

# What Is the Church?

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There are many terms used to describe the church in the New Testament which help us to understand the nature and substance of the church.

The church is called the **kingdom** of God or Christ. Jesus so describes it (Mat. 16:19; Mark 9:1, 14:25, etc.). Paul so describes it (Col. 1:13; Heb. 12:28, etc.). The church is not a democracy in which majority opinion rules, but a kingdom under the Supreme law of an all-powerful King (1 Tim. 6:15). He alone legislates for His kingdom through the written Word of His New Testament (John 12:48; Heb. 1:1-2); no man has a right to alter His laws (Gal. 1:8-9; Rev. 22:18-19). His kingdom does not have national boundaries or physical armies (John 18:36) but exists everywhere His Law is honored and obeyed (Mark 16:15-16). When He comes again, He will give the kingdom over to His Father for all eternity in Heaven (1 Cor. 15:24).

The church is called the **bride** of Christ (Rev. 21:9; John 3:29; Rom. 7:4; Eph 5:23-24). A bride should wear the name of the husband (Acts 20:28; Rom. 16:16) and be in subjection to him who is her head (Eph. 5:22-24). Christ demands that His bride, the church, be free of spot, wrinkle, or blemish and that she be holy (Eph. 5:27). Christ loved His church so much that He gave Himself up for her and He nourishes and cherishes her supremely (Eph. 5:25, 29).

The church is called the **body** of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). A body, unless it be an anomaly, has only one head. Christ is that one head. Moreover, a head has only one body in the normal case (Eph. 2:16; 4:4). A body has many members with various functions that complement each other (1 Cor. 12:12, 14-19). A normal body is a unified whole, each member being subject to one head (1 Cor. 12:20-27).

The most common word for the church is **the church**. *Church* means "called out ones" The agent that calls them out is the Gospel (Mat. 28:18-19; Mark 16:15-16; 1 The. 2:14). They are called out of the world to work for Jesus (1 Cor. 15:58; Eph 2:10). His church is the only thing Jesus will save (Eph. 5:23).

How does one enter the kingdom of Christ? By being born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5). How does one become a member of the body of Christ? By being baptized into it (1 Cor. 12:13). How does one become part of the church of Christ? When people believe, repent, and are then baptized they are saved and added to the church (Acts 2:38 41, 47).

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