

CHURCH

Ecclesia, Called Out Ones

The Church is a spiritual organism made up of all Christians. We, the Christians, are the body of Christ on earth—Jesus being the head of the Church (Ephesians 1:22, 23).

Jesus purchased the Church with His own blood	Acts 20:28
The Church is subject to Christ	Ephesians 5:24
Christ loves the Church	Ephesians 5:25
Christ nourishes and cherishes the Church	Ephesians 5:29
God causes the growth of the Church	Colossians 2:19

Since we call the building we go for Sunday services “church” as well, some of us may not even realize that it is the believers who are the Church. Keep in mind that God does not dwell in houses made by human hands (Acts 7:48).

Let us look at a few Scripture verses that clearly indicate that the biblical Church is the body of Christ—the believers.

And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.
(Matthew 18:17)

So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God.
(Acts 12:5)

Therefore, being sent on their way by the church . . .
And when they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church.
(Acts 15:3, 4)

For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part, I believe it.
(1 Corinthians 11:18)

. . . and to the church in your house.
(Philemon 1:2)

So, there is a distinction between the Church—the body of believers, and a church building where many go at certain times of the week, whether they are part of the body of Christ or not. Even I went to church for Sunday services a few times before receiving Jesus and becoming a part of the Church—the body of Christ. Many can testify of sitting in the pews for years before receiving Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Sounds unbelievable? Not if you know what is being taught in a large number of congregations. Many errors have been established throughout the years as truths.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, read your Bible, and let the Holy Spirit lead you into all truth (John 16:13). How else will you recognize errors, if you don't know the truth of the Word of God and are not firmly established in it? The truth is essential; it will set you free. To be free is good; it is something to be highly desired by the Church. People can tell you what the Bible says, but only the Spirit of God can teach you the deep spiritual meaning of it. God is spirit and His Word has to be spiritually discerned. Beloved, keep that in mind. (Read chapter "Word of God.")

And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

(1 John 2:27)

The following verses are often misunderstood:

Jesus said,

"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

(Matthew 16:18, 19)

Jesus is not telling Peter that He will build His Church upon him. Greek language shows that in a clearer way. All through the Bible we see that God is the Rock upon which the Church is built.

Ascribe greatness to our God!
The Rock!

(Deuteronomy 32:3, 4)

The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;
My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge.

(2 Samuel 22:2, 3)

For who is God, but the Lord?
And who is a rock, except our God?

(Psalm 18:31)

Is there any God besides Me,
Or is there any other Rock?

I know of none.

(Isaiah 44:8)

Jesus is the Rock. The Church is being built upon Him.

For additional verses concerning God as our Rock, read Psalm 28:1; Psalm 31:3; Psalm 62:1, 2; and Isaiah 26:4.

All true believers have the keys of the kingdom of heaven. We are God's ambassadors, His representatives. We can go to any person with this message: "Receive Jesus and the kingdom of heaven is yours," or "Reject Jesus and you will not enter the kingdom of heaven, but be eternally separated from God."

The literal Greek translation of the words "shall be bound in heaven" and "shall be loose in heaven" is "having been bound" and "having been loosed."

God is the initiator. We are not initiating anything; we are simply passing on to others what has already been established by Him.

He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

(John 3:18)

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

(John 5:24)

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,

from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

(Ephesians 4:14–16)

I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

(1 Timothy 3:15)