

# *New Way of Living*

STUDIES IN GOD'S WORD  
TO STIMULATE GROWTH

## **10** Christ and His Church (Part one)



## *Bible Studies*

### **Introduction**

There are a diversity of opinions as to what is meant by "church." Those opinions can express the church in the following ways:

**The church is mystical:** That is, the church is hidden or obscure to human comprehension. It consists of believers in God and found everywhere without being necessarily gathered or assembled.

**The church is a building:** That is, the church is a place or building to which people congregate, whether people are there or not. It is the church. The building is what is prominent.

**The church is spiritual:** There are a variety of concepts including the mystical, but basically it refers to the church being made up of people who have had a spiritual awakening or to put it another way: have been regenerated (born again John 3:5). The people are the church, not the building.

### **Church concepts:**

Church concepts can be based on a number of influencing factors.

1. A religious or denominational teaching.
2. A humanistic concept based on a worldly organization
3. A personal concept and interpretation of the Scriptures.
4. A mixture of the above three.

### **The word Church:**

The word "church" comes from the Greek word Ekklesia, which means – A calling out.

"Church" describes the believer in Christ Jesus, who, hearing the Word has repented of his or her sin and separating himself from his old life, embraces the new life that is in Christ.

The Lord seeing this principle working in your life then adds you to His church. That the Lord adds to His church is demonstrated in the following:

**Acts 2:41** Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

**:47** Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (See also: Acts 5:14; 11:24).

### **This is a baptism:**

Your being added to the church is a baptism, not of water but by the action of the Holy Spirit immersing (adding) you into the body of Christ:

**1Cor 12:12** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

- :13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.  
 :14 For the body is not one member, but many.

### The evidence:

The evidence of this principle living in the believer's life is to be seen in their faithful assembling in the place where God has planted them.

### Jesus said He would build His church

**Matt 16:13** When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

:14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

:15 He 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 Bar-jona: 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.

Jesus establishes in the minds of His disciples two essential truths:

1. **Who He is:** Jesus did not tell them who He was, but drew Peter into a place where he could receive a revelation from the Father to Peter's heart of His identity. This was done in the hearing of all the disciples, that all may know beyond all doubt that He, Jesus was the Christ (the Messiah), and that He was the Son of God. In this Jesus establishes His deity and mission.
2. **What He means by church:** This is the first mention of "church" in the New Testament. Jesus sows the seed thought of His intention to build a church. A church, that He Himself would build, which He began to build following His resurrection, when He, through His appearances unto His disciples gathered them to Himself.

### Paul speaks of Christ and His church:

**Eph 3:3** How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, :4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

:6 That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

:9 And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

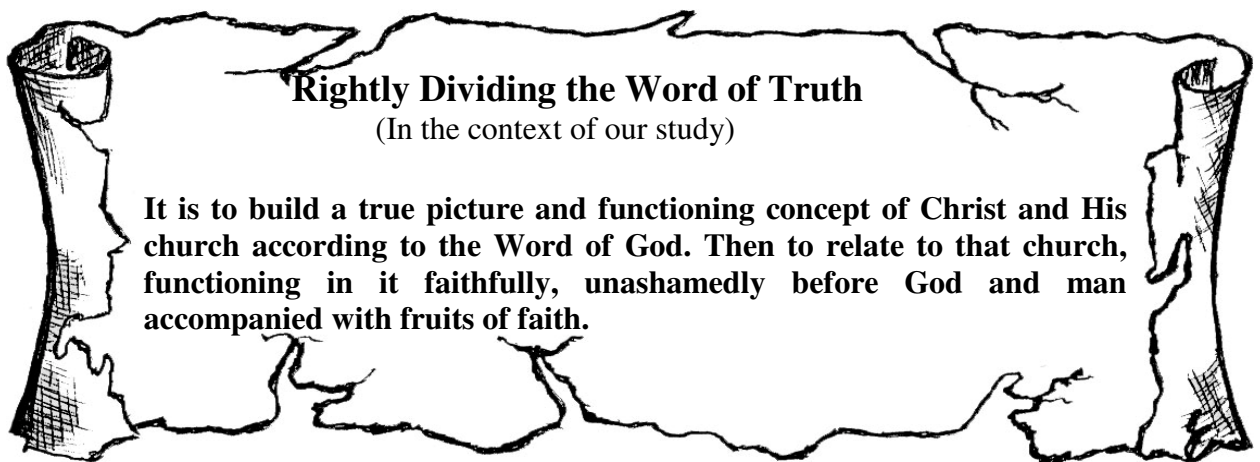
- Christ and His church is a mystery :3-4.
- It is made known to us by revelation. That by the revealing to us by the Holy Spirit quickening it to our understanding :3.
- It is understood as you read :4.
- It was not made known in other ages :5. That is: Though it is seen throughout the Old Testament in type and foreshadowed in the Jewish Synagogue it is a New Covenant revelation.

- A church that the Gentiles (all nations of the earth, apart from Jews), with natural Israelites (the Jews) should be fellow heirs and of the same body :6.
- Paul was made a minister by the Lord to preach this truth :7-8.
- That by seeing (it in function) we might fellowship Christ and His church :9.

### **The eternal purpose of God?**

**In all that we have considered, we must conclude: Christ and His church are the eternal purpose of God.**

Paul was concerned for truth to be rightly divided that we may fulfill the Word Scripturally. He wrote unto Timothy: **2Tim 2:15 Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.** It is the responsibility of ministry to rightly divide the Word of truth and each person's responsibility to fulfill it.



### **The church in function:**

- The church is the expression of the will of God on earth as it is in heaven (Matt 6:10).
- The church is both universal and local, with the local church an expression of the universal church.
- The church is a fellowship of believers in Christ Jesus, who, by the Spirit of God have been born again (John 3:5) and are added to His church
- Every local church is an embassy of the Kingdom of God and its King in the community in which it is planted.

### **The Local Church:**

The local church is the focal point for Christians to gather to, that they may minister:

1. To God.
2. To one another.
3. To the world and in particular the immediate community and region that surrounds it.

**For the church to be effective in its ministry in its locality there must be a commitment of its members to it.**

### **Are We Gathered or Assembled?**

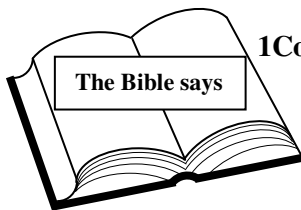
- If you were to buy an “assemble it yourself car,” you would find when you opened the crate that all the parts had been “gathered” together in their place in the crate. But you know, the car is not going to function as designed until it is “assembled.”

- With the parts would come the manual with the instructions within it on how to assemble the car, maintain it and other information about its function.
- So with you and I. We may “gather” with other Christians and receive the benefits of fellowship, but to function, means you must be “assembled.”

**It could be said:**

**“You assemble in the place of assembly that you may be assembled by the Holy Spirit and those the Lord has placed over you to instruct you and you loving it.”**

The result is: God has put your life together through the principle of assembling and you are now beginning to function in your God given purpose.



**1Cor 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.**

**:27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.**

**The word “set.”**

- Set, means you have been appointed, advised or ordained as well as set into a place within the church and it is not that you just may look pretty.
- To assemble means to come together with the Christian body to which you belong, with the realization of your gifts, abilities, strengths, weaknesses and function in that capacity as God has appointed you.
- Knowing this, you are to endeavor to function within the boundaries and functions of the purposes of God, desiring to bless the Lord and His church.

**The Bible calls this:**

- The call of God on your life. You are called to fellowship the Lord Jesus Christ (1Cor 1:9; Col 3:15), and you are called to a function (1Tim 1:9; 1Cor 7:17).
- Your ministry (Col 4:17; Eph 4:12).
- Serving (2Cor 4:5; Eph 6:6; Col 3:24).
- Your priesthood (1Pet 2:5-9).

**When assembled and functioning in your ministry, you expose yourself to the increase of the blessing of God, opportunities to serve Him, share the Gospel, and involvement in building God’s church.**

**The Purpose of Your Bible:**

- The Bible is the Lord’s manual giving you the Lord’s instructions on assembling. Jesus is the image (car) you are being assembled to be like. Paul said to the Corinthians:  
**2Cor 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.**
- By the Scriptures we understand what God means by church and our place and function. As petrol gives the energy for the car to be mobile, the Holy Spirit is our energy to be mobile. It is by His power we function and do everything we do for the glory of God. Paul said to the Philippians: **Phil 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.**

**The responsibility of every member:**

It is your responsibility to assemble, that by the Holy Spirit, hearing the Word and receiving opportunity you may serve God as He has appointed.

**The responsibility of ministry:**

It is the responsibility of ministry to prayerfully bring the instruction of God's Word to you. While doing this, prospecting your life for the precious deposits' of the gold of God's gifting within you. This is done in conjunction with encouragement, counsel and opportunity of service.

**To fully realize God's purpose for your life takes time. Patience and the proving of you is necessary. Have faith, relax, God knows what He is doing.**

**The church in the Bible:****1. The church in the Old Testament:**

The church in the Old Testament is seen in shadow form or type within the nation of Israel. Particularly in the following:

**(1) The Tabernacle of Moses:**

This was a tent structure given to Israel when they came out of Egypt.

**Exo 25:8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.**

**:9 According to all that I show thee, *after* the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.**

**(2) The Tabernacle of David:**

This was also a tent structure with its main feature an expression of worship which we considered in our previous study.

**(3) Solomon's Temple:**

The Temple was a structure of great and costly stones and timber (See 1Ks 5:17; 7:9-11).

**(4) The Synagogue:**

- The word Synagogue is in reference to the Jewish meeting places of assembly wherever the Jewish people were found.
- The word Synagogue means: An assemblage of people.
- The synagogue system of assembling in one place foreshadows the local church of the New Testament.

**2. The Church in the Gospels:**

The Church throughout the Gospels is comprehended in two dimensions and is as follows:

**The Lord Jesus:**

**John 2:18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?**

**:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**

**:20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?**

**:21 But he spake of the temple of his body.**

In these verses, Jesus is seen to be sowing the seed thought of the (His) human body being the "Temple of God" or dwelling place of God. He said this in anticipation of His own death at the hands of the Jews and resurrection. When we consider this, with His promise of the Holy Spirit indwelling His people (John 14:16-17) we again have inference to the human body being the temple of God. These two seed thoughts of Christ and the believers being temples of God became a reality following the resurrection of Christ and the birth of His church.

**The church:**

We considered the promise of Jesus: “I will build my church” (Matt 16:18). Jesus also makes mention of His future church later in the Gospel of Matthew (Matt 18:17). Jesus, knowing His departure from earth was imminent further to His promise of building His church said:

**John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.**

**:2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.**

**:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.**

The “My Father’s House” is interpreted to mean the church universally, while “the many mansions” are the local churches found throughout the earth, with Jesus receiving all that come to Him into His church through regeneration, for there He promises to be. There is an ultimate fulfillment of the words of Jesus following His Second Coming.

Throughout the Epistles they are revealed as: Christ and His church, with Christ as the head and the church as His body

Christ and His church are corporately the temple of God (1Cor 3:16; Eph 2:19-22). Yet, each individual is a temple, for as God dwelt in Christ, He now dwells in His people (1Cor 6:19).

**3. The Church in the Book of Acts:**

In the Book of Acts we see the church promised (Matt 16:18) planted, with Jesus before His ascension to the right hand of God giving the order in which it would occur:

**Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**

**Jerusalem:** The Lord following His resurrection gathered His disciples as the nucleus of His church, commissioned His apostles, commanding them to remain in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit. Ten days later at the Feast of Pentecost the Lord in His sovereignty outpoured the Holy Spirit, baptizing 120 people gathered, in one accord, in one place, resulting in 3,000 being added to them and the Lord adding daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:1-4; 2:40, 47).

**Judea:** Acts 8:1-4.

**Samaria:** Acts 8:5.

**The nations of the earth:** For this to happen, the door of salvation had first to be opened to the Gentiles. This occurred in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48). It was after this that the Lord began to move His disciples towards the nations of the earth (Acts 13:1-4; 14:23-17).

Throughout the Book of Acts, the word “church” is mentioned 22 times, with its first mention in Acts 2:47.

**4. The Church in the Epistles:**

The church in the Epistles is first realized in the opening address of each, this is particularly so with the Pauline Epistles. The church is further revealed throughout each Epistle in the instructive teaching concerning matters of doctrine (teaching), reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness (2Timothy 3:16).

Consider also: 1Cor 3:16; Eph 2:19-22; Heb 3:6; 1Pet 2:4-5.

**The Church in the Revelation:**

The Church in the Revelation is particularly seen in the first three chapters where seven churches in Asia are addressed.

The whole book of Revelation is written and commanded of the Lord to be sent to each of the seven

churches, revealing the church in symbols and its head the Lord Jesus Christ in His various aspects of relationship to the church. In the seven we see the truth of the one universal church and again in the seven each a local church. The message of the Revelation should not be confined to the seven churches, but to the church of every generation.

**The Local Church is Sovereign:**

The local church is to be an expression of truth that is in harmony with the Word of God and truth of the universal church, yet have the liberty to develop its identity in three dimensions:

- 1. Personality:** The church is made up of personalities. This with the influence of leadership and inspiration of the Holy Spirit each church will form its own unique personality.
- 2. Expression:** Every local church is to develop its own unique expression involving government, order of services, programs, music and teaching, the choosing of speakers, elders, deacons, musicians, and buildings.

All these attributes of the local church are developed as the church works in harmony with the Holy Spirit, who leads, inspires and gives revelation and wisdom in the churches development, function, changes and maturation. The process is smooth, flows with little hindrance and defines the local churches expression when its members faithfully contribute themselves, their gifting and abilities to its leadership and vision.

- 3. Character:** God’s purpose for every church is that in character it be an expression of the risen Christ. The character of the church in essence is righteousness, developed by the involvement of every member doing their duty in truth and justice. Each member is helped in achieving Christ likeness (character) by their consciousness of holiness, sanctification, obedience, Godliness and humility.

Christ is the measure of our character and His character is the churches character, and not our own, yet expressed through each personality. The church, in this manner is changed into the likeness and image of Christ by the Word and the Holy Spirit.



**2Cor 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

**Recognizing the personality, expression and character of the local church helps us to recognize Christ in the church.**

**The Local Church:**

Each local church is indigenous and autonomous, yet an intricate part of the universal church and eternal purpose of God:

- 1. Indigenous:** Dictionaries define the word to mean: Produced, growing or living naturally in a country or climate.

Applied to the church “indigenous” means, that as a result of missionary efforts a native church has been produced which shares the life of the country and district in which it has been planted and finds within itself the ability to perform three responsibilities:

- **Support itself:**  
God’s provision for the church financially is through the faithful tithing and giving of His people.
- **Govern itself:**  
God’s provision of government of His church is in the order of gifted ministries called in the Scriptures elders (overseers or watchmen), who with the pastor (senior elder) and others in position of oversight in the church, function with the responsibility and authority providing government of the church.

- **Reproduce itself:** The church reproduces itself through:
  - (1) Evangelism. That involves the church reaching into the surrounding community with the Gospel.
  - (2) By the upbringing and training of the children within. This is primarily the responsibility of parents, whose efforts may be supported and supplemented by church programs.
  - (3) Missionary work. That is the pioneering of and planting of churches in other localities within the nation or abroad.

### 2. **Autonomous:**

The word “autonomous” is best understood as two words in one. *Auto*, meaning: self and *nomos*, meaning: law = the power or right of self government.

Applied to the church “autonomous” means each local church has the power of self government, independent of any earthly form of central government or influence. Its influence is to be the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Its central source of influence is heaven, the dwelling place of Christ.