

What is the church?

Many people understand “**the church**” as a building. This is not a biblical understanding of the church. The word “**church**” is a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia*, which is defined as “**an assembly**” or “**called-out ones**.”

The root meaning of *church* is not that of a building, but of **people**.

According to the Bible, the *ekklesia* is **the body of Christ**= all those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

1 Corinthians 12:13 “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”

- Local congregations are gatherings of people who claim the name of Christ.

The local church is where believers can apply the “body” principles of 1 Corinthians 12—“**encouraging, teaching, and building one another up** in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The **universal church** consists of everyone, everywhere, who has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. “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.”

- Anyone who believes is part of the body of Christ and has received the Spirit of Christ as evidence.

Not:

An entertainment center or social gathering attempting to compete with the world. It's not the unholy trinity of: ME, MYSELF and I.

Is:

1. The expression of the body of Christ physically functioning on earth:

The phrase “the Body of Christ” is a common New Testament metaphor for the Church = (all those who are truly born again).

The Church is called:

1. “One body in Christ” in Romans 12:5 “So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.”

2. 1 Corinthians 10:17 “For we, *though* many, are one bread *and* one body; for we all partake of that one bread.” Communion
3. 1 Corinthians 12:27 “Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.”
4. Ephesians 4:12 “For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Purpose of spiritual leaders with giftings.
5. Ephesians 5:23 “For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.”
6. Colossians 1:24 “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church.”
7. Matt 16:15-18 “He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”
Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and **on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**”

Through His physical body, Jesus demonstrates the love of God clearly, tangibly, and boldly—especially through His sacrificial death on the cross Romans 5:8 “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

After His bodily ascension, Christ continues His work in the world through those He has redeemed—In this way, the Church functions as “the Body of Christ.”

2. **We’ve been given His authority and power to execute His will and Kingdom.**

Following His resurrection, Jesus gathered His disciples—some of whom were still experiencing doubt and fear—and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” Matthew 28:18–20

- When Christ claimed to have “all authority in heaven and earth,” He was declaring the fullness of His power and dominion. The word translated as “authority” in Matthew 28:18 is *exousia* in the original Greek. It refers to “ruling power over a domain or sphere of influence.” Christ’s total and complete ruling authority encompasses both the spiritual “heaven” and physical realm “earth.”
- The foundation of the Great Commission is Jesus Christ’s authority. Believers who respond in obedience operate under His directive.

- His authority formally legitimizes the mission, providing His followers with confidence and assurance to carry it out.
- The absolute King of Creation appoints the members of His kingdom to be His delegates.
- In His supreme ruling authority, He grants us full rights and privileges to preach His message of truth.

We preach the gospel not on our own authority but on Christ's. Our trust in His lordship and sovereignty underpins everything we do to further His kingdom.

3. **We have been assigned the role as Ambassadors of the K.O.G.**

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 Paul discusses the ministry of reconciliation, and he uses the term “**ambassadors**” for Christ:

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us.”

- The ambassador's role is to reflect the official position of the sovereign body that gave him authority. The ambassador does not offer his opinion or position on the matters but represents the authority that commissioned him to speak in his name.
- Karoline Levitt – Marco Rubio – Steve Witkoff ambassadors of U.S. Govt.

4. **We are a Royal Priesthood.**

1Peter 2:9 “But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;”

- God introduces the idea of a royal priesthood, by describing Israel as a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” Exodus 19:6 “And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”
- Later John writes to the churches explaining that Gentiles – non Jewish, are a kingdom of priests Revelation 1:6 “And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests. To His God and Father to Him be glory & dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- The four living creatures echo this in Revelation 5:9-10, singing that God had redeemed people from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and they add that this ethnically diverse multitude is a kingdom of priests.

“And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals;

For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, ¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”

5. **Called to Take back what the enemy has stolen:**

Acts 26:18 Paul’s assignment in life: “To open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.”

- This is our assignment as His ekklesia carrying the truth of the Gospel to our generation.

Ephesians 5:8 “For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.”

- After salvation, believers become beacons of the spiritual light of Christ.

Matt. 5:14-16 “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

6. We have a responsibility to “Occupy Until He Comes.”

Luke 19:3 “So He called ten of His servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them,
‘Do business till I come.’

While we wait for the Master’s return, we must do business with the gospel in a hostile environment:

The circumstances where Jesus gave this parable was when the Jewish nation was rejecting Him as their Messiah = hostile environment or rejection!

The Master gave each servant a mina to be multiplied.

The servants are to use the Master’s mina in the face of citizens who angrily protest, “We do not want this man to reign over us.” In the parable, this is a reference to the

Jewish nation, which was rejecting Jesus as her King. They protested to Pilate, “We have no King but Caesar” John 19:15.

- It also refers to this evil world that is hostile toward God and does not want to submit to Jesus as Lord and King.
- It is in this hostile world that we are to do business with the gospel, multiplying it by investing it in the lives of people.

There is always a risk in doing business in a hostile environment.

But the greater risk is not to do business at all, but to carefully wrap up the Master’s mina in a handkerchief, not employing it for His purposes.

7. The resistant force driving back and holding back the kingdom of darkness so His will and Kingdom come.

2Thess 2:

³Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

⁶And now you **know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.**”

- Many scholars have speculated as to the identity of the restrainer, naming the restraining force as
- 1) the Roman government.
- 2) gospel preaching.
- 3) the binding of Satan.
- 4) the providence of God.
- 5) the Jewish nation.
- 6) the church.
- 7) the Holy Spirit.
- 8) Michael the archangel.

We believe the restrainer is none other than the Holy Spirit working through the New Testament church!

8. The Bride preparing herself to be spotless waiting on His return.

Christ, the Bridegroom, has sacrificially and lovingly chosen the church to be His bride Ephesians 5:25–27.

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”

- Just as there was a betrothal period in biblical times during which the bride and groom were separated until the wedding, so the bride of Christ separates from her Bridegroom during the church age – waiting for the Covenant of marriage.
- The bride's responsibility during the betrothal period is to be faithful to Him – 2 Corinthians 11:2 “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you* as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

At the Rapture, the church will be united with the Bridegroom and the official “wedding ceremony” will take place and beginning the eternal union of Christ and His bride.

Revelation 19:7–9 “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

⁹ Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

21:1–2 “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also, there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

Matt 25 1–6, 10 “Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵ But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. “And at midnight a cry was *heard*: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet Him! And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.”