **by him were all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all things were created by him, and for him:** 17 And **he is before all things, and by him all things consist.** 18 And **he is the head of the body, the church:** who is **the beginning, the firstborn from the dead;** that in all things he might have the preeminence. 19 For **it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;** 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

- Is Christ the head of the church building, or is He the head of the "**members of his body**", "**the Lord the church**"?

[Hebrews 12:23](#) 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,**

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## More About **Christ's Church**

[Acts 2:41-47](#) Then they that gladly received [Peter's] word **were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.** 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. 46 And **they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house,** did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And **the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**

- In one day, 3000 people were added to the church. Do you think that many people fit into the temple building? I doubt it. But more and more were added to "**the church**" - the **members of Christ's body**, every day. How did that happen? They went "house to house", eating with the people and witnessing of Jesus Christ.

When Ananias and Sapphira died after they lied to God, "... **great fear came upon all the church**, and upon as many as heard these things."[\(Acts 5:1-11\)](#)

- Was "**the church**" a fearful building or was it the **members of Christ's body** that were afraid?

In [Acts 7:37-38](#), Stephen said, "This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet[**Christ**] shall [**Jehovah**] your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him[**Christ**] shall ye hear. This is he, that was in **the church in the wilderness** with the angel[**Christ**] which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:"

- Was "**the church in the wilderness**" a building? No, it was just Christ and Moses.

[Acts 8:3](#) **As for Saul, he made havock of the church**, entering into every house, and haling men and women **committed them to prison**.

[Galatians 1:13](#) For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure **I[Saul, who became Paul] persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:**

- Did Saul "**made havock of**" a church building? No. It was the people in home churches which he "committed *them* to prison"

[Acts 11:22](#) Then tidings of these things came unto **the ears of the church** which was in Jerusalem...

- Did a church building in Jerusalem have **ears**, or does this text speak of the **members of Christ's body** as being "**the church**" with "ears"?

[Romans 16:3](#) Greet **Priscilla and Aquila** my helpers in Christ Jesus: ... [5](#) Likewise **greet the church that is in their house**.

[1 Corinthians 16:19](#) The churches of Asia salute you. **Aquila and Priscilla** salute you much in the Lord, with **the church that is in their house**.

- **Where is this church?** This **church** is **in the house** of "Priscilla and Aquila".

[Philemon 1:1-3](#) Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow labourer, [2](#) And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow soldier, and to **the church in thy house:** [3](#) Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **Where is this church?** This **church**(**members of Christ's body**) is **in Philemon's house**.

[Matthew 18:15-20](#) (Jesus speaking) Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. [16](#) But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. [17](#) And if he shall neglect to hear them, **tell it unto the church:** but if he neglect to hear **the church**, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

- Is "**the church**" a building, or a group of believers -- "**members of his body**", "**the Lord the church**"?

[18](#) Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. [19](#) Again I say unto you, That **if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.** [20](#) For **where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.**

"It is worth mentioning that **in the New Testament, no synagogue, temple, chapel, tabernacle, building or any other meeting place was ever called a "church."** The term always referred to the Christian assembly and, in the New Testament, **it was used for both the local community of believers and the overall collection of Christians.**" ([source](#))

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## Is the Temple of God a Building?

[Matthew 21:12](#) And **Jesus went into the temple of God**, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,

[Matthew 24:1](#) And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the **buildings of the temple**.

[John 18:20](#) Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; **I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple**, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

- This temple is a place, a building/buildings

[Matthew 26:61](#) And said, This fellow[**Jesus**] said, I am able to destroy **the temple of God**, and to build it in three days.

- Here, Jesus described Himself as "**the temple of God**".

[1 Corinthians 3:16-17](#) Know ye not that **ye are the temple of God**, and that **the Spirit of God dwelleth in you**? [17](#) If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for **the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are**.

[1 Corinthians 6:19](#) What? know ye not that **your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God**, and ye are not your own?

- Here, we see that we are also the temple of God because we are **members of Christ's body**.
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## Conclusion (not written by Sid)

Said Christ to His disciples, "Ye are the light of the world." [[Matthew 5:14](#)] **God has a church**. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; **it is the people who love God and keep His commandments**. "**Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.**" [[Matthew 18:20](#)] **Where Christ is even among the humble few, this is Christ's church**, for the presence of the high and holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church. Where two or three are present who love and obey the commandments of God, Jesus there presides; let it be in the desolate place of the earth, in the wilderness, in the city enclosed in prison walls. The glory of God has penetrated the prison walls, flooding with glorious beams of heavenly light the darkest dungeon. His saints may suffer, but their sufferings will, like the apostles of old, spread their faith and win souls to Christ and glorify His holy name. The bitterest opposition expressed by those who hate God's great moral standard of righteousness should not and will not shake the steadfast soul who trusts fully in God. **All things shall work together for good to those who love God**[[Romans 8:28](#)]. "**This is the love of God, that ye keep His commandments.**" [[1 John 5:3](#)] They that will be doers of the Word are building securely, and the tempest and storm of persecution will not shake their foundation, because their souls are rooted to the eternal rock. ([Lt108-1886.17](#))

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Desiring to live by every word that comes from the mouth of Jehovah [Deut8:3;Mt4:4](#)

-[Sid Nash](#): 04/01/2023. Latest version: <http://sidnash.org/docs/TheChurch.html>