

The Body of Christ

I. Definitions

- A. English word “church”
 - 1. Anglo-Saxon “circe” or the Scotch “kirk”
 - 2. Both are derived from the Greek “kuriakos”
 - 3. Meaning: “belonging to the Lord”
 - 4. In modern English usage, it is used to either refer to the people of the church or to the building.
 - 5. This word, “church” which developed ultimately from the Greek “kuriakos”, was originally an adjective and in Biblical use is not the word used for the church in the New Testament.

B. Biblical Words:

- 1. The Greek “ekklesia”
 - a. This is the Greek word translated "church" in the New Testament
 - b. Definition: Assembly
 - 1) In secular writings, "ekklesia" was used for town meetings, or any other assembly in which people were called out to assemble.
 - 2) It never had reference to a building, but to people
- 2. Hebrew Background
 - a. “Edhah” - Congregation, “qahal” - an assembly (nearly always referenced an assembly for the purpose of worship)
 - b. In the Septuagint, ekklesia is often the translation for the Hebrew “qahal”

C. New Testament Usage:

- 1. When used of a body of believers, “ekklesia” is used in four senses:
 - a. Matthew 16:18; I Corinthians 10:32 - The church Universal
 - b. Acts 9:31 - Provincial
 - c. Romans 16:1; I Corinthians 1:2 - Local
 - d. Ephesians 5:25ff - Ideal
 - e. It is only used geographically, never denominationally
- 2. First New Testament Appearances of the word:
 - a. 3 times in the Gospels: Matthew 16:18; twice in Matthew 18:17
 - b. First appearance in Acts is in Acts 5:11
- 3. “Ekklesia” never means the meeting place in the New Testament

- a. Acts 3:11; 5:12 - According to this, where was one of the places that early Christians met? _____
- b. Romans 16:5; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2 - According to these passages, where is another place that early Christians met? _____
- c. Ekklesia always refers to a group of believers, never the building or the place.

4. The church is never a place, but a “people.”

- Therefore, we don’t “go to church” because we “are the church.”

II. Names Associated with the Church

A. Names for the church

- 1. Matthew 16:18 - I will build "_____ " church
 - a. The founder of the church is _____
 - b. The church belongs to _____
 - c. The church began with _____, not some other human person
- 2. The church is also called:
 - a. I Corinthians 1:2 - The church of _____
 - b. Romans 16:16 - The churches of _____
 - c. Hebrews 12:23 - The church of _____
 - d. Acts 20:28 - The church of _____
- 3. There is no specific “title” by which the church was known. Most often, it was simply “the church” (ekklesia)

B. What about names other than these?

- 1. I Corinthians 1:11-15; 3:3-5 - Being named after men was forbidden
- 2. The names/descriptions in scripture give honor to the founder of the church, Jesus Christ

C. Names for the Members (Note: Reflection on these reveals who we are)

- 1. Acts 5:14 - _____
- 2. Acts 11:26 - _____
- 3. Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:2 - _____
- 4. Acts 21:17 - _____
- 5. Philippians 2:15 - _____
- 6. Acts 6:1 - _____
- 7. Acts 15:30 - _____
- 8. Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14 - _____

9. Acts 24:5 - _____ - (probably from the idea that Jesus was called a Nazarene in Mat 2:23)
 10. Acts 28:22 - _____

III. Metaphors for the church (Note: Reflection on these reveals the nature of the church and what the church is to be like)

A. I Corinthians 12:12-27 - _____

1. Christ is the head of the body (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18)
2. Christians are connected to each other intimately and to Christ
3. A part separated from the body will die

B. I Timothy 3:15 - _____

1. God is the Father (Psalm 103:13)
2. All Christians are brothers and sisters (Romans 8:16-17)

C. Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2 - _____

1. Individual members are also called Sheep
2. Elders are charged with Shepherding
3. Note the Ultimate Shepherd in John 10:7-18; Psalm 23

D. Matthew 16:18-19 - _____

1. Jesus is the King with all authority (Matthew 28:18)
2. We are all to be subject to the King, he is Lord (Acts 2:36)
3. The Kingdom was prophesied (Daniel 2:44; Matt 3:1-4; 4:17; Mark 9:1)
4. It was fulfilled at Pentecost (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 2)
5. The Kingdom of God is not of this world (John 18:36)

E. I Peter 2:4-10 - _____

1. Spiritual House (made up of individual living stones)
2. Holy Priesthood, also a Royal Priesthood (Priests - Revelation 1:6)
3. A Chosen Race
4. The People of God
5. Notice the Basis: Jesus, the chief corner-stone

F. Ephesians 5:22-32 - _____

1. Christ is the groom, the church is his bride
2. Christ loves his bride, the church, and gave himself up for her
3. We are to be responsible to him as a wife is to her husband

G. Hebrews 12:18-24 - _____

1. Mount Zion
2. The city of the living God
3. The Heavenly Jerusalem
4. Myriads of Angels

- 5. Assembly of the first-born ones
 - a. The word “first born” is plural
 - b. First born doesn’t necessarily mean the first one born, but is a reference to position. A first born would have all the rights and privileges of an heir
 - c. First born, then, is a reference to Christians.
- 6. Spirits of righteous Men made perfect
- 7. Note the Basis: The sprinkled blood of Jesus

- H. I Corinthians 3:16-17 - _____
 - 1. Spirit of God dwells in the Temple
 - 2. Temple is Holy
 - 3. Purpose of the temple is to be a place where people can meet God
- I. 1 Pet 2:9 - A Royal _____
 - 1. A priest ministers in preparing the people to be able to meet God
 - 2. We are to proclaim his excellencies as his priesthood
- J. Galatians 6:16; Romans 9:6-8 - _____ - we are God’s chosen

IV. Metaphors and Descriptions for its members (Note: Reflection on each of these reveals the nature of who we are)

- A. Matthew 28:19; Acts 11:26 - _____
- B. Romans 6:15-18 - A _____ of Christ
- C. John 15:1-7 - A _____ in the true vine, Jesus
- D. 2 Timothy 2:3 - A _____ in the Army of Christ
- E. I Peter 1:1; 2:11; Philippians 3:20 - _____
- F. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 - _____
- G. Matthew 5:14-15; Ephesians 5:8-9 - _____ of the World
- H. Matthew 5:13; Colossians 4:5-6 - _____ of the Earth -
- I. I Corinthians 4:1-3; 9:19; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Romans 6 - _____
- J. I Corinthians 6:18-19 - _____ of the Holy Spirit
- K. I Thessalonians 4:4; 2 Timothy 2:20-21; 2 Corinthians 4:5-7 - _____

V. Fellowship in the Church

- A. Ephesians 4:3-4 - There is one Body (not many)
- B. Ephesians 2:11-22 - Christ's purpose was to unite us into one body growing together
- C. Galatians 3:26-28 - We are all one in Christ. The basis of unity is Christ
- D. Matthew 5:21-24; 1 John 1:7 - You cannot be IN fellowship with God and OUT of fellowship with your brother and vice-versa. The two go hand in hand. If you break fellowship with one, you break fellowship with the other. Fellowship is very important.
- E. Fellowship can be broken. We are not to have fellowship with:
 - 1. I Corinthians 5:1-11 - Those who continue to live in immorality
 - 2. Romans 16:17-18; Titus 3:10-11 - Those who cause division
 - 3. 2 Jn 9-11; 2 Pet 3:17f; Acts 20:28-30; Rev 2:20 - False Teachers
 - 4. 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 11-12, 14-15 - The unruly

VI. Church division, denominations, etc.

- A. Christ's church is to be one
 - 1. Matthew 16:18 - "I will build my church (singular)"
 - 2. Ephesians 4:4 - There is only ONE body
 - 3. Philippians 1:27 - We are to stand in ONE spirit
 - 4. 2 Corinthians 13:11 - We are to be of one mind
 - 5. Titus 3:10 - A divisive man is to be rejected after two warnings
- B. Acceptable divisions of the church spoken of in scripture:
 - 1. Provincial - Acts 9:31 2 Corinthians 8:2; Galatians 1:2
 - 2. City - Acts 8:1; 13:1; Romans 16:1; I Corinthians 1:2
 - 3. House - Romans 16:5; I Corinthians 16:19
 - 4. The only acceptable divisions mentioned in scripture are geographical
- C. Unacceptable divisions spoken of in scripture
 - 1. I Corinthians 1:10-15 - Divisions after men (eg. "Lutheran, Mennonite, Wesleyan, Calvinist etc.)
 - 2. I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28 - Due to race, gender, or social status
 - 3. 3 John 9-11 - Power politics
 - 4. Romans 14:3; Matthew 15:9 - Over matters of opinion

VI. The Mission of the church

A. In looking at the mission of the church, consider these passages from the ministry of Christ

1. God is a missionary God, he "sends" in order to fulfill his mission
 - a. John 8:42 - Jesus was sent by _____
 - b. John 15:26 - Jesus sends the _____
 - c. Acts 13:4 - The church, specifically Saul and Barnabas, were sent by the _____
 - d. Therefore, the church is sent to fulfill God's mission
 - 1) Mt 28:19-20
 - a) Make _____ of all the nations
 - b) Disciples are to _____ ***everything*** Christ commanded his disciples
 - c) Therefore, we are also to make disciples of all the nations
 - 2) Acts 8:4 – An example
 - a) Who went about everywhere spreading the word?

circle one: (a) The Twelve Apostles (b) Christians
 - b) circle one: **T / F** I am part of the mission of God
 - e. God's activity is inherently a "sending" activity for the sake of the world
 2. Jesus states his mission
 - a. Lk 4:18-21 - Preach Gospel to the poor, set free oppressed, etc.
 - b. Lk 5:30-32 - Minister to the "sick," call sinners to repentance
 - c. Lk 19:10 - Seek and save the lost
 3. Jesus passes on his mission
 - a. Lk 9:1-5; 10:1-9 – Trained disciples to do as He did
 - b. Mt 25:31-46 - Church is to minister to those in need
 - c. Mt 28:18-20 – Disciples to do as Jesus did and carry on mission
 - d. Jn 15:16 - We are to bear fruit
 - e. Jn 20:21 – As the Father sent Jesus, he sends us
 - f. Eph 2:10 - We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for _____
 - g. 1 Pet 2:9 - We are to _____ the excellencies of God

C. Reflection on the metaphor of the body of Christ

1. A common metaphor for the church in scripture is the "body of Christ"
 - a. 1 Cor 12 - An overarching point is that there are many members, but one unified, tight-knot body
 - b. Eph 1:23 - The fullness of Christ today is his body, the church
 - c. Eph 4:4 - Christ has only one body
 - d. Eph 4:12, 16 - Each part of the body has a service and ministry
 - e. Eph 1:22 - Jesus is the "head" of the body
2. If Jesus is the head of the body, and we are parts of the body...
 - a. What we think and do is up to him

- b. We are his hands, feet, ears, etc. to minister to others
- 3. The body of Christ needs to be unified for the purpose of mission
 - a. Jn 17:20-21 - Jesus prayed for the unity of the church so that the world may know that Jesus is sent by God
 - b. The body, under the headship of Christ and tight-knit with unity of purpose will carry on the mission of Christ.

D. Incarnation and Mission

- 1. Jn 1:1-3, 14 - Jesus is God who became flesh and lived among us
 - a. God did not send tracts, radio waves, etc., but "became" human
 - b. God became a common Jewish human
 - c. God entered the world as a baby, and learned human language, customs, culture, etc.
 - d. God "identified" with us in our humanity to give us the clearest message of all - a human being, the Son of God.
- 2. New Testament was written not in Latin, or Hebrew, but in Koine Greek
 - a. Latin was the language of education
 - b. Hebrew was the religious language of the Jews, and is what the most of the Old Testament was originally written in
 - c. Koine Greek was the "street language" and the international language
 - d. God used a means to reach the most people at their level
- 3. Jn 20:21 - Jesus sends us into the world the same way he was sent
 - a. This means entering into the world and participating in it
 - b. This means identifying with the world to bring them to God
 - c. This means communication in ways that the world understands
- 3. Examples of this principle in other parts of the New Testament
 - a. Acts 17:16-31 - Paul adjusts his approach
 - 1) He does not begin with Old Testament prophecy with these Greeks, it would have meant nothing to them
 - 2) He quotes their own poets
 - 3) He affirms their religiosity while trying to teach them true religion
 - b. 1 Cor 9:19-23 - Paul identified with people to win them
 - 1) He became like them, but not of them
 - 2) He did all things for the sake of the Gospel
 - c. 1 Tim 3:15 - The church is the support and pillar of the truth
 - 1) The church does not compromise the Gospel message
 - 2) The church identifies with the world, but does not change the message
- E. Therefore, it is better to think of the church not as having a mission, but as being part of the mission of God, or as agents of God's mission. The church does not send people to carry out God's mission, but is sent to carry out God's mission