

# The New Testament Church #6

## “What is the Church?” #3

### Intro; We stand on what others have done to know God’s word.

#### A. William Tyndale in the 1500’s took a chance to help all men know God’s word.

1. He came from a wealthy family. At a banquet he debated with a priest the meaning of scripture.
2. The priest told him, *“It would be better to be without God’s law than the pope’s.”*
3. Tyndale replied; *“If God spares my life, I will cause the plow-boy to know more about scripture than you do.”*
4. Tyndale wanted to translate the Bible from Greek to simple, everyday English. His bishop would not allow him to translate the scriptures openly.
5. Tyndale fled to Germany to publish his N.T. In 1526 he published 6000 copies in Worms, Germany and sent them to England.
6. English bishops bought and burned thousands of his New Testaments. Tyndale used the money to make more. He said, *“The bishop shall burn my New Testaments. And I am the gladder. The overplus of the money shall make me more studious to correct the said N.T., and so newly to imprint the same once again.”*
7. Tyndale also wrote tracts. In 1530 he wrote one denouncing king Henry the eighth’s attempts to dispose of Catherine.
8. He was captured and on October 6<sup>th</sup> of 1536 was strangled and burned at the stake at the age of 44. His last words were, *“Lord! Open the king of England’s eyes!”*
9. Two years later, in 1538, king Henry approved the **Matthew’s Bible**, which was a completed version of Tyndale’s work. In 1539 Henry commanded a copy of the *‘Great Bible’*, which was a revision of Matthew’s Bible, to be put in every church.

#### B. We have the Bible today and can study it all we want.

1. Many do not want to. We need to study and see what God says about Bible things.
2. One very important Bible topic is the church. Just the word **‘church’** itself is found over a hundred times in the N.T.
3. It is an important Bible topic. We must go to the N.T. to see what the Bible church looks like.
4. We should then try to make the church here look like the N.T. church. We want the *1<sup>st</sup> Century church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.

#### C. We have been studying the N.T. church.

1. We are looking at **‘What is the Church?’** or **‘What is our relationship and responsibility to God in the church.’**
  - a. **Bride of Christ;** loved and provided for
  - b. **Flock of Christ;** led and protected
  - c. **Family of God;** Rules of house & inheritance
  - d. **Laborers in Vineyard;** Work to do
  - e. **Citizens in kingdom;** Privileges & responsibilities
  - f. **Chosen people;** Privileged & honored to be chosen by God; We must then choose Him
  - g. **Royal Priesthood;** We are Priests, the Temple of God and Sacrifices
2. We see that the church is not simple. It is very complex and involves a lot of study and attention. There is not one simple definition for it.

#### D. Today, more of ‘What is the Church?’

### I. The church is, ‘the church’

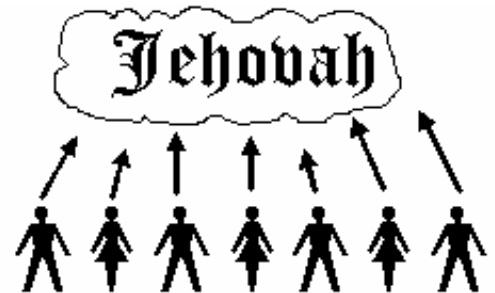
#### A. ‘Church’ comes from the Greek word, ἑκκλησία [ekklesia].

1. Strong’s Enhanced Greek Dictionary defines it as meaning; *‘a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly’* and *‘an assembly of the people convened at the public place of the council for the purpose of deliberating.’*

- Vine's says, 'ekklesia, from *ek*, "out of," and *klesis*, "a calling" (*kaleo*, "to call"), was used among the Greeks of a body of citizens "gathered" to discuss the affairs of state'.
- It originally meant **an assembly**. It's literal meaning is, '**called out**'. The Greeks used it for only a physical assemble of people.

### B. The church is people called out of the world.

- Church is used in both a **spiritual** and a **physical** sense in the N.T.
- Spiritually it is all God's saints of all times and places and their relationship with God.
- Matt 16:15-19 *He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"* 16 *Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* 17 *Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.* 18 *And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.* 19 *And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."*
- Notice that Jesus said He would build **His church**. This is the imagery of a building. We have seen we are the **temple of God** –1 Peter 2:5.
- However Jesus never built a physical building. He was not going to make an earthly building in Caesarea Philippi where men would assemble.
- The rock Jesus would build His church on was Peter's statement that He was the Messiah, the Son of the living God.
- Jesus' church is a relationship with God. We are called out of the world to be God's special people. We are His **chosen people**.



### C. The church is also people in the world.

- Because of our relationship with God we have a relationship with each other as well.
- All the activities and work of Christians was done as parts of the local churches. There is **one church** in the **universal, spiritual** sense but **many** in the **local, physical** sense.
- Eph 4:4 *There is one body and one Spirit...*
- Rom 16:16 *Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.*
- 1 Thess 2:14 *For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus.*
- The church in the 'universal, spiritual' sense has no earthly organization, headquarters nor leadership. It is all saints of all times and places.
- It is saints who have a relationship with God. Its headquarters is in heaven. There is no work for the universal church to do.
- Jesus Christ is the head of the church and the saints in the universal sense are responsible only to God and heaven.
- Col 1:18 *And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*
- Local, physical churches on the other hand do have an organization and leaders. They have work to do together.
- Acts 14:23 *So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.*
- Heb 13:17 *Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.*
- As Christians we are to be a part of a local church. We are called out of the world to worship God with the saints.
- Heb 10:24-25 *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*
- We are to encourage each other together, teach men the gospel together and help one another as fellow

Jehovah



saints.

16. There is no organization larger or smaller than the local church. It is sufficient to do all the Lord wants His saints to do in a local area.

#### D. As the church we are called out of the world to serve and worship God.

## II. The church is, 'the body'

### A. As the body of Christ we work together.

1. Being the body of Christ is a common illustration of the church.
2. Eph 5:23 *For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.*
3. Eph 1:22-23 *And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*
4. Christ is the head. The church is His body. The point should be obvious. As the church we must follow the head.

### B. A body should work together.

1. We recognize that our body has many parts and they need to work and work together. If our hearing is bad then we suffer.
2. 1 Cor 12:12-14 *For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.*
3. A body has many parts. They are all subject to the head. If they do not follow the head there is serious problems.
4. The church is the body of Christ and must be subject to Him in all things. If the church does not follow Christ it isn't His body.
5. 1 Cor 12:20-22 *But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.*
6. All parts of the body need each other. They need to work together and each do his part. There are no really redundant parts --evolution
7. 1 Cor 12:26-27 *And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.*
8. The work of Christ is done by Christians working together. They are concerned about each other and help one another.

### C. God's work is done by the local body.

1. The work of evangelism, edification and helping one another is done by the local church. It is the body of Christ.
2. 1 John 3:16-18 *By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*
3. 1 Thess 5:11 *Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*
4. As the body we must be under the head and obey it. Another illustration of this principle is the vine and branches.
5. John 15:5 *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."*
6. The body can do nothing without the head. The branches can do nothing without the vine. We can do nothing without Christ or His word.
7. We must work together as the body of Christ. We must attend regularly, give liberally, participate whenever we can and not quit.

### D. As the body we are under Christ and Him only.

### III. The church is 'servants'

#### A. As servants or slaves we are under a master.

1. Many today do not like this illustration. We are free men and not slaves to anyone. Yet we are slaves to God and righteousness.
2. Our servitude is a willing servitude. We willingly make ourselves slaves of God or of Satan. Yet we are still slaves.
3. Rom 6:16-18 *Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*

#### B. The N.T. shows we are slaves of the Lord.

1. Slavery was common in N.T. times. They fully understood the responsibilities of slaves.
2. Matt 10:24-25 *"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!"*
3. Mark 10:44-45 *"And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*
4. Most would like to reach a point where they are comfortable and can be served by others. Yet Jesus did not do this on earth.
5. We are to do good to others. We are to help others. We are to be servants. Jesus is our example.

#### C. As servants we must obey our master and Him only.

1. We need to decide whom we will serve, God or riches. Many try to serve both. The **rich, young, ruler** found out he could not.
2. Luke 16:13 *"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*
3. In Luke 17:1-4 Jesus stresses the need to forgive, even someone 7 times a day. This was a difficult concept.
4. **Faith and Duty**; Luke 17:5-10 *And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." 6 So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. 7 And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? 8 But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? 9 Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. 10 So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"*
5. If we want to increase our faith, we need to have it grow. A Mustard seed was very small but made a small tree.
6. Part of **helping our faith grow is to be humble**. We must let go of pride. We must realize we are slaves and not advisors of the Lord. This answer probably surprised the disciples.
7. All our work does not cause us to deserve anything. Our works, by themselves, do not save us. Yet we must be working.
8. James 2:24-26 *You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. 25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*
9. When we have done all we are commanded we are still unprofitable servants. We never lose our dependence on God.

#### D. As servants of the Lord, we obey Him always and without question.

### Conclusion; We have God's divinely given word to guide us.

#### A. We need to study it and follow it.

1. It tells us all about the church; what it is and what it should look like.
2. We can have the N.T. church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century today.

#### B. The N.T. also tells us how to be saved.

1. We must believe in Jesus as God's Son who died for us. We must repent of our sins and turn from them. We

must then be buried with Him in Baptism to have our sins washed away.

2. Mark 16:15-16 *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
3. Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*
4. See also Act 18:8, 22:16, Rom 6:3-7, Gal 3:26-28, 1 Pet 3:21, etc.

**C. If we can help anyone in their service to the Lord, please let us.**