

## Ekklesia (The Church)

### 1) What is it?

- a) It is an **assembly**- that is the literal meaning of the word.
  - i) A **multitude** of wandering Jews Acts 7:38[1]
  - ii) An **angry mob** Acts 19:32-34[2]
- b) More commonly it is an **assembly of believers**, "the people of God". (114 times in the New Testament)
  - i) What it is not
    - (1) It is not a new name for **Israel**.
    - (2) It is not the **Kingdom**. (Ephesians 4:12) [4] (Acts 15:16; Rev: 11:15)[5]
    - (3) It is not a **building or structure**.
    - (4) It is not a **national organization**.
    - (5) It is not a **denomination**.
    - (6) It is not a program for **social reform**
  - ii) What it is
    - (1) The Body of Christ unseen and **not yet assembled**. 1 Cor 15:9 [6] Gal 1:13[7]; Ephesians 5:32[8]; Heb 12:23[9]; Rev 19:6-9.
    - (2) The Body that **regularly assembles**.

### 2) Where did it all Begin?

- a) Genesis 3 with Adam and Eve? (Gen 3:15)
- b) Genesis 12 with Abraham and the covenant God made with him?
- c) Matthew 3 when John the Baptist starting baptizing? (Matt 28:19-20)
- d) Christ Started the Church while on earth right? Well he certainly did all that was necessary but at what point?
  - i) Was it when he chose the 12 (Matthew 10)
  - ii) Was it when Peter made his confession? (Matt 16:18[10] *Upon this rock....*)
  - iii) How about at the last Supper in Matthew 26? It is one of the ordinances right?
  - iv) Was it then when Jesus said **receive ye he Holy Spirit**? John 20:21-22[11]
- e) **Pentecost seems** to be the best thought.
  - i) Matt 16:18 [12] speaks of the church being **yet in the future**.
  - ii) The resurrection is the foundational doctrine and most oft repeated theme in New Testament preaching. However **His ascension** was required for the Holy Spirit to come and to give his gifts to men. (Ephesians 4:7-12)[13]
  - iii) Finally, Acts 1:5[14] speaks of an as of yet unfinished work of the Holy Spirit. The baptizing work of the Holy Spirit. It was fulfilled at Pentecost. (Acts 2) Acts

11:15,16[15] <sup>15</sup> "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. <sup>16</sup> Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

iv) What is this **Spirit baptism**? 1Cor 12:13[16]

3) What is it for?

a) Wrong purposes

- i) **Save** the world – 2 Tim. 3:1-7 & 2 Peter 3:1-5 indicate otherwise.
- ii) **Serve** the world
- iii) **Rule** the World (govern)
- iv) **Imitate** the world. 1John 2:15 [17]
- v) **Isolate** itself from the world. Matt 5:13-14 [18]

b) Right purposes

- i) **Love** God (Rev 2:4) [19]
- ii) *To Glorify God. Ephesians 3:20-21[20]*
  - (1) Praise and prayer. - John 14:13[21]; Heb 13:15[22]
  - (2) Fruit bearing - John 15:8[23]
  - (3) Giving Philippians - 4:18[24]; Heb 13:16[25]
  - (4) Preaching and ministry - 1 Pet 4:11[26]
  - (5) Through loving – 1 Pet 1:22[27]
  - (6) Acknowledgement of the Son – Philippians 2:9-11[28]
  - (7) By believing the Word of God – Rom 4:20[29]
  - (8) Suffering – Phil 1:29 [30]
  - (9) Witnessing – 2 Thes 3:1[31]
- iii) To display God's Grace Eph 2:7[32]; 3:6[33]
- iv) To evangelize the lost Matt 28:19-20[34]
- v) To baptize believers
- vi) To teach believers
- vii) To edify believers Eph 4:11[35], 12,16[36]; 1 Thes 5:11[37]; Jude 20[38]
- viii) To discipline believers
  - (1) Self-discipline 1 Cor 9:27[39]
  - (2) Sovereign discipline Acts 5:5[40]
  - (3) Church discipline Matt 18:17[41]; Romans 16:17[42]; 1 Cor 5:1-13
- ix) To provide fellowship Acts 2:42[43]
- x) To care for its own - 1 Tim 5:1-16
- xi) To provoke Israel to jealousy Romans 11
- xii) To provide rulers for the millennium 2 Tim 2:12[44], Romans 8:17[45]

- xiii) To restrain sin Matt 5:13-16
- c) A brief acrostic: WIFE
  - i) **W – worship**
  - ii) **I – instruction**
  - iii) **F – fellowship**
  - iv) **E – evangelism**
- 4) What is it like?
  - a) **Head and Body**. Romans 12:5[46]; 1 Cor 12
  - b) The **Bridegroom** and Bride Eph 5:25-32
  - c) The Vine and the **branches** John 15:1-5
  - d) The **Shepherd** and the sheep. John 10:11[47]
  - e) The High Priest and a **Kingdom of Priest**. 1 Pet 2:9[48]
  - f) The Cornerstone and the **living stones** Eph 2:19-22[49]; 1 Pet 2:4-5[50]
- 5) How is it organized?
  - a) **Elders**, Pastors, Bishops: Leadership, oversight, administration and teaching.-1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20:17-28
  - b) **Deacons**: service and problem solving
    - i) 1 Tim 3:8-12
    - ii) Acts 6:1-8
  - c) **Saints**: following and supporting spiritual leadership.- Philippians 1:1 [51]
- 6) What are its ceremonies?
  - a) Two **ordinances** (Not sacraments to obtain grace but memorials because of grace received)
    - i) **Baptism**: a declaration of a disciple
      - (1) All believers are baptized
      - (2) Only believers are baptized
      - (3) Identification with the Savior
      - (4) Identification with his Church
      - (5) What is an affusionist?
      - (6) What is an immersionist? Romans 6:1-10; Col 2:11-13[52] Acts 8:34-39 [53]
    - ii) **Lord's supper**: the fellowship of a disciple
      - (1) Look backward to his **sacrifice** (1 Cor 11:26) [54]
      - (2) Look inward to **examine** ourselves (1 Cor 11:28)[55]
      - (3) Look forward to **his return** (1 Cor 11:26)[54]

- 7) What about membership, does it really mean anything? The answer is yes it does. There is the Church with a capital "C". 1 Cor 12:13,[56] Eph 4:5[57]. Then there is the church with a lower case "c", like the one at Ephesus, Sardis or Des Moines.
- a) There are four main conditions related to membership
    - i) Members must first **believe** –Acts 2:41 [58] "C"
    - ii) Members are received upon their profession of faith **by baptism**. Acts 2:41[58] "c"
    - iii) Members remain as members until they reject **sound doctrine**. Titus 3:10[59]
    - iv) Members are responsible to live **moral lives**. Ephesians 4:1-6.
  - b) Is formal membership necessary? Yes for several reasons.
    - i) It has officials, Elders (pastors, bishops)
    - ii) It must maintain **order and discipline**. 1 Cor 5:12-13[60]; Rom 16:17
    - iii) It must supply for the **material** needs of its members. Acts 6:1-4 (look up)
    - iv) It must have an **official list** to be responsible for orphans and widows. 1 Tim 5:3-15 especially verse 9[61] – notice the number,
    - v) There must have been list of members because they always knew the number.
  - c) Membership involves participation, reception and **responsibility**. Eph 4:16 "each one does his part." Heb 10:24-25[62]

So how important is the church? It is the pillar and ground of the Truth. 1 Tim 3:14-15. [63]