

The Church Of The Bible

Lesson 1

What Is It?

This Series

- The biblical term
- The Name And Building
- The Kingdom
- Relationships
- “Special” Relationships
- More Special Relationships
- The Church At Work
- Disagreement
- Unity

Introduction

- **What is the church of the bible?**
 - “Ekklesia” – the biblical concept
- **How does it relate to salvation?**
- **Institutionalism**
- **Described as a “body” to which Christians are added**
- **Viewed as a family into which Christians are born**

Background

- The church is understood in a variety of ways
- “You must be a member of the church to be saved”
- The building is somewhat sacred and only “religious” activities are permissible.
 - The house of God
- People should “join the church”.
- A “blood bought institution”

The Biblical Concept

- I will build my church (**ekklesia**)
- The term is literally “assembly”
 - A riot in Ephesus – translated assembly
 - *The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another.* (Acts 19:32)
 - A town meeting – translated assembly
 - *If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly.* (Acts 19:39)

Definition

- Thayer's definition
 - A gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly
- Any gathering of people, whether religious , political, or criminal may be called an “ekklesia”
- Ekklesia must mean an assembly – nothing more, nothing less
 - Without reference to the purpose or character of the assembly

Religious Assemblies

- The term is translated “church”
 - *In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. (1 Cor. 11:18)*
 - *If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God. (1 Cor. 14:28)*
- “Church” is an ecclesiastical term

The Translators

- Tyndale's translation
- Ecclesiastical terms eliminated
 - Congregation for church
 - Senior or elder for priest
 - Repentance for penance
 - Love for Charity
- Tyndale's Bible is credited with being the first English translation to work directly from Hebrew and Greek texts.
- Furthermore, it was the first English biblical translation that was mass-produced as a result of new advances in the art of printing.

Later Translations

- The Bishop's Bible and subsequent translations retained the ecclesiastical terms
 - Supported the Church Of England's institutional church culture
- The Catholic Church had long proclaimed that the church was an institution.
- The word *church* to them had come to represent the organizational structure that was the Catholic Church.
- Tyndale's translation was seen as a challenge to this doctrine because he was seen to have favored the views of reformers.
- Martin Luther proclaimed that the church was made up and defined by the believers, or in other words their congregations.

Taken from “Tyndale Bible, Wikipedia”

The Universal Assembly

- The universal body of Christians
- Called to a common cause or faith
 - A figurative assembly
- Speaking of Israel in the wilderness
 - *He was in the assembly in the desert, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to us. (Acts 7:38)*

Ekklesia (church) is a group designation of God's people as "Christian" is the individual designation

Institutionalism

- The church is viewed as an entity to which the saved are given membership
 - An organization with officials and an official name
- Trusts in church membership rather than in Christ
- Hope based on church membership, not on relationship to Christ
 - The “right church” becomes major

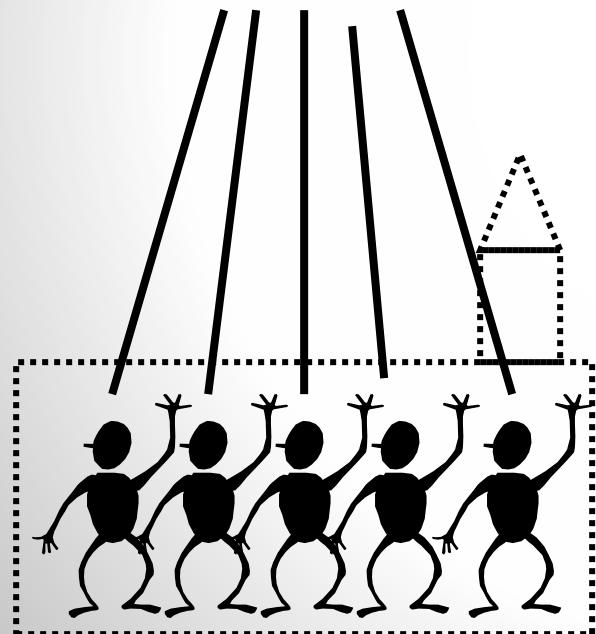
Non-Institutional

- Blood bought individuals – not a blood bought institution
- Facilitator of group relationships – not the dispenser of God's blessings
- Each congregation is autonomous – no earthly headquarters
- No institutional officers
- No institutional name
- Salvation is in Christ – not in church membership

Individual Accountability

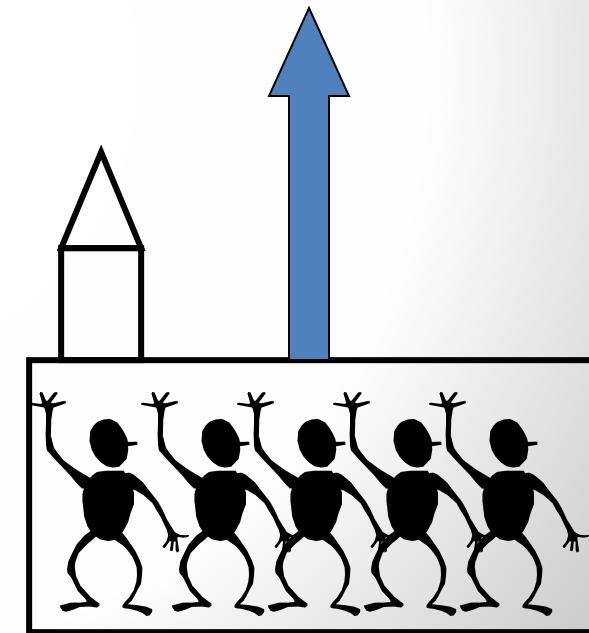
This

Christ



Not This

Christ



Two Metaphors

- **A body of individuals**
 - The Lord’s body with Christ at the head
 - *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body,-- (Eph.1:22-23)*
- **God’s family with God as the father**
 - *And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. (Matt. 23:9)*
- **No “institutional” designation**
 - “Kuriakon” – The Lord’s house

Bible Terminology

- “In Christ” or “in the Lord” – not in the church
 - Babes “in Christ” (**1 Cor. 3:1**)
 - Baptized into Christ – Put on Christ (**Gal. 3:27**)
 - Alive unto God in Christ Jesus (**Rom. 6:11**)
 - Fellow servant in the Lord (**Col. 4:7**)

The church is not a visible systematized institution
but a body defined by the believers themselves

Conclusion

- The word church means “assembly” and nothing more
- The church is made up of Christians and nothing else
- The church includes all Christians and nothing less
- The church is the product of salvation
 - You can’t have one without the other

Church And Salvation

- **Exalting the church and denigrating Christ**
- **Insisting that salvation and church membership are separate**
 - Be saved and then “join” the church
- **Two sets of instruction**
 - Salvation by faith
 - Church membership by baptism

Added To The Church

- God adds those who are being saved to the church (assembly)
 - Salvation and church membership are one process
 - *And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47)*
- Babes in Christ are newborns in God's family
 - The babe is a part of the family by virtue of the birth

The Church & The Kingdom

- The term “church” (*ekklesia*) speaks to the people of God
 - Used 77 times (NIV)
- The term “kingdom” speaks to the reign of God in the hearts of men
 - Used 284 times (NIV)

To pray for the kingdom to come in the sense of God's reign as king is not the same as praying for the church to come.

Not An Earthly Kingdom

- Not of this world
 - *Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place." (John 18:36)*
- “Within you”
 - *"The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you.“ (Luke 17:20-21)*

Observations

- Christ purchased Christians, not an institution with his blood
- The church is not a visible systematized institution but a body defined by the believers themselves.
- The saved are added to a group, a body, a family not an institution
- The saved are the church, and the church consists of the saved
- Nothing to join

The church exists for the benefit of the Christians, not Christians for the benefit of the church.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9)

