

## THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The church of Christ is the *ekklesia*, "a called-out body of people," of Christ. This Greek word translated "church," always (no exceptions) applies to people in the New Testament.

Jesus is the founder of these people, "*I will build my church*" (Matthew 16:18). "*The church of the Lord, which he purchased with his own blood*" (Acts 20:28). "*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*" (I Corinthians 3:11).

He is the head of this body of people, "(God) gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body" (Ephesians 1:22-23); "*And he is the head of the body, the church*" (Colossians 1:18). In this universal sense of the word, there is only the one *ekklesia* which Christ built, "*There is one body*" (Ephesians 4:4); "*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. ... But now are they many members, yet but one body*" (I Corinthians 12:12, 20).

This body of people became the people of the Lord by their obedience to the powerful word of God, the gospel, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*" (Romans 1:16). This is why Jesus commissioned His apostles to "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15). Salvation from sins and the hope of eternal life is located in Jesus, "*that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory*" (II Timothy 2:10). [There is no other passage of Scripture in all the Bible that tells man where salvation is located] After Jesus instructed His apostles to go into all the world, He stated, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark 16:16). Why baptism? Because there are only two passages of Scripture in all the Bible that tell man how one gets into Christ, where salvation is located, and they both say the same thing, "*baptized into (Jesus) Christ*" (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27).

The first recorded sermon after the ascension of Jesus took place in Jerusalem on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47). Peter's remarks are recorded for us, and in his sermon Peter deals with the life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and coronation of Jesus Christ, pointing out to the audience that they, the Jews, had put to death the Son of God (Acts 2:23, 36). Upon hearing these words, those with honest and good hearts ask what they should do (Acts 2:37). Hear Peter's answer, "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*" (Acts 2:28). Well, what happened? "*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls*" (Acts 2:41). What church did they "join"? None! Note that they "*were added unto them.*" Who did the "adding"? "*And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*" (Acts 2:47). An individual can "join" a human organization, a denomination, but not the church of the Lord - the Lord adds those who obey His gospel by faith in God and His Son, (Hebrews 11:6; I John 3:23), repentance (a change of life leading to a change of action), (Acts 2:38; 17:30), confession of faith in Christ, (Matthew 10:32; Acts 8:35-39), and baptism in the name of Christ for the remission of sins, (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16).

After the first major persecution against the people of the Lord in Jerusalem, "*Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word*" (Acts 8:1-4). In these places where the word, the gospel was preached, those with good and honest hearts heard, believed and obeyed the gospel, thus establishing a group of the Lord's people in that place. Later, Paul wrote about a number of these independent groups in these words, "*The churches of Christ salute you*" (Romans 16:16). Jesus had the apostle John write to, "*the seven churches which are in Asia*" (Revelation 1:11). This is the use of the Greek word *ekklesia* in the local sense; the called-out people of God in different locations.

If you have questions concerning the church of the Lord, please feel free to contact us. We are a group

of those whom the Lord, "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:13).