



The New Testament Church

The Church Defined

I. BIBLICAL USAGE

- A. Church (seventy-seven times)
- B. Churches (thirty-seven times)

II. VARYING VIEWS OF THE CHURCH

A. The Church Is a Building

1. The word *church* is used to denote both a Christian association of people and a place of worship. The word *church* is usually, but not exclusively, associated with Christianity.
2. Therefore, the church is a house consecrated to the worship of God, among Christians—the Lord’s house.
3. This concept is derived from verses like 1 Timothy 3:15.
4. Historically, saints referred to the place of worship as a meeting-house.

B. The Church Consists of a Local Body of Believers

1. The New Testament Church is a local assembly of baptized believers who have united for the purpose of carrying out the Great Commission.
2. The church consists of a body of baptized believers who have banded together to fully perform the teachings of scripture.

C. The Church Is Made Up of All the Saved

1. The church is the collective body of all who have been truly born again.
 - a. In this sense, the church is sometimes called *catholic* or *universal*.
 - b. It is often broken down to a “visible” church and “invisible” church.
 - c. On a smaller scale, the church can consist of the saved in a particular locale (i.e., the church of Ephesus, or of Antioch).
2. The visible church, also known as the local church, consists of those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and assemble together. It is identified as a visible church because its members are...
 - a. Known
 - b. Assemble
3. The invisible, or universal, church consists of the whole number of born again believers. This church is identified as the body of Christ and is called invisible because...
 - a. Some of its members are in heaven
 - b. Those on earth cannot be fully known for this church does not assemble



III. SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES TO A “CHURCH”

A. In the Wilderness (Acts 7:37-38)

1. A called out assembly (Exodus 3:7-10)
2. A people set free by blood and faith (Exodus 12:21-28)
3. A baptized assembly (1 Corinthians 10:1-4)

B. The Earthly Ministry of Christ (Matthew 18:17; Hebrews 2:10-13)

1. A called out assembly (Luke 6:12-13)
2. A people set free by faith and eventually blood (Matthew 16:13-17)
3. A baptized assembly (Acts 1:21-22)

C. After the Ascension of Christ

1. A called out assembly, made up of “saved” people (Acts 2:47)
2. A people redeemed by blood, and saved by faith (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 2:8-9)
3. A baptized assembly (Acts 2:38-41)

D. The Church of the Firstborn (Hebrews 12:22-23)

1. A called out assembly
 - a. Located in the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22)
 - b. A general assembly (Hebrews 12:23)
 - c. Made up of people whose names are written in heaven (Hebrews 12:23)
2. A people redeemed by blood and realized by faith (Revelation 5:9)
3. A baptized assembly (Romans 6:3)

IV. THE LOCAL CHURCH VERSUS A UNIVERSAL CHURCH

A. Examining the Scriptures: Local or Universal?

1. The *church* the Lord would build (Matthew 16:18)
2. The *church* that would hear of disciplinary action (Matthew 18:17)
3. The *church* to which the Lord would add (Acts 2:47).
4. The *church* upon which fear came (Acts 5:11)
5. The *church* in the wilderness (Acts 7:38)
6. The *church* that suffered great persecution (Acts 8:1)
7. The *church* threatened by Paul (Acts 8:3)
8. The *churches* resting (Acts 9:31)
9. The *church* hearing of conversions (Acts 11:22)
10. The *church* assembling with Paul and Barnabas (Acts 11:26)
11. The *church* vexed by Herod (Acts 12:1)
12. The *church* praying for Peter (Acts 12:5)



13. The *church* with prophets and teachers (Acts 13:1)
14. The *churches* where elders were ordained (Acts 14:23)
15. The *church* gathered to hear a spiritual report (Acts 14:27)
16. The *church* bringing Paul, Barnabas, and Titus on their way (Acts 15:3)
17. The *church* hearing of the faith among the Gentiles (Acts 15:4)
18. The *church* agreeing upon the conduct among Gentiles (Acts 15:22)
19. The *churches* confirmed (Acts 15:41)
20. The *churches* established in the faith (Acts 16:5)
21. The *church* saluted by Paul (Acts 18:22)
22. The *churches* not robbed, possibly of false religion (Acts 19:37)
23. The *church* with elders (Acts 20:17)
24. The *church* to be fed by elders (Acts 20:28)
25. The *church* where Phebe served (Romans 16:1; see Romans' postscript)
26. The *churches* of the Gentiles (Romans 16:4)
27. The *church* in the house of Priscilla and Aquila (Romans 16:5)
28. The *churches* of Christ (Romans 16:16)
29. The *church* hosted by Gaius (Romans 16:23)
30. The *church* of God at Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2)
31. The *churches* where Paul taught (1 Corinthians 4:17)
32. The *church* with some lowly esteemed judges (1 Corinthians 6:4)
33. The *churches* with ordained men (1 Corinthians 7:17)
34. The *church* of God (1 Corinthians 10:32)
35. The *churches* of God (1 Corinthians 11:16)
36. The *church* where believers came together (1 Corinthians 11:18)
37. The *church* of God (1 Corinthians 11:22)
38. The *church*, the seat of apostles, prophets, teachers, etc. (1 Corinthians 12:28)
39. The *church* edified (1 Corinthians 14:4, 5, 12)
40. The *church* where saints would speak (1 Corinthians 14:19)
41. The *church* together in one place (1 Corinthians 14:23)
42. The *church* with rules for tongues (1 Corinthians 14:28)
43. The *churches* of the saints (1 Corinthians 14:33)
44. The *churches* where women were to keep silence (1 Corinthians 14:34)
45. The *church* where women were not to speak (1 Corinthians 14:35)
46. The *church* of God persecuted by Paul (1 Corinthians 15:9)
47. The *churches* of Galatia (1 Corinthians 16:1)
48. The *churches* of Asia (1 Corinthians 16:19)
49. The *church* in the house of Aquila and Priscilla (1 Corinthians 16:19)
50. The *church* of God at Corinth (2 Corinthians 1:1)
51. The *churches* of Macedonia (2 Corinthians 8:1)
52. The *churches* receiving messengers (2 Corinthians 8:18, 19, 23, 24)
53. The *churches* robbed by Paul (2 Corinthians 11:8)
54. The *churches* for which Paul cared (2 Corinthians 11:28)
55. The *churches* supposed superior (2 Corinthians 12:13)
56. The *churches* of Galatia (Galatians 1:2)
57. The *church* of God (Galatians 1:13)
58. The *churches* of Judaea (Galatians 1:22)